

High Representative Briefs Solana and de Hoop Scheffer on RS Srebrenica Report

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Friday sent a letter to the European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Dr Javier Solana, and NATO's Secretary-General, Mr Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, enclosing and reviewing the RS Srebrenica Commission's report, published on Friday.

The High Representative noted that final judgment of the report rests with the BiH Human Rights Commission.

The report indicates "some progress" in the RS authorities' willingness to help establish the truth about Srebrenica, the High Representative writes. "Provided that this continues through the remaining stages of the report, it may be possible to say that a dynamic of obstructionism on war crimes issues is being replaced by a dynamic of greater cooperation."

The Srebrenica Commission's final findings are to be delivered to the RS Government by mid-July.

In his letter the High Representative draws the attention of Dr. Solana and Mr. De Hoop Scheffer to the fact that the report

- identifies 32 locations of mass graves, 11 of which were previously unknown;
- elaborates on the participation of military and police units of the RS Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- alludes to orders for the participation of police units from Republika Srpska Krajina and the Republic of Serbia; and

- contains documents making clear that “Operation Krivaja” had three planned phases – the attack on Srebrenica, the separation of women and children, and the execution of males.

The High Representative emphasizes that the information provided will need further examination and that “nothing that has been revealed by the Commission substitutes in any way for the full cooperation with the ICTY that is required if BiH is to move forward in its relations with Euro-Atlantic institutions.” This ultimately will be a matter for the ICTY to assess.

Concrete actions to arrest War Criminals are necessary and these are yet to be forthcoming.

The High Representative concludes that the information contained in the report combined with recent public statements by some RS leaders *may* indicate a growing willingness to face up to the issue of responsibility for Srebrenica and to achieve justice for the victims. The High Representative says that this “is a work in progress. It is going in the right direction. But much more needs to be done to overcome nine years of near total inactivity of the RS authorities and especially the RS MUP on the War Crimes front.”