

Vijesti.ba: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko

By Nevena Šarenac

Vijesti.ba: After the terrorist attack against a police station in Zvornik, security levels have been increased in BiH. Is there a threat of destabilization of the political and security situation in the country?

Valentin Inzko: First of all, let me express my condolences to the family of police officer Dragan Djuric who was killed in this heinous attack. I also hope that the wounded police officers Zeljko Gajić i Stevo Milovanović will quickly and fully recover from their injuries.

I am confident that all competent authorities, responsible security agencies and judicial institutions will, in close coordination and cooperation, conduct a swift and thorough investigation as to what happened during this tragic event.

What is important now it to keep a clear head. I want to appeal to every citizen in BiH to have faith in their institutions and show the necessary restraint in their reactions to prevent a rise in tensions. Moments like this are no time for divisions or accusations, they require everyone to come together and fight all the grave challenges ahead, such as consequences of this mindless attack in Zvornik.

Vijesti.ba: At their recent 5th Convention, SNSD have adopted a declaration on free and independent future of the RS. Given that this is a party document, to what extent does it jeopardize the sovereignty and integrity of BiH as an internationally recognized state? What is your general view on this declaration?

Valentin Inzko: Neither this nor any other paper adopted by any political party can change a very simple fact: BiH is an internationally recognized state whose sovereignty and territorial integrity is guaranteed under international law and by the Dayton Peace Agreement. Period.

I said it many times before, and I'll say it again: under the DPA, the entities have no rights to secede from BiH and only exist by virtue of the Constitution of BiH. The constitutional structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina can only be changed in accordance with the amendment procedure prescribed in the Constitution of BiH. Therefore, unless the Constitutional Court decides otherwise or the Parliamentary Assembly decides to amend the Constitution, all institutions at all levels of government are bound to respect the current arrangement and the decisions of the Institutions of BiH.

Vijesti.ba: How do you comment the statement by RS Prime Minister Željka Cvijanović, that the RS is a reality, and that no one would waste time or energy to fight against it.

Valentin Inzko: I am aware of this statement. I would just briefly add that BiH is also a reality, and that no one would waste time or energy to fight against it. With enough good will, Bosnia and Herzegovina provides a wide enough framework for all who live in it.

Vijesti.ba: Apart from the aforementioned declaration, a public outcry was also caused by the declaration on to the petition before the BiH Constitutional Court to assess whether the RS Law on Holidays is in line with the Constitution. It was announced that the RS would not respect rulings of the BiH CC. In the OHR's view, is this an acceptable document? Does this declaration in some way jeopardize the Dayton Agreement, having in mind that the BiH CC is a genuine Dayton category?

Valentin Inzko: The Declaration goes against the Constitution of BiH, which states explicitly that decisions of the BiH Constitutional Court are “final and binding.” It also raises serious questions about the commitment of the RS authorities to the basic principle of the Rule of Law, which is at the core of the BiH Constitution and the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Constitutional Court is the only BiH institution that has the capacity to resolve disputes between BiH institutions and the different levels of government and has contributed greatly to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the advancement of the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This declaration can also be interpreted as an attempt of the RS National Assembly to exert political pressure on a Court in its deliberations on a particular case.

The international community has repeatedly reminded authorities at all levels of their constitutional obligation to implement all decisions of the Constitutional Court. We are closely monitoring this issue.

Vijesti.ba: Last year you said that progress is possible in all areas if the elected leaders focus on practical governance. Do you believe that the newly formed authorities will succeed in implementing constructive and real politics in the interests of citizens? You said that, if they do so, they will have willing partners in the international community.

Valentin Inzko: Absolutely, they will. It is our sincere intention to see this country move forward and our door is wide open to everyone and everything that can lead BiH closer to its long-term goal – membership in the EU. However, in order for the overall situation to improve, a significant change has to occur in the way politics is being conducted in this country. All energy has to focus on concrete measures that would improve lives of ordinary citizens.

My message to all the new authorities is very simple and very clear: fix the economy and entrench the rule of law. These are the paramount priorities. Promises were made, now it is time to turn them into reality, it is time to create new jobs and focus on economic stability.