

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Mostar

BiH Courts Capacity To Try War Crimes Confirmed

The trial of Boban Simsic in the BiH War Crimes Chamber of the BiH Court started this morning, at 9 am on September 14, 2005.

This is the first war crimes case to be tried in the BiH War Crimes Chamber. The OHR welcomes it as a further step forward towards ensuring that those who committed war crimes in this country will be prosecuted justly and according to the Law here in Bosnia and Herzegovina . The OHR fully supports BiH Court as a strong and independent BiH institution.

The ability to prosecute war criminals in BiH's own Courts is a key element for reconciliation. Full cooperation with the ICTY is also a clear obligation under Dayton . Mr. Simsic is accused for war crimes against civilians committed in 1992 in Visegrad Municipality . It is now for the Court to determine his guilt or innocence based on the facts of the case.

The establishment of an effective war crimes trial capability within BiH represents an essential part of the establishment of the rule of law.

The Appelas Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on 1 September rejected Milovan Stankovic's appeal against extradition for trial in the BiH Court . Under the ICTY's rules of Procedure Stankovic will be transferred to the BiH Court within 30 days. The Stankovic case is the first case to be transferred from the ICTY and stands as confirmation that the BiH Court can provide the

highest international standards of justice in these, most difficult, criminal cases.