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EU SUPPORT TO CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS



The regional project “EU Support to Confidence Building in the Western Balkans” will provide expert support to judicial and law enforcement authorities in prosecuting war crimes cases at the national level, improve conditions for regional cooperation in the prosecution of these cases, enhance support for victims and witnesses of war crimes, and strengthen the capacities of relevant actors in supporting victims. Overall, the project will contribute to more efficient and effective prosecution of war crimes in the Western Balkans, with a victim-centered approach and full respect for human rights. This initiative aims to restore dignity to victims, foster inter-ethnic dialogue, and advance the country’s EU accession process.



DURATION

01 January 2023 - 31 December 2026



BENEFICIARIES

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia



DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

EUROPEAN UNION UNITED KINGDOM



IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub with UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNDP Kosovo, UNDP Montenegro, UNDP North Macedonia and UNDP Serbia



TOTAL BUDGET IN BiH

USD 8,500,000 USD 2,420,000

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

- Over **600 unresolved war crimes cases**, including 275 with cross-border elements.
- **6,000 persons remain missing**, with slow progress and limited institutional capacity in investigations.
- Conflicting ethnic narratives and the **denial of judicially established facts** hinder social cohesion.
- Inadequate psychosocial, medical, and legal support for victims; **risks of re-traumatization**.
- Youth unfamiliar with facts of the conflict, facing **radicalization risks** and polarization.

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VISION OF IMPACT

Justice & Accountability: Enhanced prosecution and reduced impunity for war crimes.

Victim Support: Improved psychosocial, medical, and legal services for survivors.

Civil Society Strengthening: CSOs and victims’ associations empowered as reconciliation actors.

Youth Engagement: Grassroots initiatives fostering peacebuilding, dialogue, and social cohesion.

* For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to position on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. For UNDP, all references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the Security Council Resolution 1244/1999.



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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS to date

1. Building Justice and Institutions

- First **SOPs for the Institute for Missing Persons** (finalized in 2025).
- **100+ investigators trained** in cross-sectoral workshops (2024-2025).
- **200+ family members of missing persons engaged** with institutions on case progress.

2. Fostering Regional Cooperation

- **24 war crimes cases transferred** to Serbia and Croatia.
- Bilateral **agreements on victim/witness support signed** with Montenegro & Serbia (2024).

3. Supporting Victims and Witnesses

- **80+ witness support professionals trained** in coping and peer counselling.
- **100+ judicial/forensic staff trained** in stress management.
- **Victims' rights brochure** to be distributed nationwide (2025).

4. Engaging Civil Society and Grassroots

Cycle I (2023-2025)

- **10 projects** by 8 CSOs supported with over **700.000 USD**.
- More than **1000 victims received direct support**, and **215 aid providers were trained** through the CSOs' initiatives.
- Over **1410 people** directly participated in **confidence-building activities**.
- More than **250.000 people reached** through awareness-raising campaigns.

Cycle II (2025-2026)

- **9 projects** supported with over **430.000 USD**.

IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Through project-funded initiatives, BIRN Sarajevo investigated and developed a **database of the missing children from the war**.

Post-Conflict Research Center organized the regional conference **Building a Common Agenda for Prevention, Srebrenica Youth School**, and an exhibition on the **Srebrenica genocide survivors**.

Association Pravnik trained young professionals and activists on **transitional justice**.

Lara Bijeljina held the **Women's Peace Camp**, and **promoted remembrance and reconciliation in local communities**, including through arts and handicrafts.

Center for Human Rights **introduced transitional justice studies and legal clinics at the universities** in Mostar.

Lara Bijeljina and Pravnik fostered **reconciliation and intergenerational dialogue**.

Vive Žene Tuzla and the Center for Human Rights Mostar provided **legal aid and psychological support** to **victims** and **trained victim support professionals**. Žene s Une analyzed **victims' social needs**, developing **support models**, and improved **social and mental care centers' services**.

Center for Women's Rights Zenica in improving **rights and social assistance** for **war survivors and returnees**.

Awarded CSOs in II cycle:

BH Journalists Association (BHN), Sarajevo, "**Roma girl - Romani ćej**" Prnjavor, Association "**Forum**", Association "**Youth Theatre Tuzla**", Association "**Pravnik**", Foundation for Local Democracy, Association of Prijedor women "**Izvor**", Association "**Education builds Bosnia and Herzegovina - Jovan Divjak**", Foundation "**United Women**" Banja Luka.



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