
CALL TO BAN TERM 'HERZEG-BOSNA' RAISES TENSIONS

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The proposal of the Social Democratic Party, an opposition party in the Federation entity of Bosnia, to ban such terms as "Herzeg Bosna" from the names of public companies has drawn adverse reactions in Bosnia and Croatia.

National prefixes should be deleted from the names of all public companies under the jurisdiction of the ... Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina since they belong to all citizens of this country, especially the non-existing name 'Herzeg Bosnia', Damir Masic, a member of the Federation entity parliament from the Social Democratic Party, told BIRN.

Herzeg-Bosna was an unrecognised geopolitical entity formed by Bosnian Croats during the 1992-5 war and officially abolished in 1996.

However, the idea behind it remains popular among Bosnian Croats, many of whom want a third entity created in Bosnia, besides the existing two Bosniak [Muslim] and Serb-dominated entities.

The conclusion was adopted as part of the agenda for the next session of the parliament of Federation on December 19.

So far, the session has not been held, however, although it was announced on Monday that it might be held by the end of this week.

Due to the ongoing crisis between the Federation's ruling parties, the [Bosniak] Party of Democratic Action, SDA, the Alliance for Better Future of Bosnia and the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia, HDZ BiH, the date of the next sessions of the Federation parliament are uncertain.

The SDP made the same suggestion about deleting the term Herzeg-Bosna in July but did not have enough support to get it on the agenda. Even now, it is hard to predict the outcome of the vote.

The agenda was adopted without the member of the HDZ BiH and Croatian People's Union of Bosnia, Ismet Omanovic, a Federation entity MP from the SDA, told BIRN.

In the meantime, on Sunday, a billboard appeared near the border between Bosnia and Croatia reading: Welcome to the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosna.

Dragan Covic, president of the Bosnian HDZ, has insisted there is no problem with term "Herzeg Bosna", since this term was verified by the US-brokered agreement signed in 1994 establishing the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with ten autonomous cantons, TV station N1 reported on December 21.

He also noted that current relations between Croat and Bosniak politicians were not functional, mainly blaming Bakir Izetbegovic, leader of the SDA, for heating up national questions during 2017.

Meanwhile, Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic, President of Croatia, has reminded Bosniaks that Croats are a constitutional nation in Bosnia and may not be treated as a minority.

She also said that Croatia has an obligation to take care of the Croats in Bosnia, the newspaper Vecernji List reported on Sunday.

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