Gregorian: Passivity On War Crimes Unacceptable

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Raffi Gregorian, criticized the passivity and lack of results shown by responsible BiH and especially Republika Srpska authorities in their “efforts” to bring war-crimes suspects to justice on a visit to Srebrenica today.

“It is unacceptable that victims may still be confronted with perpetrators in their daily life,” Dr. Gregorian said after meeting with the Commander of Srebrenica’s Police Station, Zeljko Vidovic.

The Principal Deputy High Representative reiterated that the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board directed the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to make ICTY cooperation a priority at its February meeting, pointing out that the OHR has already stepped up its engagement to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Today’s visit is part of a broader review of the authorities’ activities to ensure that those suspected of committing war crimes face justice. Earlier this week, the PDHR met with representatives of Srebrenica survivors associations, the BiH Minister of Security Tarik Sadovic, and Commander of NATO HQ Sarajevo, Major General Richard Wightman. And last week, he visited BiH State Border Police and RS Police based in Zvornik to determine whether efforts against the PIFWC support network had improved since the High Representative had removed police officials in 2004.

“Not obstructing ICTY is not enough. Two years ago the RS Commission on Srebrenica compiled a list of those persons who were assigned to units that took part in the killing

operations in July 1995. BiH and RS authorities know only too well that there are people who were involved in the Srebrenica genocide who are still serving in police and other BiH and RS government positions. The authorities must respond proactively, and make sure investigators have the resources they need to do the job" Dr Gregorian said.

"Until the RS police start investigating their own operatives, claims that the RS institutions have reformed will not hold water," he continued. "Rather, they underscore the urgent need for reform in the police."

In the course of his visit, Dr Gregorian also met with the mayors of Srebrenica and Bratunac – Abdurahman Malkic and Nedeljko Mladjenovic respectively – the President of the Srebrenica Municipality Radomir Pavlovic, the former Speaker of the Bratunac Municipal Assembly Refik Begic and the President of the Glogova community Senad Avdic.