

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

Tuesday, 1 March at 11.30

OHR, Vedran Persic
OSCE, Mersiha Causevic
EUPM, Alun Roberts
EUFOR, Lt Cdr Chris Percival
NATO HQ, Maj Dwight Mood
ICTY, Matias Hellman

OHR

HR to Visit Banja Luka

The High Representative will visit Banja Luka tomorrow where he will meet senior RS political leaders. One of the main topics of discussion will be Police restructuring.

The remaining legislative and administrative task which must be implemented before BiH can move forward along the path to Europe – is police reform.

Police reform is about making the police more effective. It's about giving the police the organisational and operational structures that will help them catch criminals. It will remove the barriers to policing that are currently posed by the IEBl and cantonal boundaries.

The removal of cantonal and entity boundaries will help remove political interference in the work of the police. It will hence make police more responsible to citizens, not politicians.

The Police Restructuring Commission Report issued in January launched a public debate. This is a crucial debate, because its outcome will have a direct bearing on the security of the citizens of this country and will determine BiH's progress towards Europe.

The High Representative is currently taking part in a series of live phone-in radio discussion programmes with the object of clarifying the debate about police reform: to make sure that the real issues – of citizens' security and the broader European integration agenda – are to the fore.

The EU has made it clear that if BiH wants to begin negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, police restructuring must go forward on the basis of three principles:

- All legislative and budgetary competencies must be vested at the state level.
- Police reform must proceed on the basis of geographical regions that have been drawn up to ensure maximum efficiency.
- Political interference in policing must be eliminated.

It will offer policemen and policewomen an equal salary structure and more career opportunities. And it will also help pave the way towards a softening of the visa regime for BiH citizens travelling to the EU.

This morning the High Representative participated in a call-in programme on Radio East Sarajevo.

We'll be issuing a media advisory with more details about the visit later today.

OHR comment on Delic transfer to the ICTY

The OHR welcomes the decision of Rasim Delic to place himself voluntarily at the disposal of the ICTY. Regardless of the

judicial outcome, Mr. Delic's decision to hand himself over to the Tribunal shows respect for the rule of law and of BiH's international obligations under the DPA.

It is not in the interest of any citizen, of whichever background or political outlook, to see criminal indictments go untried. Those who are indicted must defend themselves in court. This is the only way that justice can be served.

The RS authorities, by contrast, have still not demonstrated that they are genuinely ready to fulfill their obligations in this regard – The transfer of Savo Todovic was“ a significant step forward” – but only as long as this was the “beginning of a process, which will see the other indictees transferred to the ICTY”. Since Mr. Todovic's transfer no activity has taken place. Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, who have been on the run for ten years, are still on the run and are preventing every BiH citizen, including BiH Serbs, from enjoying the benefits of Euro-Atlantic integration.

Unless the RS authorities demonstrate that they are fully cooperating with the ICTY, the RS institutions and their lack of ICTY cooperation will remain the greatest obstacle blocking this country's progress towards the EU and NATO

OSCE

OSCE to launch the UGOVOR project

The OSCE Mission to BiH is launching UGOVOR project tomorrow, on 2 March, at 11:00 at UNITIC auditorium.

Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina , will deliver opening remarks and will be followed by presentations by the Mayor of Tomislavgrad and the Information Officer from Zvornik.

There will be two press opportunities:

- 11:00 Ambassador Davidson will deliver remarks
- 12:15 Conclusions; opportunity for questions

Mayors and speakers throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina have been invited to participate in this launch, which aims to improve communication and co-operation between municipalities and citizens, which is essential for any fully functioning democracy.

Following the launch, selected municipalities will work in co-operation with the Mission , to complete the project's five modules: implementation of the Freedom of Access to Information Act, implementation of a Code of Ethics for Elected Officials, establishment of a Municipal Development Planning Committee, reform of the Regulatory Framework and the development of Municipal Citizen partnerships.

Municipalities can work on modules consecutively or simultaneously, depending on their capacity, but by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the OSCE, municipalities commit to implement all five. The timescale for this will be worked out with the Mission .

We welcome all journalists to cover this event. Journalist will be allowed to attend the duration of the presentation, but depending on their convenience also have the option of attending either press opportunity.

EUPM

No statement

EUFOR

EUFOR Vehicle Check Point Operations

EUFOR Forces are continuing their programme of focussed

Vehicle Check Point (VCP) operations across Bosnia and Herzegovina . These operations are being conducted under the authority of the EUFOR mandate, in support of the BiH authorities, to bear down on all illegal activities. They have been planned in close collaboration with a number of BiH law enforcement authorities, in particular the Indirect taxation Authority (ITA).

These operations aim to disrupt the activities of the criminal networks in this country. Organised crime and corruption is endemic throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina . Criminal networks and their parallel structures undermine the institutions of BiH, are highly de-stabilising and jeopardise this country's progress towards Europe .

I have some unedited footage of recent EUFOR VCP operations available today, for any interested journalists. I would also draw your attention to a recently launched EUFOR public information campaign, which aims to complement EUPM initiatives to raise public awareness of the consequences of organised crime and encourage the reporting of illegal activities.

Operation Free Entrance (Sarajevo Harvest)

Operation Free Entrance, the recent door-to-door joint harvest operation in Sarajevo and East Sarajevo, will end tomorrow. During the operation, which has been undertaken in close partnership with FBiH and RS interior authorities and police forces, a large number of illegal weapons and munitions have been collected. EUFOR would like to thank the citizens of Sarajevo for their cooperation and support, which have made the operation a significant success and Sarajevo a safer place.

Grenadier Guards Band Concerts

The band of the Grenadier Guards, from the United Kingdom , will give three public performances to the citizens of

Sarajevo on Thursday 3 March 2005, as part of their visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina and EUFOR. Timings and venues are as follows:

1400 – 1500Bascarsija (Pigeon) Square (Weather Permitting)

1600 – 1730UNITIC Building (Inside Main Entrance Lobby)

1830 – 2000Mercator Shopping Centre (Inside Shopping Centre)

Members of the public are invited to view the concerts, which will include a wide range of music.

NATO HQ

I would first like to advise the press that we have copies of the Press Release from the 2nd DRC Meeting held this past Friday.

I am pleased to introduce today our newly hired NATO Spokesperson, Mr. Derek Chappell. It's worth noting that I will be the last military person to occupy the post as spokesperson; military tours tend to be short, and hiring an International Civilian, as your NATO Spokesperson will provide much more continuity between NATO HQ and the press corps. A NATO Spokesperson that potentially will be here for years instead of months. I will retain my position as Chief Public Information Officer for NATO HQ Sarajevo.

As this is my last official press conference, I would like to thank the members of the media for your support over the past several months.

Derek Chappell, NATO

With effect from 4 March I will be the new Spokesman for NATO HQ Sarajevo.

My name is Derek Chappell. I come to BiH from Kosovo where I have been the United Nations Police Spokesman since 2000.

I have been to Bosnia and to Sarajevo before and I feel privileged to be in this city, this country and to be representing NATO.

I will be working closely with EUFOR, especially Lieutenant Colonel Rose and the EUFOR Public Information Office.

Despite the change of names, contact information will remain the same for you to reach this office.

I look forward to working with you in the future.

ICTY

Firstly, the Appeals Chamber of the ICTY yesterday rendered its judgement in the case against Kvočka. Radić, Žigić and Prcać. The case dealt with crimes committed in the Omarska and Keraterm camps in the Prijedor area, including murder, torture, rape, inhumane acts and confinement in inhumane conditions.

The Appeals Chamber allowed one of the several grounds of appeal by Žigić, and allowed in part two of the grounds of appeal by Kvočka. The Appeals Chamber dismissed all other grounds of appeal, and confirmed the first-instance sentences against all four accused. Therefore, the following sentences have now become final: Miroslav Kvočka – 7 years, Mlado Radić – 20 years, Zoran Žigić – 25 years, and Dragoljub Prcać – 5 years of imprisonment. I have with me copies in Bosnian of the summary of the judgement, read out in court yesterday by the Presiding Judge.

I would note that the case against Kvočka and others, in which a final judgement has now been pronounced, was initially linked to and deals largely with the same matters as the case

of Mejakić and others, which is currently under consideration for possible referral to the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

And with regard to the Rule 11 bis proceedings dealing with the possible referral of cases to Bosnia and Herzegovina , I have with me today copies of some recent submissions by the Prosecution, Defence, as well as the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro . Those interested can ask me for copies after the briefing. I am sure you are also aware of the upcoming hearing of 3 and 4 March in the cases of Mejakić and others and Radovan Stanković.

Finally, as you already know, two indictees, Rasim Delić and Radivoje Miletić, arrived yesterday in the UN Detention Unit in Scheveningen. The dates of initial appearances have not been set yet, but we are expecting them to take place within a few days. According to the Rules, an accused can enter his plea at the initial appearance, or he can choose to do it later, within 30 days. For those interested, I have a few copies of the indictments against Delić and Miletić.

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No journalist's questions