

Failure To Address Stankovic Escape An Outrage



“A year after the escape of Radovan Stankovic the official response has been far from satisfactory”, said OHR’s Principal Deputy High Representative Raffi Gregorian yesterday. “Stankovic remains at large and the authorities have yet to produce a thorough report identifying those who aided Stankovic’s flight, hold accountable those responsible, or take measures to tighten up security in prisons”.

Gregorian met Judge Fausto Pocar, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia yesterday. Both shared their outrage that the Republika Srpska and BiH authorities have failed on several counts in the aftermath of the Stankovic escape. Serbian authorities have also failed to cooperate in any way, despite the fact Stankovic fled to Serbia.

Radovan Stankovic was convicted of rape and crimes against humanity committed in Foca in 1992 by the BiH Court. Stankovic was the first ICTY indictee whose case was transferred to a national court as part of the Tribunal’s completion strategy.

“Stankovic is a convicted rapist and torturer, and is a danger to society wherever he is,” said Gregorian. “He has expressed no remorse for his crimes and there is a real danger that he may strike again”.

The Stankovic escape has highlighted several shortcomings in the BiH penal system. The High Representative toughened up the

State level prison regime in the aftermath of the Stankovic prison break last year; prisoners convicted for war crimes under State law may no longer be granted weekend leave nor may they leave prison premises without proper supervision. The Republika Srpska has followed suit, but the FBiH is yet to do so, as made clear by the Maktouf scandal. Furthermore questions persist over the appropriateness of the appointment of Sinisa Goljanin as the Director of the Prison in Foca.

Pocar and Gregorian agreed that the International Community must be sure that war criminals, once tried and convicted, are properly imprisoned. Pocar reported that the ICTY is concerned about where and under what conditions convicts will serve their sentences in BiH. BiH's jails are in poor condition and the Staff needs better training. Completion of a State Prison should prevent these problems from re-occurring, but changes across the BiH penal system are also required.