

Debate Pack

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By Patrick Butchard,
Stefano Fella,
Nigel Walker

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Srebrenica

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1 Background

A Backbench Business Committee debate on a motion on Srebrenica is scheduled for Thursday 14 July 2022 in the House of Commons chamber.

1.1 Summary

The genocide in Srebrenica

In July 1995, during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnian Serb forces took over the town of Srebrenica, killing over 8,000 people. This was after blocking supplies and the reinforcement of UN peacekeeping forces that had been guarding the town.

Bosnian Serb forces forcibly separated Muslim men and boys from their families. They were taken to various locations where they were later executed, with most of the genocide occurring between 13 and 17 of July.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

The [International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia](#) (ICTY) was an ad-hoc tribunal set up by the UN Security Council in 1993 to try allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide during the Balkans conflicts. The [International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals](#) is overseeing the final appeals and cases from the ICTY.

The ICTY or the Residual Mechanism [have convicted 16 people for crimes committed in connection with the events in Srebrenica](#), including genocide. These include Radovan Karadžić (President of the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska and Supreme Commander of its armed forces until July 1996) and Ratko Mladić (Colonel General, Commander of the Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska).

Radovan Karadžić had his original sentence of 40 years in prison [increased to life in prison on appeal](#). The UK has agreed that he would serve his sentence in the UK. Reports suggest that [he was transferred to the UK in May 2021](#).

Developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Under the Dayton Peace Agreement signed in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a single state, which consists of two political entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, principally comprising the Bosniak (Muslim)- and Croat-majority areas, and Republika Srpska (RS), principally comprising the Serb-majority area.

Bosnian Serbs in the Republika Srpska (RS) have adopted a more assertive separatist stance under the leadership of Milorad Dodik, currently a member of the three-person collective presidency of BiH and previously the President of RS.

In July 2021, the then High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina [made amendments to the country's criminal code](#) to ban the denial of genocide and the glorification of war criminals. Followed this decision, the [Bosnian Serb leadership said they would boycott](#) all major institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In October 2021, the RS authorities passed a law on the non-applicability of the High Representative's decision, and obliging the RS authorities not to cooperate with institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina attempting to implement State-level law. In December 2021, the RS parliament [voted to start work on severing ties](#) with Bosnia's armed forces, judiciary and tax system. In January 2022, Dodik said RS representatives would only return to BiH state institutions would only occur if [references to genocide by RS entities](#) are prohibited.

In late May 2022, Dodik said the time had come “to try once again to activate the mechanism of peaceful dissolution in BiH”. In June he said that the war in Ukraine and its knock-on effects had forced RS leaders to [delay plans to withdraw from BiH state institutions](#).

International Reaction

The USA, UK and EU have condemned Dodik's actions. The USA and UK have imposed sanctions against Dodik. The EU is split over sanctions, 2022. Germany, other EU Member States [and the European Parliament have called for EU sanctions](#) against Dodik, but Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary have [opposed sanctions](#). Hungary has given financial and political support to RS.

The UK Government [announced sanctions against Milorad Dodik and the President of RS, Zeljka Cvijanovic](#) in April 2022. The Government accused Dodik of undermining domestic and regional peace and “encouraging ethnic hatred and genocide denial” while Cvijanovic had publicly glorified war criminals and denied the genocide at Srebrenica.

1.2

Srebrenica Genocide: Background and Context

During the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the town of Srebrenica was controlled by Bosnian Muslims and the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The enclave was [initially a refuge for Bosnian Muslims](#) from surrounding areas that were attacked and shelled by Bosnian Serb forces at the time. In April 1993, as the humanitarian and refugee situation in Srebrenica deteriorated, the UN Security Council adopted [Resolution 819 \(1993\)](#) which demanded that Srebrenica and its surrounding areas be treated as a 'safe area' and should be free from any armed attacks. The Resolution [also condemned](#) what it called:

the deliberate actions of the Bosnian Serb party to force the evacuation of the civilian population from Srebrenica and its surrounding areas as well as from other parts of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of its overall abhorrent campaign of "ethnic cleansing"

In the days following this, a ceasefire agreement provided for the demilitarisation of Srebrenica, and a humanitarian corridor for the evacuation of the wounded and sick. The UN also deployed Peacekeeping Mission (UNPROFOR, the United Nations Protection Forces) which set up a command centre in Srebrenica to monitor the demilitarisation of the area. The peacekeeping force had no more than 600 peacekeepers in Srebrenica, rotating troops every six months, with a Dutch Battalion arriving in January 1995.

But in March 1995, Radovan Karadžić, President and Commander of the Bosnian Serb armed forces of the self-declared Republika Srpska, [issued Operational Directive 7 to his forces](#), ordering the forces to:

By planned and well-thought-out combat operations, create an unbearable situation of total insecurity, with no hope of further survival or life for the inhabitants of Srebrenica.

This was followed by severe restrictions on humanitarian aid to Srebrenica and to re-supply convoys for the UNPROFOR Peacekeeping mission.

According to a [Human Rights Watch report from October 1995](#), the UN peacekeepers in Srebrenica ran out of fuel and essential supplies by the beginning of July. Two rotations of peacekeeping troops were allowed to leave Srebrenica, but Bosnian Serb troops refused entry to their replacement forces. This meant that only 300 to 400 UN peacekeepers remained in Srebrenica, and Human Rights Watch suggests that some of this force avoided reporting signals of a looming offensive against the safe area.

In mid-July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces were ordered to take over the town of Srebrenica. In the ensuing fighting, some UN troops were taken hostage by

Bosnian Serb forces. On 11 July, Dutch planes dropped two bombs on Bosnian Serb positions surrounding Srebrenica. The Bosnian Serbs responded with a threat to kill their Dutch hostages and shell refugees, causing the suspension of further strikes.

The town [fell to the control of Bosnian Serb forces on 11 July](#). Between 12 and 13 July, around 30,000 Bosnian Muslim women, children and the elderly fled Srebrenica towards a UN Compound in Potočari, and the group was shelled on their way. During this time, witnesses reported Bosnian Serb forces beating and sexually assaulting Bosnian Muslims, while some Bosnian Muslims were taken away by the Serb forces. Human Rights Watch reported that Bosnian Serb troops captured UN forces and disguised themselves as UN troops.

Bosnian Serb forces forcibly separated Muslim men and boys from their families. Some women, children and the elderly were bussed to Bosnian government-controlled territory. Men and boys were taken to various locations where they were later executed, with most of the genocide occurring between 13 and 17 of July. Many men and boys were taken to multiple mass killing sites in Zvornik. Over 8,000 people were killed in this operation.

1 Further reading

- United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, [Srebrenica: Timeline of a Genocide](#), accessed 6 July 2022
- [‘Bosnia's Srebrenica massacre 25 years on - in pictures’](#), BBC News, 11 July 2020
- [‘Chronology of Events: Bosnia & Herzegovina’](#), Security Council Report (revised on 1 June 2020)
- ICTY, [Trial Judgement Summary for Radovan Karadžić](#), 24 March 2016
- [Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 53/35: The Fall of Srebrenica](#), 15 November 1999, UN Doc A/54/549

1.3

International Criminal Trials and subsequent findings

The [International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia](#) (ICTY) was an ad-hoc tribunal set up by the UN Security Council in 1993 to try allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide during the Balkans conflicts.

In total, [161 individuals were indicted](#), with 91 of those sentenced, 18 acquitted, 37 proceedings terminated or withdrawn, and 13 referred to former Yugoslavia states for trial domestically. As the work of the ICTY drew to a close from 2010 to 2017, the [International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals](#) is overseeing the final appeals and cases from the ICTY and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), with most of these proceedings now completed.

The ICTY or the Residual Mechanism [have convicted 16 people for crimes committed in connection with the events in Srebrenica](#), including genocide:

- Radovan Karadžić (President of the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska and Supreme Commander of its armed forces until July 1996)
- Ratko Mladić (Colonel General, Commander of the Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska)
- Radislav Krstić
- Vujadin Popović
- Ljubiša Beara
- Drago Nikolić
- Radivoje Miletić
- Vinko Pandurević
- Ljubomir Borovčanin
- Milan Gvero
- Zdravko Tolimir
- Vidoje Blagojević
- Dragan Jokić
- Dražen Erdemović
- Momir Nikolić
- Dragan Obrenović

Radovan Karadžić had his original sentence of 40 years in prison [increased to life in prison on appeal](#). The UK agreed that he would serve his sentence in the UK, and reports suggest that [he was transferred to the UK in May 2021](#), and [is now serving his sentence in HMP Isle of Wight](#).

One accused, Momčilo Perišić (chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army), was acquitted. [Slobodan Milošević](#) (President of Serbia; President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from July 1997 until October 2000) died before his verdict could be handed down.

One case is subject to retrial proceedings before the Residual Mechanism after being originally found not guilty, following a retrial ordered on appeal from the prosecution (Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović).

Trials within Bosnia and Herzegovina also took place relating to less senior members of the Bosnian Serb forces.

The International Court of Justice, in the case [Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide \(Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro\)](#) found in 2007 that genocide had occurred in Srebrenica, and that Serbia had violated its obligations under the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish this genocide, and had also failed in its obligations to cooperate with the ICTY. The court stopped short of finding that Serbia had itself been responsible directly or indirectly for the genocide.

1.4 Remembering Srebrenica initiative

In July 2013, the [UK Government announced](#) that it would be funding “Remembering Srebrenica” (<http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>), an initiative dedicated to commemorating and honouring the victims of Srebrenica and teaching future generations about the consequences of hatred.

Several MPs and Peers are among the patrons of the initiative. See <https://srebrenica.org.uk/president-and-patrons>.

1.5 Recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dayton Agreement and political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Following the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, a peace agreement was eventually reached in 1995. In accordance with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (otherwise known as the Dayton Agreement), signed in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a single state, which consists of two political entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, principally comprising the Bosniak (Muslim)- and Croat-majority areas, and Republika Srpska (RS), principally comprising the Serb-majority area.

Each entity has its own president, government, parliament, police and other bodies. In addition, there is the ethnically mixed district of Brčko, which is self-governing but formally part of both the Federation and RS. The central

(state) government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has a three-member collective presidency, which consists of one Bosniak and one Croat each directly elected from the Federation, and one Serb directly elected from RS. The Presidency has responsibility for foreign, diplomatic, and fiscal policy as well as law enforcement.

Bosnian Serbs in the Republika Srpska (RS) have adopted a more assertive separatist stance under the leadership of Milorad Dodik, currently a member of the three-person collective presidency of BiH and previously the President of RS.

Genocide denial laws and separatist responses

In July 2021, Bosnia and Herzegovina's High Representative at the time, Valentin Inzko, [made amendments to the country's criminal code](#) to ban the denial of genocide and the glorification of war criminals. In the decision enacting the law, the High Representative [said that he was](#):

Deeply concerned that prominent individuals and public authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to deny that acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes were committed during the armed conflict, that individuals and public authorities publicly question the legitimacy of judgements issued by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that individuals and public authorities honor or praise convicted war criminals.

Followed this decision, the [Bosnian Serb leadership said they would boycott](#) all major institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dodik said the boycott decision had been taken in agreement with the RS opposition parties. In October 2021, Dodik said that RS [would withdraw](#) from Bosnia and Herzegovina's armed forces, and key judicial and taxation bodies. He said this would give RS full autonomy within Bosnia and Herzegovina, though not independence.

In October 2021, the RS authorities passed a law on the non-applicability of the High Representative's decision, and obliging the RS authorities not to cooperate with institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina attempting to implement State-level law. In December 2021, the RS parliament [voted to start work on severing ties](#) with Bosnia's armed forces, judiciary and tax system.

After a meeting with the President of Serbia in January 2022, Dodik said RS representatives [would return to BiH state institutions](#), but that they would continue their work of transferring BiH state competences to RS. Later in January, he said the return to BiH state institutions would only occur if [references to genocide by RS entities](#) are prohibited.

In late May 2022, Dodik said the time had come "to try once again to activate the mechanism of peaceful dissolution in BiH". He added that once this process is completed, everyone could "live peacefully." He also complained

about what he called [efforts by Bosniaks to dominate Serbs and Croats](#), which he described as “Muslim nationalism”. On 6 June, Dodik said that the war in Ukraine and its knock-on effects had forced RS leaders to [delay plans to withdraw from BiH state institutions](#).

High Representative Report

There is increasing international concern that these developments could lead to a return to the ethnic conflict of the past. In November 2021, a [report to the United Nations Secretary General by the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), Christian Schmidt (who took over the role in August 2021), was published. He wrote that BiH “is facing the greatest existential threat of the post-war period”. He referred to grave challenges to the fundamentals of the Dayton agreement which were being posed by Dodik’s party. He said this not only endangered the peace and stability of the country and the region, but could also lead to the undoing of the Agreement itself.

The report referred, amongst other things, to Dodik’s plan to draft a new constitution for the RS and his rejection of decisions and laws made by the High Representative. The report from the High Representative said Dodik’s plans would lead to a reversion to the situation that existed on the ground prior to the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. This was “tantamount to secession without proclaiming it”. The report said that [state institutions had already been paralysed](#) by the boycott announced in July 2021.

International Reaction

EU and US statements

On 20 October 2021, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued a [joint statement on the Western Balkans](#). They said they were “united in their firm support for the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. The statement expressed “serious concerns about increasingly divisive rhetoric in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and called on all parties to “respect and protect state institutions, resume constructive dialogue, and take steps to advance progress on the EU integration path – including on relevant reforms”.

The USA, UK, EU, Germany, France and Italy [condemned the decision by the RS parliament](#) in December 2021 to begin working on the withdrawal of RS from aspects of the BiH state apparatus, including its tax system, judiciary and army.

US Sanctions on Dodik

The USA [imposed sanctions on Dodik in January 2017](#), in response to his decision to go ahead with a referendum on celebrating “The Day of Republika Srpska”. The sanctions included a [ban on travelling to the US](#), or accessing assets under its jurisdiction. US sanctions against Dodik were expanded in

January 2022. [The USA accused Dodik of undermining state institutions](#) and the territorial integrity of BiH, as well as corruption.

EU division over sanctions

The EU has been [criticised for its ineffective response](#) to recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following a meeting with EU representatives in October, Dodik said he was confident that the EU would not impose sanctions on RS, but that if there were sanctions then RS would declare its independence. He also said that RS would “[defend ourselves with our own forces](#)”. He said that if NATO intervened “we will ask our friends – who told us clearly and loudly they never abandon their friends – to help us”. Dodik did not specify who these “friends” are.

Germany, other EU Member States [and the European Parliament have called for EU sanctions](#) against Dodik, but Dodik claims to have [support from certain EU Member States](#). Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary have [opposed EU sanctions](#) against Dodik and RS. Hungary has given financial and political support to the RS. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has described Serbia and RS as “key to the stability of the Western Balkans” and [warned against](#) the “exorcism of Dodik”.

An EU statement on 10 January 2022 condemned negative, divisive and inflammatory rhetoric used by RS leaders [during the Day of Republika Srpska celebrations the day before](#). The statement called on the RS leadership to end divisive rhetoric and the boycott of state institutions. It called on RS leaders to end the glorification of war criminals and to denying or glorifying their crimes. [It warned](#) that should the situation further deteriorate, the EU “disposes of a wide toolbox, including the existing EU sanctions framework, and a review of the overall EU assistance”.

BiH has been identified as a potential candidate for EU membership. Leaders of BiH, including Dodik, continue to support its accession to the EU.

UK position

In [response to a Parliamentary Question on 19 November 2021](#) the then Minister for Europe and the Americas, Wendy Morton, said that the UK remained committed to ensuring peace, and upholding international law in BiH. She underlined UK commitment to the role of the High Representative. She said the UK rejected efforts to undermine BiH's stability and would continue to support BiH in implementing domestic reforms and tackling challenges to peace and security.

On 11 April 2022, the UK Government [announced sanctions against Milorad Dodik and the President of RS, Zeljka Cvijanovic](#), “for their attempts to undermine the legitimacy and functionality of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. The two Bosnian Serb leaders would be subject to travel bans and asset freezes, the first to be designated under the UK's Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime.

The FCDO press release [said that](#) the “UK believes the pair are deliberately undermining the hard-won peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and using their positions of authority to push for de facto secession of RS from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also said that the two were emboldened by Russia’s undermining of the international rules-based system. It said that Dodik has driven action to withdraw RS from key State institutions “using divisive, dangerous, nationalist rhetoric, undermining domestic and regional peace and encouraging ethnic hatred and genocide denial” while Cvijanovic had used her office to table legislation in RS in October 2021 “to transfer state competencies to the entity level”. It said that Cvijanovic had also publicly glorified war criminals and denied the genocide at Srebrenica.

The press release said that the UK was [working in coordination with the US and other like-minded partners](#), and hoped the UK announcement would encourage other nations to apply similar restrictive measures. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

These two politicians are deliberately undermining the hard won peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Encouraged by Putin, their reckless behaviour threatens stability and security across the Western Balkans.

With these tough sanctions we are showing that the enemies of peace will be held to account.

2 Further reading

For further discussion of developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina see Commons Library Debate Pack [Stability and peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), 30 November 2021

See also Commons Library Debate [Maintaining peace and stability in the Balkans](#), 14 March 2022

2

Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[Thousands gather in Bosnia's Srebrenica to mark genocide](#)

Al Jazeera
11 July 2022

[Srebrenica massacre: Netherlands apologises after 27 years](#)

Deutsche Welle
11 July 2022

[Thousands in Bosnia commemorate 1995 Srebrenica massacre](#)

AP News
Eldar Emric
11 July 2022

[The virulent nationalism that led to Srebrenica is back in Bosnia](#)

Foreign Policy
Janine di Giovanni
11 July 2022

[Srebrenica: the mothers' fight for justice should inspire us all](#)

Council of Europe
11 July 2022

[Bosnia and Herzegovina: UN rights chief urges leaders to 'turn the page on rhetoric'](#)

UN News
24 June 2022

[Dutch government apologises to Srebrenica veterans](#)

BBC News Online
Matt Murphy
19 June 2022

[Germany to redeploy troops to Bosnia over 'stability' concerns](#)

Al Jazeera
15 June 2022

Bosnian peace deal at risk from leader stoking Serb anger

The Times

Tom Kington

19 February 2022

Balkans war: a brief guide

BBC News Online

18 March 2016

3

Press releases

UK announces sanctions under Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

11 April 2022

UK has today sanctioned Milorad Dodik, Bosnian-Serb member of Bosnia and Herzegovina's state-level Presidency, and Zeljka Cvijanovic, President of the entity of Republika Srpska, for their destabilising activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The designations, which include travel bans and asset freezes, are the first under the UK's Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime.

Emboldened by Russia's undermining of the international rules-based system, both individuals have used their positions of authority to push for de facto secession of Republika Srpska – one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2 entities – in direct contravention of the country's constitution.

Milorad Dodik has driven action to withdraw Republika Srpska from key State institutions, using divisive, dangerous, nationalist rhetoric, undermining domestic and regional peace and encouraging ethnic hatred and genocide denial.

Meanwhile, in October 2021, Zeljka Cvijanovic used her office to table legislation in Republika Srpska seeking to transfer state competencies to the entity level. Cvijanovic has publicly glorified war criminals and denied the genocide at Srebrenica.

Working in coordination with the US and other like-minded partners, the Foreign Secretary hopes today's announcement will encourage other nations to apply similar restrictive measures which hold politicians to account for their destabilising and dangerous behaviour.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

These two politicians are deliberately undermining the hard won peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Encouraged by Putin, their reckless behaviour threatens stability and security across the Western Balkans.

With these tough sanctions we are showing that the enemies of peace will be held to account.

Dodik and Cvijanovic's actions and rhetoric threaten to undo 26 years of hard-won peace and stability, and undermine the General Framework Agreement for Peace (Dayton Peace Agreement), which brought hostilities to an end in 1995.

26th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide: UK statement at the OSCE

UK Delegation to the OSCE

16 July 2021

On 11 July we paused to remember the victims and honour the survivors of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina on its 26th anniversary.

The genocide claimed the lives of over 8,000 mostly Muslim men and boys and led to the displacement of over 20,000 women and children who were forcibly expelled from their homes.

The United Kingdom continues to play a vital role in ending impunity for these horrific crimes as we have shown by agreeing to provide the prison cell so Radovan Karadzic can serve his life sentence following his conviction by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals for the Srebrenica genocide and War Crimes.

The Foreign Secretary in his message to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina reiterated the UK's ongoing commitment to supporting reconciliation across the Western Balkans.

Over the past 26 years, the UK has provided millions of pounds to support projects relating to the Srebrenica genocide, including support for the victims' families and survivors. We now have an ongoing project with the Srebrenica Memorial Centre to develop its operational capacities and establish a globally relevant centre for genocide research, prevention, and reconciliation.

It remains a great concern that some continue to deny the genocide. Two international courts, the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former-Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice, after exhaustive legal processes, have ruled that Srebrenica was a genocide.

We continue to urge political leaders in the region to reject hate speech, to condemn any glorification of the perpetrators of genocide and war crimes, and to respect the verdicts of international and domestic courts.

Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Foreign Secretary's statement on the 26th anniversary

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

11 July 2021

Today, on the 26th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has reiterated the UK's ongoing commitment to supporting reconciliation across the Western Balkans.

The genocide claimed the lives of over 8,000 mostly Muslim men and boys and led to the displacement of over 20,000 women and children who were forcibly expelled from their homes.

The Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab said:

Today, we pause to remember the victims and honour the survivors of the Srebrenica genocide. The United Kingdom continues to play a vital role in ending impunity for these horrific crimes as we have shown by agreeing to provide the prison cell so Radovan Karadzic can serve his life sentence for the genocide.

4

PQs

Balkans: Peace Negotiations

21 Jun 2022 | 17157

Asked by: Matt Vickers

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she has taken to help support peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

HMG is working closely with our NATO Allies, including the US and European partners, to support security and stability. In February, the Western Balkans Prime Ministers and Ambassadors were hosted in London for talks on strengthening our economic and security partnerships, including cooperation on resilience and cyber. In April, the Government used its Bosnia and Herzegovina autonomous sanctions regime for the first time, sanctioning Bosnian-Serb politicians Milorad Dodik and Zeljka Cvijanovic for their attempts to undermine the legitimacy and functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Government has announced plans to extend our offer of honest and reliable infrastructure investment to the Western Balkans, and aims to mobilise £80 million of UK-backed investment by 2025. This will reduce dependency on Russian hydrocarbons and accelerate the transition to renewables. The Prime Minister's Special Envoy to the Western Balkans, Sir Stuart Peach, is also engaging extensively across the region, working alongside our US and European partners to reduce the risk of conflict.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Humanitarian Aid

23 Mar 2022 | 142096

Asked by: Fleur Anderson

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what peace-building projects are being funded by UK Aid in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In 2020-2021, the Government funded £60 million of programme activity in the Western Balkans, supporting UK priorities such as conflict prevention and resolution, stronger defence and security, media freedom, gender equality, education, reconciliation, tackling corruption, serious and organised crime and violent extremism. The UK remains committed to helping Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) maintain lasting peace and stability. Our Embassy in

Sarajevo supports a range of innovative peace-building projects to deliver citizen-centred reforms. Examples include working with the community in Mostar on social cohesion; the Srebrenica Memorial Centre on genocide prevention; and the International Commission on Missing Persons on improving regional co-operation. We also work to support survivors of sexual violence and mainstreaming gender equality.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government

15 Feb 2022 | 119483

Asked by: Andrew Percy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the tensions between Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) territorial integrity. Threats from within the Republika Srpska to withdraw from BiH State institutions are dangerous. We have called on those responsible to cease this destabilising and divisive rhetoric. We condemn Russian interference in the crisis, which undermines stability. The UK is committed to upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement. The UK, along with our Allies, is offering visible and practical support to BiH's territorial integrity, to maintain the Office of the High Representative, and the peace stabilisation mission (EUFOR). The Prime Minister's appointment of Sir Stuart Peach as Special Envoy to the Western Balkans, demonstrates the UK's ongoing commitment.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government

02 Feb 2022 | 111695

Asked by: Alex Sobel

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and what steps the Government is taking to help maintain peace in that country.

Answering member: Chris Heaton-Harris | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK takes seriously talk of secession and other threats to undo the progress of the last twenty-six years in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). These are clear challenges to the peace and stability envisaged by the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP). Those responsible must cease this destabilising and divisive rhetoric. As a member of the UN Security Council and Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, the UK is committed to

upholding the GFAP in BiH. The UK coordinates with our partners to support BiH's territorial integrity and to maintain the peace stabilisation force (EUFOR) and the Office of the High Representative. We work closely with various multinational bodies such as the Council of Europe, NATO, the OSCE and UN to encourage the authorities in BiH to meet their obligations to those who elected them. On 13 December, the Foreign Secretary hosted Western Balkans Foreign Ministers at Lancaster House, and took forward discussions on how to support stability in BiH. Following this meeting, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to the Western Balkans, Sir Stuart Peach, visited BiH and reiterated the UK's enduring commitment to the country.

Western Balkans

30 Nov 2021 | 704 c752

Asked by: Sir Mark Hendrick

Many of us remember the 1990s and the horrors of the first major war since the second world war. We also remember the horrors of Srebrenica, where Muslims were massacred by the Serbs. Should the Government not be speaking to the Americans and engaging with NATO to see what can be done to stabilise the situation? I remember observing the elections in Bosnia. It was a very delicate democracy then; it is even more delicate now. It is urgent that the Government act.

Answered by: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Let us be clear that Srebrenica was a genocide, as confirmed by international courts. We must not forget the victims. The UK has urged all political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region to reject hate speech; to condemn any glorification of the perpetrators of genocide and war crimes; and to respect the courts. It is precisely because it is so important that we work with our NATO partners that the Foreign Secretary will raise the situation in Riga today.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Visits Abroad

16 Nov 2021 | HL3799

Asked by: Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government which ministers (1) have visited, and (2) are due to visit, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2021.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In July 2021, Minister Morton visited Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in her capacity as Minister for Europe and the Americas. Her visit comprised a wide range of engagements with political and civil society contacts, and

encompassed not only Sarajevo but also trips to Mostar and to Srebrenica Genocide Memorial, where she paid her respects to those who were killed in the genocide. She also visited Albania and North Macedonia in October. BiH and the Western Balkans remain high on the agenda of the Government, and we are pursuing additional Ministerial visits to the region during the remainder of 2021.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Genocide

22 Sep 2021 | HL2529

Asked by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the lessons that can be learned from the Genocide of 1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and what steps they are taking to ensure there is adherence to the Dayton Accords.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK remembers all victims and pays its respects to the survivors of the genocide. The UK continues to fight for justice and to end impunity: this year Radovan Karadžić, convicted in part for his role in the Srebrenica genocide, was transferred to the UK to serve his life sentence. We continue to support the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals' work. The FCDO Minister for the European Neighbourhood, Wendy Morton MP, visited the Memorial Centre at Potočari in July this year and the FCDO has funded the Centre's work on genocide prevention.

As a member of the UN Security Council and of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, the UK works to uphold the GFAP's implementation. We worked with likeminded states to prevent Russian and Chinese attempts in the Security Council to close the Office of the High Representative, which oversees implementation of the civilian aspects of the GFAP, and we support the new High Representative in his work. The UK remains committed to supporting BiH's security, democracy and prosperity, underpinned as necessary by limited constitutional reform. It is essential that the authorities in BiH themselves make reforms based on broad consensus and for the greater good of all citizens.

Srebrenica: Genocide

12 Jul 2021 | HL1448

Asked by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide in 2021.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

2021 marks 26 years since the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which saw more than 8,000 mostly Muslim men and boys murdered, and over 20,000 women and children forcibly expelled from their homes. The UK remembers all victims and pays its respects to the survivors. The UK continues to fight for justice and an end to impunity: this year Radovan Karadzic, convicted in part for his role in the Srebrenica genocide, was transferred to the UK to serve his life sentence. HMG's commemorative activities include a video message from the Foreign Secretary, to be shown online as part of Remembering Srebrenica's programme of events, and a statement commemorating the anniversary. The FCDO hopes to host Remembering Srebrenica's in-person commemoration when COVID-19 restrictions allow. The British Embassy in Sarajevo, alongside its project funding for the Srebrenica Memorial Centre, will join commemorations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Srebrenica: Genocide

04 Feb 2020 | HL604

Asked by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

Her Majesty's Government what plans the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has, alongside the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Through our Embassy in Sarajevo, the British Government is in close touch with the different organisations and levels of government involved in commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide. Their plans are not confirmed at this stage, but we will ensure an active and prominent role for the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom remains committed to helping the region overcome the legacy of past conflict and build a more peaceful, prosperous and stable future for all.

In the United Kingdom, we are working closely with the group Remembering Srebrenica to commemorate and raise awareness of the Srebrenica genocide.

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Debates

[Peace and Stability in the Balkans](#)

16 Mar 2022 | House of Commons | 710 cc313-332WH

Motion that this House has considered the maintenance of peace and stability in the Balkans. Agreed to on question.

[Bosnia-Herzegovina](#)

16 Dec 2021 | House of Lords | 817 cc519-544

Lords motion to take note of the importance of the constitutional integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and of upholding the Dayton Agreement. Agreed to on question.

[Bosnia and Herzegovina: Stability and Peace](#)

02 Dec 2021 | House of Commons | 704 cc1082-1123

Motion that this House notes the concerning political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; expresses its support for institutions set out in the Dayton Peace Agreement, and the office and work of the High Representative, Mr Christian Schmidt; and supports continued efforts by the UK Government and its allies to ensure peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to uphold the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Agreed to on question.

[Srebrenica Genocide Commemoration](#)

05 Jul 2017 | House of Commons | 626 cc110-8WH

Motion that this House has considered the support for the Srebrenica genocide commemoration. Agreed to on question.

[Srebrenica Genocide \(20th Anniversary\)](#)

07 Jul 2015 | House of Commons | 598 cc34-56WH

Motion that this House has considered the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide. Agreed to on question.

[Srebrenica Massacre Anniversary](#)

09 Jul 2014 | House of Commons | 584 cc104-124WH

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Urgent Questions

Bosnia and Herzegovina

09 Nov 2021 | House of Commons | 703 cc175-185

Anthony Mangnall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if she will make a statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the potential of a renewed conflict in the Western Balkans.

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): I thank my hon. Friend for his interest in the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he is right to highlight it. The recent political violence is of significant concern to the UK Government. Milorad Dodik, the Bosnian Serb member of the presidency, has threatened to withdraw Republika Srpska—the entity—from a range of state institutions. That is an act that the High Representative calls a de facto secession. This is a dangerous and deliberate attempt to distract from a failure to improve standards of living and to tackle corruption. It is unacceptable.

The UK fully supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the devastating conflict of the 1990s, the region has lived in peace for 26 years, and the Dayton political system, which should have been used to deliver progress and development for citizens, has been exploited by politicians who are focused on building and maintaining their own position.

We recognise the important role that the EUFOR peace and stabilisation force has played, and we welcome the renewal of its mandate—an important deterrent against those malign actors who wish to see instability on Europe's doorstep. We worked hard in the Security Council to ensure that it authorised EUFOR's mandate for a further 12 months. The UK continues to play an active role. My hon. Friend the Europe Minister was in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer to support that work.

The High Representative will visit the UK for meetings in December. The UK is in close contact with him to ensure that we work in co-operation and is giving him vocal support, including on the use of executive powers should the situation require it. That is a further check and balance on the destabilising actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the upcoming NATO Foreign Ministers meeting, the Foreign Secretary will push for more focus and resource on Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on the need to rebuff Russia's actions.

The international community also has collective responsibility to ensure that there is no return to the conflict of the 1990s. Along with our international partners, we are ensuring that the High Representative's position and work

are secured, and we will continue to urge Russia to return to productive engagement with the peace implementation council's steering board. Along with our international partners, we are working to tackle the divisive rhetoric and actions from some politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the threat to re-establish a Republika Srpska army and to pull out of other established state-level institutions.

The UK is committed to helping the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina build a better future in a stable and prosperous state, with strong institutions. We support the NATO Headquarters Sarajevo, including through the secondment of UK staff officers who play an important role in building the capacity of the armed forces. We are providing capacity building and expertise to those actors who demonstrate genuine commitment to progress.

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Statements

Update on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

13 May 2021 | HCWS20

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab): Promoting and enforcing international justice is central to Global Britain's role as a force for good in the Western Balkans and in the world. The conviction of Radovan Karadžić for genocide and grave crimes at Srebrenica, the siege of Sarajevo and other parts of the conflict was an essential part of addressing the horrors of the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Ensuring accountability for such crimes is also pivotal for promoting reconciliation in the region.

On 24 March 2016, the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), in The Hague found Radovan Karadžić guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war committed during the conflict in and around Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) during the mid-1990s. The Court sentenced him to 40 years of imprisonment, which was increased on appeal to a life sentence.

Following a request to the United Kingdom from the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), the successor body to the ICTY, Radovan Karadžić will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve his sentence. Radovan Karadžić will be the fifth prisoner transferred to the UK by the ICTY / IRMCT.

The crimes for which Radovan Karadžić was convicted relate to actions taken in municipalities throughout BiH with a view to permanently removing Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats from Bosnian Serb-claimed territory; spreading terror among the civilian population of Sarajevo through a campaign of sniping and shelling; taking UN personnel hostage; and the genocide at Srebrenica.

The United Kingdom signed a sentence enforcement agreement with the ICTY on 11 March 2004, allowing for sentences to be enforced in the UK, and for Her Majesty's Government to meet the associated costs. The IRMCT remains responsible for further decision-making regarding his imprisonment, over and above the prisoner's daily care.

Srebrenica

11 Jul 2013 | 747 cc50-2WS

The Senior Minister of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Warsi): I wish to inform the House that the Department for Communities and Local Government is funding “[Remembering Srebrenica](#)”, an initiative dedicated to commemorating and honouring the victims of Srebrenica and teaching future generations about the consequences of hatred.

In July 1995, the Bosnian town of Srebrenica was overrun and captured by Bosnian Serb forces and Serbian paramilitaries commanded by General Ratko Mladic, despite having been declared a UN Safe Area. More than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were systematically murdered and buried in mass graves in actions that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and International Court of Justice have determined constitute genocide.

In recognition of this, the Government are providing £170,000 to the community-led Remembering Srebrenica initiative in its first year of operation. This will fund an online educational archive, a commemoration event on 11 July 2013 and a series of visits from local communities to Srebrenica.

I wish to express my thanks to my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr William Hague) for the support and co-operation that his Department has provided.

Srebrenica represents a catastrophic collective international failure to protect civilians. Commemorating the event will teach future generations about the devastating consequences of hatred on our doorstep.

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Early Day Motions

Srebrenica Memorial Week 2022

EDM 254 (session 2022-23)

5 July 2022

Margaret Ferrier

That this House recognises the 11th July as the annual day of commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide; commits to supporting the work of communities and schools across the country to tackle hatred and intolerance by raising awareness and educating people about the genocide that took place in Srebrenica; pledges to use the lessons from Srebrenica to combat all forms of prejudice and discrimination that targets anyone because of their religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or any other characteristic; commends the dignity and determination of the survivors of genocide and ethnic cleansing who have rebuilt their lives as refugees in the UK; expresses its gratitude for the hugely invaluable work of the local organisation Remembering Srebrenica, who have united people from different backgrounds through organising activities to commemorate the victims and educate them on the tragic consequences of unchecked hatred, helping to build a more cohesive society whilst celebrating the diversity which enriches our country.

Srebrenica genocide and the Ratko Mladic verdict

EDM 637 (session 2017-19)

4 December 2017

Tom Brake

That this House notes the guilty verdict against Bosnian Serb army commander Ratko Mladic for directing the Srebrenica genocide; welcomes that Mladic has finally been brought to justice 22 years after the genocide he oversaw from 11 to 22 July 1995; further notes that 8,372 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were murdered in and around Srebrenica by Bosnian Serb forces; notes that while 6,504 of the victims have been buried, over 1,800 victims have still not been found or buried; commends the tireless and ongoing work of the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina in trying to find more victims; further commends the Mothers of Srebrenica group for its campaigning and the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial for honouring the victims; gives its full support to the excellent work done across the UK by the Remembering Srebrenica charity; praises the dignity and determination of all survivors to rebuild their lives; and hopes that the guilty verdict against Mladic can help bring them some closure.

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