

THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

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In July 2022, Schmidt made last-minute [changes](#) to Bosnia's election laws to give the Central Election Commission significantly expanded powers to limit freedom of speech by sanctioning individuals engaged in so-called "hate speech."

Then on election night, Schmidt [amended](#) the BiH Constitution immediately after polls closed, expanding the upper chamber of the Federation's parliament and limiting the power of executive offices, a move that weakened Bosnian Serb political representation while elevating BiH's other ethnic factions.

Prior to his resignation, Schmidt [imposed](#) sweeping amendments to the Election Law, including the purchase of new voting machines implicated in [fraudulent activity](#) during recent elections in Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Philippines, and the expansion of the Central Election Commission's powers.

Concerningly, the new system [combines](#) mandatory biometric identification, uniquely identifiable QR-coded ballots, electronic scanners, cameras at polling centers, and electronic transmission of results, measures that directly threaten the right to a secret ballot and create opportunities for voter intimidation or reprisal. By comparing the time of biometric verification with the time a ballot is scanned, authorities will be able to match an individual voter to a particular ballot. Placing cameras and scanners at 5,565 polling stations will create an extraordinary capacity to monitor and intimidate voters. These measures are fundamentally incompatible with ballot secrecy.

The redesigned ballots also threaten to disenfranchise voters. Until recently, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Election Law required each ballot to include candidate names. That requirement has been altered to accommodate the scanning technology. Voters will instead be forced to use [numerical codes](#) that must be matched to candidate names on a separate sheet of paper. This new procedure is likely to produce a substantial number of invalid ballots that cannot be counted while also significantly lengthening the time it takes to vote, with long lines dissuading citizens from voting who otherwise would.

These measures are designed to disenfranchise BiH's Christian communities to elevate Bosniak Muslims.

NEWS AND INSIGHTS



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Posted on September 18, 2026

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Posted on September 12, 2026

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