This City Card is one of 13, which presents a very brief overview on the city. The information provided is not exhaustive, nor would it be possible to encapsulate the entirety of the diversity of experience, outlook and communal identity of the population of any of these cities. Statements about political facts are not intended to prefer one perspective on those facts over another, the interest here is not in entering into political differences over the country’s sensitive institutional arrangements. The political parties are categorized according to local voter base, although some parties with a pronounced mono-ethnic constituency also oppose what they see as the predominant forms of ethnic politics. Furthermore, the 1991 census did not give individuals choices of how to describe themselves, and its categories confounded ethnic and religious identities; the categories also did not allow for a representation of individuals or families from mixed backgrounds, which the reader should keep in mind. In addition, the segment that captures “Voices” of citizens are not filtered or approved but presented as a reflection of local perspectives that have been raised by individuals that attended one of the events during this research process. Lastly this project involves a long-term engagement with the people in these cities, and our will involve going back to them to examine the perspectives of parties interested in further reconciliation or trust-building activity. For more details about the project and the research results please visit the our website: Religion and Ethics in the Making of War and Peace and the Faktori pomirenja i izgradnja povjerenja (B/H/S Languages based website)

The City of Bihać is located in the North West of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). In administrative terms, it lies in the entity the Federation of BiH (FBiH), and it is the capital of Una-Sana Canton, which borders Croatia. The population of Bihać, according to the 2013 census, was 61,186 people. The city has a rich history dating back to the 8th century BCE. During the Second World War, after being devastated by the pro-Nazi regime of the Independent state of Croatia, while Bihać served as headquarters for the partisan army of Josip Broz Tito it was the center of the anti-fascist resistance. The war of the 1990s in Bihać was characterized by inter- and intra-ethnic conflict. During that period, Bihać was besieged by Bosnian Serb forces for 2,102 days, with the intention to incorporate the city and its surrounding municipalities under the Serb-dominated territory. However, by a joint Croat and Bosniak forces the city had been fended off. It however left the city’s demographic structure changed, today, the population is comprised of a Bosniak majority and Croat minority. The ethnic composition of Bihać before the 1990s was majority Bosniak 66%, (the official designation was Muslim before the war), Serb 18%, Croats 8%, Yugoslav 6% and Others 2%.

During this period damage to housing, economic infrastructure and particularly cultural areas was inflicted on the town. The municipality’s territorial borders later increased to include land which had belonged to Drvar municipality (the area of Bihać before the war was 889 km², while today it is c. 900 km²). The city’s population was larger before the war, according to the 1991 census it was 70,732. In 1996, the process of reconstruction and return began. The Union for Sustainable Return and Integration stated in 2010 that there were still 7,777 housing units destroyed during the war that had not been reconstructed. In post-war elections, the majority of the 30 Assembly seats have been held by parties whose constituency is Bosniak, with a few seats held by parties whose constituency is Croat (2 seats after the 2012 elections) and none by a party with a Serb constituency. Over 80% of Bihać citizens, according to the survey results, are supportive of reconciliation activities, particularly those engaging education and culture, proactive political and institutional initiative, as well as support for the victims (please see graph for details).

1 ICTY
2 Union for Sustainable Return and Integration in BiH. Overview of return in Bosnian and Herzegovina up to 2010. html
According to the 2013 data, the average salary in Bihać is 879 BAM, which ranked it as 20th among all municipalities in the state. Its GDP per capita is estimated at 7,962.90 BAM (19th in the country). The unemployment rate in Bihać in 2015 was 46%, and the number of registered unemployed has been increasing in recent years. Of the remaining economic activity, the most important are in agriculture, with animal farming most prominent, followed by crop farming and horticulture, fishing, and beekeeping. The area surrounding Bihać is rich in terms of its beauty, with large supplies of woods and water. The city’s Development Strategic indicates orientation towards wood industry and tourism.

**VOICES FROM BIHAĆ**: The citizens of Bihać spoke very positively about inter-ethnic relations in their city, even though they feel that tensions produced on the higher administrative levels (state and entity) are concerning to them. However, despite positive attitudes within their city, they feel sometimes that the geographic periphery is excluding them from main political debates. Like elsewhere, participants in our discussions in Bihać did not speak favourably of their political leaders, and blame them for the lack of development and economic opportunity necessary for a good living standard. One of the concerns is the departure of youth from the city due to the lack of employment opportunities.

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3. This section is a summary of key-points form the Focus Group and Public Event in Bihać.