

High Representative condemns Incidents in Eastern RS

The High Representative Carlos Westendorp strongly condemns the recent violent incidents in Eastern Republika Srpska which endangered the lives of two members of the international community and led to the destruction of a total of three vehicles belonging to the European Community Monitor Mission (ECMM) and the United Nations International Police Task Force (UN IPTF).

In particular, the High Representative denounces yesterday's demonstration in Vlasenica during which Mayor Stanimir Reljic claimed that General Radislav Krstic, indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), had been tortured upon his arrest by SFOR troops on Wednesday. The High Representative has received a categorical assurance from SFOR that at all times General Krstic was treated in accordance with the highest international standards. Any suggestion of torture is entirely unfounded and highly provocative.

The High Representative has called upon the President of the Republika Srpska to undertake urgent measures to ensure an immediate and full investigation into these incidents. Appropriate measures must be taken against those individuals responsible for inciting or committing violent acts against the international community.

Individuals indicted by the Tribunal must be transferred into its custody to answer the charges against them. The ICTY Office of the Prosecutor estimates that there are twenty-five (25) publicly indicted individuals at liberty on the territory of the Republika Srpska. To date, the authorities of the Republika Srpska have failed to transfer those individuals to the Tribunal.

The Republika Srpska is obliged under the Peace Agreement to comply with any order or request of the Tribunal for the arrest, detention, surrender of, or access to persons who are accused of violations within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal. The continued failure of states in the region of the former Yugoslavia to meet their obligations to ensure the transfer of individuals indicted by the Tribunal has resulted in the issuance of indictments and arrest warrants which are not subject to public disclosure until the warrant has been served on the accused. SFOR has acted within its mandate to assist the Tribunal in obtaining custody of indicted persons.

The High Representative demands that all inflammatory statements and acts of violence against representatives of the International Community cease immediately. He reserves the right to take further action that may be necessary.