

# **Presiding Arbitrator Williamson: Brčko is an example of successful coexistence that entities are obliged to support**



Ambassador Clint Williamson, the Presiding Arbitrator of the Arbitral Tribunal for Brčko, arrived in Bosnia-Herzegovina on 10 November for a four-day official visit. Ambassador Williamson traveled to Brčko, along with PDHR/Brčko Supervisor Michael Scanlan, and they met the leaders of the Brčko District Government and Assembly. After the visit to Brčko, Ambassador Williamson and the Supervisor returned to Sarajevo for a round of meetings which included discussions with High Representative Christian Schmidt; President of the Constitutional Court, Mato Tadić; COMEUFOR, Major General Alexander Platzer; COMNATO, Brigadier General Eric Folkestad; and a number of ambassadors and other senior diplomats. In line with his responsibilities as Presiding Arbitrator, Ambassador Williamson sought the views of these officials on the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the extent, if any, to which Brčko has been or might be impacted.

In their meeting with Brčko officials, Ambassador Williamson and the Supervisor emphasized that Brčko is a successful example of post-war reconciliation and coexistence, and Brčko residents should not fear another armed conflict. They

stressed that District authorities need to accelerate good governance reforms, infrastructure development, and private sector growth and take steps to combat corruption and patronage if Brčko is to fulfil its potential, achieve a prosperous future, and ultimately satisfy the conditions for full implementation of the Brčko Tribunal Final Award.

Ambassador Williamson and the Supervisor pointed out that the Brčko District serves as an example of successful coexistence that the entities are obligated – under the terms of the Final Award – to support unequivocally. In this respect, public figures have a responsibility to contribute to peace and reconciliation and should choose their words carefully and responsibly.

Ambassador Williamson stated: “Since my appointment, in early-2017 by the International Court of Justice, to serve as Presiding Arbitrator, I have visited Bosnia-Herzegovina on a periodic basis to assess progress in implementation of the Final Award and to stay abreast of evolving events and their potential impact on Brčko. I must say that recent events in the country have been very troubling and it is this current situation that prompted my present visit. While in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I have reminded all of my interlocutors of my ongoing responsibility to assess compliance of all parties with the terms of the Final Award, and the obligation of the Arbitral Tribunal to act accordingly should a question of serious non-compliance arise.”