Ante Barisic is removed from office

This morning, a letter signed by the High Representative and the OSCE Head of Mission was delivered to Mr. Ante Barisic, Minister of Internal Affairs in Canton 10, informing him that he has been removed from office.

Mr. Barisic was removed from his important position of public trust because he has abused his power by persistently and seriously obstructing implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In particular, since his appointment in February 1999, Mr. Barisic has presided over an essentially unreformed Ministry of Internal Affairs that has played a central role in creating a climate of hostility and intolerance in Canton 10. Despite a letter of warning on 16 September 1999, Mr. Barisic's performance has not improved.

The unreformed nature of the Canton 10 Ministry of Internal Affairs was vividly demonstrated on 9 February 2000, when a routine IPTF weapons inspection found numerous illegal weapons and recently utilized intelligence gathering equipment in the Ministry's headquarters, near the Minister's office.

Rather than enhance public security and improve the lives of the people in Canton 10, Mr. Barisic has been responsible for creating a climate of fear and intimidation. For instance, despite repeated instructions from both OHR and UNMIBH concerning neutral and non-offensive insignia, the Canton 10 MUP under Mr. Barisic's authority continues to refuse compliance. More generally, during Mr. Barisic's time in office, police under his control and instruction have applied totally different and separate standards of justice and law enforcement for citizens on Canton 10 depending on their ethnic origin.

Mr. Barisic’s actions exhibit a disturbing and unacceptable pattern of obstruction. For this reason, the High Representative, exercising of the powers vested in him by Article 5 of the Annex 10 of the Dayton Peace Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has reluctantly decided to remove Mr. Ante Barisic from the position of Minister of Internal Affairs, Canton 10. Ambassador Robert Barry, as the Chairman of the Provisional Election Commission, signed a joint letter with the High Representative directing Mr. Barisic’s removal. The Decision is effective immediately and will not require any further procedural steps. Mr. Barisic must vacate his office at once.