

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Mostar

Inauguration of the High Security Courtroom

The High Representative will attend the inauguration of the new High Security Courtroom at the BiH Court today. Principal Deputy High Representative Larry Butler will also attend.

The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina began operating in 2003 and has already made a huge contribution to the fight against organised crime. The facility, which will be formally opened today – the most modern high security courtroom in this part of the world – significantly enhances the Court's logistical capacity.

Financial crime, corruption and organised crime directly threaten the people of BiH. These crimes are a scourge in everyday life. They are also undermining efforts to attract investment to BiH so as to create jobs. So they must be tackled, rapidly and effectively. The Court of BiH is at the forefront of this crime-fighting effort. The Court is already hearing cases against individuals who would have been considered, even a year or two ago, to be beyond the reach of BiH law. It has already put major criminals behind bars. The new courtroom is a valuable addition to the Court's capacity to fight organised crime and corruption.

Announcement of the press conference regarding Colonel Palic

The HR will tomorrow hold a press conference in which he will address the RS government's failure to provide adequate details on the fate and whereabouts of Colonel Avdo Palic, who disappeared in July 1995.

The press conference follows the Decision published at the beginning of this week by the BiH Human Rights Commission that found that the RS authorities have failed to provide sufficient details. After considering the latest information supplied by the RS Government the commission concluded that its earlier Decision requiring the government to supply all available information on this case has not been complied with. A Decision by the HRC on 3 October, 2005 gave the RS three more months to provide information on the fate of Colonel Palic.

The HR will say that there has been a serious obstruction of justice. And just as in the case of the initial work done by the Srebrenica commission, he will say that information that could have revealed the fate of Colonel Palic has been deliberately obscured. He will announce measures in order to ensure that the RS authorities fulfil their legal obligations.

Announcement of the HR farewell visit

I would like to announce that the HR Paddy Ashdown will visit Herzegovina as part of his farewell tour on Monday January 23.

However details of his visit will be announced by end of the week.