

# Bosnia-Herzegovina country profile



**Bosnia-Herzegovina is recovering from a devastating three-year war that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.**

It is now an independent state but remains partially under international oversight under the terms of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. Its three main communities are Bosniak Muslims, Croats and Serbs.

More than 100,000 people were killed and around two million displaced in the war, which also left the infrastructure and economy in tatters.

The peace agreement set up two separate entities - the Bosniak-Croat Federation and Bosnian Serb Republic - overarched by a federal government and rotating presidency. Peace has not brought the two entities closer together, and Bosnian Serb leaders often raise the possibility of seceding from what they call a failed state.

Profiles by **BBC Monitoring**

## FACTS

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

Capital: Sarajevo

- **Population** 3.5 million
- **Area** 51,129 sq km (19,741 sq miles)
- **Major languages** Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian
- **Major religions** Christianity, Islam
- **Life expectancy** 74 years (men), 79 years (women)
- **Currency** convertible marka

UN, World Bank

## LEADERS

**President:** The presidency rotates every eight months between a Serb, a Muslim, and a Croat.

The responsibilities of the presidency lie largely in international affairs.

## ADVERTISEMENT

In addition, the Muslim-Croat entity and the Bosnian Serb Republic each have their own presidents.

**Prime minister: Denis Zvizdic**



Denis Zvizdic of the Muslim Party of Democratic Action became federal prime minister in February 2015, after the party won the most votes in the October 2014 elections. A former architecture teacher, Mr Zvizdic set himself the goal of pressing ahead with Bosnia's aim of joining the European Union, and made significant progress in March when EU foreign ministers approved a long-delayed Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

## MEDIA



Ethnic divisions and the differences between the entities that make up Bosnia are evident in the media scene, and outlets run by the individual entities are more popular than the state-wide public broadcaster.

TV is the most popular medium. The sector is saturated and commercial outlets operate within a weak advertising market.

Around 80% of Bosnians are online. Facebook is the top social media resource.

- Read [full media profile](#)

## TIMELINE

### Some key dates in the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina:

**1908** - Ottoman province of Bosnia-Herzegovina annexed to Austria-Hungary.

**1914** - A Bosnian Serb student, Gavrilo Princip, assassinates the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. This precipitates the First World War.



The Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophia on their fateful visit to Sarajevo in June 1914

**1918** - Austria-Hungary collapses at the end of the war. Bosnia-Herzegovina becomes part of the future Yugoslavia.

**1941** - Bosnia-Herzegovina annexed by pro-Hitler Croatian puppet state. Thousands of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies are sent to the death camps.

**1945** - Bosnia-Herzegovina liberated following campaign by Communist partisans.

**1945-1991** - Bosnia is part of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.



Civilians and Bosnian troops under Serbian sniper fire during the siege of Sarajevo in 1992

**1992** - Following collapse of communism, Croat and Muslim nationalists form tactical alliance and outvote Serbs at independence referendum.

**1992-1995** - Bitter ethnically-rooted civil war involving Bosnian Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. Dayton peace accord creates two entities of roughly equal size, one for Bosnian Muslims and Croats, the other for Serbs. An international peacekeeping force is deployed.

**2016** - Former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic is convicted of genocide and war crimes for his role in the war, and his military commander Ratko Mladic is convicted the following year.

Bosnia formally applies for European Union membership.