Noose Around Support Network Tightens

Visiting Zvornik today OHR's Principal Deputy High Representative (PDHR) Raffi Gregorian stated that the International Community will allow, "no watering down of the requirements placed on the authorities in BiH – and in the RS in particular – with regard ICTY co-operation".

The PDHR was in Zvornik with Milos Stajic, the Privredna Banka Srpsko Sarajevo's (PBSS) liquidation manager and Slavica Injac, the Director RS Banking Agency. The PDHR was looking into reports of violations of orders issued by the High Representative on the PBSS. This bank's accounts have been blocked by order of the High Representative since March 2003 and its previous owner, convicted felon, Momcilo Mandic, is the subject of various sanctions by the High Representative, the President of the United States , and the European Union.

"The blocking order was to be implemented by RS and BiH institutions. If, once this investigation is over, it is clear that the competent institutions have not acted conscientiously appropriate corrective actions will be taken," said the PDHR today.

Accompanied by Howard Tucker, the Head of the International Criminal Tribunal's Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, PDHR Gregorian today also met with the Chief of the State Border Police Office in Zvornik, Araz Jukic and his Deputy Dragan Kulic, the Head of the Public Security Centre in Bjeljina, Vasilije Andric, and the Chief of the Public Security Station in Zvornik, Stanimir Vidovic.

In 2004, the High Representative removed Petko Pavlovic from his position as Commander of the Zvornik Field Office of the

SBS and Milorad Maric from his position as Chief of the Zvornik Public Security Station for their roles in permitting Persons Indicted for War Crimes (PIWFCs) to evade justice. The PDHR and Mr. Tucker discussed with their replacements the current situation in the area with regard to ICTY cooperation.

The OHR has consistently reaffirmed the International Community's determination to keep those who back the networks that support war criminals out of public life. "It is not the OHR's obligation to do the job instead of local authorities. However, we have to be convinced that the domestic authorities are doing their job properly", said the PDHR today.

"Criminality continues to be the link between ICTY indictees and their support networks. The fact that Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic are still on the run means that they are still getting support," said the PDHR. "Consultations between the International Community and local partners on what further steps can be taken to disrupt networks of ICTY indictees are underway, and you can expect that more action, like that seen during Operation 'Balkan Vice', will follow".