High Representative Announces Srebrenica Commission Support Measures

The Interim Report presented by the RS Srebrenica Commission to the High Representative on 15 April "highlights sustained and systematic obstruction and inaction by the Government of Republika Srpska, in particular the VRS, the RS MUP the RS Office for ICTY Liaison and the RS intelligence agency," the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, said after receiving the report.

The High Representative reminded journalists that "a decade after the event, there are still people who do not know for sure what happened to their loved ones during those terrible days in July 1995." He underlined the fact that the degree of official cooperation received by the Srebrenica Commission, established under a Human Rights Chamber decision, will be taken as a measure of the RS authorities' respect for the rule of law. The Commission's work is crucial to BiH's future, as NATO will consider the report in its overall assessment of whether BiH has co-operated effectively with the ICTY, a key requirement if BiH is to join PfP. Cooperation with the ICTY is also cited in the EC's Feasibility Study.

In response to the failure of some senior officials to cooperate adequately with the Commission the High Representative announced that the following measures must be enacted in the next two weeks, in order to promote a sea change in the attitude of all RS institutions.

The RS authorities will:

- Accelerate the move of command and control of military intelligence to the State-level, with the end of July

’04 as the deadline for completing this process

- RS Prime Minister Mikerevic will dismiss and replace without delay Marko Arsovic as the Commission’s Chairman.
- Ensure that the RS Srebrenica Commission is properly supported and works full time from now on, not one day a week as up to now.
- Furnish a progress report, which will include new information to be produced by the Commission, by the end of April ‘04.

In addition the High Representative:

- Has extended the Commission’s work until the end of the first week of June, when NATO foreign ministers will take the Commission’s final report into consideration.
- Has removed Dejan Miletic, the RS ICTY Liaison Officer, and General Cvjetko Savic, Chief of VRS General Staff, from their positions as the two individuals most directly culpable for the obstruction identified in the report
- Will hold RS Minister of Interior Zoran Djeric and RS Minister of Defence Milovan Stankovic personally responsible for ensuring a sea change in the cooperation and support offered by their institutions. This cooperation will be judged by the Commission’s progress report to be produced by 30 April.
- Has required RS President Dragan Cavic and RS PM Dragan Mikerevic to take direct personal responsibility for ensuring the success of the Commission and appoint Jovan Cizmovic, the President’s legal adviser, and Vlado Simeunovic, the Prime Minister’s defence advisor, as individuals responsible for ensuring the Commission’s success. Like Ministers Djeric and Stankovic these two advisors have two weeks to ensure full RS institutional cooperation with the Commission.
- Will hold RS President Dragan Cavic and RS Prime

Minister Dragan Mikerevic ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Human Rights Chamber’s legal requirements are met and that BiH’s reputation and future are restored, by the end of the first week of June of this year.

The RS authorities are legally bound by decision of the Human Rights Chamber to cooperate fully with the Commission. They are also under an international legal obligation to cooperate fully with the ICTY, who are observing the work of this Commission and have long been investigating the events of July 1995 in and around Srebrenica.