

Statement by Brcko Supervisor, Raffi Gregorian at press conference in OHR Brcko



When I arrived here more than two years ago I was told that Brcko has everything it needs to succeed except responsibility.

I am deeply disappointed that lack of responsibility is still present in Brcko.

Yesterday's meeting of the constitutive session of the BD Assembly was a fiasco.

This was the second time I have broken away from what is a very busy schedule with my new additional duties to come to Brcko for what was supposed to be a vote on a new speaker, deputy speaker, and mayor.

Councilors have abused the public's trust in failing to perform their duties, for which since mid-November they have been receiving more than 2000 marks each.

Over the past few months, my staff and I have been trying to facilitate discussions among all parties so that a viable, legitimate governing coalition that supports the District could be formed in accordance with the Final Award and the Statute, and that would appoint a mayor and department heads who have not served in the previous government.

It seems clear now that Councilors have a different agenda, some of them even going so far as to laugh at the process. This is no laughing matter, as every day without a new budget

or authorities accumulates further damage to the District, negatively affecting thousands of people's lives and livelihoods, while the acting authorities take decisions that are questionable at best.

Some have suggested new elections as a way out. Some have suggested I appoint people to positions. These are not solutions, but avoidance of responsibility. The District should be at the point where, in accordance with the Final Award, its institutions should be functioning effectively and apparently permanently.

While we are getting closer to a constitutional solution for Brcko at the state level, elected councilors **in** Brcko are recklessly undermining the District's institutions. In so doing they are endangering completion of the Final Award. I will not accept such behavior.

So I will be taking two actions intended to get the elected councilors to do their jobs.

First, I am ordering the immediate suspension of all further councilors' salaries, starting with January's salaries, until such time as they have fulfilled their duties with regard to appointing a speaker, deputy speaker, and mayor. If councilors are not going to work, they should not get paid. When they start to work, then they will start getting paid.

Second, I am ordering my staff to begin working with the Financial Directorate to prepare a new budget for 2009 to meet the District's legal obligations and needs. I will be prepared to impose this budget if, after my order on temporary financing expires on 31 March, the Assembly has not adopted its own budget.

Needless to say, any budget I would impose will be in line with what is in the objective best interests of the District, not the previous government's draft budget or what might be the priorities of a new governing coalition.

I regret that I've had to take these measures, but unfortunately shame is not a motivating factor for politicians in this country. And so these sorts of measures are necessary to get them to do their jobs.

I would also like to comment on the verdict in the war crimes case from yesterday.

First, I wish to express my admiration for the courage displayed by the victim in the case.

Second, I wish to congratulate the prosecutor's office for its work, and contributing to building public confidence in the rule of law.

And third, while I appreciate the good work of the court in this case, I must express my bewilderment at the laws that allow persons convicted of violent crimes to remain free pending further court proceedings. We will be looking at the relevant laws to see whether something needs to change in this regard.

Thank you.