



NHSMUN

Background Guide | *CRISIS: BOSNIA*

Secretary-General

Nastasja Vásquez Ramos

Director-General

Tyler Schmied

Chiefs of Staff

Devansh Bhartia

Sofía Velasco Saucedo

Under-Secretaries-General

Adam Allibhoy

Armen Bagdassarian

Joelle Boilard

Mackenzie Boilard

Mathias Carstens García

Ed Hagerman

Aurora Lai

Sebastian Mesa Medina

Sabeeh Mirza

Tom Scheer

Katelyn Shen

Analucia Tello

Executive Committee

Ana Margarita Gil

Ming-May Hu

Chris Talamo

Althea Turley

Dear Delegates,

I am thrilled to welcome you to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Crisis!

My name is Marlon Hoffrogge, and I will be your director for Session I of NHSMUN 2026. I cannot express how impatient I am to finally meet you all! This is my second year as a member of NHSMUN staff, and I am as thrilled as you are to finally meet everyone in New York City! My first and last NHSMUN experience was in 2023, as a delegate for the crisis committee on Scotland's independence.

I was born and raised in Germany, lived for two years in France during the end of high school, and now I am living in the Netherlands! Currently, I am studying European Studies at the University of Amsterdam and Business Administration at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg. Outside of university, I try my best to learn the piano and tennis (wish me luck !!) I like so many things, but my favorite, I would say, is learning new things, facts, languages, cultures—everything!

I can confidently tell you the best Co-Director I could have wished for, Olivia, and I have done our best to present you with an interesting and challenging topic! I rest assured that you will shape the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the better in our committee! I hope you are enjoying this Background Guide and I wish you a lot of fun when discovering more of the country during your research!

I truly cannot wait to meet you all in March!

Marlon Hoffrogge

Director, Crisis: Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Session I

nhsmun.crisisbosnia@imuna.org



Secretary-General

Nastasja Vásquez Ramos

Director-General

Tyler Schmied

Chiefs of Staff

Devansh Bhartia

Sofía Velasco Saucedo

Under-Secretaries-General

Adam Allibhoy

Armen Bagdassarian

Joelle Boilard

Mackenzie Boilard

Mathias Carstens García

Ed Hagerman

Aurora Lai

Sebastian Mesa Medina

Sabeeh Mirza

Tom Scheer

Katelyn Shen

Analucia Tello

Executive Committee

Ana Margarita Gil

Ming-May Hu

Chris Talamo

Althea Turley

Dear Delegates,

I am so excited to welcome you to NHSMUN 2026! I am Olivia Woodard (she/her) and I will be your director for Session II. Marlon and I are so thrilled to be your committee directors! This past summer, we researched the dynamic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having a unique history and a government structure like no other, BiH is constantly faced with new challenges. With an entity calling for its own independence and ethno-religious political parties in constant gridlock with one another, BiH's government must work together and compromise to secure a peaceful future.

This will be my fifth year attending NHSMUN and my third year staffing the conference! For NHSMUN 2025, I served as the Director of the African Union. As a director, it was incredible to see delegates learn and grow throughout the committee after attending the conference in high school. I am originally from East Brunswick, New Jersey, and I currently attend Northeastern University in Boston, where I study International Affairs, International Business, and Political Science. Outside of class, I write for Northeastern's undergraduate law review and am involved in our school's International Relations Council, where I compete in Model UN, NATO, and Arab League conferences. In my spare time, I love kayaking, thrifting, and tackling new LEGO sets!

I could not have asked for a better Co-Director than Marlon, and together we have put our effort into bringing you this complex and ever-changing topic! As you will come to learn, the events of the Bosnian War forever changed and shaped BiH's demographics and political motivations. We look forward to seeing delegates respectfully representing these different interests in collaborative and meaningful debates during committee.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Marlon or me. We are happy to help! Best of luck with your preparations, and we look forward to meeting you all in March.

Best Wishes,

Olivia Woodard

Director, Crisis: Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Session II

nhsmun.crisisbosnia@imuna.org



A NOTE ON RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the debate experience. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to the conference.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging, but to assist delegates, we have updated our [Beginner Delegate Guide](#), [Advanced Delegate Guide](#), [Research Guide](#), and [Rules of Procedure Guide](#). In particular, these guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage. They can help transform a sometimes overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

To accurately represent a character, delegates must be able to articulate its policies. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation to write a position paper for the topic on the committee's agenda. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the Research Guide. To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections.

I: Topic Background – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's character. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic. It is best to focus on the details that are most important to the character's policy and proposed solutions.

II: Character Policy – This section should discuss the character's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate.

III. Proposed Solutions – This section should detail the character's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the character's policy.

The position paper should be **no more than 10 pages** long double-spaced with standard margins and 12 point font size. This is a maximum; **3–5 pages per topic is often a suitable length**. The paper must be written from the perspective of your assigned country and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for submitting position papers on or before **February 20, 2026**. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, a position must be submitted on or before **January 30, 2026**. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the dais of each committee and returned prior to your arrival at the conference. Instructions on how to submit position papers will be shared directly with faculty advisors.

Complete instructions for how to submit position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via email. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, please contact us at nhsmun@imuna.org.

Delegations that do not submit position papers will be ineligible for awards.

COMMITTEE HISTORY

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has long faced a history of division.¹ BiH comprises three major ethnic groups: the Bosniaks (50 percent of the population), the Serbs (30 percent), and the Croats (15 percent).² The three ethnic groups each receive representation in the national government through a tripartite presidency.³ Three presidents, one for each ethnic group, rotate every eight months for four years. The country follows a consociational view whereby power sharing occurs along ethnic lines.

In 1995, the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH was created as part of the Dayton Accords (DA).⁴ The bicameral parliament consists of the lower House of Representatives (HOR) and the upper House of Peoples (HOP).⁵ Members of the HOR are directly elected by the people for four-year terms, with 28 seats designated for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and 14 seats for Republika Srpska (RS). They deal with the state budget, ratification of global treaties, and key decisions for the infrastructure of the country. The HOP consists of 15 members appointed by the legislatures of the FBiH and RS. Of the 15 members, each ethnic group holds five seats. Members serve two-year terms.⁶ The HOP also has a role in creating laws, where they can also check and approve the decisions of the HOR. The HOR and the HOP have to cooperate in creating laws, and without agreement in both branches, a law will not be passed.⁷

While the DA granted power to the people, it also created a system where the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) elects the “High Representative (HR)” for the country. The PIC consists of 55 countries. These countries support BiH financially as well as militarily under a military operation led by the European Union (EU) called EUFOR Althea. The HR acts as the main head of parliament. The so-called “Bonn Powers” gives them a wide range of powers, including appointing or removing officials. These “Bonn Powers” can override the laws enacted by the parliament, thus certifying the immense power of the HR.⁸

1 John R. Lampe and Noel R. Malcolm, “Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Accessed August 6, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Bosnia-and-Herzegovina>.

2 “Why Bosnia Has Europe on Edge Again,” DW, May 20, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/why-bosnia-has-europe-on-edge-again/video-72605856>.

3 John R. Lampe and Noel R. Malcolm, “Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

4 “About Parliament,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Accessed August 16, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/Content/Read/24?title=Opći-podaci>.

5 Michigan State University, “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Government,” globalEDGE, Accessed August 16, 2025, <https://globaledege.msu.edu/countries/bosnia-and-herzegovina/government>.

6 Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “About Parliament.”

7 Zlatan Begić, “THE DAYTON CONCEPT of PERFORMING LEGISLATIVE and OTHER FUNCTIONS of the PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY of BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA: COLLAPSE of the RULE of LAW and EFFECTIVE POLITICAL DEMOCRACY,” *EU and Comparative Law Issues and Challenges Series (ECLIC)*, 8 (January 2024): 163-83, <https://doi.org/10.25234/elcic/32275>.

8 Biljana Gutić-Bjelica, “A Unique European Governance Structure - Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Basis of Its Legitimacy and Controversial Accountability - Repository of the Academy’s Library,” *Mtak.hu*, 2 (July 2024): 60-74, <https://doi.org/10.32976/stratfuz.2024.18>.



Reevaluating Power-Sharing Structures and National Unity

Photo Credit: Izbor za bolji zivot Boris Tadic

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a relatively new country. The region declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1992, but ethnic tensions among Croats, Bosniaks, and Serbs had existed long before.¹ These divisions fueled the Bosnian War, which reshaped BiH's demographics and government structure. Much of this change came from ethnic cleansing and forced displacement during the conflict.²

The war ended in 1995 with the Dayton Peace Agreement.³ This document created a new BiH composed of two main entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the autonomous region of Republika Srpska (RS). Both entities share power in the state government and are represented in the Parliamentary Assembly.⁴ In 1999, the Brčko District was also created. Though not an official entity of BiH, it is a self-governing region within the country. Unlike other parts of BiH, Brčko has remained relatively

peaceful while maintaining a multi-ethnic population of Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks.⁵

Today, many challenges in BiH come from RS's push for secession. With a Serb majority and nationalist leaders, RS continues to seek independence. Its lawmakers have passed measures that ignore BiH's laws, increasing calls for separation recently.⁶ Another issue is the role of the Office of the High Representative (OHR). The Dayton Agreement created the OHR to make sure its rules were carried out across BiH.⁷ The international community selects the High Representative, and the role has usually gone to Western politicians. While the OHR has helped maintain peace, many citizens see it as too much outside interference.⁸ Some argue that the office should be closed or moved, especially now that BiH has a European Union Special Representative and hopes to join the EU.⁹ RS leaders have gone further, demanding the OHR be shut down entirely.¹⁰

The system of power-sharing, combined with the war's legacy, still shapes BiH politics. Before the war, the 1991 census recorded 44 percent Muslim (later Bosniaks), 31 percent Serb, 17 percent Croat, 6 percent Yugoslav, and 2 percent other nationalities.¹¹ By the end of the war, the population had shifted to 48 percent Bosniaks, 37 percent Serbs, 14 percent Croats, and 1 percent others.¹² At least 70 percent of those killed were Bosniaks. Since then, political parties have formed along ethnic lines, often leading to deadlock and slow decision-making.

Much of the push for RS independence comes from the nationalist Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD). Its leader, Milorad Dodik, has promoted an aggressive plan to leave BiH. He argues that the only options are a new agreement with FBiH or outright separation.¹³ Dialogue between FBiH and RS leaders is necessary to determine their future. Although compromise is challenging to reach, it remains the only path toward lasting peace in BiH.

1 United Nations, "The Conflicts."

2 Mirsad Karic, "Social Cleavages, Conflict and Accommodation in Bosnian Political History from the Late 19th Century until the 1990s," *Bilgi*, 13, no. 1 (November 2011): 71-97, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/journals/bilgi%20v13i1/f_0023711_19390.pdf.

3 Hanna Duggal, "Infographic: 30 Years Since the Bosnia War," *Al Jazeera*, accessed August 25, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/6/infographic-30-years-since-the-bosnia-war-interactive>.

4 Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

5 The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina v. The Republika Srpska, Final Award, ¶ 9 (March 5, 1999).

6 Azem Kurtic, "Bosnia's Constitutional Court Scraps Serb Entity's Disputed Laws," *Balkan Insight*, May 29, 2025, <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/05/29/bosnias-constitutional-court-scraps-serb-entities-disputed-laws/>.

7 "Western Balkans and the Dayton Peace Agreement," *House of Lords Library*, UK Parliament, October 6, 2023, <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/western-balkans-and-the-dayton-peace-agreement/#heading-6>.

8 "New Flag Imposed on Bosnians," *BBC*, February 4, 1998, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/53480.stm>.

9 Željana Zovko, "Thirty years after the Dayton-Paris Agreement: the European Union must get involved in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Robert Schuman Foundation*, March 31, 2025, <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-interviews/265-thirty-years-after-the-dayton-paris-agreement-the-european-union-must-get-involved-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina>.

10 "RS Government Urges UN Security Council to Shut Down Office of the High Representative," *The Sarajevo Times*, May 2, 2025, <https://sarajevotimes.com/rs-government-urges-un-security-council-to-shut-down-office-of-the-high-representative/>.

11 Karic, "Social Cleavages, Conflict and Accommodation in Bosnian Political History."

12 Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

13 Talha Ozturk, "Bosnian Serb Leader Says Only Solution for Country is Either a New Agreement or Separation," *Anadolu Ajansi*, March 21, 2025, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/bosnian-serb-leader-says-only-solution-for-country-is-either-a-new-agreement-or-separation/3515951>.

TOPIC BACKGROUND

The Causes of the Bosnian War

There are three main ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). These are the Catholic Croats, Muslim Bosniaks, and Orthodox Christian Serbs. Slavs arrived in the region in the sixth and seventh centuries. During the Middle Ages, BiH was a borderland. It lay between the Orthodox Byzantine Empire, the Catholic Kingdom of Hungary, and the Holy Roman Empire. The Bosnian Church combined Catholic and Orthodox practices.¹⁴

Between 1386 and 1592, the Ottomans conquered much of BiH. They introduced Islam and changed daily life. By the early 1600s, about two-thirds of the people were Muslim.¹⁵ In 1878, the Austro-Hungarian Empire took control of the region. At the same time, nationalism was spreading in Europe. Croats and Serbs developed strong national movements, which increased tensions with Bosniaks. That same year, Serbia gained independence. In 1882, it became the Kingdom of Serbia. Before

World War I, Serbia defeated the Ottomans in the Balkan Wars and took new lands, which it called “Serbian.”¹⁶

At the end of World War I, Yugoslavia was created. It united the Croatian, Slovenian, and Bosnian lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the Serbian Kingdom.¹⁷ Serb leaders controlled the new state. In 1929, the Serbian king suspended the constitution and declared a dictatorship. From 1929 to 1941, the Royal Yugoslav police force gained power. This force, led by Serbs, controlled Croatia through violence and assassinations. In response, Croats seeking independence created the Ustaša, a revolutionary group. Muslim Croats and Muslim Serbs were trapped in the middle of this conflict.¹⁸

World War II broke up Yugoslavia. Nazi Germany occupied the region and created an allied Croat state. The Ustaša militia ran the state and committed mass crimes. Their policy demanded that one-third of Serbs be expelled, one-third converted, and one-third killed.¹⁹ Serbs split into

two factions: the Četniks and the Partisans. The Četniks wanted to restore the Serbian Kingdom. The Partisans, led by Communist Josip Broz Tito, opposed both the Četniks and the Ustaša.²⁰

After the war, Tito reunited Yugoslavia. He expelled the Nazis and founded the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.²¹ The state was a federation with six republics: BiH, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Croatia. Each was divided by ethnic lines but overseen by a central government.²²

During the Cold War, Yugoslavia stayed neutral. It was a socialist state, but Tito’s leadership allowed independence from both East and West. He assured the world that ethnic tensions had been solved. His message focused on “Brotherhood and Unity.” This unity, however, was fragile. In the 1960s, Croatian protests erupted. The movement, known as the Croatian Spring, included students and political groups. They demanded official recognition of the Croatian language. They also argued that while 80 percent of Yugoslavia’s trade passed through

¹⁴ *Bosnia & Herzegovina Main Ethno-Religious Groups* (Houston: Peace Catalyst International, 2022), https://ansari.nd.edu/assets/475514/ethno_religious_groups_their_narratives.pdf.

¹⁵ “The History of Bosnia & Herzegovina,” Remembering Srebrenica, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://srebrenica.org.uk/what-happened/history/history-bosnia-herzegovina>.

¹⁶ *Bosnia & Herzegovina Main Ethno-Religious Groups*.

¹⁷ “Background: Tito’s Yugoslavia,” University of North Carolina, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://europe.unc.edu/background-titos-yugoslavia/>.

¹⁸ *Bosnia & Herzegovina Main Ethno-Religious Groups*.

¹⁹ *Bosnia & Herzegovina Main Ethno-Religious Groups*.

²⁰ *Bosnia & Herzegovina Main Ethno-Religious Groups*.

²¹ “The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990-1992,” *Office of the Historian*, U.S. Department of State, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/breakup-yugoslavia>.

²² Duggal, “30 Years Since the Bosnia War.”

Croatian ports, the profits were not shared fairly.²³ Many Croats said the system held the country back compared to Western Europe. Tito cracked down. He forced leaders to resign and sent many protestors to prison.²⁴

Tito used world events to distract attention. For example, after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he warned the Yugoslavs about outside threats.²⁵ To ease unrest, he created a new constitution in 1974. It gave the six republics more self-government. It also made Kosovo an official province with partial autonomy. However, provinces still had fewer rights than republics.²⁶ This new constitution was Tito's last attempt to keep Yugoslavia united. He relied on fear of Soviet power to maintain control.²⁷ But the 1974 constitution weakened the central government. It had less control over culture, politics, and the economy. After Tito's death in 1980, these weaknesses grew clearer.²⁸

The six republics also borrowed too much money from abroad.²⁹ The central government failed to manage this debt. The gap between

rich and poor regions widened. Wealthier Slovenia and Croatia grew more nationalistic and resisted supporting poorer areas. By the late 1980s, living standards had declined by 40 percent. Inflation reached 2,000 percent. Economic collapse deepened political and ethnic tensions across Yugoslavia.³⁰

Outside events also shaped Yugoslavia's fall. In 1989, communism collapsed across Eastern Europe. Germany reunified, and the Soviet Union dissolved. These countries turned to democracy and free markets. Western states shifted support away from Yugoslavia and toward these new states. With no Soviet threat, the West had little reason to back Yugoslavia.³¹

Inside Yugoslavia, Serbia's president Slobodan Milošević rose to power in 1989. He controlled the media, money, and security.³² He also changed the military so that 90 percent of it was Serbian. Using rallies and propaganda, he spread fear in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia.³³ He forced leaders in Kosovo and Vojvodina to resign

and replaced them with loyalists. Both provinces lost their autonomy and became part of Serbia's government.³⁴

Meanwhile, Eastern Europe was turning democratic. In 1990, Croatia and Slovenia elected non-Communist governments. Both declared sovereignty, saying their laws were stronger than Yugoslavia's. In August 1990, Bosnia-Herzegovina did the same. Referendums soon followed. In December 1990, Slovenia voted for independence. Croatia did the same in May 1991. On June 25, 1991, both declared complete independence, beginning the breakup of Yugoslavia.³⁵

When Slovenia declared independence, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) tried to intervene. The conflict became known as the Ten-Day War. Slovenia won, but fighting spread to Croatia. Many Serbs in Croatia wanted to remain in Yugoslavia. Backed by Serbia and the JNA, they seized one-third of Croatia and declared a Serb state.³⁶ Many Croats and non-Serbs were displaced. This became the Croatian

23 University of North Carolina, "Background: Tito's Yugoslavia."

24 Jill Irvine, *The Croatian Spring and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, (University of Oklahoma, 2008), 149-178.

25 University of North Carolina, "Background: Tito's Yugoslavia."

26 "Vogvodina," *Encyclopedia Princetoniensis*, Princeton University, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/746>.

27 University of North Carolina, "Background: Tito's Yugoslavia."

28 U.S. Department of State, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990-1992."

29 U.S. Department of State, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990-1992."

30 University of North Carolina, "Background: Tito's Yugoslavia."

31 U.S. Department of State, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990-1992."

32 U.S. Department of State, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990-1992."

33 "History of Ethnic Tensions," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/bosnia-herzegovina/history-ethnic-tensions>.

34 U.S. Department of State, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990-1992."

35 U.S. Department of State, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990-1992."

36 "The Conflicts," *International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals*, United Nations, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.icty.org/en/about/what-former-yugoslavia/conflicts>.

War of Independence. It lasted from 1991 to 1995, ending when Croatia reclaimed its land.³⁷

In September 1991, the United Nations banned weapons sales to Yugoslavia.³⁸ This left Bosnians without protection from Serb and Croat attacks. Serbia still held JNA stockpiles, one of the strongest arsenals in Europe.³⁹ In October 1991, Serbian leader Radovan Karadžić gave a warning speech in BiH's parliament. He told politicians not to follow Slovenia and Croatia.⁴⁰ He implied that Bosnian Muslims, later known as Bosniaks, would disappear if BiH declared independence.⁴¹

Bosnian War and the Dayton Accords (1992-1996)

In 1991, Serbia and Croatia's leaders met secretly to divide BiH, leaving a small region for Muslims.⁴² Milosevic hoped to unify the Bosnian and Croatian Serb territories.⁴³ These separatist policies caused BiH's move to independence. In March 1992, BiH held an independence referendum.

Bosnian Serbs boycotted the referendum. However, more than 60 percent of Bosnian citizens voted for independence.⁴⁴

In April 1992, the European Economic Community and the US recognized BiH as independent.⁴⁵ This led to Bosnian Serbs rebelling with the support of the JNA and Serbia in April 1992. The Bosnian Serbs declared the territories under their control to be a Serb Republic in BiH. With a combination of military strength and a campaign against non-Serbs, more than 60 percent of BiH fell under Serbian control.⁴⁶ Similarly, Bosnian Croats then rejected BiH's government's authority and declared their own republic backed by Croatia. These events became a bloody three-sided fight for territories.⁴⁷ These three sides consisted of the Bosnian Serb forces, Bosnian Muslim forces, and Bosnian Croat forces.⁴⁸

The war in BiH began in the spring of 1992 and lasted until the end of 1995. The war was made up of two main conflicts. The first fight was between Bosnian Serb forces. This included the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) and

Bosnian-Muslim Croat forces. In the fall of 1992, a conflict between Bosnian Muslim forces, which included the BiH Army, and the Bosnian Croat forces, which included the Croatian Defence Council (HVO), also broke out.⁴⁹

Bijeljina was one of the first places to be taken over by Bosnian Serb forces. At the beginning of April 1992, at least 45 non-Serb civilians were killed in an attack. Crimes against local Muslims continued for months after the first attack. Before the war, Muslims comprised about 30 percent of the population. By the end of the war, Bijeljina became an "ethnically Serb town."⁵⁰

From spring 1992 until the end of 1995, the capital of BiH, Sarajevo, was under siege by Bosnian Serb forces. This meant that Bosnian Serb forces surrounded the city. They cut off important supplies. The goal of the blockade was to force the citizens of Sarajevo to surrender. During the siege, thousands of shells were fired at residential areas, markets, hospitals, and civilian targets.⁵¹ Lasting for 43 months, this was the most prolonged city siege in modern

³⁷ United Nations, "The Conflicts."

³⁸ "UN Arms Embargo on Yugoslavia (FRY)," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, last updated October 16, 2012, https://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/yugoslavia/yugoslavia-1991.

³⁹ Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

⁴⁰ Aleksander Hemon, "Genocide's Epic Hero," *New York Times*, July 27, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/27/opinion/27hemon.html>.

⁴¹ "The Bosnian Genocide," Montreal Holocaust Museum, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://museeholocauste.ca/en/resources-training/the-bosnian-genocide/>.

⁴² United Nations, "The Conflicts."

⁴³ Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

⁴⁴ "War in Bosnia," *International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals*, United Nations, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.irmct.org/specials/war-bosnia/>.

⁴⁵ Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

⁴⁶ United Nations, "The Conflicts."

⁴⁷ United Nations, "The Conflicts."

⁴⁸ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁴⁹ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁵⁰ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁵¹ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

history at that time. From 1992 to 1995, 11,000 people were killed in Sarajevo.⁵²

On April 8, 1992, the town of Zvornik was attacked. Bosnian Serb forces took it over. At least 15 people were killed in the attack. Over time, the killings continued, and many non-Serbs were imprisoned in camps created in the town. Muslim prisoners experienced beatings, sexual violence, and killings. About 26 mosques in the Zvornik region were damaged or destroyed. While Zvornik had a majority Muslim population at the beginning of the conflict, only a few Muslims remained after the war.⁵³

In mid-April 1992, Bosnian-Serb forces took over the town of Foča. Non-Serb workers were dismissed from their jobs or were discouraged from going to work. Restrictions on movement throughout the town were also introduced. Non-Serbs were arrested and kept in detention centers. Many non-Serbs were assaulted or killed. Women and girls who were imprisoned also experienced sexual violence. Before the war, 52 percent of Foča's population was Muslim. In the spring of 1993, it was reported that no Muslim was left in the town—"only one people" lived in Foča and "only one religion" was practiced there. This demonstrated the ethnic cleansing that had occurred.⁵⁴

Bosnian Serb forces continued to commit many crimes in Eastern BiH's cities. The town of Vlasenica



Dayton Peace Agreement in Paris, France (Credit: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

was taken over in mid-April 1992. Muslims were first discriminated against by being dismissed from their jobs and through movement restrictions. In the following months, however, Muslim civilians were killed or imprisoned in camps around the town. The deadliest camp in Vlasenica was Sušica. In 1992, between 2,000 and 2,500 Muslim children, women, men, and elderly persons were imprisoned, beaten, raped, and killed. Before the conflict, about half of Vlasenica's population was Muslim. By the end of the conflict, only 1 percent of the town's population was Muslim.⁵⁵

At the end of April 1992, Bosnian Serb forces took over the town of Prijedor. Serious crimes

were committed by Bosnian Serbs against non-Serbs in the region. Non-Serb civilians experienced mass killings, robberies, and the destruction of Catholic churches and mosques. Detention facilities were created throughout the town. The Keraterm, Omarska, and Trnopolje camps were the deadliest. Those who were not taken to the camps were forced to wear white ribbons around their arms to show they were non-Serbs. People wearing white ribbons experienced beatings and harassment. Before the conflict, Prijedor had equal numbers of Muslim and Serb civilians and a smaller number of Croats. By the end of the conflict, the Serb population increased to

⁵² Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

⁵³ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁵⁴ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁵⁵ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

more than 90 percent, while the Muslim population decreased to 5 percent and the Croat population to 1 percent.⁵⁶

At the start of May 1992, Bosnian Serb forces took over the town of Brčko. Many local Muslim and Croat civilians were killed or imprisoned in camps around the city. The non-Serb population and their property also experienced violence and robberies. At least two Catholic churches and six mosques were destroyed.⁵⁷ Many Muslims and Croats were displaced. After the conflict, the Serb population increased from 20 percent to over 50 percent, while the non-Serb population decreased. During this time, the UN also placed sanctions on Serbia for backing rebels in Croatia and Bosnia.⁵⁸ This meant that Serbia could not trade or get money from the international community.⁵⁹

In October 1992, Bosnian Croat forces carried out a surprise attack on Bosnian Muslims in Prozor. This began the Croat-Bosniak War.⁶⁰ Members of the HVO committed many crimes against Muslim civilians and their property. Between 1993 and 1994, the conflict between Bosnian Croat

forces and Bosnian Muslim forces grew. In 1993, in the villages of Ahmići and Stupni Do, over 130 people were killed. These crimes committed against Muslim civilians caused displacement and a large change in the ethnic structure of HVO's territory.⁶¹ In April 1993, the UN declared Srebrenica a safe area under the UN Protection Force. A month later, the cities of Zepa, Bihac, Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Gorazde were also considered safe zones.⁶²

NATO began Operation Deny

The conflicts in Bosnia became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) first-ever military engagement.

Flight in April 1993 after the UN authorized a no-fly zone over the region. This meant aircraft could not fly in that territory. NATO supported the UN Protection Force and carried out air strikes to protect UN safe zones.⁶³

Between June 1993 and April 1994, the HVO kept the town of Mostar under siege and targeted Muslim civilians and mosques. The HVO stopped the flow of humanitarian aid. This cut off food, water, and electricity for the Muslim population. The HVO also arrested military-aged men and held them in detention camps. Many Muslim children, women, and elderly were displaced to territories controlled by Bosnian Muslim forces.⁶⁴ Bosnian Muslim forces also committed many crimes against Croat civilians in northern BiH. In September 1993, the BiH Army killed about 40 civilians in the villages of Grabovica and Uzdol.⁶⁵

Ethnic cleansing and forced displacement took place during the war.⁶⁶ More than 100,000 people were killed during the Bosnian War. At least 70 percent of people killed were Bosniaks. About 36,700 civilians and 68,030 military personnel were killed during the Bosnian War. According to the UN Commission on Human Rights, more than two million people became refugees.⁶⁷

In March 1994, the US led an agreement to end the Croat-Bosniak War, known as the Washington

⁵⁶ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁵⁷ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁵⁸ Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

⁵⁹ "Bosnia Fact Sheet: Economic Sanctions Against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)," *US Department of State Archive*, U.S. Department of State, accessed June 25, 2025, https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/eur/bosnia/yugoslavia_econ_sanctions.html.

⁶⁰ Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

⁶¹ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁶² Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

⁶³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995-2004)."

⁶⁴ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁶⁵ United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

⁶⁶ Karic, "Social Cleavages, Conflict and Accommodation in Bosnian Political History from the Late 19th Century until the 1990s," 71-97.

⁶⁷ Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

Agreement. This agreement resulted in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). While this was in progress, in March 1995, the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadzic, ordered Srebrenica and Zepa to be cut off from supplies and resources.⁶⁸ In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces took over the town of Srebrenica. This region was controlled by the BiH Army and was a UN safe zone. About 8,000 Muslim men and boys were killed or went missing, and 30,000 Muslim children, women, and elderly persons were forcibly displaced from the region.⁶⁹

On November 21, 1995, Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia's leaders agreed to discuss a peace deal following air raid attacks by NATO.⁷⁰ NATO's operation Deliberate Force lasted for 12 days between August and September 1995. These attacks persuaded the Bosnian Serb leadership to compromise on a peace agreement.⁷¹

On December 14, 1995, the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in Paris. The agreement divided BiH into two political entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS). The FBiH is made up of mostly Bosniaks and Croats. RS has a majority Serb population.⁷² Under the agreement,

the top tier of government is multiethnic and oversees the country's foreign, fiscal, and diplomatic policies. The presidency is made up of three members. One Bosniak and one Croat from the FBiH and one Serb from RS rotate their presidency every eight months for four-year terms.⁷³

The second tier of government allows the FBiH and RS to oversee their regions' own governments. The Dayton Peace Agreement also created the Office of the High Representative (OHR). This position ensures that FBiH and RS are following the Dayton Peace Agreement. The OHR is chosen by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC). The PIC is made up of 55 countries and agencies that support BiH's peace process. The PIC provides troops, financial assistance, and other operations in BiH. The OHR can create laws and remove government officials. These responsibilities are known as the "Bonn powers" because the PIC introduced them in Bonn, Germany, in 1997. The military parts of the Dayton Peace Agreement were initially overseen by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁷⁴

Formation of the Power-Sharing System and Progress (1997-2008 ish)

In 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was created. This organization was a UN court of law that judged war crimes in the Balkans in the 1990s. The court improved international humanitarian law and gave victims the chance to tell their stories. Most importantly, the ICTY held those responsible for war crimes accountable for their actions.⁷⁵

In December 1995, NATO launched the Implementation Force (IFOR) in BiH for a one-year mission. Its main goal was to carry out the military parts of the Dayton Peace Agreement and help end the conflict. Operating under the United Nations Charter and Security Council Resolution 1031, IFOR was responsible for keeping and enforcing peace when necessary. The mission oversaw the transfer of territory between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS), as well as the creation of a boundary between the two entities. IFOR also helped collect and store heavy weapons in approved sites. While the mission brought stability, the

68 Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

69 United Nations, "War in Bosnia."

70 Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

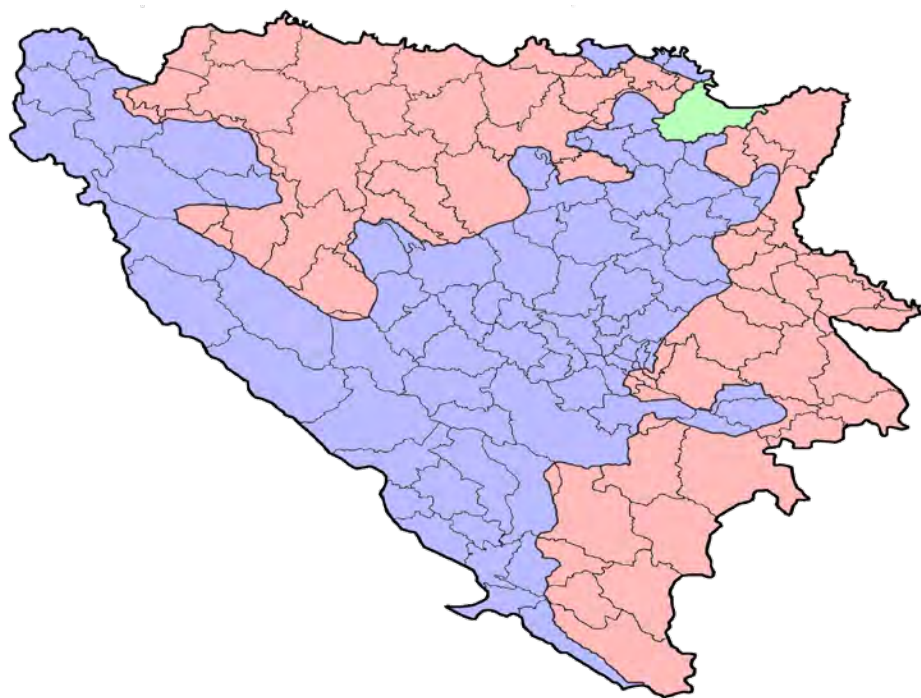
71 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995-2004)."

72 Duggal, "30 Years Since the Bosnia War."

73 UK Parliament, "Western Balkans and the Dayton Peace Agreement."

74 UK Parliament, "Western Balkans and the Dayton Peace Agreement."

75 "International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia," *International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals*, United Nations, <https://www.icty.org/>.



Red: Republika Srpska, Blue: Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Green: Brčko District (Credit: Hadžija)

situation in BiH remained fragile in 1996. When IFOR's mandate ended, NATO replaced it with a new mission—the Stabilization Force (SFOR)—in December 1996.⁷⁶

The SFOR was created to support rebuilding and maintain safety in BiH. Operating under the UN Charter and Security Council Resolution 1088, SFOR's mission was to uphold and enforce peace when necessary. In 2003, for example, SFOR collected and destroyed over 11,000 weapons and 45,000 grenades. At the time the Dayton Peace Agreement

was signed, around three million landmines were scattered across BiH, so SFOR also patrolled high-risk areas and supervised de-mining operations. The force played a key role in bringing justice by arresting 39 individuals charged with war crimes and assisting the ICTY with investigations. SFOR helped displaced citizens return to their homes and secured areas near mass graves. Another major focus was reforming BiH's divided military, which had been split along ethnic lines. With support from SFOR and NATO, BiH took steps toward unity, and in March 2004, its two

main armies merged into a single national force—an important milestone for the country's recovery and stability.⁷⁷

Between 1997 and 1998, High Representative Carlos Westendorp used the Bonn Powers. He created laws and dismissed political officials. In February 1998, Westendorp introduced BiH's new flag after Croats, Serbs, and Muslims disagreed on the design because it did not have any national symbols. The flag's dark blue background and stars are also suggestive of the European Union. Westendorp also introduced a new passport and citizenship law after Bosnian leaders had disagreements about the legislation. Similarly, he decided on the final design of BiH's currency because of disagreements between political parties.⁷⁸ In 1999, Westendorp removed RS President Nikola Poplašen from power.⁷⁹ Although Poplašen was fairly elected, he refused to adhere to the Dayton Peace Agreement. He wanted to nominate unqualified candidates for Prime Minister.⁸⁰ These actions were meant to create unity. However, the OHR may not always consider BiH's best interests.

In 2002, nationalists gained more power through elections.⁸¹ In response, OHR Paddy Ashdown argued that the results should

⁷⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995-2004)."

⁷⁷ *The Silent Menace: Landmines in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1998), <https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/files/other/silent-menace-bosnia-herzegovina-57jp32-010298.pdf>.

⁷⁸ "New Flag Imposed on Bosnians."

⁷⁹ Office of the High Representative, "Removal from Office of Nikola Poplasen," news release, May 3, 1999, <https://www.ohr.int/removal-from-office-of-nikola-poplasen/>.

⁸⁰ "Removal from Office of Nikola Poplasen."

⁸¹ Dominique Reynié and Helen Levy, "Victory for the Nationalists in the Presidential and General Elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Robert Schuman Foundation*, April 21, 2002, <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/monitor/61-victory-for-the-nationalists-in-the-presidential-and-general-elections-in-bosnia-herzegovina>.

not be interpreted as support for nationalist movements but “as a rejection of the outgoing moderate parties.” The international community has also raised concerns about the nationalist Serb Democratic Party (SDS), which gained power. Some Western officials called for the SDS to be banned, as it was believed the party had ties to its founder, Radovan Karadzic.⁸²

However, major progress was made through the Brčko District Arbitration and Supervision. The Brčko District connects the two halves of RS. After the Bosnian War, both FBiH and RS claimed the region. To prevent future conflict, the issue was left to the international community to solve. In 1999, the Brčko Final Award of 5 March 1999 declared Brčko as a neutral, multi-ethnic, self-governing district under BiH. However, neither FBiH nor RS would control the region. The Principal Deputy High Representative holds the Brčko District Supervisor position.⁸³ This agreement shows that international cooperation was necessary for peace and stability in BiH. In 2003, the EU Police Mission to BiH (EUPM) took over from the UN.⁸⁴ The EUPM’s job was to help BiH make local police

forces. These police forces had to meet European and international standards by EUPM guidance.⁸⁵ In 2004, NATO replaced SFOR with an EU peacekeeping force (EUFOR).⁸⁶

While violence in BiH mostly ended, ethnic divisions continued. This was especially true in politics. Divisions between the Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats continued to prevent progress in human rights areas. 2004 was the first time in years that SFOR did not arrest a Bosnian citizen accused of war crimes in the ICTY. However, SFOR continued to try to arrest Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian Serb wartime leader. Karadžić was believed to be hiding in Sarajevo or remote mountain villages. SFOR arrested some people believed to be helping Karadžić, but his exact location was unknown at the time.⁸⁷ Karadžić was eventually captured in 2008.⁸⁸

In April 2004, the ICTY declared that genocide was committed in Srebrenica.⁸⁹ On April 5, 2004, wartime leaders surrendered to the ICTY. These former leaders were charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against Bosnian Muslims in western Bosnia.

However, RS was the only region in former Yugoslavia that did not surrender a leader to the ICTY for war crimes. This was a concern, as RS had agreed to cooperate with the ICTY. RS authorities claimed that 100 Bosniaks were executed and 1,900 Bosniaks died fighting or from exhaustion in Srebrenica. This was not true. On October 15, 2004, the RS Commission on Srebrenica submitted a report to the RS government detailing the 1995 events in Srebrenica. For the first time, this report acknowledged that the Bosnian Serb Army was responsible for killing more than 7,000 Bosniak men and boys.⁹⁰

Because of ethnic divisions, local officials throughout the country refused to report members of ethnic majorities in court. In May 2004, RS opened the first war crimes trial ever against ethnic Serbs. While efforts were made to continue bringing those guilty to court, there was little support from political elites and the police. Poor cooperation between regions and witness protection also caused slow progress. The OHR made laws on witness protection and using ICTY evidence in domestic trials. The OHR also helped create the State Court of BiH and the Office of

82 “Nationalists Claiming Upper Hand in Bosnian Elections,” *CNN*, November 12, 2000, <https://edition.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/europe/11/12/bosnia.elction.02/index.html>.

83 The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina v. The Republika Srpska, Final Award, ¶ 13 (March 5, 1999).

84 “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Events of 2004,” Human Rights Watch, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2005/country-chapters/bosnia-and-herzegovina>.

85 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995-2004).”

86 Human Rights Watch, “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Events of 2004.”

87 Human Rights Watch, “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Events of 2004.”

88 Julian Borger, “The hunt for Radovan Karadžić, ruthless warlord turned ‘spiritual healer’,” *The Guardian*, March 22, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/22/the-hunt-for-radovan-karadzic-ruthless-warlord-turned-spiritual-healer>.

89 “ICTY Remembers: The Srebrenica Genocide 1995-2015,” *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia*, United Nations, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.irmct.org/specials/srebrenica20/>.

90 Human Rights Watch, “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Events of 2004.”

the State Court Prosecutor.⁹¹ This would help BiH improve its justice and law systems.

In June 2004, the European Union Council approved the European Partnership for BiH. The European Partnership was a document that included short-term and long-term requirements for BiH to become an EU member. This included BiH running its own fair and independent elections. BiH had to improve its court system and pass laws to help displaced persons. BiH also had to take over human rights institutions that were once run internationally. Finally, BiH had to cooperate with the ICTY. On October 4, 2004, the EU Commission declared that BiH met the fair and independent municipal election requirement.⁹² In December 2006, BiH became a NATO partner country. This means the country is not a member of NATO but still participates in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.⁹³ Through this program, BiH is focused on international cooperation, democratic, and defense reforms.⁹⁴

In February 2008, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board established the "5+2 Agenda," which listed the key

conditions BiH must meet before the OHR can close. The five main requirements focus on resolving ownership of government and military property, confirming the final status of the Brčko District, ensuring stable and transparent public finances, and strengthening the rule of law. This means BiH must decide how to fairly divide public and military assets, like land, bases, and storage sites, between national and regional authorities. It must also guarantee fair tax distribution and create a national council to oversee budgeting. Additionally, BiH must improve its justice system through clear plans for handling war crimes, immigration, and asylum cases. The final two objectives are political: signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union and securing the PIC's approval, ensuring all actions align with the Dayton Peace Agreement.⁹⁵ BiH signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement in 2008, which went into effect in 2015 and strengthened the economic, political, and trade ties between the EU and BiH.⁹⁶ However, little progress has been made to meet the other requirements to get approval

from the PIC steering board due to disagreements between political parties and ethnic tensions.⁹⁷

Attempts at Constitutional Reform and Political Resistance (2005-2009)

The Dayton Peace Agreement had its problems. The Agreement that ended the war guaranteed that Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs were included in BiH. In this spirit, the constitution states that BiH is made up of three constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs) and the category of "others." This means that national institutions in BiH are divided along ethnic lines.

For example, in the House of Peoples, 15 seats are divided evenly: 5 Bosniak, 5 Serb, and 5 Croat politicians. Candidates for the House of Peoples are elected by the Assemblies of the Entities. In the House of Representatives, 14 of the 42 members are elected by RS and 28 by FBiH. This means elections depend on where you live. The presidency also reflects this division: one Croat, one Bosniak, and one Serb. Croat and Bosniak candidates are elected by FBiH, while the Serb candidate is elected by RS.⁹⁸

91 Human Rights Watch, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Events of 2004."

92 Human Rights Watch, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Events of 2004."

93 "Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 2, 2025, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49127.htm.

94 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995-2004)."

95 UK Parliament, "Western Balkans and the Dayton Peace Agreement."

96 European Commission, "Stabilization and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina enters into force today," press release, May 31, 2015, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_15_5086.

97 UK Parliament, "Western Balkans and the Dayton Peace Agreement."

98 "The electoral system," Coalition for Free and Fair Elections "Pod lupom," accessed August 9, 2025, <https://podlupom.org/en/elections-in-bih/the-electoral-system/>; "Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina," Office of the High Representative, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/legal/laws-of-bih/pdf/001%20-%20Constitutions/BH/BH%20CONSTITUTION%20.pdf>.

This system allows politicians to exploit identity politics to win elections.⁹⁹ It also enables the so-called ethnic veto. This veto exists throughout the legislative process and can be used by the presidency, the House of Peoples, or the House of Representatives. A veto means the law will not pass. It can be invoked when a law is considered “destructive of a vital interest” of a constituent people. The veto has been abused and has paralyzed the state. Between 1997 and 2007, it was used more than 400 times. On top of this is the “entity veto.” This means that, without one-third of the votes from delegates in each entity, a law will not be adopted. This has further weakened the central state.¹⁰⁰

For this reason, many argue that it had an “undemocratic birth.” In addition, the Constitution cemented the country’s ethnic divide. That is why the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe wanted to strengthen the democratic institutions in BiH. To do so, they requested an opinion from the Venice Commission in 2005. The Venice Commission is the Council of Europe’s advisory body on constitutional matters. The Commission found that there was support for constitutional changes

in the country. However, the different ethnic groups preferred different kinds of change.¹⁰¹

Because of these problems, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe wanted to strengthen democratic institutions in BiH. In 2005, it requested an opinion from the Venice Commission, the Council of Europe’s advisory body on constitutional matters.¹⁰² The Commission found support for reform but noted that different ethnic groups wanted different changes. The FBiH pushed for a

*The Constitution of BiH
itself has also never
been validated by
referendum or public
consultation.*

stronger central state and less power sharing within the entity. In RS, some parties wanted no change, including the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) and the Party of Democratic Progress (PDP). The Alliance of Independent Serbian Democrats (SNSD) was more open and supported strengthening state powers. Still, all RS parties in 2005 agreed that abolishing RS was not

an option. Opinions also diverged on the High Representative. In FBiH, people accepted the necessity of the High Representative and the Bonn Powers, at least until reforms took place. Some, however, wanted the Bonn Powers to be phased out gradually. In RS, the role of the High Representative was met with hostility.¹⁰³

The Commission recognized that interethnic distrust was understandable after the war but urged citizens to move beyond coexistence and work toward genuine unity. It agreed that the OHR was still needed for stability but should eventually be phased out. The Commission criticized BiH’s weak central government, noting that the Constitution gave too much power to the Entities and allowed them to decide voluntarily which powers to share with the state—a system especially favored by RS. The Commission argued that BiH could not function like other federations, such as Switzerland or Germany, where national institutions are much stronger. It pointed out that BiH had only one federal court and relied on the entities for funding. The 2005 power-sharing structure, it said, also slowed down EU integration since the EU negotiates only with unified states, not separate

99 Langfitt, “Ethnic tensions are mounting in Bosnia-Herzegovina again,” *National Public Radio*, January 22, 2022, accessed July 13, <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/22/1075049588/ethnic-tensions-are-mounting-in-bosnia-herzegovina-again>.

100 Leonardo Torelli, “The Bosnian Constitution: facing the EU integration process,” *Eurac Research*, August 8, 2023, <https://www.eurac.edu/en/blogs/eureka/the-bosnian-constitution-facing-the-eu-integration-process>.

101 Torelli, “The Bosnian Constitution: facing the EU integration process.”

102 *Opinion on the Constitutional situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Powers of the High Representative* (Venice: Venice Commission, March 11), [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2005\)004-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2005)004-e).

103 “Venice Commission of the Council of Europe,” Council of Europe, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/venice-commission>.

regions. To address these issues, it recommended transferring more legislative, executive, and financial authority to the central government to reduce bureaucracy and strengthen national governance.¹⁰⁴ Constitutional reform, it said, was necessary. Reform requires approval from the Parliamentary Assembly and two-thirds of the House of Representatives. Following the Commission's recommendations, BiH attempted reform.¹⁰⁵

In April 2006, political actors drafted a reform package. It included more seats in the Parliamentary Assembly and the House of Representatives.¹⁰⁶ It also added three seats for members of non-constituent peoples, such as Roma and Jews, who previously could not be elected. The package proposed two new ministries and changes to the rotating state presidency. However, the House of Representatives failed to pass the amendments by just two votes.¹⁰⁷ As a result, no changes were adopted.

After this failure, new talks began. In 2008, the "Prud Process" was launched. They agreed on

constitutional changes, state property, a census, changes to the Council of Ministers, and the budget.¹⁰⁸ However, leaders later interpreted the agreement differently. At the next meeting, RS President Dodik walked out. He demanded a referendum on RS's status before further talks. This ended the Prud Process, and reform again failed.¹⁰⁹

In 2009, the "Butmir Process" began. Named after the military base where talks were held, it was led by the US and the EU.¹¹⁰ The goal was to align the Constitution with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and improve democratic institutions. The Venice Commission was informally involved. But this effort also failed. Key political actors could not agree. The EU and US were unprepared, offering quick fixes and little incentive to parties that would lose power.¹¹¹ The Constitution, therefore, remained unchanged. Its clause allowing only constituent peoples to be elected stayed in place.¹¹² This

meant peoples, such as Roma and Jews, could therefore not stand for election.

This led to the Sejdić-Finci ruling. Mr. Sejdić, a Roma, and Mr. Finci, a Jew, sued BiH at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The court ruled that the Constitution was discriminatory and non-compliant with the ECHR.¹¹³ Today, BiH's Constitution still does not comply with the Convention.¹¹⁴

International Community's Views on Republika Srpska's Independence

Christian Schmidt has been the High Representative of BiH since 2021.¹¹⁵ He believes that any change to BiH's governance must be decided by citizens through voting. Moreover, he believes that Dayton was a great tool to end the Bosnian War. However, he affirms that there is a need to improve the current state structure. He thinks this will be achieved through European integration and believes the

¹⁰⁴ *Opinion on the Constitutional situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Powers of the High Representative.*

¹⁰⁵ Office of the High Representative, "Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

¹⁰⁶ "Constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina," Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, June 29, 2006, <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17465&lang=en>.

¹⁰⁷ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, "Constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

¹⁰⁸ "Honouring of obligations and commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina," Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, September 30, 2009, https://assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2009/20090930_amondoc33rev.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, "Honouring of obligations and commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina."

¹¹⁰ Ramić Sanja and Maarten Lemstra, "One roadblock at a time for Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU path," *Chingindael Spectator*, October 1, 2020, <https://spectator.clingindael.org/en/publication/one-roadblock-time-bosnia-and-herzegovinas-eu-path>.

¹¹¹ "Functioning of democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina," Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, January 26, 2010, <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17800&lang=en>.

¹¹² Florian Bieber, "Constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: preparing for EU accession," *European Policy Centre*, April 2010, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/115432/PB_04_10_Bosnia.pdf.

¹¹³ Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case No. 27996/06 34836/06, Judgment, ¶ 17 (European Court of Human Rights December 22, 2009).

¹¹⁴ Office of the High Representative, "Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

¹¹⁵ "Christian Schmidt," Office for the High Representative, August 1, 2021, <https://www.ohr.int/about-ohr/high-representative/>.

ownership belongs to the people. Hence the people will need to drive the change.¹¹⁶

For the EU, secession is unacceptable. In 2023, when holding the Council's presidency, Sweden affirmed that secession was unacceptable. Sweden appealed for stability and cooperation in BiH and between the entities.¹¹⁷ The European Parliament strongly supports BiH's unity as well. It urges political actors to refrain from secessionist policies. It calls for sanctions as well. Notably on Milorad Dodik.¹¹⁸ To join the Union, Bosnia needs to fulfill certain criteria. For example, it must comply with the Sejdić-Finci ruling. It will also have to strengthen the Constitutional Court. Republika Srpska has ignored rulings in the past.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the High Representative cannot exist when joining, and more.¹²⁰

The US has already put sanctions on Dodik because of claims of corruption and undermining

of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement.¹²¹ Furthermore, the US reaffirmed their support for the High Representative in 2024. By doing this, the US wishes to support BiH and the functionality of its institutions.¹²² In 2024, the US added that "it will act if anyone tries to change this."¹²³ The US Embassy in BiH pointed out Dodik's campaign to "deprive the residents of Republika Srpska of their fundamental rights and freedoms."¹²⁴ The US aims to

The US Embassy in BiH stated that the BiH Constitution provides no right of secession.

anchor BiH in Western and European institutions and supports the state-level judiciary.¹²⁵

Russia is supporting Dodik, and vice versa. Russia considers the current High Representative to be illegitimate.¹²⁶ Russia condemns the court verdict against Dodik from February 2025.¹²⁷ Russia has also provided training to the police force of RS. Moreover, Serbs favor Russia. In 2024, 94 percent of Serbs in Bosnia had a favorable view of Russia. Yet, only 13 percent of Bosniaks and 18 percent of Bosnian Croats had one. Russia has also worked on its relations with Bosnian Croatian politicians. For instance, Russia supports the change of law proposed by HDZ. This change would introduce a third Croatian entity.¹²⁸

As for China, the country believes the High Representative to be illegitimate as well.¹²⁹ However, China also believes that constructive discourse is necessary within BiH. China affirms BiH's territorial integrity, independence, and

116 Zrinka Vrabec Mojžes, "Nacional: Interview with HR Christian Schmidt," *Office for the High Representative*, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.ohr.int/nacional-interview-with-hr-christian-schmidt/>.

117 "EU Presidency Blasts Bosnian Serb Threats Of Secession, Anti-LGBT Laws," *RadioFreeEurope*, April 20, 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-serbs-eu-dodik/32372454.html>.

118 *REPORT on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Strasbourg: European Parliament, 2023), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-10-2025-0108_EN.html.

119 Azem Kurtic, "Bosnia's Serb Entity Passes Law Rejecting Constitutional Court's Authority," *Balkan Insight*, June 28, 2023, <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/06/28/bosnias-serb-entity-passes-law-rejecting-constitutional-courts-authority/>.

120 *Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for membership of the European Union*.

121 "US, EU Condemn Bosnian Serb Leader's Separatist Policies," *RadioFreeEurope*, March 8, 2025, <https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-serb-eu-for-europe-dodik-sarajevo-srpska/33340659.html>.

122 "U.S. Reaffirms Support For Bosnia's High Representative," *RadioFreeEurope*, February 2, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-us-support-high-representative/32803003.html>.

123 "US fighter jets to fly over Bosnia in warning to 'secessionist' Serbs," *Reuters*, January 8, 2024 <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-fighter-jets-fly-over-bosnia-warning-secessionist-serbs-2024-01-08/>.

124 U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo, "Statement of the United States Embassy to BiH," press release, March 29, 2024, <https://ba.usembassy.gov/statement-of-the-united-states-embassy-to-bih/>.

125 "Bosnia and Herzegovina," U.S. Department of State, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/countries-areas/bosnia-and-herzegovina/>.

126 "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Debate," *Security Council Report*, May 5, 2025, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2025/05/bosnia-and-herzegovina-debate-4.php>.

127 Fella, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: secessionism in the Republika Srpska*.

128 Dimitar Bechev, "Between the EU and Moscow: How Russia Exploits Divisions in Bosnia," *Carnegie Europe*, June 27, 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/06/bosnia-between-russia-eu?lang=en>.

129 "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Debate."

sovereignty. Moreover, China calls on the elected representatives to work out the future of BiH.¹³⁰

Croatia supports BiH's accession to Europe and the calls for a unitary state in BiH.¹³¹ Moreover, Croatia is concerned about the Croats living in BiH. For instance, in 2018, the Croatian Parliament voted for a declaration calling for constitutional change in BiH. Croatia expressed that the Croat representative of the presidency of the country was elected by Bosniak ballots. The Parliament wishes the election law to be changed to ensure the equality of all citizens of BiH.¹³² The election of the Croat representative by Bosniaks is possible because citizens living in FBiH may decide to vote for either the Croatian or Bosniak candidate. Bosniak citizens also outnumber

Croats, allowing them to vote for the Croatian representative and win.¹³³

As for Serbia, the country condemns the verdict against Dodik and calls it undemocratic. Yet, the Serbian leader has not yet endorsed Dodik's secessionist moves.¹³⁴ In a speech on January 9, 2019, the Serbian Prime Minister said Serbia would accept any decision taken by BiH, but it would also take particular care of citizens of RS. However, the Prime Minister also affirmed to respect the Dayton Peace Agreement.¹³⁵ On June 8, 2024, Serbia hosted an All-Serb Summit in Belgrade called "One Nation, One Assembly – Serbia and Srpska." During the event, representatives from both the Serbian government and Republika Srpska met to strengthen their political ties. Together, they unanimously adopted the

Declaration on the Protection of National and Political Rights and the Common Future of the Serbian People and signed several cooperation agreements between their ministries.¹³⁶ Additionally, the Prime Minister of RS expressed his gratitude to Serbia for its support towards all Serbs who do not live in Serbia.¹³⁷

Stances on BiH differ. Most of the mentioned countries support BiH's territorial integrity and stability. However, there is a divide. Russia and Serbia partly support Republika Srpska, while the EU, Croatia, and the US oppose secession and Milorad Dodik.

130 "Remarks on Bosnia and Herzegovina by Ambassador Geng Shuang at the UN Security Council Briefing," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, May 6, 2025, http://un.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/hyyfy/202505/t20250507_11616449.htm.

131 "Croatian PM: Dodik's Threats of Secession are nothing new," *Sarajevo Times*, December 28, 2023, <https://sarajevotimes.com/croatian-pm-dodiks-threats-of-secession-are-nothing-new/>.

132 "Croatia Adopts Declaration on Bosnia and Herzegovina Croats' Status," *Total Croatia News*, last updated April 20, 2023, <https://total-croatia-news.com/news/politics/declaration-on-bosnia-and-herzegovina/>.

133 Aleksandar Novković, "Why is Bosnia and Herzegovina Still Dysfunctional as a State?" *Center for International Relations and Sustainable Development*, October 28, 2022, <https://www.cirsd.org/en/young-contributors/why-is-bosnia-and-herzegovina-still-dysfunctional-as-a-state>; "Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Central State office for Croats Abroad*, Republic of Croatia, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://hrvatiizvanrh.gov.hr/croats-abroad/croats-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina/2492>.

134 Fella, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: secessionism in the Republika Srpska*.

135 The Government of the Republic of Serbia, "Making special ties between Serbia, Republika Srpska stronger," news release, January 9, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250410053812/https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/135851/making-special-ties-between-serbia-republika-srpska-stronger.php>.

136 The Government of the Republic of Serbia, "Declaration on Protection of National, Political Rights, Common Future of Serbian People adopted," news release, June 8, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250522102149/https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/224914/declaration-on-protection-of-national-political-rights-common-future-of-serbian-people-adopted.php>.

137 The Government of the Republic of Serbia, "Serbia ready to work together with Republika Srpska to preserve national identity," news release, June 8, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250513100912/https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/224872/serbia-ready-to-work-together-with-republika-srpska-to-preserve-national-identity.php>.

CURRENT STATUS

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Accession to the European Union

The European Union (EU) is a bloc of 27 European countries. It includes most of Western, Northern, Central, and Southern Europe. Several other countries also want to join. Examples include Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹³⁸ The core values of the EU include human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights.¹³⁹ The groundwork for the EU as an economic bloc was laid in 1951.¹⁴⁰

In the following years, it created the single market and established a free trade zone. In the single market, products can be bought and sold easily between member states. To make this work, the EU guarantees four essential freedoms: capital, goods, services, and movement. The first one,

freedom of capital, means that money can circulate freely within the bloc. Freedom of goods means a product sold in one country can also be sold in another. Freedom of services refers to services that can be provided across borders. And lastly, freedom of movement means that citizens of member states can live and work anywhere in the bloc.¹⁴¹

Today, the EU has seven institutions. Five of them play key roles in BiH's EU accession. The European Commission is the executive branch. The European Parliament and the Council of the EU are legislative bodies. The Court of Justice of the EU is the judiciary. The European Council reunites all heads of state of the member states.¹⁴²

Before applying for candidacy, BiH negotiated the Stability and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2005.¹⁴³ The SAA set a framework for Balkan countries to join the Union eventually.¹⁴⁴ It was signed in 2008, along with an Interim

Agreement on trade. This Interim Agreement abolished duties and integrated Bosnia into the Freedom of Goods.¹⁴⁵ To sign the SAA, Bosnia and Herzegovina passed a police reform considered essential by the EU. The law created seven state-level police agencies that oversee training, forensic investigations, and coordination. The reform exposed ethnic divides again. Bosniak politicians supported it, saying it strengthened the central state. RS politicians opposed it.¹⁴⁶

The SAA between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union entered into force in 2015, marking an important step toward integration. BiH citizens have enjoyed visa-free travel to the EU since 2010, and the country formally applied for membership in 2016. In 2019, the European Commission issued its opinion, emphasizing that BiH must clearly define the division of powers between the state and the entities and comply with the Sejdić-Finci ruling to align with the European

138 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "European Union," last updated August 1, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union>; "Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood*, European Commission, accessed June 24, 2025, https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/bosnia-and-herzegovina_en.

139 "Aims and Values," European Union, accessed August 1, 2025, https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en.

140 "History of the EU," European Union, accessed August 1, 2025, https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_en.

141 Will Kenton, "The Single Market: Pros and Cons of the European Entity," *Investopedia*, last updated August 15, 2023, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/single-market.asp>.

142 Treaty of Lisbon," European Union, December 13, 2007, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12007L%2FTXT>.

143 European Commission, "Bosnia and Herzegovina."

144 European Commission, "Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina enters into force today," press release, June 1, 2015, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_15_5086.

145 "Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters between the European Community, of the one part, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, of the other part," European Union, accessed August 1, 2025, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:774431c4-ff10-4d3c-a617-117c8917924f.0004.02/DOC_8&format=PDF.

146 Solveig Richter, *The End of an Odyssey in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, (August 2008) accessed August 1, 2025, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2008C19_rsv_ks.pdf



Map of the member countries of the European Union (Credit: Qbox673)

Convention on Human Rights.¹⁴⁷ However, political resistance—particularly from Milorad Dodik and major Croatian parties—has slowed progress.¹⁴⁸ The EU insists that the OHR be closed, arguing that its broad “Bonn Powers” conflict with BiH’s sovereignty, a key condition for membership. Additionally, BiH’s complex power-sharing system has made policy coordination and EU law adoption difficult. The Commission proposed two paths forward: strengthening institutions or pooling resources, though both face political challenges. The EU has also urged BiH to improve regional

cooperation in the Western Balkans. In 2022, BiH gained EU candidate status, and negotiations began in 2024, a process accelerated in part by the war in Ukraine.¹⁴⁹

By 2023, according to Transparency International BiH, the country had fully completed only one of the 14 priorities. This was the creation of the Parliamentary Committee for Stabilization and Association. Five other priorities were partially implemented. Public opinion strongly supports EU membership. A 2024 survey found that 9 out of 10 Bosnians would vote in a referendum. Seven out of 10 would vote in favor. In FBiH

and the Brčko District, support was 80 percent. In RS, it was 50 percent. Compared to 2022, support declined slightly by 6.2 percent.¹⁵⁰

The main reasons people in BiH support joining the EU are access to the Single Market, economic opportunities, and greater political stability. However, concerns include higher living costs, increased taxes, emigration, and the centralization of power. Many citizens believe the EU is primarily interested in BiH’s natural resources and maintaining peace. Surveys show that 42.2 percent of people think young people would benefit most from EU membership, followed by politicians and entrepreneurs, while farmers are expected to benefit the least. In the FBiH, 63.5 percent expect living standards to improve after accession, compared to only 39.1 percent in RS. Many view the greatest obstacles to joining the EU as political interference and resistance to reform. Public perception of foreign aid also varies: 59.4 percent of BiH residents recognize the EU as the main donor—70 percent in FBiH and 40.1 percent in RS. In FBiH, Turkey is seen as the second-largest donor, while in RS, it is Russia. In reality, the largest donors are the European Commission, Germany, the United States, and Italy.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ *Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s application for membership of the European Union.*

¹⁴⁸ “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Discrimination a Key Barrier,” *Human Rights Watch*, December 12, 2019), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/12/13/bosnia-and-herzegovina-ethnic-discrimination-key-barrier>.

¹⁴⁹ *Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s application for membership of the European Union.*

¹⁵⁰ “The integration process of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the EU: 14 priorities from the Opinion of the European Commission 4 years later,” (Banja Luka: Transparency international Bosna i Hercegovina, 2023), <https://ti-bih.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ispunjavanje-prioriteta-2023-prelom-WQ-ENG.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ “Public Opinion Polls,” Directorate for European Integration, accessed June 24th, <https://www.dei.gov.ba/en/istrazivanje-javnog-mnjenja-en-28>.

Although support is strong, the High Representative said in a 2024 interview that BiH is not yet ready. He argued that accession would not be justified on current merits. He pointed to political instability, brain drain, and fragmentation. Furthermore, he said that loyalty lies more with ethnic groups than with the state. Still, he encouraged gradual rapprochement with the EU to keep hope alive. He also criticized the misuse of checks and balances, saying they create gridlock.¹⁵²

On March 19, 2025, during the 1523rd Committee of Ministers meeting, the EU addressed secessionist rhetoric. It expressed concern over the Special Registry and Transparency Law on Non-Profit Organizations. It said the law harmed civil society and was a setback for freedom of association and expression. The EU stressed that RS must comply with BiH's Constitution. It also said that the rule of law is a fundamental condition for EU membership. The Union urged all political actors to engage in dialogue. It called for

respect for constitutional order, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity.¹⁵³

Despite difficulties, the EU remains committed to the Balkans. On June 24, 2025, it guaranteed EUR 60 million in loans for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Montenegro received EUR 20 million, BiH 25 million, and North Macedonia 15 million. The EU backed EUR 4.8 million, with the rest coming from private institutions at favorable rates.¹⁵⁴

On July 9, 2025, the European Parliament allocated EUR 45.7 million in relief to BiH.¹⁵⁵ This was in response to storms, floods, and landslides in October 2024 that killed at least 26 people.¹⁵⁶ Funds from the EU Solidarity Fund will support recovery. They will cover infrastructure repair, housing, preventive works, cultural heritage protection, and clean-up.¹⁵⁷

Republika Srpska's Current Calls for Secession

The most recent president of Republika Srpska is Milorad Dodik.¹⁵⁸ In May 2024, calls for secession arose. This followed the United Nations General Assembly's resolution on the Srebrenica genocide. The resolution designating July 11 as the "International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica" was adopted with 84 votes in favor, 19 against, and 68 abstentions. Serbia's president notably voted against it. The resolution condemned genocide denial and actions that glorify convicted war criminals. It also requested the Secretary-General to establish an outreach program for the 30th anniversary in 2025. Ahead of the UN vote, RS held a symbolic government meeting in Srebrenica. Bosnian Serb leaders announced a plan for "peaceful separation." Dodik said Serbs could not live "with those who violate the Dayton Agreement."¹⁵⁹

152 Nick Alipour, "UN High Representative: Bosnia and Herzegovina not ready for EU, but no other option," *Euractiv*, last updated October 1st, 2024, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/interview/un-high-representative-bosnia-and-herzegovina-not-ready-for-eu-but-no-other-option/>.

153 Press and information team of the Delegation to the COUNCIL OF EUROPE in Strasbourg, "1523rd Meeting of the Committee of Ministers, Statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina," press release, March 19th, 2025, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/council-europe/1523rd-meeting-committee-ministers-19-march-2025-statement-bosnia-and-herzegovina_en?s=51.

154 "EU guarantees to enable €60 million in loans for sustainable growth in small businesses in North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro," *European Commission*, June 24, 2025, https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-guarantees-enable-eu60-million-loans-sustainable-growth-small-businesses-north-macedonia-bosnia-2025-06-24_en.

155 European Parliament, "MEPs support EU aid worth €280 million for flood-stricken countries," press release, July 9, 2025, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20250704IPR29452/meps-support-eu-aid-worth-EU280-million-for-flood-stricken-countries>.

156 Tamsin Paternoster, "Death toll rises to 26 in Bosnia floods as rescue teams search for survivors," (October, 10, 2024), *Euronews*, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/10/15/26-dead-and-one-missing-after-floods-sweep-through-bosnia>.

157 European Parliament, "MEPs support EU aid worth €280 million for flood-stricken countries."

158 "Milorad Dodik – President of the Republic of Srpska," President of the Republic of Srpska, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://www.predsjetnik.rs/en/biography/>.

159 UN General Assembly, "General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Srebrenica Genocide, Designating International Day of Reflection, Commemoration," press release, May 23, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/ga12601.doc.htm>; UN General Assembly, Resolution GA/12601, A/78/L.67/Rev.1 (May 20, 2024), <https://docs.un.org/en/A/78/L.67/Rev.1>.

Bosnian Serbs opposed the resolution, saying it would demonize all Serbs. Survivors of Srebrenica welcomed it. One woman said, “It hurts to read those lies, to hear the denial of genocide daily, those insults.” Two Bosnian war victims’ associations also appealed to UN members to adopt the resolution. For them, it honored victims of serious violations of international law.¹⁶⁰

Dodik has denied genocide in Srebrenica before. On April 18, he held a rally in Banja Luka. There, he said the actions of the RS Army in Srebrenica were “a mistake that left the crime.” Dodik had also threatened that RS would withdraw from BiH’s decision-making process if the resolution were adopted.¹⁶¹ After the vote, Serbia’s president criticized the motion. He argued it would fail in any parliament because of the abstentions. Dodik also stated on X that about 110 countries either abstained, did not vote, or voted against (22 did not

vote). In his view, the UN did not truly support the resolution. The Foreign Minister of BiH, however, welcomed it as “partial justice for the victims.”¹⁶²

Another example of secessionist rhetoric came on June 21, 2023. On that day, RS lawmakers changed the law on publishing legal acts. They removed the High Representative from the list of authorized publishers. This meant that his acts, which carry legal weight under the Bonn Powers, would not apply in RS. Such action is not allowed under the Dayton Agreement.¹⁶³ After this law was passed, the High Representative annulled it using the Bonn Powers. He also declared defying his rulings a criminal offense.¹⁶⁴ Dodik had defied his rulings, so an investigation began. This led to his trial. On February 26, 2025, the judges issued a guilty verdict. Dodik was sentenced to one year in prison and barred from holding office for

six years.¹⁶⁵ He called the verdict “null and void.”¹⁶⁶ His lawyers appealed.¹⁶⁷

After the verdict, RS lawmakers met in an emergency session. They passed several laws. Most notably, they banned Bosnia’s state-level court and Prosecutor’s Office from working in the RS. They also banned the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council and the State Investigation and Protection Agency from operating in RS. Following this, BiH’s Prosecutor’s Office opened an investigation for “an attack on the constitutional order.”¹⁶⁸ It issued arrest warrants for Dodik. The Constitutional Court provisionally annulled the laws in March 2025 and confirmed the annulment on May.¹⁶⁹

In March 2025, Dodik left BiH and entered Israel. It was unclear how he left the country.¹⁷⁰ BiH then asked INTERPOL to issue a red notice, similar to an international arrest warrant.¹⁷¹ However, INTERPOL refused.¹⁷²

160 Azem Kurtic, “Bosnian Serb Leaders Hold Defiant Meeting in Srebrenica Before UN Vote,” *Balkan Insight*, May 23, 2024, <https://balkaninsight.com/2024/05/23/bosnian-serb-leaders-hold-defiant-meeting-in-srebrenica-before-un-vote/>.

161 “Bosnian Serb Leader Tells Rally In Banja Luka Srebrenica Massacre ‘Wasn’t Genocide,’” *Radio Free Europe*, April 18, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/republika-srpska-dodik-srebrenica-genocide-denied/32911356.html>.

162 Milica Stojanovic et al., “Srebrenica Survivors Hail UN Genocide Resolution, Serbs Question Vote’s Legitimacy,” *Balkan Insight*, May 23, 2024, <https://balkaninsight.com/2024/05/23/srebrenica-survivors-hail-un-genocide-resolution-serbs-question-votes-legitimacy/>.

163 “Republika Srpska Assembly Votes To No Longer Publish Decisions Of Bosnia High Representative,” *RadioFreeEurope*, June 21, 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-srpska-high-representative-schmidt-decisions-/32469653.html>.

164 Guy Delauney, “Bosnian-Serb leader sentenced to jail in landmark trial,” *BBC*, February 26, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdrxy1zp8mxo>.

165 Miloš Davidović and Maja Sahadžić, “The Tipping Point in BiH’s Constitutional Struggle,” *Verfassungsblog*, April 8, 2025, <https://verfassungsblog.de/bih-constitutional-struggle-dodik/>.

166 Aleksandar Brezar, “Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik rejects verdict appeal amid political turmoil,” *Euronews Serbia*, June 5, 2025, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/06/05/bosnian-serb-leader-milorad-dodik-rejects-verdict-appeal-amid-political-turmoil>.

167 “Seeking Acquittal from all Charges: Dodik’s lawyers file appeal against B&H court decision!” *Serbian Times*, June 11, 2025, <https://serbiantimes.info/en/seeking-acquittal-from-all-charges-dodiks-lawyers-file-appeal-against-bh-court-decision/>.

168 Kurtic, “Bosnia’s Constitutional Court Scraps Serb Entity’s Disputed Laws.”

169 Kurtic, “Bosnia’s Constitutional Court Scraps Serb Entity’s Disputed Laws.”

170 Azem Kurtic, “Bosnia’s Top Court Calls on Interpol to Issue Warrant for Serb Leader Dodik,” *Balkan Insight*, March 27, 2025, <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/03/27/bosnias-top-court-calls-on-interpol-to-issue-warrant-for-serb-leader-dodik/>.

171 “Red notices,” INTERPOL, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Notices/Red-Notices>.

172 “Interpol declines Bosnian ‘red notice’ request for Serb leader Dodik, court says,” *Reuters*, April 3, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/interpol-declines-bosnian-red-notice-request-serb-leader-dodik-court-says-2025-04-03/>.

On March 31, Dodik appeared in Moscow.¹⁷³ He revealed his location in a video message and met with Russian President Vladimir Putin.¹⁷⁴ Eventually, Dodik returned to BiH. On July 4, he voluntarily went to the Prosecutor's Office, where he was questioned. This led to the lifting of the national arrest warrant previously issued by the BiH court.¹⁷⁵ On August 1, 2025, an appeals court upheld his guilty verdict. Dodik said he would continue as President of RS as long as he had parliamentary support. He said he would write to the US Administration and seek help from Russia. Dodik's lawyer said they would appeal to the Constitutional Court and planned to ask for a temporary delay in implementing the verdict until the court makes its decision.¹⁷⁶

Case Study: Kosovo's Independence

The case of Kosovo's independence is one of the most significant examples of how ethnic tension, nationalism, and international involvement can shape modern borders. Once an autonomous province within Yugoslavia, Kosovo became a central point of conflict after Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević



Milorad Dodik (Credit: Mauro Bottaro - European Commission)

removed its autonomy in 1989. This case is especially relevant to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as leaders in Republika Srpska have drawn parallels between Kosovo's independence and their own aspirations. Understanding Kosovo's path—from war to independence—helps illustrate the challenges and consequences that arise when regions seek self-determination in complex, multiethnic states.

Tension in the country increased after Milosevic made the province a part of Serbia in 1989. Serbs continued to mistreat the majority of the Albanian population. As

more parts of Yugoslavia tried to become independent, Serbian pride and nationalism grew. In the late 1990s, a group called the Kosovo Liberation Army started fighting back. They attacked Serbian police, and Serbia responded with violence. In 1998, a civil war started between Yugoslav and Kosovar forces. With help from NATO, the civil war ended in 1999.¹⁷⁷

After the war ended, the UN set up a mission to help run Kosovo. This was called the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Kosovo was still part of Yugoslavia but had self-

173 Una Hajdari, "Bosnian Serb leader appears in Moscow as authorities step up pursuit," *Politico*, April 1, 2025, <https://www.politico.eu/article/milorad-dodik-bosnian-serb-leader-flees-to-moscow-amid-looming-arrest-warrant/>.

174 "Meeting with President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik," *The Kremlin*, April 1, 2025, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/76608>.

175 "Bosnia ends warrant for Bosnian Serb leader after questioning," *France 24*, July 4, 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250704-bosnia-ends-warrant-for-bosnian-serb-leader-after-questioning>.

176 "Bosnia appeals court upholds Bosnian Serb leader's sentence," *Aljazeera*, August 1, 2025, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/1/bosnia-appeals-court-upholds-bosnian-serb-leaders-sentence?traffic_source=rss.

177 Volker Wagner, "25 Years Later, What Happened During the Kosovo War?" *Deutsche Well*, June 10, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/25-years-later-what-happened-during-the-kosovo-war/a-69318675>.

government.¹⁷⁸ This meant that it could make many of its own decisions. In 2005, the UN Security Council started talks about Kosovo's legal status. However, many countries could not agree on what should happen.¹⁷⁹

On February 17, 2008, Kosovo's leaders declared independence from Serbia. This made Kosovo the youngest country in Europe.¹⁸⁰ On June 15, 2008, Kosovo passed its first constitution, giving the country its own set of laws. By mid-2009, Kosovo joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.¹⁸¹ These are essential global organizations that provide financial assistance and support for development to countries.

Today, about 87 percent of the population is Albanian, while 8 percent is Serbian. These groups live mostly separate lives. In the north, most people are Serbs. Kosovo has little control in that region.¹⁸² Democracy has improved in Kosovo since its independence, with fairer elections and less corruption.¹⁸³ However, the government still needs help to improve its structure

and rule of law. In 2010, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) said Kosovo's independence did not break international law. Since then, 117 countries have recognized Kosovo as independent. However, Russia, Serbia, China, and five EU countries do not recognize Kosovo's independence. Because of this, politics in Kosovo are uncertain, and economic growth is slow. This also stops Kosovo from joining the EU.¹⁸⁴

In 2019, Kosovo held parliamentary elections with help from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE works with Kosovo to improve democracy, human rights, and public security. The NATO Mission in Kosovo (KFOR) continues to operate in the country, focusing on maintaining peace and stability in the region. At present, around 3,500 troops remain stationed there. Despite these efforts, Kosovo's society remains deeply divided, and many human rights violations and war crimes from the civil war have yet to be fully addressed.¹⁸⁵

Dodik has argued that if Kosovo can be independent, then the RS should be too.¹⁸⁶ If the RS leaves BiH like Kosovo left Serbia, it could have big problems. If BiH joins the EU, RS might not get the same benefits. Kosovo became independent in 2008, but people could not travel to the EU without a visa until 2024.¹⁸⁷ Though the EU has tried to help with peace talks in Kosovo, in March 2024, the EU announced that it was "regrettable" that there had been "very limited progress by Kosovo and Serbia."¹⁸⁸ Even after almost 20 years, Serbia and Kosovo still do not get along.¹⁸⁹

While the RS does not hold the same status as Kosovo, similar tensions and protests have occurred, proving the region would face similar problems as Kosovo should it become independent. For example, in March 2025, Bosnian Serb police forced Bosnia's officials out of a police building in RS's main city, Banja Luka. This happened after Dodik said Serb members of Bosnia's police and courts would quit and join the RS government.¹⁹⁰

178 "Strong opposition to Kosovo's independence," Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, March 11th, 2022, <https://www.bmz.de/en/countries/kosovo/background-118654>.

179 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Strong opposition to Kosovo's independence."

180 "Kosovo," Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, March 11th, 2022, <https://www.bmz.de/en/countries/kosovo>.

181 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Strong opposition to Kosovo's independence."

182 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Strong opposition to Kosovo's independence."

183 Vjosa Osmani, "The Republic of Kosovo's Written Statement for the Summit for Democracy Commitments," U.S. Department of State, January 7, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/KOSOVO-Summit-for-Democracy-Written-Statement-Accessible-Final-Feb-2022.pdf>.

184 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Kosovo."

185 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Strong opposition to Kosovo's independence."

186 "Why Kosovo and Republika Srpska cannot be compared in any Way," *Sarajevo Times*, June 29, 2021, <https://sarajevotimes.com/why-kosovo-and-republika-srpska-cannot-be-compared-in-any-way/>.

187 Tea Kljajić, "In Bosnia, a naive separatist movement is putting citizens at risk," *Emerging Europe*, May 30th, 2024, <https://emerging-europe.com/opinion/is-bosnia-a-naive-separatist-movement-is-putting-citizens-at-risk/>.

188 Kljajić, "In Bosnia, a naive separatist movement is putting citizens at risk."

189 Stefano Fella, *Kosovo: Developments Since 1999 and Relations with Serbia* (London: House of Commons Library, 2024), <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10012/>.

190 Nicholas Counter, "Bosnian Serb Police Raid Federal office as Tensions Escalate," *Deutsche Well*, March 7, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/bosnian-serb-police-raid-federal-office-as-tensions-escalate/a-71860820>.

If RS were to become independent, it might face similar problems to Kosovo. Serbia is in the UN, but Kosovo is not because

some countries, like Russia and China, do not recognize it. Kosovo is eager to join the EU, but it has not been allowed yet.¹⁹¹ Even if

Russia or Serbia support RS, other countries might not. Without this support, RS could be left out of international groups like the UN.

BLOC ANALYSIS

Points of Division

Points of division between these blocs surround constitutional reform, the independence of RS, and NATO membership. In terms of constitutional reform, the Serb bloc would prefer to keep the structure established by the Dayton Peace Agreement. This entails high autonomy for RS and a weak central state. Also, RS would not want to join NATO, as they deem it potentially hurtful to RS. Especially the SNDS is exclusively interested in the institutional order of RS. The Serb bloc would look more favorably upon the question of RS independence.¹⁹²

The Croat bloc would oppose RS independence, a unitary state, and continuing with the framework established by the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Croat bloc stands for electoral change, creating more independence for the Croat

minority from the Bosniak majority. As both ethnicities are mainly living in FBiH, the bloc also looks favorably upon creating a third Croat entity within BiH. This would allow for more power to the Croat minority in BiH. These three entities would make BiH a federate state, having complementary levels of government. They want the levels to be coordinated and complementary. This would avoid overlapping competencies and diffusion of responsibility. As opposed to the Serb bloc, the Croat bloc does support joining NATO.¹⁹³

The Bosniak bloc says no to a third region. It wants one Bosnia and Herzegovina. The bloc also wants a strong central state. Some parties even push for one unitary state. This would end Republika Srpska.¹⁹⁴

One point that all blocs formally agree on is European integration by joining the EU.¹⁹⁵

Bosniaks

The Bosniak bloc would likely consist of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the Social Democratic Party (SDP BiH), Democratic Front-Civic Alliance (DF GS), People and Justice (NiP), Our Party (Naša Stranke / NS), and the People's European Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (NES). The main Bosniak party in BiH is the SDA.¹⁹⁶ The SDA aspires to centralize the country. It also believes Republika Srpska should be abolished, as it is a result of genocide and expulsion. It aims to implement a market economy and develop business infrastructure. They support small and medium enterprises, farmers, and exporters. They also want to attract foreign investment. Moreover, they aim to improve relations with the Eastern countries. Euro-Atlantic

191 Fella, *Kosovo: Developments Since 1999 and Relations with Serbia*.

192 Dražen Barbarić, "Bosnia and Herzegovina, between the anvil and the hammer: an analysis of the programs of the major ethno-national parties," *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa*, February 7, 2022, <https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Bosnia-Herzegovina/Bosnia-and-Herzegovina-between-the-anvil-and-the-hammer-an-analysis-of-the-programs-of-the-major-ethno-national-parties-215758>.

193 Republic of Croatia, "Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

194 Republic of Croatia, "Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

195 Barbarić, "Bosnia and Herzegovina, between the anvil and the hammer: an analysis of the programs of the major ethno-national parties."

196 "Representatives convocation 2022 - 2026," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 1, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/list?lang=en>.

integration, however, is their main priority. This means it hopes to join NATO and the EU.¹⁹⁷

The SDP BiH is a modern leftist party of labor. It cares about social issues and civil society. It focuses on promoting employment and individual and collective prosperity. Furthermore, it bases its principles on European and BiH Social Democracy, peasant movements, and worker movements. The SDP BiH also believes in a BiH that is not divided by ethnicities.¹⁹⁸ It instead supports a multi-ethnic approach to society. It also is a supporter of European integration. The party believes that this would strengthen democratic institutions and human rights.¹⁹⁹

The DFGS is an alliance between Democratic Freedom and Civic Alliance. Previously, they were distinct parties. The coalition aims to prevent forces that promote hatred and division. They oppose these actions, as they would lead to the dissolution of the country.²⁰⁰ Our Party (NS) is convinced that NATO membership could guarantee peace in BiH.²⁰¹ The NES

stands for European integration and cooperation. It aims to foster unity among all citizens of BiH. The NES also tries to promote good relationships with other Balkan countries. Therefore, this bloc primarily represents a united Bosnia and unity among the country's ethnicities. Furthermore, it supports European integration.

Croats

In the Parliamentary Assembly, the Croat bloc would mostly consist of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ BiH) and the Croatian National Assembly (HNS), but it is not limited to only these parties. The main Croatian party in BiH is the HDZ BiH. The HDZ BiH supports the rights of Croats. The party supports improving BiH's political system, which it believes is putting the needs of Bosnians and Serbs before those of Croats. The party looks to change BiH's constitution to create a third region. This would cause BiH to have three ethnically based and autonomous regions of Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats.²⁰² The HDZ

BiH supports foreign investment and transferring businesses and services from public to private ownership, or privatization.²⁰³ The party also supports agricultural production and promotes tourism. One of HDZ BiH's main priorities is its relationship with European and Western countries. The HDZ BiH would like to join the EU. Becoming a NATO member is also a top goal of the party.²⁰⁴ The HDZ BiH also suggested changing election laws to vote for the president and House of People's representatives. The party hopes to prevent outvoting by majority groups to help Croat communities have more equal representation in government.²⁰⁵ The HNS emphasizes the importance of peace, stability, and equality in the region.²⁰⁶ The HNS also supports BiH joining the EU and election law reforms. More specifically, HNS also supports energy security and investments in education, science, and technology. The HNS looks to promote Croatian cultural identity and recognize the rights of Croatian veterans and victims of the Croatian War of Independence.²⁰⁷ In 2021,

197 *Bosnia and Herzegovina European Party Monitor* (Leuven: KU Leuven, 2020), <https://soc.kuleuven.be/io/english/european-party-monitor/bosnia-and-herzegovina/party-passport-bosnia-and-herzegovina-ku.pdf>.

198 "About SDP," Social Democratic Party of BiH, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://www.sdp.ba/about-sdp/>.

199 "Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Party of the Week*, Iedvesmo Inc, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://party.oftheweek.com/vote/social-democratic-party-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina>.

200 "Leftists form coalition for election they call historic," *N1 Bosnia*, May 30, 2018, <https://n1info.ba/english/news/a263525-Leftists-form-coalition-for-election-they-call-historic/>.

201 "Party leader: NATO membership would guarantee peace in Bosnia," *N1 Bosnia*, September 23, 2025, <https://n1info.ba/english/news/a379654-Party-leader-NATO-membership-would-guarantee-peace-in-Bosnia/>.

202 "Key Political Parties," *Balkan Insight*, September 24, 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/09/24/key-political-parties-09-21-2018/>.

203 "Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH)," *European party monitor*, KU Leuven, accessed June 25, 2025, https://soc.kuleuven.be/io/english/european-party-monitor/bosnia-and-herzegovina/copy_of_bih_party_3.

204 KU Leuven, "Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH)."

205 "Grlic-Radman: Support to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU Path and Quality of Croats," *Total Croatia News*, August 18, 2020, <https://total-croatia-news.com/news/politics/grlic-radman-support-to-bosnia-and-herzegovina-s-eu-path-and-quality-of-croats-3/>.

206 *67th Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the UN* (Sarajevo: Office of the High Representative, 2025), <https://www.ohr.int/67th-report-of-the-high-representative-for-implementation-of-the-peace-agreement-on-bosnia-and-herzegovina-to-the-secretary-general-of-the-un/>.

207 *67th Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the UN*.

the HNS proposed abolishing the Federation of BiH entity and supporting the creation of a third ethnic region.²⁰⁸ Overall, the Croat bloc looks to preserve and promote Croat culture and values, even if it means creating a third ethnic region in BiH.

Serbs

The Serb bloc in the parliamentary party includes six main parties: SNSD, SDS, PDP, ZPR, and United Srpska. The SNSD is the largest party. Milorad Dodik leads it. The SNSD is a nationalist party.²⁰⁹ They defend RS autonomy and have passed laws rejecting BiH's authority.²¹⁰ The SNSD has also made moves towards secession, as demonstrated by passing laws that ban state judicial institutions.²¹¹ They even drafted a constitution that claims sovereignty and the right to an army.²¹² The SNSD supports joining the EU but rejects NATO.²¹³

The SDS also wants to protect RS's autonomy. It supports the Dayton Agreement and defends the national identity, culture, and rights of Serbs. Like the SNSD, the SDS rejects centralization that would reduce RS's powers. The party supports RS joining the EU on its own, not only through BiH. It promotes investment, anti-corruption reforms, and the voices of Serbs in Europe.²¹⁴ However, the US has sanctioned the SDS for not arresting war criminals.²¹⁵ These sanctions forced the party to reform and become more democratic. As a result, it lost support among radical voters. Still, part of the SDS has turned more pro-EU.²¹⁶

The PDP is a center-right party with modern goals. It promotes better education, digital growth, new infrastructure, and lower taxes for workers and entrepreneurs.²¹⁷ The ZPR works on reducing economic inequality, creating fair policies, and making government more transparent. It also supports veterans' rights, healthcare reform,

and an independent media. The party stays neutral between Russia and the West.²¹⁸ United Srpska has similar goals. It supports social justice, healthcare access, worker protections, and environmental protection.²¹⁹ Therefore, while the SNSD and SDS tend to have more nationalist views, the PDP, ZPR, and United Srpska parties are more supportive of a modern and progressive RS.

208 Milan Pavicic, "The Croatian National Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina proposes the abolition of the entities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the proposal is supported by the leading Bosniak party SDA," *Telegram*, October 7, 2021, <https://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/hrvatski-narodni-sabor-bih-predlaze-ukidanje-entiteta-federacije-bih-prijedlog-podrzava-vodeca-bosnjacka-stranka-sda/>.

209 *Bosnia and Herzegovina European Party Monitor*.

210 Amer Cohadzic, "Bosnian Serb Lawmakers Bar Joint Institutions After a Court Convict President and Tensions Occur," *Associated Press*, February 27, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/bosnia-serbs-laws-dodik-verdict-80fface9e307617d1eff6986711af593>.

211 "Dodik signs laws banning BiH state judicial institutions in Republika Srpska," *N1 Bosnia*, March 6, 2025, <https://n1info.ba/english/news/dodik-signs-laws-banning-bih-state-judicial-institutions-in-republika-srpska/>.

212 "Republika Srpska adopt new constitution asserting the right to self determination," *Tamil Guardian*, March 29, 2025, <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/republika-srpska-adopt-new-constitution-asserting-right-self-determination>.

213 "Dodik: We support BiH's European Path, we are not in favor of joining NATO," *Sarajevo Times*, February 3, 2024, <https://sarajevotimes.com/dodik-we-support-bihs-european-path-we-are-not-in-favor-of-joining-nato>.

214 "Of the people, for the people, with the people since 1990!," *Serbian Democratic Party*, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.sds.rs/o-nama/>.

215 *Bosnia and Herzegovina European Party Monitor*.

216 "Key Political Parties."

217 "For the Republika Srpska CHANGE STARTING TODAY," PDP, accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.pdp.rs.ba/>.

218 "PROGRAM AND GOALS FOR JUSTICE AND ORDER LIST OF NEBOJSE VUKANOVIC," *Nebojša Vukanović info*, August 18, 2022, <https://nebojsavukanovic.info/program-i-ciljevi-za-pravdu-i-red-liste-nebojse-vukanovica/>.

219 "Statute of United Srpska," accessed June 25, 2025, <https://www.ujedinjenasrpska.rs/statut-ujedinjene-srpske/>.

COMMITTEE MISSION

The Constitution of BiH explains the powers of the Assembly in Article IV. The Assembly can pass laws for the president, approve the state budget, and ratify treaties. It can also take on new duties if both entities agree to share them.²²⁰ Article III sets out the main tasks of the state level.²²¹ These include making foreign and trade policy, setting customs rules, and managing monetary policy. The state also oversees immigration and enforces criminal law across the entities. It oversees communication systems, transport between the regions, and control of air traffic.

The House of Representatives is part of the Parliamentary Assembly. Members must talk to each other to solve the country's

problems. They also must work with the entities when the Assembly cannot act alone. They deal with EU membership, constitutional changes, and RS independence. The Assembly cannot solve these issues by itself. Members must work across ethnic groups and with state institutions.

The Constitution regulates the voting procedure under Article IV, 3(d). This committee will follow this procedure partly. A bill passes the House of Representatives by most members present. This majority must comprise at least one-third of members from each entity (Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats).²²² This committee will disregard what happens when one-third is missing. In this case, the bill

will be considered as failed directly. Normally, bills passed in the House of Representatives need to pass the House of Peoples next. However, in the scope of this committee, a bill will be considered passed when the House of Representatives passes it.

The Parliamentary Assembly must pass laws and represent the people. Members must speak with each other, with state institutions, and with various entities to solve problems. They must work together and think creatively to guide BiH. No matter what party they belong to, parliamentarians must improve life for all citizens. Bosnia and Herzegovina depends on its leaders to act for the people.

COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Branislav Borenović (PDP)

Branislav Borenović is a PDP representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is part of the committees on Preparation of

the Election of the BiH Council of Ministers, Transport and Communications, and Foreign Affairs. He is also part of the Joint Committee on European Integration.²²³ Borenović is also a member of the Group for Asia that oversees relations with countries

in that region.²²⁴ Finally, he is a member of the Delegation of Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The IPU is a peace organization that connects parliaments throughout the world.²²⁵

²²⁰ Office of the High Representative, "Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

²²¹ "The Functions of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/Content/Read/25?title=FunkcijeParlamentarneskup%C5%A1tineBiH&lang=en>

²²² Office of the High Representative, "Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

²²³ "Borenović, Branislav," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/536?lang=en>.

²²⁴ "Miletić, Zlatko," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://parlament.ba/delegate/detail/617?lang=en>.

²²⁵ "Delegation of Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/4?mandateId=10>.

Čedomir Stojanović (DEMOS)

Čedomir Stojanović is a DEMOS representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on August 18, 1974, in Bijeljina, a city in RS. He has a background in agricultural technology and received his doctorate in agricultural sciences. Furthermore, he is part of the Committee for the Preparation of the Election of the BiH Council of Ministers as well as the Committee on Foreign Trade and Customs. Stojanović is also part of the Joint Committee on Economic Reforms and Development and of the Group for Western Europe, which oversees relations with countries in that region.²²⁶

Darijana Filipović (HDZ, BiH, HNS)

Darijana Filipović is an HDZ BiH representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was born on January 26, 1987, in Mostar, a village in Herzegovina-Neretva, which is located in FBiH and lies close to RS. She is a graduate of Business Economics from the University of Mostar. Until 2014,

she was the Secretary-General of HDZ BiH. Additionally, she takes part in the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the joint committee on Human Rights.²²⁷

Darko Babalj (SDS)

Darko Babalj is an SDS representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is part of the committees for the Preparation of the Election of the BiH Council of Ministers and on Foreign Trade and Customs. He is also part of the Joint Committee on Supervision of the World of Intelligence and Security Agency of BiH. Babalj is also a member of the Joint Committee on Defence and Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.²²⁸ He is also a member of the Group for Neighbor Countries, which oversees relations with countries near BiH.²²⁹

Denijal Tulumović (SDA)

Denijal Tulumović is an SDA representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on December 25, 1959, in Živinice, a town in Tuzla, which is located in FBiH. He is the Head of Clinic at the Public Health Institution UKC

Tuzla. Additionally, Tulumović takes part in the committees on Gender Equality and the joint committee on European Integration.²³⁰

Denis Zvizdić (NIP)

Denis Zvizdić is an NIP representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on June 9, 1964, in Sarajevo, the capital of BiH, which is located in FBiH and is also its capital. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo. Furthermore, he teaches at the Faculty of Architecture in the Department of Urbanism and Spatial Planning. Zvizdić was a long-term member of the SDA and its vice president, but he left and joined the NIP. Soon, he was elected deputy president of the party. Between 2003 and 2006, he was Prime Minister of the Sarajevo Canton before he won a seat in the House of Peoples of FBiH. Between 2010 and 2012, he was elected to the House of Representatives of FBiH and was its speaker. Additionally, he takes part in the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the joint committee on European Integration.²³¹

²²⁶ "Group for Western Europe," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/608?lang=en>.

²²⁷ "Filipović, Darijana," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/517?lang=en>.

²²⁸ "Babalj, Darko," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/603?lang=en>.

²²⁹ "Group for Neighbour Countries," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/15?mandateId=11>.

²³⁰ "Denijal Tulumović," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javna-rasprava.ba/fbih/Parlamentarac/739>.

²³¹ "Denis Zvizdić," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javna-rasprava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/1418>; Zvidić, Denis," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/504?lang=en>.

Jasmin Imamović (SDP, BiH)

Jasmin Imamović is an SDP BiH representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on October 8, 1957, in Brčko, a city located in the Brčko District, which is located close to FBiH and RS. Imamović lived most of his life in Tuzla. He is a graduate lawyer and went to university in Sarajevo. He was the mayor of Tuzla from 2001 to 2004. Furthermore, he was a delegate to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. As a writer, he published six novels. He is also the creator of the biggest award for a novel in the Western Balkans. Additionally, he takes part in the committee on Transport and Communications and the joint committee on Defense and Security of BiH.²³²

Ljubica Miljanović (SNSD)

Ljubica Miljanović is an SNSD representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Miljanović is a member of the Committee on Finance and Budget of the House

of Representatives as well as the Committee on Gender Equality. She is also a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights.²³³

Marinko Čavara (HDZ, BiH, HNS)

Marinko Čavara is an HDZ BiH representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born in 1967 in Busovača, a town in Central Bosnia, which is located in FBiH. He was a mechanical engineering teacher and went to university in Zenica in FBiH. Previously, he was the deputy minister of transport and communications in the Central Bosnian Canton from 1996 to 2001. In 2014 he was appointed president of FBiH. Additionally, he takes part in the Constitutional-Legal Committee of the House of Representatives and the joint committee on Administrative Affairs.²³⁴ In 2022, he was placed under sanctions by the United States because his behavior was deemed to threaten the stability of BiH. The US accused him of undermining the Dayton Peace Accord. They stated that Marinko held the Constitutional Court of FBiH hostage by refusing to nominate vacant seats.²³⁵

Midhat Čaušević (SDA)

Midhat Čaušević is an SDA representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on January 20, 1984, in Kladanj, a town in Tuzla, which is located in FBiH and lies close to RS. Čaušević studied in Sarajevo and works as a high school teacher and university professor at the faculty of philosophy. He is the head of the university's department of sociology. Additionally, he takes part in the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the joint committee on Human Rights.²³⁶

Milan Petković (Ujedinjena Srpska)

Milan Petković is a United Srpska representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on October 5, 1984, in Banjaluka. Before becoming a representative, Petković was a lawyer. He is part of the committees for election and monitoring over the work of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption, Preparation of the Election of BiH

²³² "Imamović, Jasmin," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://parlament.ba/representative/detail/581?lang=en>; "Jasmin Imamović," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javna-rasprava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/1408>.

²³³ "Miljanović, Ljubica," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://parlament.ba/representative/detail/611?lang=en>.

²³⁴ "Čavara, Marinko," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/578?lang=en>; "Marinko Čavara," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javna-rasprava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/1406>.

²³⁵ "Treasury Designates Two Senior Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina for Destabilizing Behavior," United States Department of the Treasury, June 6, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0808>.

²³⁶ "Čaušević, Midhat," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/572>; "Midhat Čaušević," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javna-rasprava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/1400>.

Council of Ministers, Foreign Affairs, and Constitutional-Legal Committee of the House of Representatives.²³⁷ He is also a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights. He is also a member of the Group for Neighbor Countries, which oversees relations with countries near BiH.²³⁸ Petković is also a part of the Delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PAUfM). The PAUfM is made up of 43 countries and looks to strengthen cooperation between the EU and Mediterranean countries.²³⁹

Milorad Kojić (SNSD)

Milorad Kojić is an SNSD representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He has a background in law and is fluent in English. He is a member of the Committee on Foreign Trade and Customs and of the Joint Committee on Supervision of the Work of Intelligence and Security Agency of BiH.²⁴⁰ He is also a member of

the Group for East and Middle Europe that oversees relations with countries in that region.²⁴¹

Nenad Grković (ZPR)

Nenad Grković is a ZPR representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on October 24, 1977, in Metković, Croatia. Before becoming a representative, Grković was a physics professor. He is a member of the Committee for the Preparation of the Election of BiH Council of Ministers and the Committee on Transport and Communications.²⁴² He is also a member of the Group for East and Middle Europe that oversees relations with countries in that region.²⁴³ Grković is also a part of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South–East European Cooperation Process (PASEECP). The PASEECP is made up of representatives from 13 countries in Southeast Europe. The group focuses on political, security, and economic cooperation.²⁴⁴

Nermin Mandra (SDA)

Nermin Mandra is an SDA representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on December 17, 1969, in Kakanj, a town in Zenica - Doboј, which is located in FBiH. He is a mechanical engineering graduate from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of Sarajevo. Also, Mandra was the editor-in-chief of the public enterprise “Radio Kakanj” between 1994 and 2001 and worked for the Kakanj Thermal Power Plant as assistant director. He was also appointed as Minister of Spatial Planning, Transport and Communications, and Environmental Protection in the Government of the Canton of ZDK in 2003. Additionally, he takes part in the committees on Finance and Budget of the House of Representatives, the committee for the Preparation of the Election of the BiH Council of Ministers, and the joint committee on Economic Reforms and Development. He is also part of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South - East European Cooperation Process.²⁴⁵

237 “Petković, Milan,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/609?lang=en>.

238 “Group for Neighbour Countries,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/15?mandateId=11>.

239 “Delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PAUfM),” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/2?mandateId=11>.

240 “Kojić, Milorad,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://parlament.ba/representative/detail/598?lang=en>.

241 “Group for East and Middle Europe,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/14?mandateId=11>.

242 “Grković, Nenad,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/607?lang=en>.

243 “Group for East and Middle Europe,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/14?mandateId=11>.

244 “About SEEC,” South East European Cooperation Process, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.seecp.info/about-seecp>.

245 “Mandra, Nermin,” Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/571?lang=en>; “Nermin Mandra,” Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javnaraspava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/696>.

Nihad Omerović (NIP)

Nihad Omerović is a NIP representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on October 28, 1969, in Falešići, a village in the municipality of Srebrenik in FBiH. He graduated from a high school of mechanical engineering. Omerović received his master's and doctorate degrees in the field of raw minerals preparation. He was part of the Faculty of Mining and Geology from 1987 to 1998. Before becoming a representative, he was secretary of the Secretariat for Social Activities until 2000. He then became a professor at a secondary school until 2006. Omerović was also a manufacturing engineer until 2008. He was then a technical department manager at a concrete manufacturing company until 2014. Finally, he was the mayor of the Srebrenik Municipality until 2022. As a representative, he is on many committees. This includes the committees on the Preparation of the Election of the BiH Council of Ministers, Transport and Communications, and Foreign Affairs. He is also on the Joint Committee on Economic Reforms and Development.²⁴⁶ Omerović is also in the Group for East and

Middle Europe, which oversees relations with countries in that region.²⁴⁷

Sabina Ćudić (Naša Stranka)

Sabina Ćudić is an NS representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is a member of many committees, including the Committee on Gender Equality, the Preparation of the Election of the BiH Council of Ministers, and Foreign Affairs. She is also a member of the Joint Committee on Supervision of the Work of the Intelligence and Security Agency of BiH. Ćudić is also a member of the Group for North and South America, Australia, Oceania, and Japan. This means she oversees relations with countries in those regions. She is also in the Delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).²⁴⁸ The Council of Europe oversees human rights, democracy, and the rule of law throughout Europe. It is made up of 47 countries. PACE is made up of members of national European parliaments with a few members.²⁴⁹

Šemsudin Mehmedović (SDA)

Šemsudin Mehmedović is an SDA representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on January 20, 1961, in Lepenica, a village in Tešanj, which is located in FBiH and lies close to RS. Mehmedović was a mechanical production engineer and went to university in Banja Luka (RS) and Belgrade (Serbia). He had served in the Parliament of FBiH, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Zenica - Doboj Canton, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of BiH previously. Additionally, he takes part in the committees on Transport and Communications, Foreign Trade and Customs, and the joint committee on Defense and Security of BiH.²⁵⁰

Vlatko Glavaš (DF-GS)

Vlatko Glavaš is a DF-GS representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on September 2, 1962, in Bugojno, a village in Central Bosnia, which is located in FBiH. Glavaš graduated from a mechanical engineering High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in economics

²⁴⁶ "Omerović, Nihad," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/590>.

²⁴⁷ "Group for East and Middle Europe," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/14?mandateId=11>.

²⁴⁸ "Ćudić, Sabina," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://parlament.ba/representative/detail/592?lang=en>.

²⁴⁹ "Delegation of Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://parlament.ba/committee/read/9?mandateId=11>.

²⁵⁰ "Mehmedović, Šemsudin," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/204?lang=en>.

from the University of Travnik in 2015 (FBiH). He also played on the national football team of BiH between 1994 and 1997. Additionally, he takes part in the Committee on Gender Equality, the joint committee on Administrative Affairs, and the joint committee on Human Rights.²⁵¹

Zlatan Begić (DF-GS)

Zlatan Begić is a DF-GS representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born in 1975. He was an assistant professor at the faculty of law at the University of Tuzla in the field of constitutional law. Begić wrote a significant number of scientific and professional papers in this field in the country and abroad. He is a member of the Expert Group for Constitutional Reform of FBiH. Also, he was a member of the expert commission formed by the Assembly of the Tuzla Canton to implement the decision of the Sejdić-Finci case in the Constitution of the Canton. He also is a member of the International Association for Public Law and the Editorial Board of the Journal of Politics and Law from Canada. Additionally, Begić takes part in the Constitutional-Legal Committee of the House

of Representatives and the joint committee on supervision of the work of the Intelligence and Security Agency of BiH.²⁵²

Zlatko Miletić (NES)

Zlatko Miletić is an independent delegate in the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is part of the Croat People Caucus within FBiH. Miletić was born on June 28, 1966, in Sarajevo within the Centar municipality. He was part of the Military Academy from 1984 to 1988. He has a background in defense and security. Miletić was head of the Public Security Service in Novo Sarajevo during the Bosnian War and was decorated in the war. He has worked in many government offices, including the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Team for Combating Terrorism of the Council of Ministers, and the Federal Police Administration. He is also a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and of the Committee on Foreign and Trade Policy Customs, Transportation, and Communications. Miletić is also a member of the Joint Committee on Economic Reforms and Development and a part of the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

He is also a part of the Group for Asia that oversees relations with countries in that region.²⁵³

Zukan Helez (SDP, BiH)

Zukan Helez is an SDP BiH representative in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was born on January 1, 1964, in Kupres, a town in Canton 10, which is located in FBiH. Helez studied at the Faculty of Science and Mathematics in Sarajevo. He worked as a professor and was a member of the army of BiH. He knows Russian and English. Additionally, he takes part in the committee on Foreign Trade and Customs and the joint committee on Defense and Security of BiH.²⁵⁴

251 "Glavaš, Vlatko," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/587?lang=en>; "Vlatko Glavaš," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javnaraspava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/1414>.

252 "Begić, Zlatan," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/530?lang=en>; "Zlatan Begić," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javnaraspava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/712>.

253 "Miletić, Zlatko," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://parlament.ba/delegate/detail/617?lang=en>.

254 "Helez, Zukan," Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.parlament.ba/representative/detail/526>; "Zukan Helez," Javna rasprava, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://www.javnaraspava.ba/bih/Parlamentarac/708>.

RESEARCH AND PREPARATION QUESTIONS

The following research and preparation questions are meant to help you begin your research on your country's policy. These questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

Topic A

1. How will the government manage or limit international involvement in the event of renewed conflict?
2. Amid ongoing political instability, what actions can the Parliamentary Assembly take to rebuild public trust and strengthen national unity?
3. To what extent do international actors such as the United Nations and the European Union influence decision-making within Bosnia and Herzegovina's government?
4. If divisions emerge across or within political parties, what safeguards or reforms can prevent the Parliamentary Assembly from falling into political paralysis?
5. How might the perspectives and reactions of modern-day Bosnian society—and the international community—differ from those seen during past conflicts?
6. Given the growing signs of militarization, how should the Parliamentary Assembly respond if Republika Srpska attempts to secede or align with Serbia?
7. How can the government ensure that the mistakes of ethnonationalism, which once devastated Bosnia and Herzegovina, are not repeated?
8. How can the Parliamentary Assembly protect national integrity while pursuing greater integration and cooperation with the European Union?

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Topic A

Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for membership of the European Union. Brussels: European Commission, 2019. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52019DC0261&qid=1674056260796>.

Office of the High Representative. "Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina." Accessed July 8, 2025. <https://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/legal/laws-of-bih/pdf/001%20-%20Constitutions/BH/BH%20CONSTITUTION%20.pdf>.

Office of the High Representative. The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. December 14, 1995. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/0/126173.pdf>.

Opinion on the Constitutional situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Powers of the High Representative. Venice: Venice Commission, March 11. [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2005\)004-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2005)004-e).

Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "About Parliament." Accessed August 25, 2025. <https://www.parlament.ba/Content/Read/24?title=Op%C4%87ipodaci&lang=en>.

The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

Written by Adam Allibhoy, Marlon Nnamocha, and Olivia Woodard.

Edited by Adam Allibhoy, Armen Bagdassarian, Devansh Bhartia, Ana Margarita Gil, Tyler Schmied, Althea Turley, Nastasja Vasquez, and Sofia Velasco.

© 2025 IMUNA. All Rights Reserved.

