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Bosnia in Perspective

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Bridge in Mostar
© Pietro Columba

Chapter 1: Geography

Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a richly forested, mountainous country located in the Balkan region of southeastern Europe. Its rugged topography has served to divide and isolate it. The country is named for two historic regions that are separated by the central mountain ranges: Bosnia, in the north, and Herzegovina, in the south. Herzegovina, which comprises roughly 20% of the country's total area, is the smaller of the two.¹ Historically, overland travel between these two regions was concentrated via a natural passageway through the mountains—from the Bosna River in the north to the Neretva River in the south. Sarajevo, the country's capital (located in Bosnia), lies along this route, as does Mostar, the largest city in Herzegovina.²

Today, the country's administrative divisions do not follow the historic boundaries of the respective Bosnia and Herzegovina regions. Rather, the country is subdivided into two political entities established in the peace agreement that brought an end to the Bosnian War, or War in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995). These entities roughly reflect the country's population distribution of major ethnic groups, which were redistributed during the war through ethnic cleansing, internal displacement, and emigration. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina comprises most of the western and central portions of the country. This region is mostly populated by Bosniaks and Croats, who formed an alliance in the latter stages of the war.^{3,4} The Republika Srpska (Serb Republic or RS) comprises most of the north and east, which is largely controlled and populated by Serbs.^{5,6}



Cattle farm
©, *shimeck / flickr.com*

Area

Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in southeastern Europe, in the northwestern region of the Balkan Peninsula. The country is shaped roughly like an arrowhead, with the tip pointing to the northwest. It shares borders with three countries: Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro. Serbia lies to the east and Montenegro to the southeast. The boomerang-shaped country of Croatia surrounds Bosnia and Herzegovina to the west and north. In the southwest, a small portion of Bosnia and Herzegovina extends to the Adriatic Sea, giving the country a short coastline of 20 km (12 mi). (This narrow corridor intersects Croatia's southern arm along the Adriatic coast.) Overall, the country

comprises a total area of 51,197 sq km (19,767 sq mi), making it slightly smaller than West Virginia.⁷ The greater region is commonly known as the Balkans, which comprises the territories of Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Albania.⁸

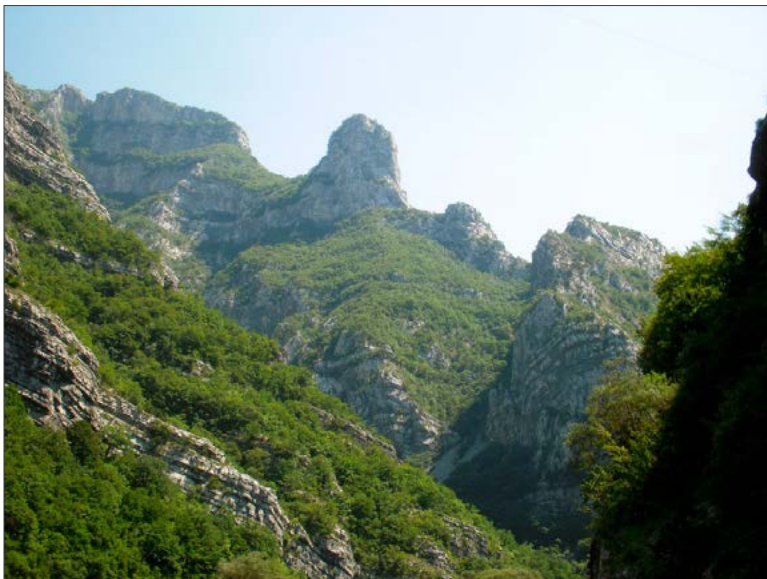


Wheat fields
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Geographic Regions and Topographic Features

Northern Lowlands

The northern lowlands of Bosnia and Herzegovina mostly consist of fertile plains extending alongside the Sava River, which forms a large portion of the border with Croatia. These low-lying plains represent the southern limits of the vast Pannonian Plains that spread throughout Central Europe to the north. They are intersected or abutted in areas by hills, plateaus, and low mountains. As the country's most fertile region, the northern plains are the agricultural heart of Bosnia and Herzegovina.^{9, 10} Locally, the region surrounding the Sava River is known as Posavina.¹¹ Most of the region falls within the Republika Srpska and is therefore predominantly populated by Serbs. A small portion of Posavina, the Posavina Canton (district), belongs to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; this exclave (disconnected region) is mainly populated by Croats.^{12, 13} At the eastern end of the northern lowlands is the strategically important Posavina corridor, a narrow strip of land that connects the western and eastern regions of Republika Srpska.¹⁴



Mountains
© *Enes / flickr.com*

Central Mountains

Mountains cover the majority of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country's numerous mountain chains belong to the larger Dinaric Alps range, which runs alongside the Adriatic Sea, from Italy and Slovenia in the north to Albania in the south.¹⁵ This range runs generally northwest to southeast through Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dinaric Alps proper form most of the country's western border with Croatia. Among the many individual mountain ranges are the Grmeč (in the northwest), Cincar (in the west), Vranica (in the central part of the country), and Zelengora (in the southeast). The country's highest point is located in the southeast, near the border with Montenegro. Here, Maglić Mountain rises to 2,386 m (7,828 ft).¹⁶ At least eight other peaks reach above 2,000 m (6,562 ft). While generally rugged, the terrain ranges from snow-covered peaks and rocky plateaus to lush rolling

hills and grassy valleys. Much of the region is threatened by deforestation, yet remains richly wooded. Numerous rivers cut through the mountains, pass through deep canyons and gorges, creating occasional waterfalls.^{17, 18} Most settlement here occurs in river valleys, including those of the Bosna and Vrbas Rivers. The central mountain region contains significant resources, namely timber, mineral deposits, and water resources that supply hydroelectric power. Arable meadows and valleys support farming and animal husbandry.^{19, 20}



Dandelion field
© Alan Bloom

Southern Plateaus

The southern plateau comprises much of the historic region of Herzegovina. While it contains some highland areas, its terrain is generally flatter, drier, and more eroded than that of the central mountains. The landscape largely consists of rocky, arid plateaus marked by karst topography, or land formations produced by the erosion of sedimentary layers, namely limestone and dolomite. (Karst topography is also a pervasive feature of the western mountains.)²¹ Karst features include fissures and caves, which gradually form from the flow of water from the surface through subterranean layers.²² Underground rivers are thus also common in the karst region. The upland

plateaus of this region are typically barren due to poor soils and deforestation. These conditions contribute to sparse population in some areas. However, the region is also marked by scattered *poljes*, or enclosed basins formed by collapsing sinkholes, which are moderately arable and can be farmed.²³

The southwestern part of this region contains the lush lower reaches of the Neretva River valley, which hosts the city of Mostar and ultimately joins the Adriatic Sea. Bosnia and Herzegovina's short coastline is located southeast of the Neretva River delta on the Adriatic. Here, the terrain descends sharply to the coastal city of Neum, which draws tourists but lacks a viable port.²⁴ The coastal corridor is surrounded on both sides by Croatian territory. Croatia's plans to construct a bridge directly linking their disconnected regions—via the Pelješac Peninsula—have been opposed by the Bosnian government. The bridge would effectively allow Croatia's heavy coastal tourist traffic to bypass Bosnia and Herzegovina.^{25, 26}



Lightning over Banja Luka
© jovom / flickr.com

Climate

Climate conditions vary according to region and elevation. Running along the western border, the Dinaric Alps shield the interior from the warm air currents coming in off the Mediterranean. As a result, the northern and central parts of the country have a mild continental climate similar to that of Central Europe. This climate is characterized by cold winters, warm or hot summers, and cool transitional seasons.²⁷ The northern lowlands experience warmer temperatures and less precipitation than the central mountains, where elevation is a major factor in shaping weather patterns.²⁸ Banja Luka, which is located on the southern cusp of the northern plains, experiences average temperatures of around 0 °C (32 °F) in January and 22 °C (72 °F) in July. Its short rainy season occurs in late spring and early summer.^{29, 30, 31} The upper elevations of the central mountains have an alpine climate marked by short, cool summers and long cold winters with heavy snowfall. High winds can occur at upper elevations.³² Lying in a river valley within the central mountains, Sarajevo experiences average temperatures of around -1 °C (30 °F) in January and 19 °C (66 °F) in July.³³ It receives moderate levels of precipitation throughout the year.^{34, 35, 36}

In the south, the Mediterranean Sea influences the climate of Herzegovina, which generally experiences hot dry summers and mild winters with moderate to heavy precipitation. Along the coast, temperatures can reach 38 °C (100 °F) in summer

months.³⁷ Further inland, in Mostar, the temperature averages around 6 °C (42 °F) in January and 26 °C (78 °F) in July.^{38, 39, 40}



River in Sarajevo
© Oliver W / flickr.com

Rivers and Lakes

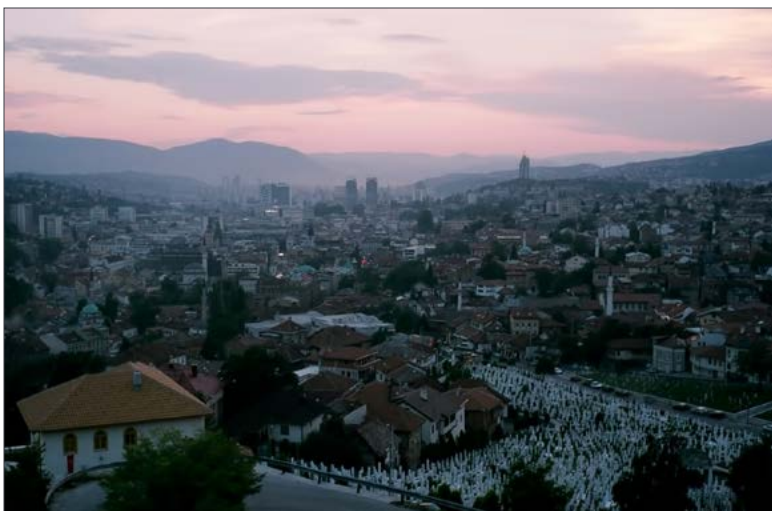
Bosnia and Herzegovina has numerous rivers that supply substantial freshwater and, potentially, hydroelectric power. Most rivers originate in the mountains and either flow northward into the Sava River, or southward into the Adriatic Sea.⁴¹ The Sava River, which originates in Slovenia, forms the majority of the country's northern border with Croatia before flowing into the Danube River in Serbia. It is navigable along the border.^{42, 43} The Sava is fed by four major rivers that flow northward from the greater Dinaric Alps: the Una, Vrbas, Bosna, and Drina. The Una River flows through the northwest and forms portions of

the western and northern borders with Croatia before flowing into the Sava River, where it forms the northern boundary going east.⁴⁴ The Vrbas flows through west-central Bosnia, passing through Banja Luka, Republika Srpska's major city, before flowing into the Sava.⁴⁵ A hydroelectric dam on the river has created the artificial reservoir, Bocac Lake.⁴⁶ The Bosna River, the namesake of the Bosnia region, flows northward through central Bosnia.⁴⁷ Its valley is the site of significant human settlement and industrial development.^{48, 49} The Drina, whose headwaters originate in Montenegro, forms a portion of the northeastern border with Serbia. Large artificial lakes have been created by hydroelectric dams in the cities of Bajina Bašta (on the Serbian side of the river) and Zvornik (in Bosnia and Herzegovina).^{50, 51}

In the south, the major river is the Neretva, which originates in the central mountains and flows southward into Croatia, where it empties into the Adriatic through a delta. The river is dammed at Jablanica (Jablaničko), in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to create an artificial lake for hydroelectric power generation.^{52, 53} Several additional dams are located on the river, which is a vital source of water and power for the region. The extensive development of the river and its surrounding valley has threatened local habitats and exposed the river to pollution.^{54, 55} The karst region of the south and southwest is rich in underground water resources. The country as a whole has many natural springs, which are commercially exploited for mineral water and health spas.⁵⁶ Historically, river valleys have served as passageways throughout the mountainous interior. Today, the majority of the country's major roadways parallel river routes.⁵⁷

Aside from its numerous manmade reservoirs, the country has few major lakes. Among

them are Boračko Lake (located near Konjic, in the south-central mountain region) and Blidinje Lake, a large glacial lake in the mountains of the southwest. Also located in the southwestern mountains is the massive artificial lake, Buško Lake, which collects regional runoff.⁵⁸ Many small glacial lakes are scattered throughout the mountains.⁵⁹



View of Sarajevo
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Major Cities

Sarajevo

Sarajevo, (pop est. 438,443), is located in the Miljacka River valley in the eastern part of the central mountains. It is the national capital, as well as the administrative seat of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.^{60, 61} The city developed in the 15th century as a religious, economic, and administrative center for the Muslim Ottoman Turks. As a legacy of the Ottoman era, Sarajevo “retains a strong Muslim character, having many mosques, wooden houses with ornate interiors, and the ancient Turkish marketplace,” the Baščaršija. After the Turks were driven from the

area in the late 19th century, the city was modernized under the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1914, it was the site of the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand by a Bosnian Serb, an incident that sparked World War I. Under the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Sarajevo hosted the 1984 Winter Olympic Games.^{62, 63}

As Yugoslavia began to dissolve in the early 1990s, the city became a focal point in the Bosnian War (1992–1995). The Serb-led Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) besieged Sarajevo with a shelling campaign for three years, leaving the city in ruins and thousands of residents dead. Prior to the war, Sarajevo had a reputation as a multiethnic, multi-religious city, due to its diverse population of Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croats.⁶⁴ Yet, in the wake of the devastating conflict, its population is now mostly comprised of Bosniaks.^{65, 66} Reconstruction efforts have made significant progress in restoring the city, but scars from the war remain—among them are vast graveyards.⁶⁷ The Baščaršija marketplace continues as “the heart of the city.”^{68, 69}



Banja Luka
© Garrett Nelson

Banja Luka

Banja Luka (pop. est. 199,191) is located in the northwest, on the southern cusp of the northern plains.^{70, 71} The Vrbas River passes through the city. The city historically lay on the border between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottoman Empire. It served as a defensive outpost against the invading Ottoman Turk forces, but was overtaken by the Turks in the early 16th century. The surrounding military frontier was settled by Orthodox Christians, namely Serbs, who still dominate the region.⁷² In the post-World War II era, the city was industrialized under the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It suffered large-scale devastation in 1969, when an earthquake shook the city. During the Bosnian War, Banja Luka functioned as a stronghold for Bosnian Serb forces, which violently expelled large numbers of Bosniaks, Croats, and other non-Serbs from the city and greater region. The Serbs razed the city's mosques at this time. Today, Banja Luka is the administrative seat of the Republika

Srpska; it remains mostly populated by Serbs. The city is an important industrial and transportation hub for the northwest.⁷³

Tuzla

Tuzla lies in the Tuzla Basin of the northeast, in the transitional zone between the plains and the mountains. It is located in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, not far from the border with the Republika Srpska. The Tuzla Basin is the site of intensive industrial development focused on the exploitation of natural resources. The area is especially rich in rock salt deposits. Many centuries ago, the city was known as Soli ("salts"), and its current name derives from the Turkish word *tuz* ("salt"). The basin also contains sizable deposits of coal. As home to an ethnically diverse population, the city was reportedly "relatively free of interethnic violence during the 1992–1995 war." However, it did suffer a deadly attack on civilians, known by some as the "Tuzla massacre" of 1995.⁷⁴ The city hosts thermal-power stations and serves as a central distribution hub for regional produce.⁷⁵ Since 2014, it has been home to approximately 120,441 residents.^{76, 77}



Apartments in Zenica
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Zenica

Zenica lies in the Bosna River valley of the north-central mountains. The city has a history of industrial development dating back to the 19th century, when Austro-Hungarian authorities constructed mills and metallurgical facilities. Later, the city was developed by Yugoslavia as one of its “most important industrial complexes.” Zenica served as a stronghold for the Bosnian government and its armed forces during the Bosnian War, when the traditional capital, Sarajevo, was under siege. Its population was predominantly Bosniak by the close of the war.⁷⁸ The city is currently home to an estimated 73,751 people.⁷⁹

Mostar

Located in the south, Mostar is the major city of the historic Herzegovina region. It lies along the Neretva River in a low-lying valley surrounded by mountains. The city’s roots trace back to the 15th century, when it was named for its wooden suspension bridge over the Neretva River. In 1566, Ottoman Turks built a new bridge out of stone; this long-standing bridge came to be known as the Old Bridge. The Turks developed the city as a strategic military, administrative, and economic center linking western and eastern Herzegovina. Later administered under Austria, the city

developed a rich multicultural heritage and diverse population of both Muslims and Christians.^{80, 81, 82}

Mostar (pop. est. 113,169) was the site of violent ethnic conflict and physical devastation during the Bosnian War. Local Bosniak and Bosnian Croat forces initially allied to repel Serb forces from the city. However, their alliance broke down, and the resulting combat between Croats and Bosniaks divided the city. Croats took control of Mostar’s western bank, while Bosniaks were forced onto the eastern bank. Croat forces destroyed the Old Bridge when they waged a heavy shelling campaign against the eastern side.^{83, 84, 85} After Bosniaks and Croats realigned in the latter stages of the conflict, Mostar was temporarily administered by the European Union and eventually reconsolidated as a single political entity. The Old Bridge, seen by many as a symbol of the city’s multicultural heritage,⁸⁶

⁸⁷ was restored as part of broader reconstruction efforts. Yet the city remains socially divided along Croat and Bosniak lines.^{88, 89} As the economic hub of Herzegovina, Mostar hosts industrial facilities and serves as a processing and distribution center for regional agricultural produce.⁹⁰



Smokestacks

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Environmental Issues

Bosnia and Herzegovina faces several environmental challenges. While the country enjoys a bountiful supply of freshwater, poor water management results in the squandering and polluting of available resources.⁹¹ Untreated wastewater and industrial and agricultural runoff (e.g., chemicals and fertilizers) are routinely discharged into the country's waterways. As a result, water quality is often poor.⁹² Intensive industrialization has also contributed to heavy air pollution in some areas.^{93, 94, 95} Bosnia and Herzegovina lacks a proper waste management and disposal system not only for wastewater, but also for trash and hazardous materials. Random, illegal dumping of waste is thus common in both rural and urban areas,⁹⁶ with trash frequently accumulating in waterways.⁹⁷ Deforestation, largely a product of extensive illegal exploitation during and shortly after the Bosnian War, has contributed to severe soil erosion in some areas. At least 10% of the country's land has been described as badly damaged by erosion. Soils have also been degraded by industrial and household waste dumps.⁹⁸ Finally, the country remains heavily and widely contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war.⁹⁹ Although environmental protection regulations are provided for in the constitution, they remain limited and ineffective.¹⁰⁰



Flooding
© Ian Bancroft

Natural Hazards

Bosnia and Herzegovina is vulnerable to several types of natural hazards. Over the last few decades, flooding has been the most frequent and wide-reaching form of natural hazard. Floods typically occur when heavy rains or snow melt overwhelm the river capacity. This is common on the Sava River, and its many tributaries that flow down from the central mountains. Flooding can also affect karst valleys. The destruction of the flood protection infrastructure, namely embankments, pump stations, and drainage systems during the war has greatly increased the nation's vulnerability to floods. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also

susceptible to drought; the northeast and southwest are at the highest risk of drought. Drought can cause serious economic losses and contribute to the risk of wildfires, another potential hazard.¹⁰¹

Located along an active seismic belt, Bosnia and Herzegovina has a history of earthquakes. The regions of Banja Luka, the Dinaric Alps proper (along the western border), and the south (Herzegovina) have been identified as the most susceptible to seismic activity.¹⁰² Banja Luka in particular has been the site of several significant earthquakes, including devastating quakes in 1969 and 1981. Landslides and wind storms are additional natural hazards. Landslides often result from soil settling caused by mining operations.¹⁰³ Both landslides and floods can pose added dangers by shifting or transporting landmines and explosive remnants of war.

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Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina has no coastal access.

FALSE

Bosnia and Herzegovina does have coastal access at Neum, however it is not amenable to receiving large commercial ships. This small coastline area is bounded on both sides by Croatia and is not developed as a major port.

2. Bosnia and Herzegovina is approximately the size of West Virginia.

TRUE

Bosnia and Herzegovina comprises a total area of 51,197 sq km (19,767 sq mi), making it slightly smaller than West Virginia.

3. Bosnia and Herzegovina's central mountains enjoy a Mediterranean climate.

FALSE

Bosnia and Herzegovina's central mountains have an alpine climate, comparable to similar areas on the Continent. The coastal area experiences a Mediterranean climate.

4. Bosnia and Herzegovina's climate types converge at the central part of the country.

TRUE

The country's coastal Mediterranean and inland, alpine continental climates converge in the central part of the country.

5. Mostar is the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

FALSE

Sarajevo, which developed in the 15th century as a religious, economic, and administrative center for the Muslim Ottoman Turks, is Bosnia and Herzegovina's capital city. It retains its strong Muslim character as reflected by its many mosques as well as its Turkish marketplace.



Mountains in Bosnia
© terekhova / flickr.com

Chapter 2: History

Introduction

From 1992–1995, reports from Bosnia and Herzegovina became a daily news staple. Ethnic Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks (Muslim Slavs) engaged in brutal warfare that ultimately made “ethnic cleansing” an internationally recognized term. Sarajevo, the nation’s capital and the host of the Winter Olympics less than a decade earlier, was under a permanent siege that destroyed much of the city. For many who knew little about the region, the conflict was viewed as the culmination of ancient, bottled-up ethnic hatreds that were suddenly unleashed upon the breakup of Yugoslavia. In contrast, research has suggested ethnic tolerance and intermingling was the norm throughout the region.¹

The rugged mountain topography of Bosnia and Herzegovina has several times made it a remote province of large empires centered to the north, south, or west, often serving as a border region. Bosnia and Herzegovina’s history as an independent state or kingdom is short—with a period of less than 100 years during the late medieval era and the nearly two decades since 1992. During the 19th century, Bosnia and Herzegovina was a buffer region between the Austrian and Ottoman Empires, moving from one empire to the other as a peace-treaty pawn. Later, in 1914, the assassination carried out by a Bosnian Serb terrorist group in Sarajevo set off a chain of events leading to World War I.^{2, 3, 4}

Pre-Slavic Bosnia and Herzegovina

The earliest documented inhabitants of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina were the Illyrian tribes. Among the better known of these groups were the Delmatae, whose lands extended from Dalmatia (in modern-day Croatia) into western Bosnia, the Scordisci in northeastern Bosnia, and the Daesitates in central Bosnia.⁵ Herding, hunting, and fishing were more common than agriculture among most of these Illyrian tribes, except in the larger river valleys.^{6,7}

The Illyrian tribes of the Bosnia region were influenced during the 4th century B.C.E. by Celtic tribes invading from the north and by the Greeks arriving from the south.^{8,9} A century later, the Romans launched the first of several campaigns against the Illyrians. By the 9th century C.E., all of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina lay under Roman control.¹⁰ Most of this territory became part of the Dalmatian Province, except for the northernmost regions, which were included in the province of Pannonia.¹¹ The Romans built several roads across the Bosnian region, mostly for the Roman legions traveling to far-flung military outposts.¹² However, these routes also provided a transportation network for silver mined in eastern Bosnia, near the present-day city of Srebrenica.¹³

At the end of the 4th century C.E., tribal groups from the north and east invaded the Roman Empire several times. The Huns, Goths, and Alans were among the tribes who invaded the Western Balkans. None of these peoples left a lasting legacy on the Bosnian region because they quickly moved on to other areas. However, two closely connected new populations who entered the Balkans in the 6th century—the Avars and the Slavs—had a very significant impact on the subsequent history of the region.¹⁴

Serbs and Croats

The Slavs allied themselves with the Avars initially. The latter group, known for its fighting prowess, rapidly established a base of power in the Danube Basin. By the late 8th century, the armies of the Frankish King Charlemagne had pushed the Avars out of the region.¹⁵ The Slavs, who were largely settled in the Balkan regions to the south of the Avars' domain, remained.¹⁶

By the time of Charlemagne's campaign, several later waves of Slavic tribes had migrated into the Balkans, including the Serbs and Croats. Little is known about the origins of these two peoples. The most widely held theory is that both groups arrived in the Balkans via a migration route that began in the region north of the Black Sea (in modern-day Ukraine), moved westward to central Europe (southern Poland, the Czech Republic, and eastern Germany), and from there headed southward. The Serbs initially settled in what is now southwest Serbia, and eventually expanded their realm to modern-day Montenegro, eastern Bosnia, and Herzegovina. The Croats initially settled in modern-day Croatia and probably most of Bosnia, with the exception of the eastern strip near the Drina River.^{17, 18, 19}

Until the year 1180, present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced a confusing array of conquests and shifting alliances that prevented the development of a separate political identity in the region. At various times, different areas were under either Croat or Serb dominance, with the Byzantine Empire occasionally exerting nominal sovereignty. However, Herzegovina was most often tied to Serb rulers, while Bosnian areas were usually linked to Croat kingdoms. Most of the Bosnian region remained tied to the Roman Catholic Church, although Bosnia's remoteness allowed its church to operate relatively independently from Rome until the mid 14th century.²⁰ Eventually this independence opened the Bosnian Church to persistent charges of heresy. As a result, Rome introduced a Bosnian Franciscan vicariate in 1340, specifically to lead the Christian faithful back to the traditional Catholic Church.²¹

Early Bosnian Autonomy

In 1102, the Hungarian and Croatian kingdoms joined together, although from the Hungarian point of view, it was more of an annexation of the Croatian crown than a merger. Bosnia now became a distant vassal state of the Hungarian kingdom. In 1154, the Hungarian crown appointed the first known leader (*Banate*) of Bosnia, Ban Borić, at a time when the Byzantine Empire was gaining the upper hand in the region. In 1163 the Byzantium leadership in turn appointed Ban Kulin to rule Bosnia. Kulin proved a very shrewd, capable leader who successfully steered Bosnia toward greater autonomy. In 1180, Bosnia was freed of Byzantine vassalage when it helped Hungarian forces drive deep into Byzantium's lands. Subsequently, Kulin built

good relations with most of the neighboring kingdoms, established important trade connections with the important Adriatic port city of Ragusa (Dobrovnik), and defended the Bosnian Catholic Church against charges of heresy from Hungary and Zeta (Montenegro). Kulin died in 1204, and to this day he remains something of a legendary historical figure in Bosnia.^{22, 23}

The Bosnian bans who succeed Kulin often found themselves under pressure from Hungary. Hungarian armies launched failed crusader campaigns against Bosnia in the late 1230s and in 1253.²⁴ The papacy in Rome, at the very least, lent indirect support to Hungary's military actions through its frequent complaints to the rulers and church leadership about the heresies of the Bosnian Church. Much historical speculation arose over the subsequent centuries about the nature of these heresies, including an



Kulin Ban Plate
© Courtesy of Wikipedia.org

argument that the Bosnian Church had followed the extreme theological doctrines of the Bulgarian Bogomil sect. Among these beliefs was a “dualistic” conception of creation that viewed the earthly world as the work of Satan. Recent historical research, however, has discredited the Bogomil interpretation of the Bosnian Church. A modern view is that the “heresies” of the Bosnian Church simply reflected the combination of a poorly trained clergy in isolated outposts with the blending of some Orthodox Greek religious traditions.^{25, 26, 27}



Statue of Lazar Hrebljanović
© Courtesy of Wikipedia.org

The Rise and Fall of the Bosnian Kingdom

The peak of Bosnian independence and importance within the Balkan world came near the end of the medieval era. Under Ban Stjepan II Kotromanić (ruled 1322–1353), the territory of the Bosnian *Banate* expanded to include Hum (Herzegovina), marking the first time in history that Bosnia and Herzegovina had become part of the same political entity. Kotromanić’s successor was his nephew, Stjepan Trtvko (1353–1391), who was only 15 at the time of his ascendancy to power. After early revolts by Bosnian nobles and land grabs by the Hungarian crown, Trtvko finally managed to consolidate his power by 1367.

He then formed a strategic military alliance with the Serbian leader Lazar Hrebljanović, which ultimately led to Bosnian control of large chunks of modern-day Dalmatia (in Croatia), Montenegro, and southwestern Serbia. In 1377, Trtvko celebrated this expansion of Bosnian lands by declaring himself king, the first of a short line of Bosnian royalty. After Trtvko’s death in 1391, his successors spent most of the next 70 years either plotting against one another or trying to turn back (or, in some cases, accommodate) the Ottoman forces that were advancing northward and eastward through the Balkans.^{28, 29}

Most of Bosnia fell to the forces of Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II in 1463. Some of Herzegovina held out for a few years longer, and a portion of northern Bosnia resisted until the late 1520s. Thereafter, all of Bosnia was under Ottoman rule for 350 years. From 1580 onwards, Bosnia was an Ottoman *eyalet*, a first-order administrative unit comparable to a province. Its borders initially extended beyond modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the Empire began to decline in the 17th century, however, northern Ottoman territories were regained by the Hapsburg Empire. Bosnia soon became a frontier *eyalet* with borders similar to those of Bosnia and Herzegovina today.^{30, 31, 32}



Mostar, Bosnia (Ottoman era bridge)
© David, Dufresne

Religion in Ottoman Bosnia

During Ottoman rule, the Bosnian population shifted dramatically in its religious affiliation. Prior to 1463, the Serbian Orthodox Church had virtually no presence in Bosnia, outside the eastern border regions adjacent to the Drina River. (In Herzegovina, which spent several centuries politically separate from Bosnia, the situation was different.) As Bosnia became a military frontier region along its northern and eastern borders, both soldiers and settlers were recruited from other parts of the Ottoman realm to staff military outposts and populate the border regions that had been evacuated for Hapsburg lands. Many of these new arrivals were Vlachs, a non-Slav

group of people who originally spoke a language similar to Latin. The Vlachs were a nomadic group skilled in shepherding, horse breeding, and trade, and they followed the Orthodox Church. Thus, Bosnia's Christian population became more Orthodox than Catholic in these regions.^{33, 34}

The development of a large Muslim population in Bosnia during the Ottoman era represented another major religious change. The Ottomans were Muslim themselves, but they generally did not force those living in their conquered Balkan lands to convert.³⁵ Although there were certainly significant economic and political benefits to conversion, most areas of the Balkans did not experience a large shift towards Islam. Bosnia and Albania were the two exceptions. Some have theorized that one reason for the larger number of Islamic conversions in Bosnia was that no central Christian church dominated prior to the Ottoman conquest. Bosnia's population had been subject to a running battle between its indigenous Bosnian Church and the Roman Catholic Church, which viewed the former as heretical. The Serbian Orthodox Church in Herzegovina and eastern Bosnia was also competing in the mid 15th century to recruit new members from the declining Bosnian Church.³⁶ With none of the Christian faiths as organized as in other Balkan regions, Islam gradually made headway in religious conversion.^{37, 38, 39}



Battle of the Russo-Turkish War
© Courtesy of Wikipedia.org

Decline of the Ottoman Empire

The 17th and 18th centuries sustained a series of Balkan wars between the Ottoman Empire and the neighboring Hapsburg Empire and Venice. As a frontier *eyalet*, Bosnia was both a staging area and battlefield during these conflicts. It was also a place of refuge for the Ottoman forces that increasingly lost these battles.⁴⁰ Taxes were increased to help support continued fighting, triggering several tax revolts by Muslim citizens in Herzegovina during the 1720s through the 1740s.⁴¹ After a 50-year period of peace, war broke out once again between the Hapsburg (Austrian)

Empire and the Ottomans in 1788, resulting in a status quo peace settlement in 1791.⁴²

The Ottoman Empire's hold on Bosnia and Herzegovina began to be seriously threatened in the first half of the 19th century. Ottoman economic and administrative reforms were strongly resisted by Bosnian Janissaries (long a significant component of the Ottoman infantry) and Bosnian landholders, most of whom were Muslim.⁴³ Many landowners responded by instituting further taxes on the peasants who worked their lands.⁴⁴

A peasant uprising protesting these taxes in 1875, originated in Herzegovina and spread to Bosnia, sparking events that marked the final chapter of the Ottoman presence in Bosnia. When the Bosnian governor initiated a violent campaign against the resistance, Serbia and Montenegro declared war against the Ottoman Empire in 1876. They were joined a year later by Russia after the Serbian forces had suffered early military setbacks. Concurrently, a revolt against Ottoman rule in Bulgaria, brutally suppressed by Ottoman authorities, led to outrage throughout Europe and cemented Russia's decision to go to war.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Great Power designs on Balkan lands, as much as sympathy for the plight of Bosnian peasants or anger against Ottoman atrocities committed in Bulgaria, fueled what is today referred to as the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878.⁴⁶

The Austro-Hungarian Era

At the Congress of Berlin, held in 1878, Austria-Hungary (the successor of the former Hapsburg Empire) was charged with the military occupation and administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The transition period was not a smooth one, with the Bosnian population unwelcoming toward another occupying force.^{47, 48} Bosnia faced a large refugee crisis in the wake of the war. Tensions between the Christian and Muslim populations ran high due to war atrocities and the continuing strains between landless, Christian peasants and their Muslim landlords. Numerous Muslims left Bosnia during this time, many for Turkey.⁴⁹

Austria-Hungary invested a large amount of resources into the modernization of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By objective standards, the Bosnian province improved in several ways: transportation infrastructure was constructed, schools were built, industrial development moved forward, and reforestation projects were introduced. Nevertheless, for the majority of the population—landless, Christian peasants using farming methods and tools that had changed little over the centuries—life remained hard and discontent grew.^{50, 51}

Ethnic Nationalism

In the Austro-Hungarian period and the decades preceding it, religious and ethnic affiliations became politically entwined in Bosnia. This represented an outgrowth of nationalist movements in neighboring Slavic regions of the Balkans. Bosnian Catholics were seen as ethnic Croats, and Bosnian Orthodox adherents as ethnic Serbs. Bosnia's Muslim population was claimed by both ethnic Serbs and ethnic Croats, respectively.⁵² Bosnia's Muslims were also ethnically Slavic, but they instead associated with Bosnia itself, especially the Islamic institutions of the region.⁵³ This decision not to ethnically self-identify mirrored the *millet* system of the Ottoman era, in which religious communities were granted much autonomy in cultural and legal affairs.⁵⁴ Bosnia's Muslim population today is frequently referred to as Bosniak, a somewhat confusing term that in the past referred to all residents of the Bosnia region.⁵⁵

Austria-Hungary formally annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. Reaction towards the move varied widely among nationalist groups both inside and outside Bosnia.⁵⁶ Serb nationalists strongly opposed the annexation; they instead favored the creation of a "Greater Serbia" encompassing all ethnic Serb-populated areas (including much of the Bosnian region). Those ethnic Croats favoring either a federated Slavic union or a "Greater Croatia" were more likely to view Bosnian consolidation with Austria-Hungary as a useful first step towards their respective nationalist goals.⁵⁷



The First Yugoslavia

Austria-Hungary collapsed at the end of World War I. Decisions on what to do with the Empire's lands were made at the Versailles Peace Conference, held outside Paris in 1919. Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (better known "Yugoslavia"). This pan-Slavic union was proclaimed in December 1918 and subsequently ratified by the representatives at Versailles.⁵⁸ Ruled under a constitutional monarch, King Alexander (the first three years as regent for his aged father), Yugoslavia was from the first an unstable collection of disparate Slavic peoples who spoke different languages, practiced different religions, and had conflicting conceptions of what the political organization of Yugoslavia should be. Many Serbs wanted Yugoslavia to be a state with a strong central government, with Belgrade, the Serbian capital, serving as the government center. Croats and Slovenes, on the other hand, favored a federalist structure, guaranteeing significant autonomy to the provinces.⁵⁹

Stjepan Radić

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As Yugoslavia endured a series of short-lived governments, relations between Serb- and Croat-dominated parties became increasingly strained. The June 1928 assassination of Stjepan Radić (a leading Croatian political leader) on the parliamentary floor triggered a crisis that would seemingly dissolve the Yugoslavian union. In response, in 1929, King Alexander annulled the constitution, dissolved the national parliament, and banned political parties; Yugoslavia became a royal dictatorship.⁶⁰

One of the king's first actions was to reorganize Yugoslavia into nine new districts, called *banovinas*, which had little or no connection to historical regions. Parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina were partitioned between four of these *banovinas*.⁶¹ Alexander's policies, including this attempt to erase traditional political boundaries, did little to unify Yugoslavia. Alexander was assassinated in Marseilles five years later by a Macedonian terrorist, possibly with assistance from the Ustaše, an ultranationalist Croat terrorist group.⁶²



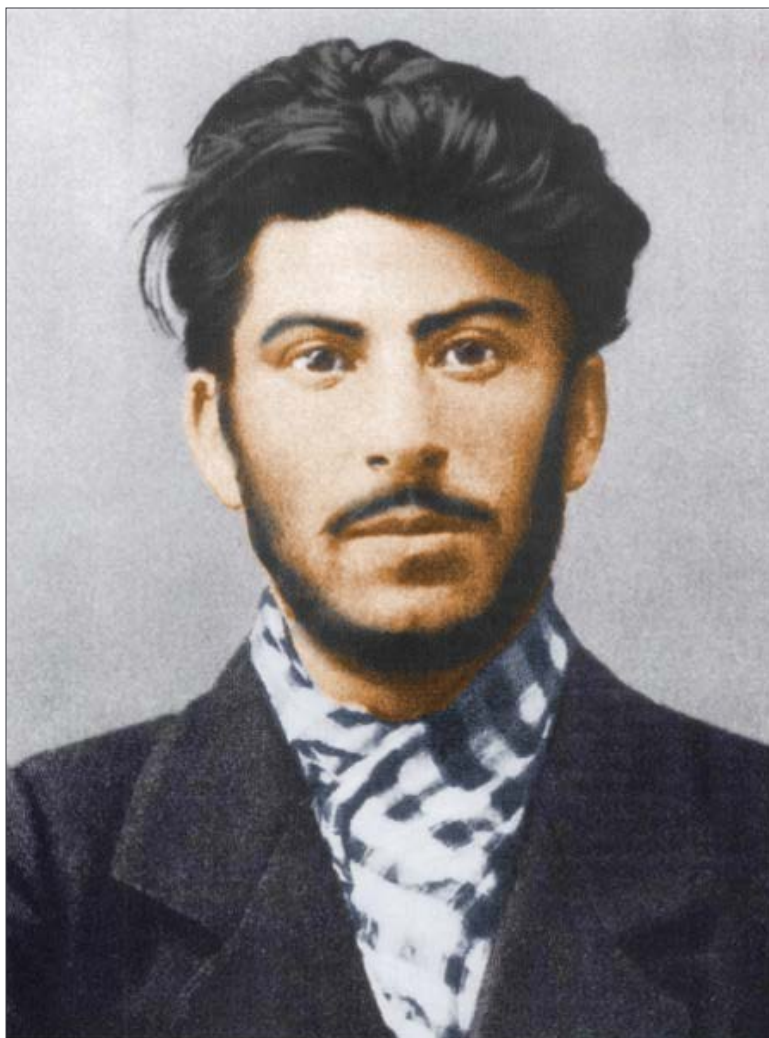
Draža Mihailović
© Pidge Copetti

World War II

Yugoslavia's expected collapse was interrupted a German invasion in April 1941. Two years prior, in August 1939, a special Croatian *banovina* was created to administer many internal matters. Parts of modern-day northeastern Bosnia, central Bosnia, and western Herzegovina, were some of the regions included in the new, somewhat autonomous *banovina*.^{63,64} Bosnian Muslim leaders quickly demanded that a similar autonomous region be created within Bosnia and adjacent regions. The presence of a majority ethnic Serb population in what remained of Bosnia made it easy for government officials in Belgrade to ignore these wishes. In addition, the issue of ethno-regional tensions within Yugoslavia had, by 1940, taken a back seat to appeasing German leader Adolph Hitler, whose armies were just across the Yugoslav border in former Austrian territories. A coup waged against the Yugoslav government by Serbian military officers who were opposed to these mollification policies. This gave Hitler all the motivation he needed to unleash his forces. Beginning with a massive bombing raid on Belgrade, all of Yugoslavia was overrun in an 11-day blitzkrieg during the spring of 1941.⁶⁵

The Axis powers dismantled Yugoslavia, with Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, and Hungary each having regions under their control. Bosnia and Herzegovina was included in the Independent State of Croatia, a puppet state nominally “run” by leaders of the Ustaše, the Croatian terrorist group that had been in forced exile for over a decade. The Ustaše launched a brutal eradication campaign against ethnic Serbs, Jews, and Roma people (gypsies). Many of the anti-Serb activities took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including religious conversions, deportations, and even executions.⁶⁶

Two main resistance groups battled against the occupation forces in Serbia and Croatia. One was a Serbian nationalist group collectively known as the Četnici (Chetniks), led by former Yugoslav Army colonel Draža Mihailović. The other was the “Partisans,” a Communist-controlled group led by Josip Broz, whose nom de guerre was “Tito.” Born in Croatia while it was still part of Austria-Hungary, Tito spent several years in Russia during the Russian Revolution before returning to Yugoslavia, where in 1939 he emerged as the leader of the outlawed Communist Party of Yugoslavia.⁶⁷



Joseph Stalin
© Courtesy of Wikipedia.org

The Second Yugoslavia

Tito's forces emerged as the most potent of the two resistance organizations. Ultimately, Allied tactical support, originally given to the Chetniks, was transferred to the Partisans.⁶⁸ In October 1944, the Partisans participated in the liberation of Belgrade, along with the Soviet Red Army.⁶⁹ ⁷⁰ Six months later, in April 1945, the Partisans entered Sarajevo. By May 1945, all of Yugoslavia was liberated. Tito quickly consolidated power, most notably by ordering the deaths of thousands viewed as either German collaborators or anti-communists. (Total estimates of those killed range from 30,000 to 200,000.)⁷¹

In 1946, Yugoslavia was reconstituted as a Communist-controlled federation consisting of six republics (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro) and two autonomous provinces of Serbia (Vojvodina, Kosovo). The nation initially aligned itself with the Soviet Union and other communist states of Eastern and Central Europe. However, it split with Moscow in 1948 over a dispute with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin concerning Yugoslavia's increasingly independent foreign policy actions in the Balkans.⁷²

During the 1960s and 1970s, Bosnia's Muslim population was recognized by the central government as an ethno-national group, rather than a religious group. The distinction was an important one because Bosnian Muslims were now seen as a "nation within a nation," similar to Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes. Those who still viewed Bosnian Muslims as either ethnic Croats or ethnic Serbs (who had yet to declare their ethnicity) found such arguments counter to official government policy.⁷³

Following Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia's economy began to decline amidst staggering inflation and a mountain of foreign debt.^{74,75} Increasing disillusionment with the government created a breeding ground for nationalist ideologies. During the late 1980s, Slobodan Milošević, leader of the Serbian Communist Party, appealed to Serbian nationalism to garner increasing political power within Yugoslavia. Nationalist groups and political parties emerged in the republics with non-Serb majority populations—most notably, Croatia and Slovenia.⁷⁶ Multi-party elections in 1990 swept non-

communist, nationalist parties to power in both of these republics.⁷⁷ For Yugoslavia, the question was seemingly no longer “if” it would split apart, but “how.”



Mate Boban's grave
© Courtesy of Wikipedia.org

Bosnian Independence

The answer to this question came the following summer. The first salvos came in the summer of 1991, after Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence on 25 June. The Yugoslav People's Army waged a brief and ineffective campaign against Slovenia. It then shifted its attention to Croatia, where ethnic Serb separatists had already declared their own independent region (the Republic of Serbian Krajina) in areas of the country having a Serb-majority population. After the Croatian conflict began, it seemed inevitable that Bosnia, a republic with significant ethnic Serb and Croat populations, would become embroiled in ethnic-based warfare.

Bosnia's republican government in the early part of 1991 was a power-sharing arrangement of three ethnic-based parties: the Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA, led by Alija Izetbegović), the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS, led by Radovan Karadžić), and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ, led by Stjepan Kljuić, who was replaced by Mate Boban in 1992). Several attempts by the three parties to negotiate a federated state consisting of ethnic “cantons” (administrative units) failed, thus nearly assuring the inevitable break-up of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In February and March 1992, a referendum on independence for Bosnia and Herzegovina was passed overwhelmingly in a vote that was boycotted by the SDS and their followers. Shortly thereafter, Bosnian President Izetbegović declared Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence from Yugoslavia after parliamentary approval. Karadžić and the SDS responded a few weeks later, announcing the formation of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (later known as Republika Srpska). On 7 April 1992 the United States and the European Community (the predecessor of the European Union) officially recognized the new state. That same day, fighting broke out in Sarajevo, marking the beginning of a conflict that would become the deadliest European War since World War II.^{78, 79} Within five to six weeks of independence, over 60% of Bosnian territory was under Serb control.⁸⁰



Military Policeman
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The Bosnian War

The Bosnian War was not a strictly internal conflict. The Bosnian Serb forces were initially assisted by units of the Yugoslav People's Army and by paramilitary groups from Serbia. Bosnian Croat fighters received assistance from Croatian paramilitary forces as well as the Croatian Army.⁸¹ The Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the Bosnian governmental force and was frequently associated with the Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), although the army's units also included ethnic Croats and even Serbs.⁸² It was the only combatant army in the Bosnian War not to be assisted by external militias from neighboring Balkan states. However, *mujahedeen* volunteers arriving from the Middle East and elsewhere fought in the Bosnian War against ethnic Serb and Croat forces.⁸³

The Bosnian War ultimately involved United Nations peacekeeping forces. Their presence, however, did little to limit the violence. In early July 1995, UN forces stationed near the town of Srebrenica, a safe area for Bosniak civilians, were overrun by Serb forces. The result was the execution of 8,000 Bosniak men and boys, an event that was later ruled as genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia.⁸⁴ These deaths were some of the last of the nearly 100,000 soldiers and civilians who died during the conflict.⁸⁵ In addition, nearly 2.3 million Bosnians were forced to flee their homes, creating a staggering refugee crisis.⁸⁶



Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
© Nyttend / Wikipedia.org

Dayton Peace Accords

In August 1995, NATO bombers unleashed fierce aerial assaults against Serb positions around Sarajevo, a city that had been under siege since the beginning of the war. Meanwhile, Croat and Bosnian Army forces began successful offensive campaigns in western Bosnia that overran Serb positions. Peace talks resumed in November 1995, at Wright-Patterson Airbase in Dayton, Ohio. An agreement was finally announced at the end of the month, which outlined the post-war political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina that remains in effect to this day.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into two “entities”—the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with each having about the same amount of territory.⁸⁷ The nation’s presidency was established as a three-person

office that included one representative from each ethnic group.^{88, 89, 90} Also an Office of the High Representative (OHR) was created to oversee the civil implementation of the Dayton Accords, under the guidance of the multinational Peace Implementation Council. The OHR office was supposed to close in 2008, but political progress has been too slow. Progress towards meeting the conditions necessary to close the OHR has stalled, and the office remained open and active in 2014.⁹¹ ⁹²The central government’s powers are weak, and thus most traditional governmental functions are carried out at the entity level.⁹³



Radovan Karadžić
© Mikhail Evstafiev

Post-War Bosnia

The end of the Bosnian War ushered in a period in which those accused of perpetrating war crimes were arrested and brought to trial by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague. Among those indicted were former Republika Srpska (RS) President Radovan Karadžić and RS Army Chief of Staff

Radko Mladić, both accused of genocide related to the Srebrenica massacre. Karadzic remained on the run until July 2008, when he was arrested in Belgrade after years of hiding in plain sight as a guru-like holistic health counselor.⁹⁴ Mladić was finally captured in 2011. His war crimes trial, which began in 2012, is ongoing.^{95, 96, 97, 98}

Nationalist politicians rose to power during the 1998 national elections. Although the nationalists were defeated in the 2006 elections, moderate politicians relied heavily on ethnically-based messages to appeal to voters. They created a six-party coalition to form the national government but the Serb Party for Democratic Progress withdrew from the coalition in February 2009.⁹⁹ The most recent elections were held in October 2014. Once again, nationalist candidates were victorious.^{100, 101}

Current Situation

Since the war's end, the nation's two entities have made slow progress in consolidating some governmental institutions, including the military. The OHR has been a strong force in moving this integration forward.^{102, 103, 104, 105} But major differences persist. The Bosnian Serbs pressed for greater autonomy and talk about seceding. The Croats want an internal secession for its people. The Bosniaks seek to strengthen the federal government and create broader national unity.^{106, 107}

The duplication inherent in this multiple governance structure has taken a toll on the economy. Economic growth has been hampered by a large public sector responsible for almost 50% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).^{108, 109} The failing economy, rampant unemployment, and dissatisfaction with the government sparked the most violent demonstrations since the end of the war.^{110, 111}

In a bid to help the Bosnians achieve greater self-rule, NATO foreign ministers agreed to permit BiH to join the Membership Action Plan program, a first step toward NATO membership. The conditions for membership, however, have been stalled by the RS leaders who fear the action could strengthen the federal government. Similarly, BiH signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union in 2008. The SAA agreement is a first step toward EU candidacy. No progress has been made because the BiH federal government has been unable to meet the conditions required by the terms of the SAA.^{112, 113, 114}

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Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment

1. The shifting alliances of the first millennium C.E. prevented present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina from developing its own regional image.

TRUE

At various times, different areas would be under either Croat or Serb dominance, with the Byzantine Empire occasionally exerting nominal sovereignty. As a generalization, however, Herzegovina was most often tied to Serb rulers, while Bosnian areas usually were linked to Croat kingdoms.

2. Historically, the Bosnian region was predominately Muslim.

FALSE

The remoteness of the Bosnian region, which remained tied to the Roman Catholic Church, allowed it to operate relatively independently from Rome. In 1340, however, a Bosnian Franciscan vicariate was given the responsibility of leading the Christian faithful back to the true Church after allegations of heresy arose.

3. Bosnia and Herzegovina first became part of the same political unit only in the 19th century.

FALSE

Under Ban Stjepan II Kotromanić (ruled 1322-1353), the territory of the Bosnian Banate expanded to include Hum (Herzegovina), marking the first time in history that Bosnia and Herzegovina had become part of the same political entity.

4. Bosnia was under Ottoman rule for much of the latter half of the second millennium C.E.

TRUE

By 1580, all of Bosnia was under Ottoman rule, which would last 350 years. What began as a first-order administrative eyalet whose borders exceeded those of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, eventually shrank to its present-day size, as the Ottoman Empire began to decline and the Austro-Hungarian Empire regained territories once held.

5. Bosnia and Herzegovina is making clear progress on achieving EU candidacy.

FALSE

BiH signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union in 2008. The SAA agreement is a first step toward EU candidacy. No progress has been made because the BiH federal government has been unable to meet the conditions required by the terms of the SAA.



Marshlands
© Alan Bloom

Chapter 3: Economy

Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy was ravaged during the war. Production fell by 80% between 1992 and 1995 and unemployment was high. In the three years immediately following the war, the economy began to recover, but slowed once again in 2000-2002. Between 2003 and 2008, the economy again showed signs of recovery as it grew at rates above 5%. Between 2009 and 2014, economic growth was somewhat volatile.^{1,2} The economy took a nosedive in 2014. This was caused, in part, by floods that ravaged large parts of the country.^{3,4} The worsening economy sparked the worst violent protests seen in the country since the end of the war. Unemployment hovered around 44% for the general population, and over 60% for the youth.^{5,6,7}

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a transitional economy, but market reforms have yet to be fully realized.^{8,9} Privatization of banks has progressed smoothly, but privatization of state-owned enterprises has been slower than hoped. This is especially the case in

the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where gridlock between Muslim and Croat political parties has complicated the process of instituting economic reform. Corruption and cronyism have hindered the development of a strong business sector in both entities.^{10,11, 12} The current economy is heavily dependent on the export of metals, energy, and textiles. Foreign aid, international loans, and foreign remittances play a significant role in economic growth and stability.^{13, 14} Fragmented government, high unemployment, and an underdeveloped manufacturing base remain significant obstacles to recovery, and the economy is subject to external shocks from an unstable world economy.^{15, 16}



Small scale farmer
© Almin Zrno / World Bank

Agriculture

In 2013, agricultural production accounted for 8.1% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), and employed 18.9% of Bosnia's labor force.¹⁷ In spite of its relatively small size, agriculture is an important part of the BiH economy, providing food security for most of the rural population.¹⁸ Most farms in Bosnia and Herzegovina are less than 2 ha (4.9 acres) in size and yield subsistence-level crops. Because much of Bosnia and Herzegovina is hilly and mountainous, less than 43% of the total land area is devoted to agriculture.^{19, 20, 21} Of this agricultural land, nearly half is grassland. A high percentage of the remaining arable land is not under cultivation.^{22, 23}

Very few of Bosnia and Herzegovina's farmlands are irrigated, and those that are irrigated are found almost exclusively in western Herzegovina.²⁴ Droughts, varying from mild to extreme, can depress agricultural yields from year to year. Northeastern and southwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina are the regions most vulnerable to extreme droughts.²⁵ Several droughts in recent years have reduced yields by as much as 70%.^{26, 27}

Bosnia and Herzegovina's arable land is mostly used for cereals (predominately maize and wheat), vegetables, and fruits.²⁸ Though a high percentage of the nation's farmlands are growing cereals, Bosnia and Herzegovina still imports a significant amount of its grain.²⁹ The leading fruits grown are plums, apples, grapes, tomatoes, cherries, raspberries, and strawberries.³⁰ Wine is produced in Herzegovina near Mostar, where the karst soils and Mediterranean climate provide favorable conditions for the indigenous Žilavka white and Blatina red wines.^{31, 32}

Livestock products are major contributors to Bosnia and Herzegovina's agricultural output. By total value, cow milk is the leading agricultural product, and has double the production value of second-place fresh vegetable products. Beef, eggs, and chicken are

also in the nation's top 10 most valuable agricultural products.³³



Factories in Zenica
© aaProductions / flickr.com

Manufacturing and Industry

Industry provides 26% of Bosnia and Herzegovina's GDP and employs over 30% of the nation's workforce.³⁴ Manufacturing is the dominant industrial sector, followed by construction, electricity, gas and water supply, and mining/quarrying.^{35, 36} Major manufactured goods include food products, metal products, base metal processing (iron, steel, aluminum), manufacturing of non-metallic minerals (e.g., cement), and manufacturing of wood products (e.g., cut timber).^{37, 38} Relations between labor and industry are strained. Many unions are fighting for better working conditions and worker rights. Strikes are common. Industrial workers make significantly

less money than workers do in other sectors.³⁹

Aluminum from bauxite and iron ore are the primary metallic minerals mined in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Much smaller amounts of lead, manganese, and zinc are also extracted.⁴⁰ The nation's largest steelworks is in the industrial city of Zenica, located within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The primary aluminum processing plants are in Zvornik (Republika Srpska) and Mostar (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina).⁴¹ Industrial non-metallic rocks and minerals, such as gypsum, limestone, dolomite, quartz sands, rock salt, and crushed stone, generate a larger amount of the nation's GDP than do metallic ores.^{42, 43}



Oil Slump and Inspection Pit
© Lee Bryant

Energy Resources

Bosnia and Herzegovina produces no oil or natural gas and thus relies on imports for these fuels. The nation's sole oil refinery is at Bosanski Brod, located in Republika Srpska on the banks of the Sava River.^{44, 45, 46} It reopened in November 2008 after being closed for three years due to large, unpaid debts.⁴⁷

Bosnia and Herzegovina's power supply comes from a mix of coal-powered plants (60%) and hydropower plants (40%).⁴⁸ Three entity-owned utility companies—Elektroprivreda Bosne i

Hercegovine (EPBiH), Elektroprivreda Hrvastke Zajednice Herceg Bosne (EPHZHB), and Elektroprivreda Republika Srpska (EPRS)—provide electricity in different sections of each entity.⁴⁹ Overall, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a net exporter of electrical power.⁵⁰

Bosnia and Herzegovina has several lignite (brown coal) and sub-bituminous coal deposits (a lower grade coal, but higher grade than lignite). The largest of these deposits are in the Tuzla Basin, a region in the northwest part of the country centered around Tuzla, a city in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here and in other regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the coal is extracted by both open-pit and underground mines and is primarily used to power electrical plants.⁵¹

Trade

Bosnia and Herzegovina carries a significant negative balance of trade.^{52, 53, 54} Bosnia and Herzegovina's major trade partners are generally the countries located in its immediate geographic neighborhood in or near the Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina's leading export destinations in 2012 were Germany (16%), Croatia (14%), Italy (12%), Serbia (9%), Austria (8%), and Slovenia (8% EU).⁵⁵ Main exports included metals, clothing, and wood products.^{56, 57} The most important source countries for Bosnia and Herzegovina's imports are Croatia 13%, Germany (11%), Russian Federation (10%), Serbia (10%), Italy (10%), China (6%), and Slovenia (5%). Main import products included machinery and equipment, automobiles, chemicals, fuels, and foodstuffs.^{58, 59}



Cargo Train
© Timon91 / flickr.com



Tourists in Bosnia
© Susan Sermoneta

Tourism

In 1995, when the Bosnian War finally ended, Bosnia was probably the least likely tourist destination in Europe. Starting from that low point, a modest but steadily growing tourism industry has developed. The industry is now growing at double-digit rates. Arrivals and overnight stays were up 9.3% and 12.2% in 2012 over 2011 figures.⁶⁰ In 2011, approximately 4% of the labor force was directly employed in tourism.⁶¹ Approximately 678,000 foreign tourists arrived in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2012.⁶² Another 226,768 tourists made their way to Republika Srpska.⁶³ The largest numbers of tourists

were from Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Italy, and Turkey.^{64, 65} The main destinations in FBiH were Sarajevo, Ostala Mjesta, and Mostar.⁶⁶ The most likely subsectors to experience growth include skiing and mountain tourism, ecotourism, and spa tourism. In addition, the country has a variety of important cultural heritage and religious sites that could attract large numbers of tourists. The Old Bridge in Mostar and the Mehmed Pasa Sokolovic Bridge in Visegrad are UNESCO World Heritage sites.⁶⁷

More than one third of all foreign tourists arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina are from either Croatia or Serbia, followed by Slovenia, Germany, and Italy. Not surprisingly, there are significant differences in the tourism patterns between the two entities. Republika Srpska, for example, receives the bulk of its tourists from Serbia. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, is the initial destination for the large majority of visitors from Croatia, Poland, and Turkey. The Federation is also home to the nation's biggest city (Sarajevo) and largest international airport, and it draws a larger and more diversified population of international tourists.^{68, 69}

One of Bosnia and Herzegovina's top tourist attractions, and the world's second-largest Catholic pilgrimage site, is the small village of Međugorje, located near Mostar.⁷⁰ The town became famous in 1981 when six teenagers claimed that an apparition of the Virgin Mary spoke to them. The Catholic Church has not acknowledged these apparitions, which are the first to have been reported in Europe since Lourdes, France in 1858 and Fatima, Portugal in 1917.^{71, 72}

Banking, Finance, and Investment

Bosnia's national currency is the convertible mark (*konvertibilna marka*, which carries the ISO code BAM, and is locally abbreviated as KM). The value of the KM is tied to the euro, and it is one of the Balkans' most stable currencies.⁷³ The KM came into existence in 1998, and its value was originally pegged to the German mark.^{74, 75, 76} When Germany switched over to the euro in 2002, Bosnia and Herzegovina followed its lead by pegging its currency to the euro.⁷⁷

Bosnia and Herzegovina's banking system crumbled during the 1990s, leading to a loss of savings and a widespread distrust of banks that took several years to overcome.⁷⁸ Since that time,

the banking sector has been the target of numerous reforms that have resulted in a large influx of foreign banks providing greater access to loans and financial services.⁷⁹ Microfinance institutions, providing small loans to individuals and small businesses, have also expanded greatly. However, a drop in personal earnings and in remittances from outside the country caused loan defaults in 2008 that significantly slowed this growth.⁸⁰

Bosnia's Central Bank functions are split between three agencies. The Banking Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Banking Agency of the Republika Srpska, supervise banks in their respective entities. Each oversees the licensing, regulation, and oversight of commercial banks operating in their areas. The Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in turn, coordinates the actions of the entity banking agencies and is responsible for the nation's monetary policy.⁸¹ As of 2014, 28 commercial banks operate within Bosnia and Herzegovina, with 18 headquartered in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 10 in Republika Srpska. Sarajevo and Banja Luka are the respective banking centers.⁸²

Since 2007, foreign direct investment (FDI) has tailed off.⁸³ Government efforts to secure more funds have been somewhat successful. In 2013, approximately USD 633 million found its way into the country. Serbia, Austria, Croatia, Slovenia, and Russia are the biggest investors. Most FDI dollars find their way into the manufacturing, banking, and telecommunications sectors. Problems of transparency and corruption, along with a weak rule of law combine to keep investment sums low.^{84, 85}



Bosnian money
© kcakduman / flickr.com



Tram in Bosnia
© Jennifer Boyer

Transportation

The Bosnian War damaged much of Bosnia and Herzegovina's transportation system, including nearly half of the nation's roads.⁸⁶ Several international and national agencies, including the European Union, the U.S., Japan, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, subsequently provided hundreds of millions to carry out repairs to roads, bridges, tunnels, railway equipment, and airports.⁸⁷ Today, most of the country's transportation infrastructure has returned to the level it was at prior to the beginning of fighting, although road maintenance and rehabilitation is spotty in some areas.^{88, 89}

Bosnia's roads transport over 95% of all goods and persons within Bosnia and thus are the linchpin in the transportation network.⁹⁰ Fewer than 70 km (44 mi) of the nation's highway system has four lanes.^{91, 92} Bosnia and Herzegovina's rail system consists of a little over 1,000 km of track, of which more than 58% is electrified.^{93, 94} This rail system is split between two companies that control the train infrastructure within each entity.⁹⁵ The rail companies within each entity have freight-and passenger-train connections to the Croatian rail system, but only Republika Srpska has connections to Serbia's rail system.^{96, 97, 98}

Sarajevo International Airport is the primary air gateway for Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is served by several foreign airlines offering scheduled direct flights to various European cities, as well as B&H Airlines, the flagship carrier for the country.⁹⁹ The only other airport with international air service is Banja Luka and Tuzla.^{100, 101}

Standard of Living

Compared with most other European countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina's standard of living is low.^{102, 103} Although the average monthly cost of living in 2014 was approximately USD 562, it was above the wages for most residents.¹⁰⁴ In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the average monthly wage in 2012 was approximately BAM 830 (USD 480). The average monthly wage was approximately BAM 103 (USD 60) in Republika Srpska.^{105, 106, 107} The poverty rate is estimated at 18% of the population.¹⁰⁸ Another 23-30% of the population is at risk of poverty.¹⁰⁹ Contrary to the pattern seen in other countries, however, households headed by women are significantly less likely to lie below the poverty line than those headed by men.^{110, 111} The official unemployment rate is very high (roughly 44%). For young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the unemployment rate is much higher than for the population as a whole.^{112, 113, 114} The youth unemployment rate is



Sarajevo
©, Ville Miettinen

one of the highest in world, and four times higher than the European Union average.^{115, 116, 117}

Looking Forward

Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced a modest growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about 1.5% in 2013.¹¹⁸ In 2014, devastating regional floods led to a contraction in the economy.^{119, 120} The short term outlooks for economic growth are somewhat gloomy. Projections suggest that the economy will grow between 2015 and 2020 although at rates generally below 2%. Some estimates, however, are more optimistic and place growth at around 4-5% in 2016 and 2017. The balance of trade is expected to remain relatively unchanged and remain negative.^{121, 122, 123}

In 2014, the economy showed several strengths, including five months of foreign currency reserves, a stable exchange rate, and low inflation.¹²⁴ On the negative side, the country faces a number of challenges. Ethnic differences persist and continue to block any meaningful reform at the national level. Poverty rates are high and unemployment rates have soared to more than 40%. Over the next two years, unemployment is expected to drop but only marginally.¹²⁵ The nation's major export partners are emerging countries whose economies are volatile. The national deficit is unsustainably

high. Coupled with a high external debt, Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy remains particularly vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters.¹²⁶

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Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Agriculture makes up the single largest sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy.

FALSE

Agriculture is a relatively small but important part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy, providing the base of economic activity in rural areas. In 2013, agricultural production represented 8.1% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), and 18.9% of Bosnia and Herzegovina's workers were employed in the agricultural sector.

2. Bosnia and Herzegovina's topography limits agricultural productivity.

TRUE

Because much of Bosnia and Herzegovina is hilly and mountainous, less than 43% of the total land area is devoted to agriculture. Of this agricultural land, nearly half is grasslands.

3. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a net exporter of cereals.

FALSE

Bosnia and Herzegovina's arable land is mostly used for cereals (mostly maize and wheat), vegetables, and fruits. Even though a high percentage of the nation's farmlands are growing cereals, Bosnia and Herzegovina still imports a significant amount of its grain needs.

4. Bosnia and Herzegovina must import all oil and natural gas they need.

TRUE

Bosnia and Herzegovina produces no oil or natural gas and thus relies on imports for these fuels. The nation's sole oil refinery is at Bosanki Brod, located in Republika Srpska on the banks of the Sava River.

5. Bosnia and Herzegovina produces electricity by means of its coal-powered and hydropower plants.

TRUE

Bosnia and Herzegovina's power supply comes from a mix of coal-powered plants (60%) and hydropower plants (40%). Overall, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a net exporter of electrical power.



Market in Bosnia
© Ivana Vasilj

Chapter 4: Society

Introduction

All Bosnians, regardless of ethnic background, share a common traditional Slavic cultural heritage. Yet, each group is still distinguished from others by their religious affiliations. The majority of Bosniaks are Muslims, while the Serbs are predominantly Orthodox Christian and the Croats are primarily Roman Catholic.^{1, 2, 3} These three ethnic groups coexisted for centuries before the outbreak of war in the 1990's. Marriage across ethnic groups was common.^{4, 5, 6, 7} All of that ended when the former nation of Yugoslavia disintegrated in 1991. Ethnic violence rose to genocidal levels. The divisions created during those years remain.^{8, 9} No longer do the three groups come together freely. Each ethnic group maintains its own traditions and much of daily life remains circumscribed by ethnic (religious) affiliation.¹⁰ Yet, each group is also part of the larger Bosnian national culture that is based on shared history and experiences.^{11, 12}

Bosnian cultural traditions have been broadly influenced by European/Mediterranean and Turkish traditions, many of which derive from the days of Ottoman rule.¹³ Family

and hospitality are two values that transcend the ethnic divide. Families often include three generations in one house, especially in rural areas. If they do not live close, relatives visit one another and are always in contact.¹⁴ Within the nuclear family, many parents provide for their children even after they have gotten married. Parents may even give money or housing to their children.¹⁵ It is also customary for adult children to live with their parents until they marry. Older children are expected to take in and take care of their parents when they become too old to take care of themselves.¹⁶

Bosnians are an outgoing, warm, and friendly people. They are very community oriented, preferring close relations with their friends and neighbors. They have a broad sense of humor and often laugh at themselves. *Ćeif*, a concept that refers to a mood to do something, is a sense of spiritual calmness that allows Bosnians to act spontaneously without much concern for the consequences.^{17, 18} This helps Bosnians maintain their relaxed way of life.¹⁹



Bosnian family
©, Kathleen Franklin

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Three major ethnic groups make up the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosniaks, making up 48% of Bosnians, are South Slavs of Muslim affiliation or heritage.^{20, 21} Serbs (37%) are traditionally affiliated with the Orthodox Christian Church. Croats (14%) are traditionally Roman Catholic.²²

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has three official languages, each corresponding to one of the main ethnic groups: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian.²³ All ethnic groups speak the Serbo-Croatian language, which is only minimally different from the three official languages. The dialects

demonstrate slight variations in vocabulary and pronunciation. The primary difference between them is in the use of written scripts. In the Serbian region of the Republika Srpska (RS), the written language is Cyrillic while the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), uses Latin script.^{24, 25, 26, 27}

Religion is strongly correlated with ethnicity, but the two phenomena are by no means identical.^{28, 29} Tensions among these groups manifested in the Bosnian War (1992–1995), including violent ethnic cleansing campaigns. Internal displacement and emigration redistributed the population. Bosniaks and Croats live mainly in The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), in the western and central portions of the country.³⁰

³¹ Serbs predominate in The Republika Srpska (RS).³² Observers have asserted that this political structure has reinforced ethnic divisions.³³

With no overarching sense of Bosnian national identity, religion rather than ethnicity continues to divide the nation. Some Bosnians identify strongly with their Bosnian nationality. National identification is highest among the Serbs (68%). Roughly half of Croats (48%) and 50% of Bosniaks identified strongly with their nationality as Bosnians. On the other hand, 63% of Serbs, 51% of Croats, and 47% of Bosniaks identified strongly with their religion.^{34, 35} This suggests that for many people, religion and nationality are inextricably linked. On the other hand, a significant number of people have disentangled the two, which gives some hope for normalizing interactions.³⁶ Relations among the groups are improving. In a 2010 survey, 60% of Bosniaks stated that they trusted people of Orthodox or Catholic faith. Among Croats, 73% said they trusted Orthodox Serbs, but fewer (63%) trusted Muslims. Among the Serbs, 67% trusted Catholics and 62% trusted Muslims.^{37, 38}



Cathedral in Sarajevo
© Geoff Young

Religion

The federal constitution, as well as the constitutions of FBiH and RS, protects religious freedoms in the nation. The laws prohibit discrimination that is based on religion, and guarantees the legal status of churches and religious communities. The respective governments generally respect these freedoms, but may fail to enforce the laws. The complex and weak governance structure also contributes to full religious rights among religious minorities.³⁹ In some areas, schools are segregated.⁴⁰ In other cases, the government failed to provide required services to religious minorities. In the worst cases of abuse, local governments allowed religious intolerance, which restricted freedom of worship

for minority populations.⁴¹

The law guarantees representation for each of the three major religious groups in both the government and armed forces. All religious groups are formally afforded the right to religious education. Students may opt out of religious classes although primary school students need their parents' permission. Only religious classes for the majority religion may be available in more remote sections of BiH.⁴² Other religious groups, however, are subject to discrimination. Under state law, members of religious groups other than the "big three" are not allowed to run for office.⁴³

The country has still been unable to amend its constitution to eliminate ethnic discrimination. Neither has it been able to resolve the tri-partite presidency and

Congress, which have essentially paralyzed the country. The European Union declared that until Bosnians are able to make those changes to the constitution, no election results will be recognized.^{44, 45, 46}



Bosnian women
© Iain Guest

Gender Issues

Within Bosnian homes, traditional gender roles often continue to be the norm, although less so among the nation's younger generation.⁴⁷ Women generally take care of the household chores and child-rearing. Even in households in which there is more equitable sharing of household responsibilities, the nation's high level of unemployment has raised barriers for women, limiting access to the formal employment sector outside the home.^{48, 49, 50} Only about 39% of women work outside the home. Most work in traditionally female occupations, such as teaching. Women have trouble finding jobs, are paid generally lower wages, and represent nearly 52% of all the unemployed.^{51, 52}

Bosnian law forbids any direct or indirect forms of discrimination based on gender.⁵³ ⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the investigation and prosecution of infractions of this law are not uniform. One of the biggest problem areas is violence against women, both in the form of sexual assault and domestic violence. By some non-governmental organization estimates, roughly one woman out of three in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a victim of domestic violence. Problems are particularly acute in the Republika Srpska, where domestic violence is considered a minor offense. The government has tried to address the issue by establishing domestic violence hotlines, setting up safe houses, and providing police training on how to handle domestic violence cases. Unfortunately, most domestic violence victims (an estimated nine out of ten women) do not report the crimes.^{55, 56, 57, 58}

One of the most difficult legacies of the Bosnian War was the use of rape as an "instrument of terror." While members of every ethnic group in the 1992–1995 war were convicted of such crimes, the United Nations Commission on Breaches of Geneva Law in the Former Yugoslavia found that Bosnian Muslim women comprised the largest number of reported victims, and that Bosnian Serbs comprised the largest number of alleged perpetrators.⁵⁹ The shocking reports about mass rapes that took place galvanized public opinion. This led to ground-breaking legal regulations that specifically target rape as a weapon of terrorism. At the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in 1998, landmark trial judgments against Bosnian Serb defendants

“recognized rape as a violation of the Laws and Customs of War and as a basis of torture under the Geneva Conventions” for the first time.⁶⁰

Arts

Music and Dance

Traditional Bosnian music is a mix of Bosniak, Croat, Serbian, Greek, Roman, Turkish, Hungarian, and Macedonian music. One form, known as *ganga*, is a type of singing typical in rural areas. A single singer begins a song and is then joined by other singers until the singing ends in emotional wails. Arguably, the most recognizable style of music is the emotional and often melancholic folk music known as *sevdalinka*. These sad songs were traditionally accompanied with the Turkish stringed instrument known as the *saz*, a wooden lute, or *diple* (droneless bagpipe). Later, however, the accordion replaced the *saz*.^{61, 62, 63} The newer brand of folk music is a mix of pop music infused with Turkish and Serbian influences. Heavy metal is popular and electronic music is taking off. Hip hop is relatively new but is gaining some footing thanks to rappers such as Edo Maajka.⁶⁴

Kolo is a traditional dance form popular in the nation. The dance is performed in a circle but the dancers move only from the waist down. Both men and women dance the *kolo*, which is commonly performed at weddings and other cultural events. Dancers wear special shoes, *opanci*, made from pig leather. These shoes are custom fit to each dancer.^{65, 66}



Traditional Bosnian Dancers
© Thaddeus Stewart



Film makers
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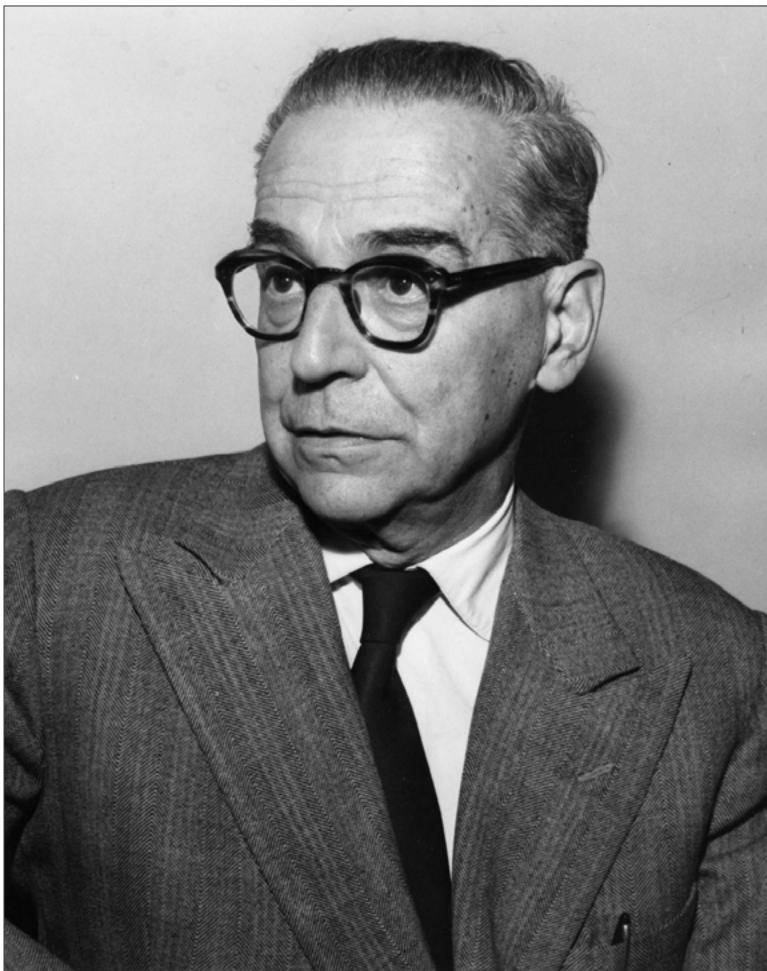
Film

For several decades, Bosnia and Herzegovina has fostered a small, but internationally recognized, film industry. Sarajevo, in particular, has become associated with the center of this film community. Even the devastating Bosnian War did not completely dampen the enthusiasm of Bosnians for quality films. In 1995, even as parts of Sarajevo continued to suffer from mortar attacks in the last stages of the city's three-year siege, the Sarajevo Film Festival came into existence. That year, 15,000 people attended the 37 movies from 15 different countries.⁶⁷ Today, 100,000 movie lovers attend the 9-day event, which annually attracts

over 200 films from around the world. In its 20-year history, it has become the premier annual film festival in the Balkans.^{68, 69}

A noteworthy Bosnian film shown during the 2001 Sarajevo Film Festival was *No Man's Land*, directed by Danis Tanović, an ethnic Bosniak. Tanović is a member of the young generation of Sarajevans whose lives were changed forever by the siege of their city during the Bosnian War. Tanović, a university student at the time of the Sarajevo siege, formed a documentary crew that spent two years filming missions carried out by the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina.^{70, 71} These experiences with soldiers during warfare provided partial inspiration for *No Man's Land*, his first full-length feature film. Focusing on the travails of three soldiers—one Bosnian Serb and two Bosniaks—trapped in a trench between front lines, *No Man's Land* uses elements of dark humor to illustrate the absurdities of the war, including the actions of the largely ineffectual UN peacekeepers. The following year, the film won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, the only film from the Balkans to ever win this award.^{72, 73, 74}

Other internationally acclaimed films from Bosnia and Herzegovina include, *Grbavica: The Land of My Dreams* (2006). This is a film by Jasmila Žbanić about the lingering legacies of the Bosnian War. It has won numerous awards in Europe and the United States. *Summer in the Golden Valley* (*Ljeto u zlatnoj dolini*; 2003) is another acclaimed film that was directed by Srđan Vuletić. It is a story about a Bosniak youth who becomes enmeshed in a kidnapping plot when he tries to repay his dead father's debts.^{75, 76}



Ivo Andrić
© Tanja Kragujević

Literature

Bosnia and Herzegovina's best-known writer is Ivo Andrić (1892–1975), although he is also claimed by Serbia and Croatia.^{77, 78} Born to a Bosnian Croat family in a small village near the central Bosnian town of Travnik, Andrić wrote poetry and short stories during his early career. He did not take to writing full-length novels until World War II. Living as a recluse in occupied Belgrade during the war, Andrić read and wrote incessantly.⁷⁹ In 1945, when he was 53, Andrić published three works (*The Bridge on the Drina*, *Bosnian Chronicle*, *The Woman From Sarajevo*) that established his international literary reputation. The first two of these are set in the Bosnian towns of Višegrad and Travnik, respectively, and trace the complex social interactions of the residents of these multi-ethnic communities during the Ottoman era. In 1961, Andrić was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.⁸⁰

Not as well known outside Bosnia as Andrić, but perhaps more admired by Bosniak readers, is the writer Mehmed-Meša Selimović (1910–1982).⁸¹ A Bosniak born in Tuzla, Selimović's most acclaimed

work is the 1966 novel *Dervish and Death* (*Derviš i Smrt*). Like several of Selimović's writings, the novel is a cathartic fictionalization set in the Ottoman era. The novel tells the story of the execution of Selimović's brother by a Partisan firing squad during World War II, an event that continued to haunt him throughout his life.^{82, 83}

In his poetry collection entitled, *Stone Sleeper* (*Kameni spavač*), Mehmedalija "Mak" Dizdar (1917–1971) used the mysterious inscriptions and decorative motifs found on Bosnia and Herzegovina's many *stecći* (tombstones of medieval Christians) to inspire a "poetic transformation of the medieval burial ground into the cradle of national culture."^{84, 85} Dizdar's poems link Bosnia and Herzegovina, a multi-ethnic region without the strong national identity of Croatia and Serbia, to the stones of its *stecći*. This provides lasting markers of the nation's collective past and culture.⁸⁶



Soccer players
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Sports and Recreation

Soccer, known in most places as football, is the most popular sport in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most Bosnian communities maintain a playing field for local use.⁸⁷ The sport's need for limited equipment also allows it to be played in informal locations by the poorest of youth. The top-flight national league is known as the Premijer Liga, which comprises 16 teams based in the country's major cities, including several in Sarajevo.^{88, 89} Over 700 additional soccer clubs operate at various levels below the premier league.⁹⁰ The Bosnian national team is known as the Dragons, or the Golden Lilies.^{91, 92} (The latter is a reference to the

coat of arms of a historic Bosnian kingdom.) Bosnia and Herzegovina qualified for its first World Cup in 2014 where it placed 21st.^{93, 94}

Basketball is another popular sport in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnians play in national and European leagues, as well as for U.S. universities and the NBA.⁹⁵ As in the country's football league, ethnic tensions have affected the sport. Bosnia and Herzegovina produces some Olympic competitors; Sarajevo, then under Yugoslavia, hosted the Winter Olympic Games in 1984. To date, the nation's Olympians have not won any medals.⁹⁶ For the general population, additional recreational activities include hunting, hiking, and skiing.⁹⁷

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Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment

1. There are three major ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

TRUE

The major ethnic groups are Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats.

2. The official language of the country is Serbo-Croatian.

FALSE

Bosnia and Herzegovina has three official languages, each corresponding to one of the ethnic groups: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian. All ethnic groups speak the Serbo-Croatian language, which is only minimally different from the three official languages.

3. Two main cultural values transcending ethnic divisions are family and hospitality.

TRUE

Bosnian cultural traditions have been broadly influenced by European/Mediterranean and Turkish traditions, many of which derive from the days of Ottoman rule. Family and hospitality are two values that transcend the ethnic divide.

4. Religion and ethnicity are strongly but not perfectly correlated.

TRUE

Religion has become affiliated with ethnicity, though the two are by no means identical.

5. Bosnia and Herzegovina's three main ethnic groups have, for the most part, rarely coexisted peacefully.

FALSE

These three ethnic groups coexisted for centuries before the outbreak of war in the 1990's. Marriage across ethnic groups was common. All of that ended when the former nation of Yugoslavia disintegrated in 1991.



Bosnian Soldiers
© Sgt. Christina M. Dion

Chapter 5: Security

Introduction

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a sovereign state, in reality, it functions as a protectorate under the direction of the United Nation's Office of the High Representative. Under the terms of the Dayton Accords, which formally ended the War in Bosnia in 1995, the country is saddled with what is arguably the world's most complicated form of government. The nation is divided into two entities—the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS). Each of these entities has its own government responsible for the affairs of the entity, including foreign relations. The federal government is a weak agency whose presidency rotates each eight months among the member of the three main ethnic groups—the Bosniaks, the Serbs, and the Croats. BiH's central government has responsibility for international relations^{1, 2, 3}

In the years following the end of the war in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy efforts have centered on maintaining domestic security and securing its territorial integrity.⁴ The country has made a series of moves designed to integrate it more fully into world and regional politics. In 2002, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a member of the Council of Europe. The move was an important first step in the nation's broader integration into the European Community.⁵ In 2006, the nation joined the Partnership for Peace. The move was an important interim step on the path toward full NATO membership.⁶ In 2008, BiH became a member of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) designed to strengthen BiH's influence in the region.⁷

Bosnia and Herzegovina faces no significant external threats from its neighbors. The nation's most serious security concern arises from within its borders. Ethnic divides in the nation are deep and regularly exploited for political or financial gain. As many Bosnians look hopefully toward a future as part of Europe, through membership in the European Union and other institutions, they also face the stark realization that greater internal integration must first be achieved.^{8, 9, 10}



U.S. Troops in Bosnia
©SGT Alejandro Francisco

U.S.-Bosnian Relations

The United States first established diplomatic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, following its independence from the former Yugoslavia. War erupted shortly after independence and raged for nearly four years. The United States helped broker the Dayton Peace Accords, which brought peace to the region. Since the final stages of the Bosnian War, the United States has been closely involved in the nation's attempts to develop stable political and economic institutions.^{11, 12} Approximately 20,000 American troops were deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of a NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) to enforce the Dayton agreement, and to

police the cease-fire.¹³ U.S. peacekeeping forces remained in Bosnia and Herzegovina until 2004, when the European Union took over the mission.¹⁴

Immediately after the Bosnian War, the U.S. provided large amounts of financial assistance to BiH as the nation began to rebuild. Since the departure of U.S. troops in 2004, however, U.S. influence in BiH has been waning. The United States continues to work in a strategic partnership with the European Union to introduce political reforms. To date, however, these reform attempts within BiH have met with little success.¹⁵

Recent U.S. aid packages have been less generous than in the years immediately

following the end of the war. Most U.S. aid dollars are earmarked for programs that promote economic growth and improvements in state-level institutions (e.g., police, judiciary, border patrol).^{16, 17} In 2015, approximately 40 U.S. companies or their affiliates operated in BiH. Bilateral trade totaled approximately USD 121 million in 2014, with the balance of trade favoring BiH.¹⁸



Bosnian / Croatian border
© James Diggins

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Croatia

Diplomatic relations between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been volatile since BiH's independence. Relations hit an all-time low during the Bosnian War due to Croatia's support for the Bosnian Croat militias. Significant evidence exists that former Croatian President Franjo Tuđman wanted to incorporate regions of Bosnia controlled by Bosnian Croat forces into a Greater Croatia.^{19,}

^{20, 21} Following Tuđman's death in 1999, the Croatian government of President Stjepan "Stipe" Mešić renounced the excesses of the Tuđman years. He has even pledged to not interfere in

Bosnia and Herzegovina's internal affairs.²² Relations between the two countries began to significantly improve thereafter.^{23, 24} In April 2010, Croatian President Ivo Josipović publicly apologized in the Bosnian parliament for the suffering caused by the Croatian policies toward Bosnia during the 1990s.^{25, 26} Today, relations between the two nations are cordial.²⁷

BiH's regional trade relations have historically been stronger with Croatia than any other nation. Geographic proximity and lack of a language barrier promoted strong relations. Prior to Croatia's membership in the EU in 2013, cross-border shopping was a daily occurrence. When Croatia became an EU member, it was forced to abandon its multilateral free trade agreement in the region. This move has decreased the trade volume between the two countries.^{28, 29, 30} Nevertheless, Bosnia and Herzegovina is Croatia's second-largest export market.³¹



Bosnian / Montenegro border
© Francisco Antunes

Montenegro

Shortly after declaring its independence from Serbia, Montenegro established diplomatic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 2006.³² Since that time, the two nations have had strong relations free of any major conflicts or tensions. Perhaps the most challenging issue faced by the two nations is the extensive smuggling that takes place across Montenegro's border into Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cigarette smuggling, in particular, has been a long-time, profitable endeavor for organized crime groups. The

smuggling is also sometimes aided by corrupt government officials and police officers in both countries.^{33, 34}



Bosnian / Serbia border
© Brenda Annerl

Serbia

Serbia's direct and indirect involvement in the Bosnian War has continued to cast a shadow over its relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though the fighting has ended. The two nations have maintained diplomatic relations, but often at a distinctly chilly level. In 2007, for example, Belgrade refused to accept Bosnia's selection for its ambassador to Serbia, and later vetoed a replacement candidate as well; the reasons were never made public.^{35, 36, 37} The ambassadorial position remained vacant for three years, until the Turkish Foreign Minister hosted a series of

diplomatic "interventions" beginning in October 2009. At the fifth session, in February 2010, the Serbian Foreign Minister announced his country's willingness to accept the Bosnian ambassador-designate, Boriš Arnaut.³⁸

Several challenges continue to sour relations. Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have ongoing border disputes along the Drina River.^{39, 40} To date, Serbia has failed to implement agreements on the restitution of property following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.⁴¹

The Serbian government does, however, maintain friendlier ties with the government of the Republika Srpska. Serbian President Boris Tadić attended an RS campaign rally for the SNSD in late September 2010, reciprocating Dodik's support for him during Serbia's 2008 presidential election.^{42, 43, 44} Serbia's new coalition government has cooled its support for Dodik, however. The state of their future relations remains in doubt.⁴⁵



Bosnian and American Soldiers
© tericee / flickr.com

Military

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AF BiH) were created in January 2006. The all-volunteer fighting force consists of an Army and an Air and Air Defense Force under the supreme command of the BiH president.^{46, 47, 48, 49} Estimates of the size of the military range between 4,000 and 10,000 active-duty military personnel.^{50, 51} The land forces are charged with defending the nation against external attack, as well as participating in collective security operations. During national emergencies, the forces conduct relief activities.^{52, 53} Within the AF BiH there are three infantry regiments, each corresponding to each of the three main ethnic groups. Tensions and political issues make it impossible to station Serb troops outside of the RS. Similarly, Bosniak and Croat troops must be stationed within the FBiH.⁵⁴

The nation's air force has approximately 500 active-duty members. The Air Forces and Air Defense Brigade are headquartered in Banja Luka in the RS. The country announced plans to purchase radars as part of the Balkans regional Approach for Air Defense (BRAAD) initiative with Montenegro and Macedonia. Jahorina has

been named as the radar site.^{55, 56}

The AF BiH has sufficient weapons to meet general current needs, but much of the weaponry is obsolete. The problem is likely to increase since money for new armaments is unlikely. Current weapons are increasingly likely to be unserviceable. Germany and the United States have donated some rifles to help offset the problem. The forces recently procured about a dozen Light Multirole Vehicles and some AMX-10 wheeled APCs.^{57, 58}

Bosnia and Herzegovina presently is part of NATO's Partnership for Peace program.^{59, 60} This program aims to develop a working bilateral relationship between NATO and Partner countries. This is the first step that non-NATO countries take in the accession process to NATO membership. Bosnia and Herzegovina has also been conditionally approved for a Membership Action Plan by NATO officials, the next step. The primary condition that still needs to be met is that all stationary defense properties (e.g., military bases) become the registered property of the central government for use by the Ministry of Defense. Presently, the entity governments control these properties.^{61, 62, 63, 64}



Policewoman and kids
© UN Development / flickr.com

Police and Security Forces

Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two entities—The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS). Each entity has its own separate police force with jurisdiction only within the specific entity. As a result, police functions remain fractured and outside of any central command structure.^{65, 66, 67} Within FBiH, the 11,500-member federal police force is divided into 10 cantons. An additional special police unit handles counter-terrorist operations, and assists during times of national emergency including natural disasters. In recent years, efforts to professionalize the force have

been successful. Corruption within the units has decreased. Nevertheless, efforts to reform the police into a single unified force have largely stagnated.^{68, 69, 70, 71} International support for the 6,250-member RS police force has been significantly lower than in FBiH. Most support for RS police come from Russia and Serbia.^{72, 73} The RS forces are more centralized than those of the FBiH, and are not structured along geographical divisions as are their FBiH counterparts.⁷⁴ The Brcko District maintains its own police department separate from those of both the FBiH and RS. The district is located near the border with Croatia. One of its main priorities has been controlling the illegal trafficking of women and illegal immigration. So far, the efforts have proved successful and the region is now relatively stable.⁷⁵

In addition, the BiH Border Police (*Granicna Policija Bosne i Hercegovine: GPBiH*) operate along the border with Croatia. The officers of the GPBiH carry sidearms and control all border crossings and international airports.^{76, 77}

Threats to Internal Stability

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an emerging federal democracy plagued by ethnic divisions, devastated by a failing economy, and paralyzed by an ineffective governance structure. Peacekeeping troops in the region have helped stabilize the nation. Some progress has been made in rebuilding national infrastructure and economic institutions. High unemployment, slow economic growth, and increases in crime continue to threaten the country's ultimate stability. Rising ethnic tensions culminated in some of the worst violence since the end of the war in 1995. Those tensions have cooled but continue to simmer just under the surface. Experts suggest that the country faces moderate risk of political instability.^{78, 79}

Terrorism

Bosnia and Herzegovina's moderate brand of Islam has created an environment that is not conducive to extremist groups operating or building large bases of operation there.^{80, 81} Nonetheless, some terrorists have appeared on the Bosnian scene. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, for example, several international terrorists traveled on Bosnian passports that were obtained under the lax immigration system immediately after the Bosnian War.^{82, 83, 84} These individuals were mostly veteran mujahedeen fighters from the Middle East and North Africa, and new recruits from Western Europe. These individuals entered the country during the war years to fight against Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat forces.⁸⁵ Extremists may still represent a credible threat to Bosnia and Herzegovina's political stability.⁸⁶ Experts disagree regarding the extent of the threat posed by terrorist groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Few experts believe that terrorism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an immediate major threat to national stability. On the other hand, other experts believe as many as 3,000 potential terrorists, nearly 8% of the population, currently reside in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With this number of suspected terrorists, radicalized Muslims represent a credible threat to Bosnia and Herzegovina's political stability.⁸⁷ Others believe that the potential danger from terrorism is elevated because of strong extremist connections to Bosniak leaders.⁸⁸

Consolidation or Secession: Can the Center Hold?

Although the Dayton Peace Accords brought peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina, without modification it is insufficient to provide the basis for nation-building. While some successes have occurred in allowing central institutions to develop—most notably observed in the consolidation of the nation's armed forces—Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a poor country that is more divided than unified. Numerous attempts to modify the nation's constitution to increase the powers of the central government have produced no change. The current government of Republika Srpska has been adamant about retaining its independence from Sarajevo. Threats by its leadership to hold a referendum on secession has only exacerbated international fears that the country may not be able to hold together. At the very least, the central government remains paralyzed by the lack of cooperation and policy deadlocks, a situation unlikely to change in the near-term.^{89, 90, 91, 92}

Interethnic Reconciliation and Communication

Ethnic tensions are a fact of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those fractures were front and center in the most recent elections in 2014. Milorad Dodik, a Bosnian Serb nationalist who advocates secession from the nation, was elected president of the Republika Srpska. Dodik is also a strong supporter of Russia and has recently met with President Putin.^{93, 94} Political discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina has become increasingly nationalized, or ethicized, with politicians having little incentive to take

positions on issues that might appeal beyond their own ethnic group. Large national problems, such as high unemployment and widespread corruption, beg for broad-based approaches. However, the central government is too weakened by conflicting ethno-nationalist agendas to pass or carry out significant reforms.^{95, 96}



Protests in Sarajevo
© stefanogiantin / flickr.com

Economic Weakness

The weak economy presents a major challenge to the government. Unemployment runs as high as 44% among the general public. Among youth, as many as six in ten are out of work.^{97, 98} Protests erupted in some urban centers early in 2014 with levels of violence not seen since the end of the war in 1995.^{99, 100, 101} The risk of repeat violent demonstrations is high, especially since the economy is continuing to contract. Protesting farmers could resume their blockades of roads and border crossings with Croatia. These moves are designed to decrease agricultural trade with Croatia, which has recently become an EU member.^{102, 103} The floods that ravaged the country

in May 2014 continue to damage the economy. Most of the nation's arable lands were destroyed by flooding. Transportation infrastructure was also devastated.^{104, 105} Massive amounts of loans will be required to begin to repair the damage. Future IMF loans are dependent on a series of political reforms that appear unlikely to occur. As a result, near-term loans could be suspended further destabilizing the economic and political situation.^{106, 107}



Beggar in Sarajevo
©, David Dufresne

Outlook

All in all, serious challenges remain for Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is clear that the current governance structure will not work in the long term. The country has to become more unified, with a stronger centralized government if it is to function effectively in the future. Without a more functional central government, it is unlikely that the nation will meet the conditions necessary to join the European Union.^{108, 109} Until the nation demonstrates that it can effectively govern itself, and until it resolves some of its ethnic problems, the OHR is likely to remain. This means that Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue in a state of limbo and not be truly sovereign for some years. This lack of sovereignty could be one factor preventing the development of a true national identity.^{110, 111} The United States and the EU

continue to invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the goal of one day having the nation become an EU member state. Some progress has been made on helping the country take concrete steps toward realizing this goal without first making major constitutional changes.¹¹² Without a doubt, economic challenges remain front and center. The risk of violent and potentially destabilizing protests is significant. Bosnia and Herzegovina remains one of the poorest European nations. With massive unemployment, the possibility of greater dissatisfaction with the government looms large.^{113, 114}

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Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has a weak central government.

TRUE

The country has a multi-tier government. BiH's central government has responsibility for international relations but the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska are responsible for overseeing most other government functions.

2. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant constitutional reforms since the war's end.

FALSE

Though the U.S., EU, and NATO have stressed the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's strengthening its central government institutions, progress has been challenging. Since 2006, significant reform proposals have generally met opposition from the RS leadership.

3. Relations with neighboring Croatia are generally cordial.

TRUE

Relations between the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia have warmed in recent years and may now be characterized as cordial.

4. Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have some unresolved border issues.

TRUE

Several challenges remain which continue to sour relations. Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina still have ongoing border disputes along the Drina River.

5. The military is fully integrated and operates with few tensions related to ethnicity.

FALSE

There are three infantry regiments with one corresponding to each of the three main ethnic groups. Tensions and political issues make it impossible to station Serbs outside of the RS. Similarly, Bosniak and Croat troops must be stationed within the FBiH.

Bosnia in Perspective: Final Assessment

1. The Northern Lowlands contains much of the historic region of Herzegovina.
TRUE OR FALSE?
2. Banja Luka once served as a defensive outpost against the Ottoman Turks.
TRUE OR FALSE?
3. Banja Luka served as a stronghold for the Bosnian Serbs during the Bosnian War.
TRUE OR FALSE?
4. Bosnia and Herzegovina's northern plains are its agricultural heartland.
TRUE OR FALSE?
5. Karst topography is throughout the north.
TRUE OR FALSE?
6. The Bosnian province experienced a number of improvements under Austria-Hungary.
TRUE OR FALSE?
7. During the Austro-Hungarian period, people living in the Bosnian region tended to identify themselves more along religious rather than ethnic lines.
TRUE OR FALSE?
8. Serb nationalists were strongly in favor of Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
TRUE OR FALSE?
9. After World War I, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to be administered under Austro-Hungary.
TRUE OR FALSE?

10. Although nationalists won the first elections in 1998, they have been replaced by more moderate politicians.

TRUE OR FALSE?

11. Nearly one in three workers is employed in manufacturing and industry.

TRUE OR FALSE?

12. Bosnia and Herzegovina's Central Bank functions are divided between three agencies.

TRUE OR FALSE?

13. Bosnia and Herzegovina's largest trade partners are the United States and China.

TRUE OR FALSE?

14. Unemployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is around 25%.

TRUE OR FALSE?

15. The largest investors in Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) are the United States and Germany.

TRUE OR FALSE?

16. The largest religious group in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Muslim.

TRUE OR FALSE?

17. The Bosniaks have the strongest levels of national identity with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

TRUE OR FALSE?

18. Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina are generally expected to stay home and care for the household.

TRUE OR FALSE?

19. Basketball is the most popular sport in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

TRUE OR FALSE?

20. Kolo is a popular dance form where almost all movement by the dancers is from the waist-up.

TRUE OR FALSE?

21. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a NATO member.

TRUE OR FALSE?

22. There are only a handful of Islamic terrorists living in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

TRUE OR FALSE?

23. High unemployment could fuel riots capable of destabilizing the government.

TRUE OR FALSE?

24. Bosnia and Herzegovina faces few security risks from its neighbors.

TRUE OR FALSE?

25. The federal police operate under a strong central command structure.

TRUE OR FALSE?

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