



Komitei pravnik  
za ljudska prava



žene u crnom  
beograd



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### **Nongovernmental Organizations Demand the Return of *The Jewel of Medina* to its Readers**

By exerting pressure on the publisher *Beobook* to withdraw the book *The Jewel of Medina* from sale and demanding an apology and repentance, leaders of the Islamic community in Serbia took it upon themselves to judge and proscribe what can and cannot be read, thus violating the right of every citizen to make his/her own judgment.

We would like to point out that literature or other works of art can be subject only to the criticism and judgment of the public and that no religion has the right to introduce censorship or intimidate writers, publishers and readers with threats of god's punishment.

We demand the return of the book to its readers so that they can judge on its value themselves. We expect that the Islamic community leaders apologize to every citizen of Serbia [and the world] because of the attempt to jeopardize freedom of thought and expression. We emphasize that certain limitations are possible if a book calls to violence, discrimination, racism, war crimes, which can be determined in a legally proscribed procedure in a very limited number of cases.

*The Jewel of Medina* tells the story of the life of Mohammed's seventh wife Aisha from the age of six when she was engaged to the Islamic prophet. The publishing of this book (authored by Sherry Jones) in the US was followed by harsh debates about freedom of speech after the book's presentation in May was postponed because Texas University Professor and Islam and Early Medieval expert Denise Spielberg evaluated the novel as a potential threat to national security.

**Humanitarian Law Center  
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