



Alliance for
Peacebuilding

November 19, 2021

Secretary of State Antony Blinken

U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield

United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Administrator Samantha Power

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Secretary Blinken, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, and Administrator Power,

The [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#) (AfP), the leading nonpartisan global network of 150+ members working in 181 countries to end violent conflict and build sustainable peace, and the undersigned organizations are deeply concerned about the [significantly deteriorating security conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (BiH). The diplomatic community's inadequate response fails to address the immediate crisis and weakens the Office of the High Representative in BiH. The U.S. and the international community must act now to prevent violence and conflict and build sustainable peace in BiH and throughout the region utilizing all available diplomatic and development tools.

Although BiH has avoided full-scale war since 1995, [the country has never been closer to another ethnic crisis than it is today](#). Security and stability in BiH is spiraling amidst [threats](#) from Milorad Dodik to reconstitute the Serb army and [withdraw](#) from state-level institutions. Dodik is empowered by [support](#) from nationalistic politicians in Croatia, as well as by Russian diplomats seeking to [diminish the sovereignty of BiH](#) and [prevent the country from joining NATO](#).

While representative of the U.S. at the United Nations expressed concern over Mr. Dodik's statement to withdraw the Republika Srpska "entirely" from the Government, adding that such assertions represent "[a dangerous path](#)" for BiH and the region, the wider U.S. response to this increasingly unstable situation is insufficient. Indeed, the U.S.'s proposed [piecemeal constitutional and electoral law solutions](#) may [serve to entrench ethnic divides](#), and announced [economic development assistance](#) will not meet the scale of the crisis.



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Additionally, recent media reports from the [U.S.](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and [BiH](#) found that the High Representative to BiH, Christian Schmidt, could not present his annual report to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The act of silencing the Mr. Schmidt at the UNSC represents a grave threat to the Office of the High Representative, [an international institution responsible for overseeing the implementation of civilian aspects of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement](#), which ended the war in BiH. The alleged [deal](#) by U.S., United Kingdom, and France with the Russian Federation to extend the mandate of the NATO-backed European Union force (EUFOR) resulted in the [striking of all references](#) to the Office of the High Representative in the resolution. However, the report from the Office of the High Representative is now public and offers a dire assessment:

As of the writing of this report, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces the greatest existential threat of the postwar period. Persistent, grave challenges to the fundamentals of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) by the Republika Srpska (RS) entity authorities, led by the biggest RS party, the Alliance for Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) headed by BiH Presidency member Milorad Dodik, endanger not only the peace and stability of the country and the region, but—if unanswered by the International Community—could lead to the undoing of the Agreement itself.

AfP and the undersigned organizations call on the U.S. to use all available diplomatic and development tools to de-escalate the political and ethnic tensions in BiH and to reinforce support for the Office of High Representative, rather than diminish its critical civilian oversight of the [1995 Dayton Peace Accords](#). The U.S. should also apply its newly announced [enhanced sanctions](#), which reinforce the [2017 targeted sanctions regime against Dodik](#) imposed for his rule of law violations, defiance of the BiH Constitutional Court, and obstruction of the Dayton Accords. The U.S. should work with its European counterparts and UN colleagues to institute complimentary sanctions to multiply their effect. Furthermore, the U.S. must urge NATO to [undertake immediate contingency planning](#), as outlined by the [Democratization Policy Council](#), to address the reconstitution of Bosnian Serb forces in BiH and further threats to the integrity of the BiH state and the implementation of the Dayton Accords, per [Annex 1A](#).

We urge the U.S. and the international community to act decisively and urgently. Without immediate, coordinated action to stem nationalist tides in BiH, curb the Serbian separatists' efforts to create a "[Serbian world](#)" movement, push back against the increasingly corrosive influence of Russia, undertake tangible legal reform that protects the fundamental rights of the BiH people, and bolster the credibility and support of the Office of the High Representative, the state's breakup and ethnic violence and conflict is a credible and serious threat.

Sincerely,

- Alliance for Peacebuilding
- Association for Social Research and Communication (UDIK)



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- Association “Youth Volunteers” of BiH
- Bosnian Islamic Cultural Center of Chicago (BICC)
- Bosnian Academic Circle
- Bosnian-American Community Association (BACA)
- Bosnian Educational and Cultural Center of America (BECCA)
- Center for Investigative Reporting (CIN)
- Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues
- Democratization Policy Council
- DT Global
- East West Bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Educators’ Institute for Human Rights (EIHR)
- Glas za Bosnu
- Harlem Arts Foundation
- Heartland Alliance
- Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
- Humanity in Action Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Humano Brdo 2010
- Humanus Network
- IBECO Portland Oregon
- IRMO
- Justice in Michigan
- Karuna Center for Peacebuilding
- Mak Worldwide Inc
- Muslim Student Life at Syracuse University
- National Peace Academy
- New England Friends of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Omladinski Resursni Centar (ORC) Tuzla
- PartnersGlobal
- Pathfinders4Peace
- Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC)
- Selma Design Limited
- Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center, Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide
- Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding
- TANGO
- The Fund for Peace
- The Regional Network of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia
- The Wordsmithy
- Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security (WCAPS)