

SRS must refile application for party registration

The Acting High Representative Ralph Johnson and the OSCE Head of Mission Ambassador Robert Barry, instructed the Serb Radical Party (SRS) today to refile its party registration with the appropriate courts in the Republika of Srpska without the membership of Nikola Poplasen and two other party officials in leadership positions, or face the possibility that the SRS will not be certified as a registered party for the Municipal Elections scheduled to be conducted on April 8, 2000.

In a letter to the SRS party officials, Johnson and Barry noted that the Provisional Election Commission (PEC) had been in the process of reviewing political party applications, to determine eligibility for municipal elections. The letter noted that Mr. Nikola Poplasen had continued to be listed as the legal President of SRS. In addition, it was also noted that Mr. Mirko Blagojevic and Mr. Ognjen Tadic were listed as party officials authorized to represent the SRS.

On March 5, 1999, the High Representative removed Mr. Poplasen from the Office of the President of Republika Srpska because Mr. Poplasen obstructed the implementation of the results of the 1998 General Election and had repeatedly obstructed the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP). In addition, the Election Appeals Sub-Commission (EASC) prior to the 1998 General Elections removed Mr. Blagojevic and Mr. Tadic from the SRS candidates list because of serious violations of the PEC Rules and Regulations by the SRS party. Mr. Blagojevic and Mr. Tadic have, even after their removal from the candidates list, repeatedly used inflammatory language in order to incite violence and destabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The letter further explains to SRS party officials that "by keeping Mr. Poplasen, Mr. Blagojevic and Mr. Tadic in political party leadership positions and allowing Mr. Poplasen to sign the statement on behalf of the SRS Party, the SRS is in violation of Article 7.35 of the Provisional Election Commission Rules and Regulations. Consequently, in order for the SRS to register successfully for the 2000 Municipal Elections, the SRS must officially remove Mr. Poplasen, Mr. Blagojevic and Mr. Tadic from any leadership positions in the SRS. The removal of these persons must be done in accordance with the RS Law on Political Party Organization."

The SRS must provide the court documentation to the PEC by October 22, 1999. Failure to remove these persons from leadership positions in the SRS and submitting the necessary documentation to the PEC will result in the PEC not allowing the SRS Party to participate in the Municipal Elections in April 2000.

The High Representative and the PEC will demand a greater level of compliance by all political parties, coalitions and independent candidates within the General Framework Agreement for Peace and the Rules and Regulations during the electoral period for the 2000 Municipal Elections. The PEC and the High Representative will be especially concerned if parties use inflammatory language in order to incite violence and destabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina and use intimidation during the electoral period. Therefore, even if a party successfully registers for the elections, the PEC and the High Representative will continually review parties, coalitions and independent candidates' conduct and will take the necessary steps in order to ensure compliance with the GFAP and the PEC Rules and Regulations.