

HR Sets March 15 Deadline To RS MoD

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today commended the BiH Ministry of Defence on its Report into Systemic Weaknesses in Command and Control within the Armed Forces of BiH, released last week. In a letter sent today to BiH Minister of Defence Radovanovic, he welcomed some of the reports recommendations.

However, he also expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the RS MoD has failed to explain adequately how Ratko Mladic was not discharged from the RS Army until March 2002. He noted that the RS Ministry of Defence has failed to provide evidence confirming that no individuals who served in the 410th Military Intelligence Centre (involved in illegal surveillance) or in Ratko Mladic's personal security detail, are still serving in the VRS or the RS MoD.

The High Representative today set 15 March 2005 as the deadline for the RS Minister of Defence to provide evidence that the RS MoD has undertaken these measures. "The report proves that Mladic was on the RS payroll until the end of 2001, and not discharged until March 2002. This is an extraordinary revelation. The report even identifies the individuals who signed off on Mladic's pay cheques," he said.

He ascribed the inability of the BiH Ministry of Defence to confirm whether Ratko Mladic was at Han Pijesak in 2004 to the pitiful lack of investigative resources available to the BiH MoD's Inspector General. He welcomed the Minister's commitment to closing the Han Pijesak facilities.

"It is hardly surprising that no evidence of Gen Mladic's stay at Han Pijesak has come to light, given that Minister Radovanovic had available at the State level only one

dedicated inspector and a driver to conduct such an investigation,’’ said the High Representative.

“The report clearly points to the need to improve state level command and control, and increase the resources available to the BiH MoD. It supports Minister Radovanovic’s decision to develop the concept of military police. Indeed, I would go further and strongly urge the early creation of state-level military police unit,” he added.

In his letter, the High Representative also “applauded [the Minister’s] proposal to establish a financial audit capacity inside the Ministry.” He supported the Report’s proposal that the Defense Reform Commission draft amendments to the BiH Law on Defence and a new Law on Service of the Armed Forces of BiH.