



High Representative deplors politics of glorification of war criminals

Yesterday's decorating by the RS National Assembly Speaker Nedeljko Cubrilovic of indicted and convicted war criminals is an utterly unacceptable practice in the modern and civilized world. "The Republika Srpska was legally established in 1995 by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina as set forth in Annex 4 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace. The RS National Assembly, as part of the legislative authority of the RS, is bound to honour and respect the equality of all its constituent peoples, and to promote peace, tolerance and reconciliation in line with the GFAP and the RS Constitution."

"By glorifying war criminals, the RS authorities have missed an opportunity to present Republika Srpska as a politically mature, modern, progressive entity of all constituent peoples and citizens," said the High Representative Valentin Inzko.

"A recent example from Germany proves that a different approach is possible. The town of Engelsbrand had decorated Mr. Wilhelm Kusterer for his years of service in the town council. Later it was revealed that Mr. Kusterer, as a member of the SS, had taken part in the massacre of 800 civilians in the Italian town of Marzabotto in 1944, for which he was tried and sentenced. When this information became known to the young mayor of Engelsbrand in March of this year, 94-year-old Kusterer had to return his decoration."

"This example - which is not the only such case - is a sign of democratic maturity and political culture, something the RSNA and its Speaker Cubrilovic should abide by. They have placed themselves outside of the realm of European and civilized values. What good is a signature or a word by party or an individual, that they want the European path, if that is the case," added the High Representative.

Concluding his comments, High Representative Inzko further said that "such actions of the RS authorities contravene their duty under the GFAP to promote peace, tolerance and reconciliation but also to create the political, economic and social conditions for sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons."