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QURAN MEMORIZATION (HIFZ) IN NORTH MACEDONIA BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

Although the Balkan nations were introduced to Islam before the Ottomans, this new faith has become essential part of those societies only under the rule of Ottoman Empire. One of the main objectives of the Ottomans, who played a key role in all aspects of everyday life of the Balkan societies, was to ensure spiritual and intellectual development of Muslims of this region, including the practice of memorization of Quran (Hifz). This practice has been maintained through schools named as Schools for Hifz as well as Dar'ul Qura. Throughout history in above mentioned schools have been graduated thousands of young Muslims from this region who have played a significant positive role in their societies.

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, North Macedonia as one of the top places for memorization of Quran in the Balkans, has become part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which after WWII has been transformed to Socialist Yugoslavia. Despite the fact that the Muslims of North Macedonia from the beginning of 20th century until now, have been facing and still facing different social, economic, political difficulties and challenges, on other hand they are striving to maintain their religious values including the practice of Hifz. Recently, memorization of Quran in this place is maintained through different methods. This goal is achieved either by special official schools (formal education) or by professional individuals (informal education). After the successful completion of Hifz, students are obliged to enter to official exam prepared by related office of Islamic Religious Community.