

Transcript of the Press Conference in Mostar

	Spokesperson	Topic
OHR		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head of OHR(S) with HNC PM• Head of OHR(S) urges for unification of Red Cross branches in Mostar• HR's remarks on OSCE's taking the leading role in the field of education in BiH
SFOR	Lt. Col. Rambaud	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search of Sarajevo Tobacco Factory• Arrest in Mostar• Arrest in Foca• Farewell

Lt. Col. Rambaud - MND SE

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. As you can see, other International Community representatives are not here with us today. The OHR press statement will be read out to you and you will also be able to get it later in writing. As there is also no special statement from the OSCE today, I will then later take the floor as usual.

OHR

The Deputy High Representative and the Head of OHR (South), Mr. Jean-Pierre Berçot, met this morning with the resigning Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Prime Minister, Mr. Omer Macic. Ambassador Berçot conveyed to Mr. Macic his understanding and respect for Mr. Macic's personal choice to leave the position of the Cantonal Prime Minister underlining at the same time the necessity for the Cantonal Governor and Deputy Governor to nominate another candidate for the position and for the Cantonal Assembly to confirm the candidate. Bearing in mind the complex overall situation in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, Mr. Berçot reiterated once again that there is no time to waste and that the Cantonal authorities must move in a fast and quality way so that decisions, such as defining the unified cantonal budget, can be made to the benefit of all the citizens of the Canton.

Secondly, on the occasion of the visit of the Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Pascal Cuttat, the Deputy High Representative and the Head of OHR (South), Mr. Jean-Pierre-Berçot, was briefed on 8 July, 2002 on the humanitarian services provided by the National Society of the Red Cross in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Deputy High Representative Berçot recognised the importance of the Red Cross Society's main activities which include home care, mine-awareness programmes, first aid training, tracing, blood collection, Red Cross Youth activities, prevention of drug abuse, HIV/AIDS-awareness campaigns and community health projects and the running of public kitchens.

Taking into consideration the apolitical character of this institution, the Deputy High Representative was surprised to learn that, 7 years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Red Cross in Mostar is still not unified. Having in mind the importance of the humanitarian tasks carried out by the Red Cross to the benefit of the population, particularly the most vulnerable, the Deputy High Representative urges the Red Cross branches in Mostar to take all the necessary steps to reach the creation of a unified Red Cross in Mostar, thus finalising the already initiated project of the unification of the Red Cross branches from the western and the eastern part of the city of Mostar.

Lastly, in Vienna last week, the High Representative argued strongly in favour of the OSCE taking the lead on education. With its strong field presence and experience handling education issues in other countries, the OSCE was uniquely qualified to take on this task. The OSCE will continue to involve other institutions, including the OHR and the Council of Europe. In High Representative's view, the international community is at its most effective when one agency takes a clear lead on an issue, coordinating the others as necessary. This has now been achieved with education. Paddy Ashdown was very satisfied with the political support for this approach in the OSCE, particularly from the EU. He was also very impressed with Robert Beecroft's determination to make a success of this mandate.

Lt. Col. Rambaud - MND SE

First I would like to tell you that this is my last press conference here with you. Unfortunately my mission here in Mostar ends on Friday morning when I will fly back to France. I would like to use this opportunity and introduce my replacement, Christophe de Lambert, French Cavalry Major.

So the things I prepared for you today are referring to the last three events that had happened in Sarajevo, Mostar and Foca. As you can already guess, I am talking about SFOR search of Sarajevo Tobacco Factory compounds, the men's arrests in the Mostar and Foca region. I have put here the official statements of SFOR.

I would like to thank first to Sarajevo Tobacco Factory owner and the staff, who were on the scene during the four-hour search operation, for the assistance they offered to SFOR soldiers. I would like to emphasise that during this search no weapons or ammunition or false documents have been found.

About the Saturday's arrest in Mostar of an armed man I only have one thing to add. So far the investigation did not gather any evidence that would point out and confirm the media speculation that he could be a possible terrorist. SFOR investigation is finished today and for us this story is completely closed.

Yesterday, at 15:00 hrs in Foca, the Stabilisation Forces acting within its mandate, detained Radovan Stankovic, 33 years old. He is charged for crimes against humanity, including rape, sexual assault and enslavement of women and young girls. Mr. Stankovic was in charge of a Karaman's house in Miljevina, near Foca, where Muslim women and young girls were detained and sexually assaulted. Mr. Stankovic is now in process of being transferred to The Hague. In the last 12 months over 26 persons indicted for war crimes have been brought to justice. Of the 103 indicted war criminals sought by ICTY, 82 have been brought to justice. 27 out of 82 indicted war criminals were detained by SFOR. These actions are clearly showing SFOR's determination to build a lasting peace in the Balkans, helping the IC and BIH authorities to arrest PIFWC.

There were no journalists' questions today.