



# OSAC Country Security Report

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

Published: March 19, 2025

*This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State [Bosnia and Herzegovina Travel Advisory](#) and [Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Information Page](#).*

### Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

#### [U.S. Embassy Sarajevo](#)

1 Robert C. Frasure Street, 71000 Sarajevo.

Tel: +387-(0)-33-704-000. Hours: 0800 – 1700, Monday – Friday.

Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +(387) (33) 704-000. If after dialing you receive a recorded message, press “0” and ask for the embassy duty officer.

### OSAC Country Chapter

OSAC’s Sarajevo Country Chapter exists but is currently inactive.

Contact [OSAC’s Europe team](#) with any questions.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report’s publication assesses that travelers should exercise increased caution in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia or BiH) due to terrorism, crime, and land mines.

### Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar as being **HIGH** for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Crime “C” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While the city is generally safe, the vast majority of crimes that affect the U.S. and international communities are non-violent street crime, theft, and opportunistic burglary. Begging, pickpocketing, vehicle break-ins, and other related crimes of opportunity are prevalent. Petty theft and pickpocket incidents are common, focusing primarily on tourist areas and crowded public transportation. Residential break-ins, particularly late-night burglaries, are also common, but reports of confrontational home invasions are rare. Crime, while generally non-violent, may occur anywhere and at any time. The greatest concentration of crime incidents is in Sarajevo

and other larger towns and cities (e.g., Banja Luka, Tuzla, Mostar). Currently, there are no off-limit areas or designated restrictions within the country for Embassy personnel.

One of the enduring legacies of the 1992-1995 Bosnian War is the widespread availability of weapons, ammunition, and explosives, which are often kept by individuals or traded illegally on the black market. In 2024, law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina frequently reported seizures of significant quantities of weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials. Grenade attacks remain relatively common in the country and have, in recent years, occurred in residential areas, including neighborhoods in Sarajevo where embassy housing is located. These attacks stem mostly from personal disputes or organized crime and may occur in public locations.

Violent crime (e.g., murder, carjacking, rape, armed robbery) targeting the international community is also rare. There is a substantial organized crime element, with numerous criminal gangs involved in smuggling, trafficking, and other transnational crimes. There have been incidents of violent attacks in public places that police have attributed to rival gangs. Violence among members of these groups/affiliates is quite common. The expatriate community is not a specific target, although members could become victims due to circumstance or proximity.

To help avoid being a victim of crime, practice situational awareness and be alert at all times, especially after dark and in locations frequented by foreigners, such as cafés and restaurants. People wearing backpacks stand out and attract the attention of pickpockets who easily gain access without the owners' knowledge. Take normal precautions to protect your property from theft and exercise common sense personal security measures, such as traveling in groups and staying in well-lit areas after dark. Avoid carrying large sums of money or wearing expensive jewelry or accessories.

## Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping “K” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar as being rated **MEDIUM** for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has included a Terrorism “T” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Bosnia and Herzegovina, indicating that terrorist attacks have occurred and/or specific threats against civilians, groups, or other targets may exist.

Sarajevo is a city with a predominantly Muslim population, and while it enjoys relative stability, the threat of terrorism—particularly from radicalized Muslim extremists—remains a concern. In the past, a number of individuals from BiH traveled to participate in armed conflict in Syria and other parts of the Middle East, and there is an ongoing concern about these foreign fighters

who have since returned from the battlefields, potentially bringing with them heightened risks for domestic security. The extremist threats in BiH are therefore considered significant, particularly as these individuals may have gained combat experience or been exposed to violent ideologies during their time abroad.

A recent incident underscores the real threat posed by domestic extremism. In October 2024, a 14-year-old boy entered a police station in Bosanska Krupa and fatally stabbed a police officer and severely injuring another. The prosecutor's office has characterized this attack as an act of terrorism. The police have concluded that the incident was a result of the boy's religious radicalization. This tragic event highlights the potential for violence from individuals who may be influenced by extremist ideologies. The security landscape in BiH remains complex, with a persistent risk from domestic and foreign extremist elements. While the country has made significant strides in stabilizing its post-conflict society, the availability of weapons and the potential for radicalization continue to present challenges.

## Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar as being a **MEDIUM**-threat locations for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Civil Unrest "U" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Civil unrest can develop quickly without prior notice, often interrupting logistics and services. Avoid demonstration activity, as even those planned to remain peaceful have the potential to turn violent.

## Elections/Political Stability

On February 26, 2025, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina delivered the first instance verdict in the trial of Republika Srpska (RS) President, Milorad Dodik. The judge issued a guilty verdict and sentenced Dodik to one year in prison and a six-year ban on holding the office of RS President for failing to implement the decisions of the High Representative, Christian Schmidt. Throughout his year-long trial, Dodik increased his threat of secession from BiH. Dodik's actions in the aftermath of this guilty verdict have caused a constitutional crisis. Dodik and his supporters in the RS National Assembly adopted new laws in March 2025 rejecting the legitimacy of the BiH Court's ruling, dismissing the High Representative's authority, and calling for laws to ban certain BiH state-level institutions from operating in the RS. These actions have directly threatened the Dayton Peace Agreement and the political stability of BiH. As this political situation continues to play out, the potential for civil unrest and instability may increase.

President Dodik's legal team announced they will appeal the first instance verdict and a final ruling by the appellate-level court is not expected until at least April. The ruling by the second-instance court is final and cannot be appealed.

## Protests & Demonstrations

Peaceful demonstrations are relatively common in BiH. Most protests are fueled by wage or pension issues. War veterans frequently protest outside the BiH Federal Government Building. Other peaceful gatherings included a march for Women's Day and student-led demonstrations. These protests have largely remained peaceful due to a strong police presence for every large event

Crowds inside and outside of soccer stadiums can be dangerous. Rival fans occasionally get into fights and cause property damage. There are often large crowds before and after matches, creating significant traffic congestion and problems for pedestrians. Road closures are common. Plan ahead to avoid any area when a soccer match is imminent, ongoing, or recently completed.

## Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

There is no general anti-U.S. sentiment in most of BiH, though public opinion of the U.S. government tends to be lower in Republika Srpska. Anti-U.S. demonstrations or boycotts of popular U.S. consumer brands/products occur periodically in the Federation entity during events related to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Only in rare cases have demonstrations been directed toward U.S. diplomatic facilities.

## Law Enforcement

State-level police agencies include the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), the Border Police, the Service for Foreigners Affairs (partial police competencies), and the Directorate for the Coordination of Police Bodies. Police agencies in the two entities (the Republika Srpska Ministry of Interior and the Federation Police Directorate), the Brcko District, and 10 cantonal interior ministries also exercise police powers. The armed forces provide assistance to civilian bodies in case of natural or other disasters. The intelligence service is under the authority of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers. A European Union peacekeeping force continues to support the country's government in maintaining a safe and secure environment for the population.

While civilian authorities maintain effective control of law enforcement agencies and security forces, a lack of clear division of jurisdiction and responsibilities between the country's 17 law enforcement agencies results in occasional confusion and overlapping responsibilities.

## Police Response

Local police are generally helpful to the international community, but have limited resources (manpower, response capabilities), and minimal English (or other foreign language capability) to assist.

The emergency line in Bosnia is **122**.

## Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [LGB Travelers](#)
- [Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [Student Travelers](#)
- [Faith-Based Travelers](#)

## Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively nor prioritize public corruption as a serious problem. Corruption remains prevalent in public procurement processes, local governance, and public administration employment procedures. Observers consider police impunity widespread, and there have been continued reports of corruption within security forces of all levels. In 2023, mostly with international assistance, the government provided training to police and security forces to combat abuse and corruption, and to promote respect for human rights. The field training manuals for police officers also include ethics and anticorruption training components.

State, entity (Federation and RS), cantonal, and municipal administrations, each with the power to establish laws and regulations affecting business, have created systems that lack transparency. Corrupt officials at all levels often demand “service fees,” especially in local government institutions.

Analysts consider the legal framework for prosecuting corruption to be satisfactory across almost all levels of government and attribute the absence of high-profile prosecutions to political pressure and a lack of political will. State-level institutions tasked with fighting corruption have had limited authority, no executive powers, and remained under resourced.

## Cybersecurity

Cybercrime is rare and consists mainly of relatively unsophisticated website defacement and attempts to obtain personal data.

## Import/Export Restrictions

Bosnia and Herzegovina places restrictions on the following types of imports: cargo vehicles, trailers for cargo, and buses. Used tires are also restricted for import. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, importing and possessing satellite phones and satellite devices requires written permission from BiH Ministry of Communication and Transport; travelers arriving with a satellite phone must present it and the permit to customs.

In accordance with obligations from international trade agreements, the BiH Council of Ministers may ban imports, exports, or transit of certain goods through BiH or set conditions for imports, exports, or transport of such goods in transit in order to prevent danger to human health, life, and the environment.

A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

*Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).*