

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

RS Failed to Provide Details on Fate of Avdo Palic

In a Decision published yesterday the BiH Human Rights Commission has found that the RS authorities have failed to provide details on the fate and whereabouts of Avdo Palic. After consideration of the latest information supplied by the RS Government the Commission has concluded that its original Decision requiring the government to supply all available information on this case has not been complied with. The RS Government has flouted the HRC Decision of 3 October 2005, which gave the RS three more months to comply fully with all the HRC's conclusions in the Palic case.

The High Representative views the RS Government's failure to meet its legal obligation to the HRC as a matter of the utmost seriousness. The government's failure to honour a basic human obligation to Mrs. Palic – who has spent more than ten years trying to find out what happened to her husband – is despicable. There has been calculated obstruction of justice, as a result of which information of the sort that was successfully uncovered by the Srebrenica Commission – has been obscured. This is unacceptable.

The High Representative will meet Mrs. Palic later today and

will then decide what action to take against those who have failed to ensure that the RS Government fulfils its legal obligations

High Representative to Visit SIPA Premises Tomorrow

The High Representative will tomorrow visit SIPA in its current temporary location in the “Zrak” Buildings in Sarajevo . The High Representative will meet SIPA officers and discuss their role leading BiH in its fight against organised crime, international terrorism, and illegal migration. SIPA, as you know, is the state law-enforcement agency mandated to deal with the most serious crimes facing BiH.

SIPA is still in temporary premises because the issue of its permanent home has been the subject of political wrangling since July2003. The Zrak building is subject to legal dispute and the premises themselves are inadequate for an operational police agency.

The CoM’s continuing failure to agree on suitable premises is now affecting the Agency’s ability to work at full capacity – and this is essential if SIPA is to be able to support the BiH Judiciary effectively and play its full role in the fight against organised crime.

The High Representative will hold a short doorstepper at the “Zrak” building tomorrow after meeting SIPA officials. We will be issuing a media advisory with full details regarding this visit later today.

OSCE

Two-thirds of citizens of BiH support the Education reform that the authorities of this country have pledged to

The OSCE Mission to BiH recently surveyed public attitudes toward education reform in BiH. The data shows that 68% of the

respondents said that they believed that there should be a state-level Ministry of Education guaranteeing the same education standards and norms throughout BiH; 76% believed that children of different ethnicities should attend school together; 70% believed that children should learn the history and literature of all constituent peoples and others; 67% believed that it was not acceptable that the language of instruction used in classrooms should prevent children from going to class together.

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina finds these results encouraging and heartening. At the same time, however, they also highlight the sad fact that almost two-thirds of the citizens of this country – with similar percentages among all three constituent peoples – support reforms that the authorities of this country have pledged to undertake but that they have so far signally failed to carry out. Still, it is not too late to create an educational system in line with the wishes of the citizens and the commitments entered into by the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina . We urge the elected political leadership of this country to waste no more time in doing so.

EUPM

No statement.

EUFOR

45th Joint Military Commission Meeting

Today, EUPM will hold the 45th Joint Military Commission meeting at Camp Butmir , with senior members of the Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFBiH) and State Ministry of Defence (MoD) officials.

The Joint Military Commission is the central military body to discuss all military issues within Bosnia-Herzegovina and this meeting is the forum in which COM EUFOR may pass his Instructions to the Parties, signatories of the Dayton Peace Accords.

The central issues to be addressed during the meeting will be the transfer of authority for BiH military issues to a single State MoD and a single military force functioning fully under state level command and control, and the transfer of the responsibilities and activities of joint military affairs to those authorities.

Further topics of discussion will be the responsibilities for military sites, regulations over the carriage of weapons, approval procedures for movement control, training and operations, airspace control, AFBiH within democratic society and accreditation of AFBiH for mine clearance and unexploded ordnance (UXO) removal.

As a result of these discussions, over the next year, State MoD and AFBiH will take on increasing responsibilities, previously taken on by EUFOR.

To this end, further enquiries about the details of the Instructions to the Parties should be addressed to State of Bosnia-Herzegovina MoD. Photographs of the meeting will be made available to the media later on today.