

SOCIOCULTURAL

FAULT LINES are “exploitable sources of instability in the human domain; they can be real or perceived.”

Source: GCKN Fault Line Methodology, 2017

Exploitable Conditions



Ineffective Government



Divided Societies



Infrastructure Deficits



Economic Inequalities



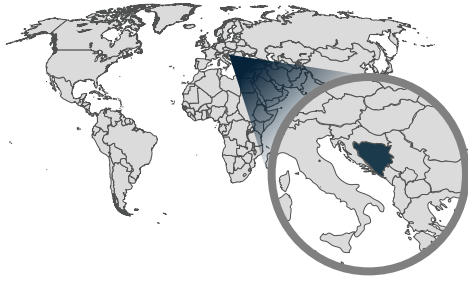
Technification of Society



Mobilizing Ideologies



Multiple Sovereignties



Bosnia and Herzegovina **FAULT LINES**

Fault Lines

FL1: Factionalized and Dysfunctional Government

BiH is beset with a deep-seated and longstanding governability crisis. BiH’s complicated political system impedes any kind of movement toward unity and only insulates partisan interests and government congestion.

FL2: Lingering War Echoes

BiH suffers from persistent war trauma. Repeated exposure to the conflict trauma via media messaging and ethnic-based memorials are constant reminders of an emotional and vexing national problem.

FL3: A Defacto Three-Nation Society

BiH’s constituent groups prioritize ethnoreligious identity over national identity. Technically one state, BiH rather functions as three separate ethnoreligious nations divided by real, perceived, and created differences.

Ethnonationalism remains the principal factor undermining post-war state building.

Although ethnonationalism remains a prime organizing logic for Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosniaks alike, belligerents can easily leverage it to foment a state of perpetual sociopolitical gridlock further deepening the country’s problems.

Implications

1 Reduced U.S. and Western Influence.



High Risk
Probability: Likely
Consequence: Critical

2 Further delays for accession into NATO.



Moderate Risk
Probability: Likely
Consequence: Moderate

3 Return of interethnic and religious violence.



High Risk
Probability: Occasional
Consequence: Catastrophic



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OE Exploitation: Global and Regional

Great Powers



Russia employs soft power tactics, including **disinformation and identity politics**, to foment BiH's divided society and ineffective government. Continued **BiH instability aids Russian efforts to erode the liberal world order**. The Kremlin's goal is centered on **keeping Sarajevo out of the EU and NATO** by subverting and destabilizing the central state without completely destroying it.

China capitalizes on BiH's infrastructure deficits and limited economy to sponsor major power plant and highway projects. **Chinese as a second language** is taught in Republika Srpska (RS) schools to **encourage future RS-China business connections**. The **China "mask diplomacy policy"** created **good will** by providing health assistance, including vaccines, and economic relief during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Neighboring European Countries

Serbia also leverages soft power tactics to widen ethnic divisions and benefit from instability in BiH. **Serbia is historically aligned with Russia** and purchases materiel from Russia. **Serbia fosters divisiveness** by refusing to remove monuments of war criminals responsible for the Srebrenica massacre, and only exported COVID-19 vaccines to Bosnian Serbs.



Hungary provides support for Republika Srpska (RS) secession policies, including vetoing EU sanctions and, if necessary, offering financial support. **Hungarian inflammatory rhetoric** furthers BiH political and social instability, and includes denying the genocide of Bosniaks during the war and claiming regional security is at risk when two million Muslims occupy BiH.



Muslim Powers

Turkey supports the political unity and territorial integrity of BiH as part of its "neo-Otto-manism" policy that creates **regional security umbrellas and counters Russian influence**. Turkey capitalizes on BiH's infrastructure deficits and economic situation by financing the Sarajevo-Belgrade Highway regional trade route, which should increase regional development and offset other actors' influence.



Iran views BiH as a useful environment for **espionage and criminal trafficking**. Iran developed influence with Bosniak communities that facilitates efforts to disrupt BiH for its own gain. Iran seeks to **embed a network of religious, cultural, educational, and media organizations in the Balkans to expand its sphere of influence**.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Political Elites



Šefik Džaferović
Bosniak President

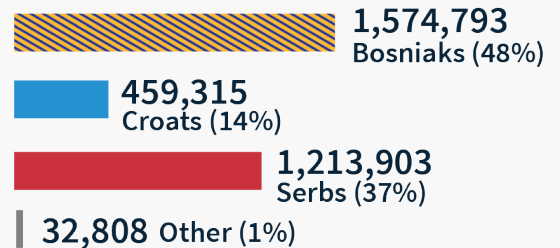


Željko Komšić
Bosnian Croat President



Milorad Dodik
Bosnian Serb President

ETHNIC POPULATION 2021



BIH POPULATION: 3,280,819