



Dnevni avaz: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko

By: Amil Dučić

Dnevni avaz: In your report to the UN Security Council, you stated that the overall political situation has deteriorated, with constant bickering and ethnic tensions.

Valentin Inzko: Yes, I reported that the general political environment in BiH has deteriorated. BiH is a mix of positive and negative trends that run in parallel. On one hand, the country made positive steps towards the EU, which I have indeed wholeheartedly supported for years! I always said that I am for early candidate status.

On the other hand, the RS organised a referendum on 25 September, which represents a serious challenge to BiH Constitutional Court decisions, the constitutional order of the country and the rule of law in general. Challenging state level institutions, along with divisive and secessionist rhetoric continues by the SNSD-led coalition. In my speech at the UN, I also condemned the glorification of war criminals, which means that the decisions of the ICTY are not respected.

Dnevni avaz: How do you comment on reactions in Croatia to the arrest of several Croat army personnel in our country?

Valentin Inzko: Croatia has always been a firm advocate of BiH's Euro-Atlantic path and Prime Minister Plenkovic reaffirmed this position during his recent visit to BiH. In my view, the bringing in of certain HVO members for interrogation should not be politicized or challenged, but instead there should be further cooperation and mutual assistance by countries in the region.

Dnevni avaz: You said you were tempted to use the Bonn powers? What for? And what made you reconsider?

Valentin Inzko: I assume that you have in mind the situation with regard to the RS referendum. As explained in

my previous interviews, the Constitutional Court of BiH took a stance. It therefore would have been inappropriate for me to use my powers at the same time to, for instance, annul the referendum, which would have essentially had the same effect. After all, you cannot make something illegal twice. The holding of the RS referendum was illegal, and it was illegal because the Constitutional Court of BiH had declared it so. I reported all this to the UN Security Council.

Dnevni avaz: The coalition in the FBiH - and you have tackled this government level in your report - is quite stressed because of ethnic bickering over certain laws. What are your views on this?

Valentin Inzko: I hesitate to say this, but it appears that SNSD's pattern of blocking the work of state-level institutions and blackmailing the other political parties in BiH is slowly being copied in the FBiH. And I am afraid there is wider agenda behind it - trying to show that the current setup in the FBiH cannot function, just as Dodik is trying to show that the state of BiH is dysfunctional.

There needs to be a basic understanding of political principles in BiH, which means searching for compromise.

Dnevni avaz: Is BiH having a problem with professionalism in the judiciary?

Valentin Inzko: It is not simply a matter of professionalism. There are good professionals available, absolutely, and we must support them. However, constant political attacks and pressure on the independent work of the judiciary represent the biggest problems for the rule of law in BiH.

Entrenching the rule of law and maintaining a strong judiciary is a long-term process in any country. But surely it is one worth investing in. Without rule of law, the country cannot function.