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## Croats of the Bihać area from the Ottoman invasion until today

### Summary

Almost two centuries passed from the first Ottoman invasions to the fall of Bihać, the last Croatian stronghold conquered by the Ottomans in 1592. After the fall of the defense on the river Vrbas, and then on the Una, only the defensive line on the river Kupa was effective enough to finally stop the Ottomans. During this period, the indigenous population of the wider area was suppressed in migrations to the northwest.

The Islamization of conquered Bihać was important in the Ottoman security strategy. Part of the indigenous Catholic population remained in the villages around Bihać. The wars and demarcations in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries affected the confessional and ethnic image of the wider river Una area.

There were periods of more frequent „cross-border exchange“ of the Croatian population due to economic and other reasons. About eight hundred surnames are recorded in the preserved registers of the parish of Bihać from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the heart of the Croatian ethnic and political historical space, from which it is today separated by the state border, Croats have survived as indigenous population of this area, mostly around Bihać. Its numbers were influenced by wars, socio-political circumstances and political-territorial alterations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Key words:** Bihać, Bosanska krajina, Croats, Catholics.