

**Monday 11th November**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Pop: 3.3 million**

**Muslim: 51%**

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a single country, often known informally as Bosnia. In determining whether to separate from Yugoslavia in 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina became involved in a devastating three-year civil war. Fighting broke out along ethnic lines among the Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Croats (Catholics), and Serbs (Eastern Orthodox), where few cultural differences had previously existed. About one million people were killed and two million displaced.



The 1995 Dayton Peace Accord ended the war and established a governmental plan to include all three ethnic factions. The new plan called for dividing the country into two entities - the Bosnian-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serb Republic or Republika Srpska. Each entity has its own governing powers with a central Bosnian government having three presidents - one from each ethnic group - who rotate every eight months. Peace has not brought the two entities closer together and Bosnian Serb leaders often raise the possibility of seceding from what they call a failed state.

Of the three main ethnic groups, Bosniaks are the largest, with Serbs second and Croats third. Traditionally, Bosniaks are Muslim, Serbs are Eastern Orthodox, and Croats are Roman Catholic. Religion is an important part of each group's national identity and culture. Followers of Christ have had some success in reaching across ethnic lines, but one obstacle has been the lack of Christian literature in the Bosnian language, including a translated Old Testament. The availability of affordable Bosnian Bibles and Christian literature would provide all denominations with additional resources to bring the Christian message of hope to the hurting people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Nearly 70% of Bosnians use the internet and Facebook is the top social media resource, making social media a potentially powerful resource for outreach.

- Pray for reconciliation among those still traumatised by the bitterness of a devastating ethnic-religious war.
- Let's pray for more Christian literature in the Bosnian language and more affordable and readily available resources for outreach opportunities. Discussing gospel stories is such a powerful way to share the Good News.
- Pray for Christ's love to penetrate the hardened hearts of many who are spiritually unresponsive and for creative ways to reach softened hearts.

Source of most material: <https://prayercast.com/bosnia-and-herzegovina.html>

## Tuesday 12th November

### Short-term trip to Bosnia

A small group from Frontiers recently went on a short-term trip to Bosnia. A colleague writes of her experience:

“Bosnia is such a complex country; that was one of my overriding impressions. So many cultures and tensions have shaped it over time and it felt quite disjointed to me. I found it difficult to capture its essence. Perhaps ‘melting pot’ is a good description, and a beautiful one at that – the mountains and scenery were stunning! The bulk of the population is made up of Croats (Catholic), Serbs (Orthodox) and Bosnians (Muslims), with Sarajevo being around 98% Muslim. I was struck by how spiritually hard the ground is there and how disunity can affect openness to the gospel.

A small church of evangelicals began to grow following the end of the war in 1995, but has since suffered under persecution and church leaders have struggled with burnout and discouragement. There’s recently been a move towards developing unity between the Bosnian church leaders who are Christ followers, something the whole country at large is crying out for. I think this needs to be a big focus of our prayers for Bosnia, so that hope would rise up and the church would be strengthened in shining out Jesus’ love to the huge populations of unreached Muslims.”

Listen to this worship song and call out for the church and people of this country:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxifqtpW4H4>

- Let’s pray for unity among Bosnians, Croats and Serbs, leading to reconciliation and a softening of hearts towards one another and the message of the gospel.
- Cry out for unity in the church and endurance for Bosnian church leaders suffering discouragement and persecution. Let’s pray their strength will rise as they wait upon the Lord.
- Let’s pray for hope to rise in this nation and the love of Jesus to shine out to the growing Muslim population.
- For further prayer resources, go to <https://www.pray4bosnia.com/>

## Wednesday 13th November

**Bosniaks**      **Pop: 1.5 million**      **Islam: 95%**

Most Bosniaks identify themselves with Bosnia and Herzegovina as their ethnic state. Some live in Montenegro and Serbia. A notable Bosniak diaspora exists in a number of countries, including Italy, Austria, Germany, Australia, Sweden, Turkey and the United States as a result of various instances of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The tragedy of the Bosniaks has been vividly portrayed to the world by the media. The destruction of towns and villages, expulsion of their inhabitants, systematic looting and raping of women have left deep scars and an lasting hatred between communities that once lived together and even intermarried. A particularly disturbing occurrence happened in July 1995, when Serb troops under

war criminal general Ratko Mladic occupied the UN 'safe area' of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia, after which around 7,000 Bosniak males went missing.

Both within the region and the outside world, Bosniaks are often noted for their unique culture. They are considered to be some of the most advanced Islamic peoples of the world.

Today many of the Bosniaks who are war refugees in Western countries still speak Bosnian and maintain a cultural and religious community and visit their mother country regularly. Some are being reached by believers in these countries, which has contributed to a number of them becoming followers of Jesus. The Bosnians remain one of Europe's least evangelised peoples. Although there are missions agencies currently working among the Bosnians of Bosnia and Herzegovina, few have accepted Christ.

- Prayer is the key to reaching Bosniaks with the gospel. Let's ask God to raise up prayer teams with a heart for these people.
- Pray for the Lord's protection over all those who are seeking to advance his kingdom among these people.
- Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to go to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Please pray for a family who are preparing to go to this region to reach out to Muslims with the good news of hope and love.

Source: [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/10953/BK](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10953/BK)

#### Thursday 14th November

**Sarajevo**      **Pop: 343,000**      **Muslim: 98%**

*"Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors that the King of glory may come in." Ps 24:7*

As the capital of the country, Sarajevo is the political, financial, social and cultural centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a prominent centre of culture in the Balkans, with wide influence across the region in entertainment, media, fashion and the arts.



Due to its long, rich and prosperous history of religious and cultural diversity, Sarajevo is sometimes called the 'Jerusalem of Europe' or 'Jerusalem of the Balkans'. It is one of only a few major European cities to have a mosque, Catholic church, Orthodox church and synagogue within the same neighbourhood. The war changed the ethnic and religious profile of the city. The number of Bosniaks increased while the number of Serbs decreased as they were forced out of the city. Today Bosniaks are the largest group compared to a small minority of Serbs and Croats.

A regional centre in education, the city is home to the Balkans' first institution of tertiary education in the form of an Islamic madrasa (school), today part of the University of Sarajevo. Its large manufacturing, administrative and tourism sectors make Sarajevo the strongest economic city of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- Lord, we ask that you would swing wide open the gates of this capital city in order that You, the King of glory, may come in.
- We pray that you would be Lord over this city and its people and there would be unity despite the trauma of its past.
- We pray that the influence of this city over the country would be one of blessing. Please continue to pray for this city, country as its people as you feel led.

### Friday 15th November

**Kosovo**      **Pop: 1.8 million**      **Muslim: 80%**

Kosovo, like most of the Balkans, was subject to 500 years of Ottoman Turkish occupation. Dominated by ethnic Albanians for generations, Kosovo has been the subject of many bitter conflicts. During the early 1990's, Slobodan Milosevic, a Serbian national, assumed control of Kosovo and disregarded Albanian requests for independence. After a failed attempt to secure an alternative government, progressive Albanians formed a resistance army. Serbian militants responded harshly to the movement, massacring many and forcibly relocating over 800,000 ethnic Albanians.



With NATO and UN intervention, Kosovo eventually gained independence from Serbia in 2008, after nearly 10 years of negotiation and brutal ethnic conflict. Serbia still does not recognise it as an independent country. This conflict devastated the economy and infrastructure and today Kosovo is one of the poorest nations in Europe. It also left deep internal ethnic divisions. Kosovo is now 90% Albanian; the other 10% is made up of Serbs and other ethnic groups.

Kosovo Albanians are predominantly Muslim, with their identity becoming stronger since the

conflict. Whilst many are nominal in their faith, extremism is increasing among some, as is opposition to Christianity. Despite this there are a growing number of believers, especially among young people and more churches are being established.

- Pray that believers in Kosovo would grow into mature Christians who lay aside ethnic differences and strive for reconciliation and healing for their fellow countrymen.
- Pray for continued freedom to evangelise among the Muslim population.

- Pray for the peace of Jesus to heal the division between ethnic Serbs and Albanians and for God to bless this country.
- Pray for spiritual growth and bold proclamation among the small group of committed Christians.

Sources: <https://prayercast.com/kosovo.html>  
<https://balkaninsight.com/2018/08/06/serbian-bishops-call-for-prayer-fasting-for-kosovo-08-06-2018/>

## **Saturday 16th November**

### **Albanian Gheg in Kosovo**

This unreached people group, living throughout Albania and principally in Kosovo, are one of Frontiers priority groups.

The Albanians are believed to be descendants of the Illyrians, who were the original inhabitants of the western Balkan Peninsula. In the sixth century, migrating Slavs began to settle on Illyrian territory and pushed the Illyrians into what is present-day Albania. The Albanians are divided into two major groups, the Gheg and the Tosk, according to which Albanian dialect they speak. The Gheg live north of the Shkumbin River, while the Tosk live to the south of it. The Gheg are a very stern and courageous people; while the Tosk are known to be friendly, lively and talkative.

Centuries ago, many Albanians were converted to Islam by the Ottoman Turks. However, they practised a type of folk Islam, which embraced occult practices such as praying to the dead, seeking cures for sickness and praying for protection from spirits and curses. Today, according to the Joshua project, 92% of all Albanians follow Islam.

- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Gheg Albanian and to use the small number of Gheg believers to share Christ's love with their own people.
- Bible translations and other outreach resources are available in their language. Pray for these to find their way into Albanian homes and for families to be curious to read them.
- God's love extends to every person of every nation. Let's pray that this truth breaks through to all those living in the Balkan region.
- Pray for God's Spirit to move over this region and, following the three-day Balkan Call Prayer Conference last week, for kingdom fruit that will last.

Sources: [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/11880/KV](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11880/KV)  
[https://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php?title=Albanian,\\_Gheg](https://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php?title=Albanian,_Gheg)