

# **OHR Statement by the High Representative, Carl Bildt on municipal elections**

## **STATEMENT**

### **BY CARL BILDT, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE**

**Sarajevo, 27 August 1996**

The Provisional Election Commission has today decided that it does not consider it feasible to hold municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on September 14.

At the same time, it has reaffirmed its commitment to the holding of the national, entity and cantonal elections on September 14 as planned. I warmly welcome this. These elections are critically important in paving the way for the setting up of the common institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The decision on local elections is taken in view of the gross misuse of the registration process noted primarily among refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. I have previously reacted strongly against this and urged that action should be taken.

Although the municipalities are of great importance, the holding of local elections is not prescribed by Annex Three of the Peace Agreement. This does however mention the possibility of holding them if, in view of the Provisional Election Commission, this is considered "feasible".

The international community will now, in close contact with the different national authorities, have to consider how the new situation will be handled. The PEC decision raises a number of issues which will affect both the nature and the scope of the peace implementation process during the rest of this year and 1997.

I have accordingly put the question on the agenda of the meeting of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council in Brussels Thursday September 5. There will also be other international consultations on how the situation might be handled.