

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2018

The Honorable Wess Mitchell
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520-0005

Dear Assistant Secretary Mitchell,

This month marks the 26th anniversary of the referendum that led to the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) from the now-dissolved Yugoslavia. From referendum to democracy, the United States has served as a leader in BiH. Our country dedicated immense time and resources to end the armed conflict and broker peace through the Dayton Accords. Today, we are concerned that the peace and political stability of BiH is threatened by the ongoing impasse of the national election law.

To date, BiH has not fully addressed the parts of the national election law struck down by the Constitutional Court in December 2016. The absence of this resolve has induced fear in BiH that the upcoming elections will not be recognized, and a government will not be formed.

The United States must once again assume a leadership role in BiH. The consequences of igniting a political crisis in BiH are too grave to risk. If the outcome of the election is not accepted by citizens, political stability that BiH has earned and enjoyed for over two decades will be threatened. Political volatility in BiH is potentially a destabilizer in the Western Balkan region, and opens BiH and its neighbors to further intrusion of bad actors, including Russia and radical Islamist terrorist organizations.

We hope to open a dialogue with you to learn what your bureau and our Embassy in Sarajevo is doing to assist and ensure that the political leaders in BiH swiftly dissolve fears ahead of the 2018 election. In this regard, we respectfully request your responses to the following questions.

1. What specific actions has the State Department taken to resolve the concerns surrounding the October 2018 general elections? Please describe the role, if any, the State Department has played in bringing political leaders from the various ethnic groups together to negotiate a resolution.
2. With the expectation that the election commission will call the election in early May 2018, what actions are the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and the Sarajevo Embassy planning to take to encourage BiH leaders to ensure that the October elections