

High Representative Removes Bratunac Mayor and Head of Department of Urban Planning From Office

The High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch today issued decisions removing [Miodrag Josipovic](#) from his position as Mayor of Bratunac and [Mladen Tolj](#) from his position as Head of the Department of Urban Planning of Bratunac. Both of these officials have abused their power by persistently and seriously obstructing the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

- Mr Josipovic, during his time as mayor, authorized the construction of several properties in clear violation of the High Representative's Decision of 27 April 2000, which requires an OHR waiver for such construction. Furthermore, several cases involving illegal property allocation investigated thus far in Bratunac reveal not only discrimination based on ethnicity but also unfair allocation of land and apartments for the benefit of a small circle of elected and appointed officials and SDS representatives.

Mr. Josipovic was repeatedly instructed by OHR to stop illegal land allocation, to nullify all illegal decisions made in regard to socially owned land allocation and to ensure that no further illegal construction took place. On 17 May 2001, the OHR warned May 2001, the OHR warned Mr Josipovic by letter that his unlawful activities must cease or he would face dismissal. He failed to comply.

Following a shooting incident against returnees on 15

March 2001 he had publicly incited and inflamed ethnic tension by criticising the arrest of alleged wrongdoers, thereby undermining the law enforcement agencies and the rule of law. In the letter of 17 May 2001, Mr Josipovic was asked by the OHR to distance himself publicly from recent attacks on returnees. As repeatedly happened in the past he has again failed to demand action from the police against perpetrators of such attacks.

- Mr Tolj, as Head of the Department of Urban Planning allowed the construction of various properties in clear violation of the High Representative's Decision of 27 April 2000, which requires an OHR waiver for such construction. In a letter by OHR of 17 May 2001, Mr Tolj was warned as to his unlawfull activity and as to the possibility of his removal. However, he purported to resign his position, while in fact retaining his authority in the department.

The decisions, which take immediate effect, ban Mr Josipovic and Mr Tolj from holding any official or appointive public office in the future, unless authorized by the High Representative. In accordance with RS Law the Municipal Assembly of Bratunac shall install immediately an acting mayor, until such time as a permanent replacement has been elected.

The High Representative takes this occasion to reiterate that he remains firmly committed to establishing the rule of law, safeguarding property rights, and stamping out corruption in BiH.