

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
CENTRE FOR SECURITY STUDIES



SOCIAL SURVEY

Perceptions and Attitudes of the Citizens of Bosnia
and Herzegovina towards Terrorism and the Role
of International Security Organisations

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RESEARCH TEAM

Project Organiser: *Dr. Bisera Turković*

Project Leader: *Dr. Vladimir Obradović*

Focus Group Moderator: *Sanja Ljubičić*

Assistants : *Armin Kržalić*
Amel Kadić
Arnel Šahurić

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SUMMARY

The survey of the perceptions and attitudes of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) towards terrorism and the roles of international security organisations (NATO, SFOR) comparatively encompassed subjects from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS). Due to the content of the research only male subjects have been included, which we selected by a systematic, stratification sample, dependent upon telephone number in each individual canton. The control of the accuracy of the samples and the analysis of the results afterwards was conducted according to the variables of age, work experience and nationality. Besides this, we conducted focus groups that involved interviewing journalists, officers, professors, faculty assistants and students. The commentary and content of the discussion made possible a qualitative approach in the investigation. The most important findings of this investigatory research are:

1. Subjects from the FBiH and the RS are not differentiated by any statistical significance in the perceptions and evaluations that there is **no serious threat** from foreign terrorism in BiH, and that it is only possible to speak about internal terrorism towards returnees;
2. Anxiety from terrorism for the majority of the subjects from the **older generation has not grown** after 11 September 2001. Only within the **group of younger subjects from the ages of 18 - 30 has this perception more significantly increased**. However, the data from the focus group is interesting, which points towards the significance of the **presence of negative perceptions** towards the manner in which the US is leading the anti-terrorist campaign and the war against terrorism in Afghanistan;
3. Attitudes towards the accession to the European Union (EU) and the NATO Alliance are **expressly positive** between subjects in the FBiH, but that picture is diametrically reversed by the opinion in the RS, especially in **view of the expressed negative position concerning the accession of BiH to NATO**;
4. Confidence in international security institutions has an identical direction and relationship between the citizens of the FBiH and RS. Namely, the citizens of the FBiH have a **high-level of confidence** in NATO, SFOR and the Hague Tribunal, while the citizens of the RS **have little or no confidence** in the Hague Tribunal; consequently, it is possible to speak about "group blindness" for the arguments and evidence concerning war crimes.
5. The attitude towards the downsizing of the military was **positively polled by 80% of the subjects in the FBiH and 64% of the subjects in the RS**, which is a statistically significant difference. However, the real gulf in attitudes of the citizens of the FBiH and RS is reflected in the level of support for a Joint Military Command, which has the **support of 93%** of the population of the FBiH and **only 33% of the population of the RS**.

Introduction - Objective, Problems and Methodological Approach

At the request of the organisation that ordered this research, who substantially determined their field of interest, we formulated the following questions:

1. To which degree in our public (BiH), among the people that you know, is present a threat from terrorism?
2. Has this anxiety increased or remained the same after the terrorist attack on the US on the 11 September 2001?
3. What is your personal attitude concerning the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union and the NATO Alliance?
4. Which level of confidence do you have in the follow security institutions: European Union, NATO Alliance, Hague Tribunal, SFOR, Army of FBiH, Army of RS, Police of FBiH, Police of RS?
5. What do you personally think about the downsizing of the military and a Joint Military Command in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Objective of the Research

The objective of the research was to confirm what are the perceptions and attitudes of the citizens of the FBiH and RS towards terrorism and international security forces and institutions, and as to whether there exist differences between subjects, depending upon their ethnicity and nationality, working status and age.

Associated Problems

The associated problems with the research were the following:

- a) As to whether in the BiH public there is present the experience of threats from terrorism and as to whether anxiety concerning terrorism has significantly grown after the terrorist attack on the US on 11 September last year?
- b) What is the level of confidence of the citizens of BiH in international security institutions (NATO, SFOR, and the Hague Tribunal) and as to whether that level of confidence differs depending upon institution and the ethnicity of the subject?
- c) What is the level of support for the downsizing of the military in BiH and the establishment of a Joint Command, and as to whether there exists significant difference between the citizens of the FBiH and RS?

Methodological Approach

On the foundation of the above-mentioned questions we conducted this research survey, of the telephone enquiry variety, on 200 subjects in the FBiH and 100 subjects in the RS. We mention that the sample was secured with the incidental selection of subjects and the maintenance of cantonal representation and adequate age and national structure as well as the quota of the relations of employed, unemployed and pension status in both entities. Besides this qualitative examined research, especially for the FBiH and RS, we conducted focus group interviews (in Sarajevo) with four male focus groups: professors and faculty assistants (7), officers of the Army of the FBiH (5), journalists from the FBiH and RS (4), and students (8).

We mention that the co-operation between the subjects was very good and our colleagues, interviewers, moderator and assistant effectively conducted their tasks in the relatively short time period of 20 days. This points to the fact that the Centre for Security Studies is able to plan the substantial realisation of extensive qualitative and intensive qualitative research in the field of security.

REVIEW OF THE RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

We shall provide comparatively the review of the results of the survey for the FBiH and RS, due to the fact that these entity divisions have bearing upon the statistical significance of the given results, whilst the influence of age and employment status was not shown to be statistically significant in the differing responses. Furthermore, due to the comprehensive analysis of perceptions and attitudes for every question, besides the analytical review of the results of the survey, we shall provide also illustrations of the comments from the focus group interviews alongside the designation of specific details that were shown in the individual focus groups.

1. ANXIETY CONCERNING TERRORISM

This thematic field is interlocked with two questions whose number of responses we shall state:

- 1.1. "To which degree according to your opinion within our public, between the people that you know, is present a threat from terrorism?"

No.	EVALUATIONS	FEDERATION BiH		REPUBLIKA SRPSKA		TOTAL
1.	No threat	87	43,5%	36	36,0%*	123
2.	Little threat	63	31,5%	35	35,0%	97
	TOTAL 1+2	150	75,0%	71	71,0%	220
3.	Presence of threat	20	10,0%	19	19,0%	39
4.	Strong presence	20	10,0%	10	10,0%	31
5.	Unspecified or without answer	10	5,0%			10
	TOTAL	200	100%	100	100%	300

*

With consideration that in the RS was the inclusion of 100 subjects, this number of subjects in the individual modality of the responses represents a percentage that can be compared with the percentage of responses of the subjects from the FBiH.

This data unambiguously shows that without consideration to the entity in which the subject belonged, the absolute majority of the citizens of BiH do not perceive a terrorist threat in their environment.

The comparison of the same responses according to the variable of age in both entity environments provide identical results that confirm the above-mentioned statement.

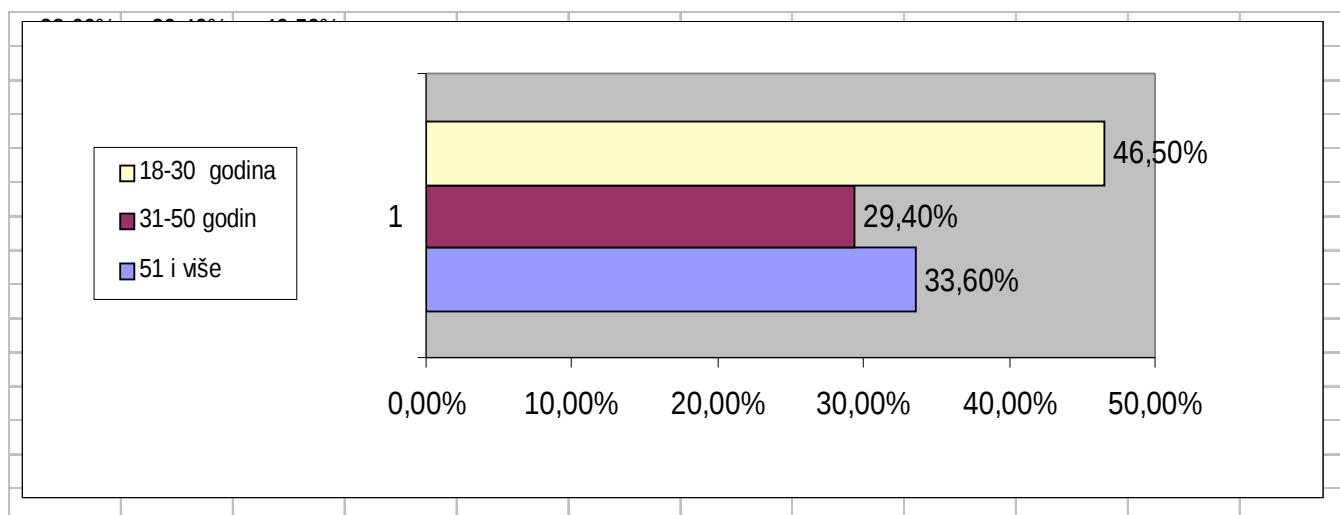
1.2. " Has this anxiety increased or remained the same after the terrorist attack on the US on the 11 September 2001?

No.	EVALUATIONS	FEDERATION BiH		REPUBLIKA SRPSKA		TOTAL
1.	Significant increase	4	2,0%	2	2%	6
2.	Increase	65	32,5%	39	39%	104
3.	Remained the same	108	54,0%	53	53%	161
4.	Cannot evaluate	23	11,5%	6	6%	29
TOTAL		200	100%	100	100%	300

One-third of the population of BiH evaluate that an increase in anxiety concerning terrorism has occurred after the terrorist attack on the US on 11 September 2001, while two-thirds of the population do not share that opinion.

We mention that the difference in responses from subjects in the FBiH and RS are not statistically significant. However, conversely, we find significant statistical difference in the increase of the perception of threat within subjects of the younger age group (18 to 30), as opposed to the remaining groups. The following graphical chart illustrates this perfectly.

Comparative Graphical Chart of the Perceptions of the Increase of Anxiety Concerning Terrorism According to Age:



2

X test=6,4871 $p > 0,01$ statistical significance

Among the younger population of BiH, the event of 11 September awoke a larger anxiety and possibly made them more critical towards the phenomenon of terrorism, as was reflected by the position of the generation of the population of both entities in BiH.

1.a) The Focus Group interviews confirmed the results of the survey in all groups. All of the focus groups concluded that in BiH there does not exist any threat from foreign terrorism alongside a more critical attitude from the focus group of students, but this question opened a completely unexpected thematic group of critical relations towards anti-terrorist activities in Afghanistan and the Near East, and also directly condemned the "aggressive behaviour of the US against terrorism into which NATO has been drawn, which has to justify their purpose through their participation in the anti-terrorist campaign."

The student group were more critical in their view of the manner in which the anti-terrorist campaign is being led, and they were significantly more freer in their evaluations ("Terrible America wishes to conquer and rob the whole world, creating completely civilian victims, the anti-terrorist campaign is much more blood-thirsty than it should be, and they are doing precisely that which they should be preventing, which is now an international incident and not a war against terrorism," and similar)

Conversely, the focus group interviews indicated the possible fear from internal terrorism, emphasising terrorism towards returnees, and the possible jeopardy for the citizens of BiH due to the large presence of foreign nationals who could be possible targets for foreign terrorism.

The observation that not one of the focus groups showed any empathy for the consequences of terrorist acts is interesting, and that the discussion in principle was directed towards the rationalisation of the perception of the history of the war in BiH, in which there was not the timely international action that would have stopped the terrorist attacks (Sarajevo) and prevented mass crimes (Srebrenica).

Generally, we can observe that the perception of terrorism is not clearly present in attitudes, insofar as it is an expressed perception of the anti-terrorist activities of the US for which our subjects neither showed sympathy, understanding, nor justification of the manner in which the terrorist campaign is being conducted.

2. *ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ACCESSION OF BiH TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO ALLIANCE*

The official political orientation of Bosnia and Herzegovina unambiguously aspires for the quickest possible entry into the EU and NATO Alliance; however, it is justifiable to suppose that there exists critical attitudes among the population, especially in the RS due to the role of the EU in sanctions and the NATO Alliance in the pacification of Yugoslavia. (Through the conducting of sanctions and isolation and through the bombing of military and infrastructural objects).

2.1. ATTITUDE TOWARDS ACCESSION TO THE EU

No.	MODALITY OF ATTITUDES	FEDERATION BiH		REPUBLIKA SRPSKA		TOTAL
1.	Support	178	89,0%	70	70%	248
2.	Critical	4	2,0%	4	4%	8
3.	Undecided	13	6,5%	21	21%	34
4.	Against	5	2,5%	5	5%	10
TOTAL		200	100%	100	100%	300

In the FBiH there absolutely does not exist any reservations in relation to accession to the EU, while this is something slightly more suggestive among the population of the RS, but not in a critical relation, rather in the refusal to make some clear expression. Towards research standards the data that only 5% of subjects are committed for a critical and antagonistic attitude can be considered statistically negligible. Within a political consideration, generally it can be observed that between the population there is not any effective opposition to the accession of BiH to the EU.

2.2 ATTITUDE TOWARDS ACCESSION TO THE NATO ALLIANCE

No.	MODALITY OF ATTITUDES	FEDERATION BiH		REPUBLIKA SRPSKA		TOTAL
1.	Support	161	80,5%	43	43%	204
2.	Critical	4	2,0%	6	6%	10
3.	Undecided	25	12,5%	29	29%	54
4.	Against	10	5,0%	22	22%	32
TOTAL		200	100%	100	100%	300

The attitude towards accession to the NATO Alliance of the citizens of FBiH has a level of support of 80%, while a critical and antagonistic attitude is present among a negligible number of subjects. Conversely, a large and significant difference in the support of accession to the NATO Alliance is expressed among the citizens of the RS. Politically considering, it can be observed that just every second citizen in the RS would support accession, which means there is a large effective opposition to the endeavours of political actors who advocate that option. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the critical and antagonistic attitudes are viewed collectively (29%) roughly equal with undecided (29%), which means that alongside the corresponding political information process, support for the accession of BiH to the NATO Alliance can be expected, and to achieve unquestionable democratic majority criteria.

The focus group interviews were conducted in Sarajevo, but according to national representation it was not possible on the basis of their comments to enter into a deeper structure of negative attitudes towards NATO in the RS.

The critical comments from the side of the subjects from the FBiH were directed towards the submissive perception of NATO in relation to the US, and its excessively controlling role in the politics of the State of BiH.

3. CONFIDENCE IN SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

No.	SECURITY INSTITUTIONS	FEDERATION BiH			REPUBLIKA SRPSKA		
		LARGE	GRADE	LITTLE	LARGE	GRADE	LITTLE
1.	NATO	40%	3,50	14%	11%	2,34	44%
2.	SFOR	50%	3,49	18%	24%	2,80	33%
3.	HAGUE TRIBUNAL	55%	3,72	13%	6%	1,81	60%
4.	ARMY	62%	3,91	7%	54%	3,58	19%
5.	POLICE	59%	3,65	16%	54%	3,65	14%

Grades of confidence: 5 very large, 4 large, 3 medium, 2 little, 1 none

In the above table, we have provided an average grade of the confidence that citizens in the FBiH and RS indicated for individual international and domestic security institutions. The percentages alongside every grade on the left side show the collective percentage of citizens showing a very large or large level of confidence, and on the right side, alongside of the grade, is the collective percentage of citizens showing little or no confidence.

3.1. 40% of the citizens of the FBiH show a large level of confidence in the **NATO Alliance**, while only 14% showed little or no confidence. The average grade on a scale from 1 to 5 amounts to 3,60, which means a relatively high average grade. SFOR received precisely the same grade, and also significantly more of the citizens of the FBiH have a large level of confidence in them (50%).

The citizens of the RS, opposite to the evaluations of the citizens of the FBiH, point out a diametrically opposite attitude. The average grade in the RS is significantly below the average (especially in relation to NATO - 2,34, but neither did SFOR achieve the average grade). Only every ninth of every quarter of citizens of the RS expressed a large level of confidence in NATO and SFOR and the grades of mistrust in NATO and SFOR are very high, those being 44% and 33% respectively.

3.2. **The Hague Tribunal** opposite to the high average grade of confidence (3,72) among the population of FBiH, achieved the lowest evaluation in the RS, with 1,81, where a negligible percentage of 6% have a large level of confidence in it, and even 60% of citizens indicated that they have a large level of mistrust in the objectivity of the work and activities of the Hague Tribunal. Politically speaking this is the most worrying data because it speaks concerning the expressed spread of nationalist prejudgements that lead to "collective blindness" for arguments and evidence concerning war crimes and guilt, and to the uncritical attitude that "the court only judges us" (and not other perpetrators of crimes). It is extremely difficult to change extremist negative attitudes (prejudgements), especially when they are connected with frustrations and feelings of loss. This data we evaluate as socially worrying and as a politically limiting factor for the reintegration of BiH in a contemporary democratic civil society. It would be even more difficult if the prejudgements of this type

and the traumatising experiences become an area of cultural inheritance of an ethnic community, as became the myth about Kosovo and Gavrilo Principe.

This data points to the necessity of a more comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of mistrust, which could be researched with more qualitative research processes from which focus group interviews would be very favourable, separately or combined with other techniques.

3.3. Confidence in our own military and police. A large level of confidence in our own military and police was expressed by 60% of subjects from the FBiH, and less by subjects in the RS. The average grades are highly positive (from 3,6 to 3,9) and the differences are neither large nor especially significant.

However, the comments and non-verbal behaviour of the participants of the focus group are interesting, which point to a predominantly negative perception, especially of the police "which neither serves nor protects" and the first association when somebody mentions the police is "the repressive financial penalties for traffic offences". They highlight corruption and inefficiency, but those evaluations were neither arguments nor examples of commentary.

The non-verbal reactions (laughter and joking) that were given to the question of confidence in the military and police perhaps are the most interesting area of the analytical basis of the focus group interviews. Namely, the groups generally could not focus on the thematic area of confidence in the military and police, which exist and work dependently upon the instructions of international forces and institutions, and even the relationship of the groups towards the theme could not be implemented on a functioning level.

According to our opinion, this insight is contradictory to the evaluations of confidence given in the research survey, and due to this would require a deliberated analytical research endeavour in order to uncover and indicate the limiting and stimulating factors in the behaviour and work of the police, in a media presentation of the work and activities of the police, and concerning the roles and relationship of international security institutions towards the organisation and supervision of police activities ("less paternalistic and dictatorial and more co-operative and directional").

3.4. The founding reasons for the mistrust of the police are predominantly the following:

	REASONS FOR MISTRUST IN THE POLICE	FEDERATION BiH RANK	REPUBLIKA SRPSKA RANK
a	Unprofessional and unsatisfactory trained	1	3
b	They do not do their job and do not combat criminals	2	1
c	Bad security situation in BiH	3	-
d	Their hands are tied	4	-
e	They have bad management personnel	5	-
f	Corruption	6	2

Generally we can comment that the negative perception of the public concerning the police is primarily directed towards to the criticism of their inefficiency of work and the awareness of their indolence and inactivity in both entities.

The second complimentary observation relates to unprofessional behaviour and the unsatisfactory training of the police, and these are critical observations of the behaviour that are possible (and necessary) to change without large material or organisational reconstruction.

We suggest an active evaluatory research of the functioning of the police that could have as an objective the improvement of the process of work and active functioning of the police, and the improvement of the perceptions and attitudes of the population concerning the police in both entities of BiH.

4. OPINION CONCERNING THE DOWNSIZING OF THE MILITARY

The actual theme is the necessity of the downsizing of the military, its reorganisation and the establishment of a joint command. In BiH there de facto exists two militaries and as we have previously mentioned there exists the expressed conviction concerning the necessity that the population of FBiH and RS has its own military.

4.1. What do you personally think about the downsizing of the military?

	FEDERATION BiH		REPUBLIKA SRPSKA	
I SUPPORT DOWNSIZING	160	80%	64	64%
I DO NOT SUPPORT DOWNSIZING	40	20%	36	36%
TOTAL	200	100%	100	100%

²
X test= 9,0774 p> 0,01 statistical significance

The difference in responses of the subjects from the FBiH and RS is statistically significant, although we can generally state that the majority of the population of both entities (Federation 80% and RS 64%) supports the idea concerning the downsizing of the military. The differences dependent upon age and employment status are not statistically relevant.

5. SUPPORT FOR A JOINT COMMAND OF THE BiH MILITARY

5.1. What do you personally think about a joint command of the military in BiH?

	FEDERATION BiH		REPUBLIKA SRPSKA	
I SUPPORT	185	92,5%	33	33%

I DO NOT SUPPORT	15	7,5%	67	67%
TOTAL	200	100%	100	100%

²
X test= 62,6917 p>0,001 co-efficient contingency amounts to 0,68

The testing of statistical significance was shown on the expressed relevance of the confirmed differences that were maintained and the co-efficient (Q=0,68), so that we can speak about the high association of positive attitudes belonging to the FBiH and negative attitudes belonging to the RS.

The founding reason for that which subjects from the RS stated is based upon the traumatic war experience through the statement that "wounds are not yet healed" and that "it is still too early for that". This psychological barrier of the large majority of the citizens of the RS is rather strange considering that there does not exist a psychological argument for that.

Politically speaking the adoption of the decision concerning a joint command of the military in BiH shall be understood as an "act" of violence over the security between the population of the RS, which shall significantly worsen the security situation. We do not have any possible insight (because we do not have any focus group interviews in the RS) into the further causes of those kinds of opinion of the majority of the population of the RS. A possible explanation perhaps is the expression of the sentence that that would be definitely a collapse in the dream concerning the other reserve 'motherland'.

Due to the fact that there remains the question as to whether the artificial creation of a joint military especially with violent methods would have very negative repercussions on the security plane. Further to this, our investigatory research seriously urges caution before choosing the time and manner of the resolution of this issue of a joint BiH military.

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Dr. Vladimir Obradović