

Car bomb attack on Zeljko Kopanja

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and the Steering Board ambassadors, meeting today in Sarajevo, were outraged to learn of the car bomb attack this morning on Zeljko Kopanja, the Editor-in-Chief of Nezavisne Novine.

Mr Kopanja, currently undergoing emergency surgery in Banja Luka hospital, is in critical condition. The High Representative and the Steering Board ambassadors extend their heartfelt sympathies both to him and his family at this difficult time. They earnestly hope Mr Kopanja recovers from this appalling attack.

Mr Kopanja is a courageous journalist who, since August, has published a series of articles in Nezavisne Novine detailing war-time atrocities committed against non-Serbs by Serb and Bosnian Serb forces. The series represents the first comprehensive investigation into such atrocities to appear in any media in Republika Srpska.

Terrorism against journalists is wholly unacceptable. Mr Kopanja clearly has a key role to play in the establishment of a free and independent media in this country, which is fundamental to the process of reconciliation and the establishment of a lasting peace.

The High Representative and the Steering Board Ambassadors express their outright condemnation of those responsible. We urge the local police to undertake a vigorous and prompt investigation of this heinous act. Rest assured that the OHR, together with the Steering Board Ambassadors, will do their utmost to support the relevant authorities in ensuring that the perpetrators are brought to justice.