

## **Montenegro Seeks Bosnia Genocide Case Exemption**

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Podgorica argues that Serbia alone should be prosecuted.

Montenegro has asked to be excluded from a case in which it stands accused as part of its former union with Serbia for alleged genocide in Bosnia during the 1992-95 war.

"Montenegro can no longer be the prosecuted party in this trial, because the legal successor of the former union is only Serbia," said Vesna Medenica, the state prosecutor for Montenegro on December 9.

Montenegro broke from Serbia in June this year, with just over 55 per cent of its 620,000 inhabitants voting for independence.

Bosnia first filed the genocide suit against the then-Yugoslavia in March 1993, at the height of the inter-ethnic Bosnian conflict, which raged until 1995.

The landmark trial at the International Court of Justice - which is the first to involve a charge of genocide against a sovereign state - began in February this year, after nearly 13 years of legal wrangling.

Sarajevo claims Belgrade is responsible for genocide committed on its soil, and wants it to pay reparations for the killings, torture and devastation wreaked in Bosnia during the war.

But Belgrade's defense argues that while there may have been displacement of Muslims during the war, there is no evidence of the genocidal intent needed to prove the charge.

Montenegro disputes Bosnia's claim that it shares responsibility for alleged genocide.

In May this year, the ICJ heard the closing arguments for both the prosecution and defence, but it could take months for the 16 judges to agree on a verdict.

A conviction could see Serbia and Montenegro having to pay out billions of euro in reparations.

If Montenegro's demands to be excluded from the trial are met, Serbia would be left to foot this bill alone.

The ICJ was established after World War II to settle disputes between UN member countries and does not deal with cases against individuals.

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**Location:** [Serbia](#)  
[Bosnia and](#)

Herzegovina

**Topic:** Briefly Noted

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