

Statement by the High Representative

These are difficult days for the entire region. I take this opportunity to call on all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to remain calm. The world's spotlight is upon us: the interests of all this country's citizens are best served by a measured and dignified response.

I also take this opportunity to warn anyone who might be tempted to try to exploit the Kosovo crisis for their own ends, that such attempts will not be tolerated. The international community will act swiftly and firmly to deal with any such exploitation.

Under Annex 10 of the GFAP and the Bonn and Madrid Declarations, I can and will remove those in office who forget their obligation to maintain peace and public order. I can and will penalise political parties whose members incite violence, make inflammatory statements, or otherwise endanger the public.

The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have turned their backs on war and violence. There is no reason to turn back the clock.

I call upon Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders to do what they are elected to do, and represent the voice of the people of this country. The people of this country want their future decided here in BiH, not in Belgrade or elsewhere. They want us to get on with our work – building a peace that lasts. There is still much to be done in the implementation of the peace agreement. Let us not be distracted from that task.