

OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference

Intelligence Reform

Events over the last 48 hours starkly underline the urgent necessity of reforming the Intelligence Sector in this country.

Regarding the events themselves, any allegations of criminal activity are a matter for the Prosecutor to consider. The way in which information leaked to media is a matter for the Federation government to investigate, and we welcome Mr Hadzipasic's decision to do so. Mr Vuksic's decision to ask to be suspended was also an appropriate step considering his recent indictment.

The OHR is now concerned that BiH undertakes the long-overdue reform of BiH's intelligence services and the way in which their information is used.

BiH needs a modern and professional state security service that helps law-enforcement agencies in this country fight organized crime, terrorism and other threats. What BiH does *not* need – and what it must eliminate completely – are discredited and politicised intelligence operations operating outside proper democratic control. Reform is imperative. It is imperative in order to protect citizens, and it is imperative if BiH is to become a modern, functioning democracy fully integrated in Europe.

Since the end of May this year the Intelligence Reform Commission has been working on a draft Law which will establish an efficient, non-political intelligence service in this country. The Commission has been headed up by a respected former Hungarian Ambassador to BiH and former head of the post-communist Hungarian intelligence service, Mr Kalman Kocsis.

The draft law that will shortly be presented to the Council of Ministers.

Among the issues it deals with are:

- Political responsibility for and democratic control over the civilian intelligence services in BiH
- Protection of data on citizens
- Rules on dissemination of information
- Protection of official secrets; and
- Professionalism and non-politicization of staff

It has never been clearer that root-and-branch intelligence reform is a task that must be undertaken with the utmost urgency by BiH's parliamentarians.