

Debate Pack

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Srebrenica Memorial Week

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1 Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on Srebrenica Memorial Week is scheduled for Tuesday 4 July 2023, from 9:30-11:00am. The debate will be led by Yasmin Qureshi MP.

2 Background

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.¹

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.² 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).³

¹ Remembering Srebrenica, [What happened in Srebrenica](#), [accessed 29 June 2023]

² UN International Criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, [About the ICTY](#) [accessed 29 June 2023]

³ UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, [Srebrenica genocide 1995](#), [accessed 29 June 2023]

Radovan Karadžić had his original sentence of 40 years in prison [increased to life in prison on appeal](#).⁴ 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](#).⁵

Recent 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.⁶

Bosnian Serbs in the Republika Srpska (RS) have adopted a more assertive separatist stance under the leadership of Milorad Dodik, President of RS from November 2022 (and previously 2010 to 2018) and a member of the three-person collective presidency of BiH from 2018 to 2022.

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.⁷ Followed this decision, the [Bosnian Serb leadership said they would boycott](#) all major institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸ 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 severing ties](#) with Bosnia's armed forces, judiciary and tax system.⁹ In January 2022, Dodik said RS representatives would only return to BiH state institutions if [references to genocide by RS entities](#) were prohibited.¹⁰

In late May 2022, Dodik said the time had come “to try once again to activate the mechanism of peaceful dissolution in BiH”.¹¹ 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](#).¹²

Secessionist rhetoric from Dodik has intensified since he returned to the RS Presidency in November 2022. On 27 June 2023, the RS parliament passed a

⁴ UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, [KARADŽIĆ, Radovan \(MICT-13-55-ES\)](#) [accessed 29 June 2023]

⁵ Danijel Kovacevic, [Radovan Karadzic Transferred to Britain to Serve Jail Sentence](#), 28 May 2021

⁶ OSCE, [Dayton Peace Agreement](#), 14 December 1995

⁷ Nermina Kuloglija, [Bosnia's High Representative Imposes Genocide Denial Ban](#), 23 June 2021

⁸ DW, [Bosnian Serbs threaten to block country's major institutions](#), 27 July 2021

⁹ Reuters, [Serbs vote to start quitting Bosnia's key institutions in secessionist move](#), 11 December 2021

¹⁰ N1, [Dodik sets condition for return of RS entity representatives to BiH institutions](#),

¹¹ Euractiv, [Bosnian Serb leader calls for 'peaceful break-up'](#) 25 May 2022

¹² Reuters, [Bosnian Serb leader Dodik says Ukraine war has delayed secession plan](#), 6 June 2022

law to [suspend the application of rulings of the BiH constitutional court in RS](#).¹³

International Reaction

The USA, UK and EU have condemned Dodik's actions. The USA and UK have imposed sanctions against Dodik.¹⁴ The EU is split over sanctions - most EU Member States and the European Parliament have called for EU sanctions, but Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary have opposed this.¹⁵ Hungary has given financial and political support to RS.

The UK Government [announced sanctions against Milorad Dodik and the then President of RS, Zeljka Cvijanovic](#) in April 2022.¹⁶ 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.

The US Embassy has called the June 2023 RS decision to suspend the application of rulings of the BiH constitutional court "[a reckless attack on the Dayton Peace Agreement and the BiH Constitution](#)."¹⁷ The UK Embassy in BiH described the decision as "[an illegal and reckless move](#)" with "[no legal standing](#)" in BiH.¹⁸

Dodik claims to have support from Russia and has maintained friendly relations with President Putin. He has also blocked BiH participation in sanctions against Russia since its invasion of Ukraine. In January 2023, Dodik awarded President Putin the RS highest medal of honour (in absentia) [for his "patriotic concern and love" for RS](#).¹⁹ The US Embassy in Sarajevo said the [award was "reprehensible"](#). The award was also criticised by EU officials.²⁰

¹³ Reuters, [Bosnian Serb lawmakers vote to suspend rulings of Bosnia's top court](#), 27 June 2023

¹⁴ FCDO, [UK announces sanctions under Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime](#): 11 April 2022

¹⁵ European Parliament, [MEPs to debate the increasingly tense situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), 3 March 2022, and The Independent, [EU mulls ways to stop the possible breakup of Bosnia](#), 21 February 2022

¹⁶ FCDO, [UK announces sanctions under Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime](#): 11 April 2022

¹⁷ European Western Balkans, [Republika Srpska has adopted a law that bans the implementation of decisions made by the Constitutional Court of BiH](#), 28 June 2023

¹⁸ Julian Reilly (@JulianReillyUK), British Embassy statement regarding yesterday's decision of the RSNA (Twitter) Available from: www.twitter.com/JulianReillyUK/status/1673989509057314817

¹⁹ AP news, [Bosnian Serbs award Putin with medal of honor](#), 8 January 2023

²⁰ Politico, [EU, US slam Bosnian Serb leader for awarding Putin highest honor](#), 9 January 2023

2.1 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.²¹ 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"²²

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.²³

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.²⁴ Two rotations of peacekeeping troops were allowed to leave Srebrenica, but Bosnian Serb troops refused entry to their replacement

²¹ IRMCT, [Srebrenica: Timeline of a Genocide](#)

²² United Nations, [Resolution 819 \(1993\)](#) / adopted by the Security Council at its 3199th meeting, on 16 April 1993.

²³ International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, [Trial Judgement Summary for Radovan Karadžić](#), 24 March 2016

²⁴ Human Rights Watch, [The Fall of Srebrenica and the Failure of UN Peacekeeping](#), October 1995

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](#).²⁵ 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 were taken away by the Serb forces. Human Rights Watch reported that Bosnian Serb troops captured UN forces and disguised themselves as UN troops.²⁶

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

²⁵ United Nations Digital library, [Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/35 :#the fall of Srebrenica](#), 1999

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, [The Fall of Srebrenica and the Failure of UN Peacekeeping](#), October 1995

- [Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 53/35: The Fall of Srebrenica](#), 15 November 1999, UN Doc A/54/549

2.2

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.²⁷ 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

²⁷ ICTY, [Key Figures of the Cases](#) [accessed 19 June 2023]

Radovan Karadžić had his original sentence of 40 years in prison [increased to life in prison on appeal](#).²⁸ 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.

2.3

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>.

²⁸ UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, [KARADŽIĆ, Radovan \(MICT-13-55-ES\)](#) [accessed 29 June 2023]

2.4

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.²⁹

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, President of RS from November 2022 (and previously 2010 to 2018) and a member of the three-person collective presidency of BiH from 2018 to 2022.

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.³⁰

²⁹ OSCE, [Dayton Peace Agreement](#), 14 December 1995

³⁰ Office of the High Representative, [HR's Decision on Enacting the Law on Amendment to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), 23 July 2021

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.³¹

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 severing ties](#) with Bosnia's armed forces, judiciary and tax system.³²

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](#) were prohibited.³³

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”.³⁴ 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](#).

In December 2022, the RS parliament adopted the Law on Immovable Property, giving the RS ownership of rivers, forests and agricultural land on its territory. The High Representative temporarily suspended the law on 27 February 2023, in line with a previous decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in response to a very similar law in September 2022³⁵ The Court had stated that RS does not have the constitutional competence to regulate state property assets because that jurisdiction belongs to the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in accordance with the BiH Constitution.³⁶

³¹ Reuters, [Secessionist leader says Serbs will undo Bosnia state institutions](#), 14 October 2021

³² DW, [Bosnian Serbs threaten to block country's major institutions](#), 27 July 2021

³³ N1, [Dodik sets condition for return of RS entity representatives to BiH institutions](#),

³⁴ Euractiv, [Bosnian Serb leader calls for 'peaceful break-up.'](#) 25 May 2022

³⁵ Office of the High Representative, [63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations](#), 9 May 2023, Section II B

³⁶ Office of the High Representative, [63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations](#), 9 May 2023, Section II B and Balkan Insight, [Bosnian Serb Leader Vows to Defy International Envoy Over Property Law](#), 28 February 2023

On 14 April 2023, Dodik said in a joint news conference with Serbia's President Aleksandar Vučić that: "We are considering in the most serious terms to bring a decision to declare independence and secede Republika Srpska unless the property issue is solved".³⁷

On 24 April 2023, Dodik and Vučić both attended and spoke at a commemoration at a World War II concentration camp site. Dodik said:

All the people here must take ownership of the idea we have, to proclaim RS a country and unite it with Serbia. We are not making a country on someone else's territory. This is our country, our property, our freedom".

He added: "We bear no ill will to Bosniaks and Croats, but my message to them is 'leave us alone, we cannot be together". Vučić did not reference Dodik's speech but said that Serbs should no longer be divided into Croatian or Bosnian Serbs "because we are one and the same people".³⁸

On 27 June 2023, the RS parliament passed a law to [suspend the application of rulings of the BiH constitutional court in RS](#).³⁹ The US Embassy responded by calling the decision [a reckless attack on the Dayton Peace Agreement and the BiH Constitution](#). The UK Embassy in BiH described the decision as "[an illegal and reckless move](#)" with "[no legal standing](#)" in BiH.

High Representative Report, November 2021

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 said 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 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.

³⁷ Reuters, [Bosnia Serb leader Dodik threatens to declare independence](#), 15 April 2023

³⁸ See Euractiv, [Bosnian Serb leader Dodik invokes merging of Serb entity with Serbia proper](#), 24 April 2023; and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, [Dodik Says He Wants Bosnian Serb Entity To 'Unite' With Serbia](#), 24 April 2023

³⁹ Reuters, [Bosnian Serb lawmakers vote to suspend rulings of Bosnia's top court](#), 27 June 2023

High Representative Decision on Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center, February 2023

On 20 February 2023, the High Representative amended the Law on the Center for the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide. This decision adjusted a previous High Representative's decision to facilitate the Memorial Center's work. With donors' consent, this adjustment allowed unspent funds originally assigned for burials to be used for other purposes.⁴⁰

The High Representative noted that the Memorial Center and victims' associations welcomed the decision, while political representatives from Republika Srpska criticised it.⁴¹

High Representative report, May 2023

In his report to the UN Secretary-General on 9 May 2023, the High Representative, Christian Schmidt, said that the "secessionist rhetoric and action by the RS authorities, namely Mr. Milorad Dodik, had intensified".⁴²

Schmidt said this rhetoric "poisons the political climate in the entity and the entire country" and noted that RS authorities "reject the authority of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OHR and they pursue a confrontationalist attitude towards Western partners". He also noted, with reference to the Law on Immovable Property, that RS authorities "continued to undermine BiH state institutions by obstructing their work and decision-making and claiming constitutional and legal competencies for RS, which belong to the State".⁴³

The High Representative also pointed to a joint statement signed by the RS ruling parties on 24 April, setting out concrete steps toward secession, and said this was "a dangerous development".⁴⁴

The High Representative urged the UN Security Council to take these threats seriously. He said that Dodik's rhetoric posed "a threat to peace and stability

⁴⁰ Office of the High Representative, [63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations](#), 9 May 2023, Section II B

⁴¹ Office of the High Representative, [63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations](#), 9 May 2023, Section II B

⁴² Office of the High Representative, [63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations](#), 9 May 2023

⁴³ Office of the High Representative, [63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations](#), 9 May 2023

⁴⁴ Office of the High Representative, [63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations](#), 9 May 2023

in the country and potentially to the wider region”. Schmidt also noted that Dodik had shown sympathy with Russia’s role in the war in Ukraine.

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](#).⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

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”.⁴⁷ 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.⁴⁸ 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](#)”.⁴⁹ 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.

⁴⁵ European External Action Service, [Western Balkans: Joint Statement following the meeting of High Representative Josep Borrell and Secretary of State Antony Blinken](#), 20 October 2021

⁴⁶ Politico, [Western countries warn Bosnian Serbs against secessionist move](#), 11 December 2021

⁴⁷ Reuters, [U.S. imposes sanctions on Bosnian Serb nationalist leader Dodik](#), 17 January 2017

⁴⁸ Politico, [In Bosnia, US overtakes EU as crisis boils](#), 9 November 2021

⁴⁹ Euractiv, [Dodik: EU Commission will not sanction Republika Srpska](#), 15 October 2021

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.⁵⁰ 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”.⁵¹

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](#).⁵² 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.⁵³

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”.⁵⁴ 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

⁵⁰ The Independent, [EU mulls ways to stop the possible breakup of Bosnia](#), 21 February 2022

⁵¹ Balkan Insight, [Orban: Hungary gives €100 million support to Bosnian Serbs](#), 21 December 2021

⁵² Politico, [Secession threats and nationalist strife shock Bosnia as EU offers limited response](#), 18 January 2022

⁵³ [Written Question UIN 71300](#), 8 November 2021 [Bosnia: Politics and Government]

⁵⁴ FCDO, [UK announces sanctions under Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime: 11 April 2022](#)

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. The then 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.

In [response to a Parliamentary Question on 17 October 2022](#), FCDO Minister Leo Docherty reaffirmed UK support for BiH sovereignty and territorial integrity. He said the UK had led efforts at NATO to develop a new package of measures to support BiH, “including support to the NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo to counter disinformation”, and was delivering training and capacity building to the BiH Armed Forces.⁵⁵

RS response to UK and USA

On 17 March 2023, Dodik threatened to cut off contacts with US and UK diplomats and embassies in Bosnia and Herzegovina over what his office described as interference in the internal affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A statement from his office said that a team has been formed to “draw up comprehensive information on the anti-Dayton activities of American and British diplomats and embassies and their interference in the internal affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina”.⁵⁶ On 24 March, the RS Government confirmed that that it would “end cooperation” with US and UK embassies and accused both countries of “interfering with internal affairs in Bosnia”.⁵⁷

In [response to a Parliamentary Question on 30 March 2023](#), Leo Docherty said the RS decision to prevent all contact with the British and US Embassies was not legally binding. He said Dodik’s “authoritarian actions move BiH away from its Euro-Atlantic path”, and that the UK together with allies, would “continue to support alternative voices and to strengthen BiH’s democracy”.

⁵⁵ [Written Question UIN 59092](#), 10 October 2022, [Bosnia and Herzegovina]

⁵⁶ Reuters, [Bosnia Serb leader Dodik threatens to declare independence](#), 15 April 2023

⁵⁷ Balkan Insight, [Bosnian Serb Govt 'Ends Cooperation' With UK, US Embassies](#), 24 March 2023

RS and Russia

Dodik has separately said he has support from both Russia and China.⁵⁸ Dodik met with President Putin in Moscow in December 2021. According to Dodik, Putin reiterated his backing for “joint economic projects” in the RS including a new gas pipeline, further fuel deliveries and a planned solar plant. Dodik also said that Russia has “[a series of objections about disregard for the Dayton peace agreement](#)”.⁵⁹

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February, Dodik said [BiH would not be joining EU sanctions against Russia](#). However, he said that he supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine, in the same way as he supported the territorial integrity of Serbia and BiH. Sanctions against Russia were supported by the two other members of the BiH collective presidency, but without the support of Dodik they could not be adopted. Nevertheless, BiH voted in favour of the [United Nations resolution condemning Russia’s actions](#) in Ukraine and calling on it to withdraw on 2 March 2022.

Dodik visited President Putin in Moscow in September 2022. Putin wished Dodik success in the BiH general elections, and said he hoped that the “results will strengthen the position of the patriotic forces in the country, allowing us to continue to develop productive and mutually beneficial cooperation”.⁶⁰ According to reports, RS and Russia have continued to discuss economic cooperation since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and this involves the construction of a Russian-funded gas pipeline to RS.⁶¹

On 8 January 2023, Dodik awarded President Putin the RS highest medal of honour (in absentia) for his “patriotic concern and love” for RS. Dodik said that “Putin is responsible for developing and strengthening cooperation and political and friendly relations between RS and Russia”.⁶² The US Embassy in Sarajevo said the award was “reprehensible”. The award was also criticised by EU officials.⁶³

2 Further reading

⁵⁸ The Guardian, [Bosnian Serb leader: Putin and China will help if west imposes sanctions](#), 29 November 2021

⁵⁹ Bloomberg, [Putin Backs Bosnian Serbs Against ‘Liberal’ West, Dodik Says](#), 3 December 2021

⁶⁰ Euronews, [‘Friend of our country’: Putin praises separatist Bosnian Serb leader during his Kremlin visit](#), 21 September 2022

⁶¹ Euronews, [‘Friend of our country’: Putin praises separatist Bosnian Serb leader during his Kremlin visit](#), 21 September 2022

⁶² AP News, [Bosnian Serbs award Putin with medal of honor](#), 8 January 2023

⁶³ Politico, [EU, US slam Bosnian Serb leader for awarding Putin highest honor](#), 9 January 2023

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

3

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.

[Britain condemns ‘illegal and reckless’ move by Bosnian Serb separatists to ignore top court](#)

Independent
Alastair Jamieson
28 June 2023

[Court widens war crimes convictions of former Serbian security officers](#)

The Guardian
Peter Beaumont
31 May 2023

[In Bosnia, the past is disappearing and the future is bleak](#)

Al Jazeera
5 April 2023
Ehlimana Memišević

[‘Together We Are One’ the theme of this year’s Remembering Srebrenica Commemoration in the UK](#)

Sarajevo Times
12 February 2023

[Russia’s Influence in the Balkans](#)

Council on Foreign Relations
James McBride
2 December 2022

[The Virulent Nationalism That Led to Srebrenica Is Back in Bosnia](#)

Foreign Policy
Janine di Giovanni
11 July 2022

4

Press releases

[‘Now is the moment for all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to show courage and leadership’: UK statement at the Security Council](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

10 May 2023

Let me start by welcoming the participation of the High Representative in this meeting.

Mr Schmidt and his office continue to play a crucial role in contributing to a stable and secure Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is therefore important for the Security Council to have an informed and open dialogue with Mr Schmidt on the situation on the ground.

Madam President, the UK wants to see Bosnia and Herzegovina move forward as a democratic, stable and prosperous European country.

We welcome the formation of a new Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 28 April.

A functional and effective government is vital to help counter hostile actors, make progress on Euro-Atlantic integration and implement reform.

While it was regrettable that the High Representative had to take executive actions, Mr Schmidt, along with the international community, had repeatedly encouraged domestic politicians to come to an agreement and form a government. His executive powers remain a necessary tool when the situation requires it.

We urge all actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to set aside narrow interests, and to promote collaborative and constructive politics in the coming period.

This includes halting attempts to frustrate governance and working together to agree an alternative to the permanent amendment to the Federation Constitution before May 2024.

We welcome the proactive approach taken by the new Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and hope to see such activity continue.

We remain concerned by the dangerous, divisive and secessionist rhetoric and actions from the Republika Srpska leadership.

As the High Representative makes clear, Republika Srpska authorities continue to undermine state institutions in an attempt to damage the integrity of the state.

Recent authoritarian legislative moves threaten peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region.

Against this backdrop, it is more important than ever that the Security Council maintains its support for the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the High Representative.

The UK remains firmly committed to the Dayton Peace Agreement, and its associated international structures.

We welcome all efforts towards meeting the conditions set out for their closure, including the 5+2 criteria. We remain a committed member of the Peace Implementation Council in support of the territorial integrity and fundamental structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, sovereign state, comprising two entities.

We also recognise EUFOR ALTHEA's effective work to maintain peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It continues to play a vital role in regional security.

President, now is the moment for all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to show courage and leadership – rejecting the politics of division and hatred in favour of cooperation and constructive engagement.

This is essential to deliver stability and prosperity for all its citizens.

[The United States Will Continue to Speak Out Against Genocide Denial](#)
U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina
8 April 2023

President Dodik is, as always, wrong to claim genocide did not take place in and around Srebrenica in July 1995. The facts of this tragedy are supported by unimpeachable forensic and other evidence and have been established beyond a shadow of doubt by international courts: elements of the Army of Republika Srpska, under the command of Ratko Mladic and the political direction of Radovan Karadzic, committed genocide, and they are war criminals. The guilt for this and other war crimes committed during the 1992-1995 war rests with the perpetrators, not with an entire ethnic group. Mr. Dodik's repeated denial of the Srebrenica genocide cannot change these facts.

Coarse and bigoted comments about Srebrenica and other sensitive issues do not help the people of the Republika Srpska. They are an effort to divert attention from the ongoing campaign to take away the fundamental freedoms of the people living in Republika Srpska; from the failure to address the day-to-day issues of most concern to Republika Srpska's residents, such

as rising prices; and from irresponsible public borrowing, which is mortgaging the Republika Srpska's future.

We cannot prevent Mr. Dodik from continuing to embarrass himself and the Republika Srpska, but the United States will continue to speak out against genocide denial. We will also continue to engage with and support the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the residents of Republika Srpska, as they work to build a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous future for themselves inside the Euro-Atlantic community of nations.

5

PQs

Srebrenica: Genocide

26 Jun 2023 | HL8371

Asked by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the genocide at Srebrenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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

Srebrenica was a genocide, as confirmed by the international courts, and we must never forget the victims. It is important that such a significant anniversary is appropriately commemorated, and we will work with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to support their plans. The British Embassy Sarajevo has previously participated in commemoration events in BiH and will continue to do so. Furthermore, the UK Government continues to support the Srebrenica Memorial Centre in its work to become a world-leading centre for the study and prevention of genocide.

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

10 May 2023 | HL7433

Asked by: Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) for the contents of the Learning Centre to be attached to the UK Holocaust Memorial, and (2) to specify the populations whose genocides are to be commemorated therein.

Answering member: Baroness Scott of Bybrook | Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

The main focus of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre's exhibition content is to ensure that the story of what happened during the unique events of the Holocaust resonates with the public. This will include raising questions about Britain's role at the time. The content will also address genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Republika Srpska: Diplomatic Relations

30 Mar 2023 | 174465

Asked by: Alicia Kearns

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his

Department's policies of reports that Republika Srpska will end diplomatic relations with the US and UK.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 17 March and on the back of false claims, President of the Republika Srpska (RS) entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Dodik, announced a non-legally binding RS government decision to prevent all contact with the British and US Embassies. He has also pushed retrograde legislative moves in the RS. His authoritarian actions move BiH away from its Euro-Atlantic path. Together with our allies, we continue to support alternative voices and to strengthen BiH's democracy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: NATO

08 Feb 2023 | HL5072

Asked by: Baroness Helic

To ask His Majesty's Government what (1) personnel, and (2) financial, contribution they made to NATO HQ in Bosnia and Herzegovina in (a) 2020/21, (b) 2021/22, and (c) the current financial year.

Answering member: Baroness Goldie | Ministry of Defence

The UK's direct personnel and financial contribution to NATO HQ in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2020-21; 2021-22 and the current financial year (FY) is shown in the table below:

FY	Personnel in theatre	Financial Contribution
2020-21	2	No finance data available*
2021-22	2	£37,013.44
2022-23	3	£25,000.00 **

* Costs for the UK's contribution to NATO HQ Sarajevo Staff Officer postings are unavailable due to these financial contributions being reported as one sum for Op ELGIN (KFOR, Op REHEARSAL, NATO HQ Sq). In FY2020-21 these costs totalled £2,733,351.11 and were not disaggregated by Operation.

** Forecast at AP12 FY2022/23

NATO HQ Sarajevo is funded through NATO's Military Budget, to which the UK contributes a national cost share (currently 11.3%). Per calendar year, this share amounts to €415,000 in 2020, €493,000 in 2021, €533,000 in 2022 and €572,000 for 2023.

Balkans: Wagner Group

17 Jan 2023 | 119062

Asked by: Alicia Kearns

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether the paramilitary Wagner Group is currently operating in (a) Kosovo and (b) Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We will oppose Russian attempts to destabilise the region. We are aware of unconfirmed media reporting that Wagner Group has been operating in north Kosovo during the recent heightened tensions and are in regular contact with NATO's Kosovo Force who continue to investigate and monitor the situation closely. There are also unconfirmed reports that citizens from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) have been recruited by groups like Wagner, but we have no evidence that the group is operating on BiH territory.

Republika Srpska: Russia

16 Jan 2023 | 119146

Asked by: Alicia Kearns

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has received evidence of the Russian Federation offering (a) financial, (b) arms, (c) manpower and (d) other support for Republika Srpska's secession from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has heightened the risk of instability in the Western Balkans. We will oppose Russian attempts to destabilise the region. The UK condemns any steps towards "de facto secession" by Republika Srpska by Milorad Dodik, who has met Putin on two occasions since February 2022 to seek Russian support. Attempts to undermine the integrity and functioning of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are dangerous and risk conflict. On 11 April 2022, the Government imposed sanctions against those driving secessionist policies in BiH. We will consider targeting others who continue these actions.

Russia: Republika Srpska

12 Jan 2023 | 119140

Asked by: Alicia Kearns

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has received evidence of the Republika

Srpska region of Bosnia and Herzegovina providing (a) financial support (b) arms (c) manpower and (d) other equipment for the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We have not seen evidence of Republika Srpska (RS) entity offering practical support to Russia in Ukraine. Nonetheless, Milorad Dodik and other politicians in the RS have blocked BiH from implementing sanctions against Russia for its aggression in Ukraine. Dodik has met Putin on multiple occasions since February 2022 in search of Russian support. The UK has condemned the RS authorities' decision to award Vladimir Putin the RS medal of honour. We have made clear that the award is unjustifiable and risks further isolating those RS politicians involved.

Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

17 Oct 2022 | 61136

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina following the elections held on 2 October 2022.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK supports the role played by the High Representative and his Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). We are in regular contact with him, including through the Steering Board of Ambassadors. In the absence of domestic political will, he has an important part to play in implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement and supporting the framework for a prosperous future. Following his imposition of a package of measures to improve the functionality of the Federation of BiH, domestic political actors must work together to implement the election results in a timely fashion and support the reforms needed for progress on BiH's Euro-Atlantic path.

Balkans: Politics and Government

17 Oct 2022 | 59752

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has with the High Representative to Bosnia and Herzegovina on the stability of the Western Balkans.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK supports the role played by the High Representative and his Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). We are in regular contact with him, including through the Steering Board of Ambassadors. In the absence of domestic political will, he has an important part to play in implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement and supporting the framework for a prosperous future. Following his imposition of a package of measures to improve the functionality of the Federation of BiH, domestic political actors must work together to implement the election results in a timely fashion and support the reforms needed for progress on BiH's Euro-Atlantic path.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

17 Oct 2022 | 59092

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help support peace, stability and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK fully supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) sovereignty and territorial integrity. The European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) remains vital. We are working hard to secure its mandate in the UN Security Council and prevent a security vacuum. We have led efforts at NATO to develop a new package of measures to support BiH, including support to the NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo to counter disinformation, and are delivering training and capacity building to the BiH Armed Forces. In April, we imposed UK sanctions on Member of the Presidency, Milorad Dodik, and Republika Srpska President, Zeljka Cvijanovic, for their attempts to undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina's integrity, legitimacy and functionality.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Elections

03 Oct 2022 | HL2074

Asked by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the use of Bonn Powers by the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina in relation to (1) election law, and (2) the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and in any such plans, what consideration they are giving to the risk of denial of rights of representation in the House of Peoples for ethnic minorities in the cantons in that country.

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

The delicate balance of power sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina is set out in the Dayton Peace Agreement and other documents. These afford certain protections to the three Constituent Peoples and 'Others'. However, misuse of these mechanisms is preventing functional government and blocking progress. There has been no domestic agreement on electoral and constitutional reform despite US and EU facilitated talks. With this in mind and aware of the need for a functional Federation, the UK strongly supports the High Representative and the use of his executive powers should the situation require it.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Elections

30 Sep 2022 | HL2075

Asked by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had within the Peace Implementation Council of the Dayton Peace Agreement regarding (1) election law reform, and (2) forthcoming elections, in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and to what extent any such discussions have noted the importance of maintaining the ability for full electoral participation by ethnic minorities within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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

The UK strongly supports the High Representative and the use of his executive powers should the situation require it. Officials have made this clear in meetings of the Steering Board of Ambassadors of the Peace Implementation Council. The measures he imposed on 27 July are a valuable step towards increasing the integrity and transparency of the 2 October elections. He has also called on Bosnia and Herzegovina's political party leaders to develop domestic solutions to the significant functionality problems. We encourage leaders to engage constructively to find solutions.

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.

Topical Questions

21 Jun 2022 | 716 c705

Asked by: Mark Menzies

Last year, I visited Bosnia to understand first hand the situation in the country. What steps is my right hon. Friend taking to ensure peace and stability in the western Balkans?

Answered by: Elizabeth Truss | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My hon. Friend is absolutely right; that is a vital issue. We are seeing attempts by Russia to destabilise the western Balkans. I recently visited Sarajevo, as has the Minister for Europe and North America, to do what we can to support the country through greater investment, so that there are alternatives to malign investment, and to make clear our support for security in the nation.

6 Other Parliamentary material

6.1 Debates

West Balkans: Council of Europe

16 Nov 2022 | 722 cc265-287WH

Motion that this House has considered the West Balkans and the Council of Europe. Agreed to on question.

Srebrenica

14 Jul 2022 | 718 cc523-544

Motion that this House notes that from 4 to 11 July 2022, the UK marked Srebrenica Memorial Week with commemorations taking place in hundreds of schools, local authorities, places of worship, community centres and police forces to name but a few to mark the 27th anniversary of the genocide at Srebrenica where over 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were murdered by Bosnian Serb forces; expresses concern about the current threat to Bosnia's territorial integrity and sovereignty from secessionists who are operating with the support of Russia and the prospect of a return to conflict; commends the invaluable work undertaken by Remembering Srebrenica in using the lessons of Srebrenica to tackle prejudice to help build a safer, stronger and more cohesive society in the UK; and urges the Government to continue funding this vital work which since 2013 has educated nearly 200,000 young people on Srebrenica, enabled over 1,500 community actions to take place right across the country each year, and created 1,450 Community Champions who pledge to stand up to hatred and intolerance in their communities. Agreed to on question.

Peace and Stability in the Balkans

16 Mar 2022 | 710 cc313-332WH

Motion that this House has considered the maintenance of peace and stability in the Balkans.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Stability and Peace

2 Dec 2021 | 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.

6.2 Statements

Preventing Future Mass Atrocities Around the World

19 Jan 2023 | 726 cc566-572

Statement on the publication of the Government response to the third report of the International Development Committee, From Srebrenica to a safer tomorrow: Preventing future mass atrocities around the world, (HC 992). (* See further reading)

6.3 EDMs

Srebrenica Memorial Week 2022 (SUSPENDED)

EDM 254 (session 2022-23)

Margaret Ferrier

5 July 2022

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.

7 Further reading

7.1 Committee reports

[From Srebrenica to a safer tomorrow: Preventing future mass atrocities around the world: Government response to the Committee's Third Report](#), Fourth Special Report of Session 2022–23, International Development Committee, HC 992, 19 January 2023

[From Srebrenica to a safer tomorrow: Preventing future mass atrocities around the world](#), Third Report of Session 2022–23, International Development Committee, HC 149, 17 October 2022

7.2 Commons Library papers

[Srebrenica](#), Commons Library Debate Pack, 12 July 2022

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

[Stability and peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), Commons Library Debate Pack, 30 November 2021

7.3 Other websites

[Srebrenica Memorial Center](#) (Website)

[Remembering Srebrenica](#) (Website)

[All Party Parliamentary Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (Membership)

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