

High Representative welcomes SFOR demonstration of resolve in apprehending indictees

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, has welcomed SFOR's demonstration of its resolve in apprehending indicted war criminals, by force if necessary.

The High Representative was commenting on an operation mounted by SFOR troops on Thursday to detain Radovan Karadzic. The High Representative noted that robust measures to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes (PIFWCs) are necessary elements in peace implementation.

The High Representative has stated on many occasions that the arrest and free and fair trial of all indicted war criminals is a crucial part of the process of reconciliation in BiH and the region. There is a pressing need for justice to be done, and for justice to be seen to be done. Implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, as well as the economic development of BiH and its integration in the European mainstream will all be facilitated by the arrest and trial of these individuals.

In this context, the High Representative is disappointed with the statement made by RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic complaining that his government was not informed of the SFOR operation in advance. This and similar SFOR operations would be entirely unnecessary if the RS authorities fulfilled their statutory obligation to co-operated fully with the ICTY.

The Hague Tribunal is an independent court established to judge individuals who played a role in some of the darkest moments in European history during the last 50 years. Bringing these individuals to justice will help the people of the region come to terms with the recent past.