

Bosnians and Serbs: tensions remain

By [Global Research](#)

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Bosnia and Herzegovina violently separated from Communist Yugoslavia in the turbulent 1990s. The conflict that tore the country apart for three long years eventually resulted in war crimes charges

Like the war itself, the battles that unfolded in the days leading up to the Bosnian war (1992-1995) that claimed lives of at least 100,000 people, are controversial and confusing.

A former Serbian soldier, who spoke to RT on the condition of anonymity, witnessed the very beginning of the ethnic conflict.

He said that on May 15, 1992, as his convoy was leaving the city of Tuzla in the newly independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there was no indication of any trouble.

“We are going in the truck, everybody’s looking to his friend, his colleague and is thinking - what is going to happen,” he reminisced. “Every man in his mind was somebody thinking he is going back to his family, to children, to go back in his hometown, everybody think everything is going to be everything okay.”

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It did not turn out this way, and as the convoy drove onto the main road, it came under fire.

“The first gunfire was killing my friend right of me. I got six bullets in my right leg, driver and the soldier near was killed by the snipers, and the truck by the inertion, going on the crossroads like this and stopped. When I tried to take my helmet the bullet came here and broke my bone and I started yelling.”

The soldier accuses Muslim leaders of the new state of Bosnia and Herzegovina of breaking a ceasefire they had earlier agreed to. On that day, at least 92 soldiers were killed.

Serbia is still demanding that Bosnia hand over those responsible. Bosnia refuses, at least not until Serbia reciprocates and hands over those Bosnian Serbs it is sheltering.

The pressure is on after Serbia decided to prosecute 19 Bosnian officials for firing on the same army two weeks earlier - except on a different street.

On May 2 and 3, 1992, as the troops of the Yugoslav People army were withdrawing from the city of Sarajevo, they came under fire from the Bosnian army. The attack is considered one of the early important events of the Bosnian war.

Among those the Serbian government has issued arrest warrants for are members of

Bosnia's presidency at that time. Ejup Ganic, a former Bosnian MP, is one of them and he says the charges against him are ridiculous.

"It is unbelievable. Imagine if Germans after World War II, initiate a law or protest in the court against British freedom fighters, who were destructing German airplanes when they were bombing London," he said. "They kidnapped the president. It was agreed that the president should be allowed and then the president and general leave the city. They simply didn't obey that."

Bruno Vekaric, a spokesperson for War Crimes Tribunal in Belgrade, says that what Ganic says is not true.

"We have a lot of evidence to confirm what we are saying. We have evidence that there was a deal between both sides to lay down arms and we have statements from officials who recognise there was a crime," he said. "These are two of the biggest crimes against the former Yugoslavian army - or the Serbian military - in Bosnia."

Serbia is now preparing more indictments against other Bosnian officials, including Haris Silajdzic, who represents the Bosnian Muslims in the office of the presidency in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"Both examples show an absurdity that goes against all war conventions and customs of war. The people who were killed didn't even have ammunition in their weapons and their deaths were very unscrupulous," said Serbian political analyst Gostimur Popvic. "And because both incidents happened in front of representatives of the United Nations and that the United Nations had given their word that the attacks wouldn't happen, there is also the question of the responsibility of the United Nations."

The charges of war crimes exacerbate an already tense situation between Bosnians and Serbs. The two are already at loggerheads regarding the future of their country.

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