

Sanctions against SDS for non-cooperation with ICTY

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown issued on Friday a decision that freezes all further payments to the SDS from the state-level down to the municipal-level due to failure to fully comply with its international duties with respect to the ICTY. The measure will be in affect until such time as the SDS carries out those actions necessary to show convincingly that it is prepared to fulfil its international obligations.

Over eight years after the Peace Agreement was signed, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be held hostage by political forces, especially in the RS, that have failed to meet a key obligation of the Peace Agreement – to bring persons indicted for war crimes to justice. It is a regrettable fact that in the RS, while some 25 indicted war criminals have been arrested and sent to The Hague in the last nine years, all of these were arrested by troops of the International Community, and not one of these by the authorities of the RS. The SDS is also the senior party of government today and has been either in, or influential over, government over the whole period. The SDS is manifestly and flagrantly failing its obligations under International Law to pursue and bring to justice indicted war criminals, including, but not limited to Dr. Radovan Karadzic.

“The SDS was founded by an indicted war criminal who remains at large. We have good reasons to believe the SDS still maintains financial connections with its founder Radovan Karadzic. I have given the SDS space to provide information that will indicate whether this is true or not. In the mean time, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot afford to run the risk that public money is going to a party that may still have financial connections with indicted war criminals. I look

forward to receiving the full and complete information on the SDS financial affairs so that I can assess whether further actions regarding this political party will be necessary.”

Without the arrest of indictees, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot complete the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and turn decisively towards the reforms required for Euro-Atlantic integration. And unless the RS and its governing party, the SDS, can convince the NATO authorities that there has been a sea change in attitude and that Republika Srpska is prepared to fulfil BiH's international duties with respect to the ICTY, every citizen could suffer as a result of Bosnia and Herzegovina being denied membership to PfP, and with it the best guarantee of lasting peace. The SDS bears a heavy responsibility for ensuring that this now happens. The High Representative looks to them to fulfil this obligation without delay.