

# Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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## OHR

### **High Representative: Lessons Must Be Learned from Srebrenica**

High Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling expressed his hope that today's ceremony, on the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, will provide a measure of comfort for friends and family of those being buried and that lessons will be learned from what happened at Srebrenica.

"The grief will not diminish and the victims will never be forgotten – but it is our duty to those who were murdered to ensure that lessons are learned from this tragedy," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said in a statement.

The High Representative expressed satisfaction that the Council of Ministers has designated 11 July a day of mourning throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and said that he would like to see Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions build on this decision.

"This is important," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said. "I very much hope that this country's institutions will decide one day soon to set aside a day every year to honour the memory of both the victims of Srebrenica and all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who lost their lives."

In his statement, the High Representative explained how even

11 years on it is still almost impossible to comprehend fully what happened at Srebrenica.

“Every time I think of Srebrenica,” Mr Schwarz-Schilling said. “I have to ask myself what more we could and should have done, and what more I could and should have done, to prevent the slaughter in what was, after all, a UN-declared safe haven.”

“We failed the victims of this genocide in life and we will fail them in death unless we ensure that the remains of each and every one of them are buried with dignity, and that the perpetrators – each and every one of them – are brought to justice.”

## **High Representative Explains Thinking Behind OHR Transition**

I would draw your attention to an article by the High Representative which was published by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network on 7 July. The article, in which the High Representative explains in detail the thinking behind the Peace Implementation Council’s decision to close the OHR at the end of June next year and discusses some of the issues connected to this decision, can be found on the [BIRN website](#).

In this piece the High Representative stresses, among other things, that

- it is time for Bosnia and Herzegovina to move beyond peace implementation towards Euro-Atlantic integration;
- this new phase represents a progression, not a change of direction;
- the closure of the OHR does not mean the International Community is withdrawing from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will remain fully involved, with a reinforced engagement by the EU, through the Stabilisation and Association process, through the work of an expanded EU Special Representative’s Office, and through the continued

presence of EUFOR, the EU Police Mission, NATO and other international actors;

- now there is a clear timeframe within which the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina must take decisive steps to rationalise and consolidate the country's institutions, ensure its economic viability and take it further along the path of Euro-Atlantic integration;
- the option of waiting for the OHR to close before sabotaging the peace process does not exist.

## **EUFOR**

In the last week EUFOR has worked to uncover large quantities of ammunition and weaponry that is still held in homes and hidden in the countryside. All taskforces continue to carry out OP HARVESTS in the local communities. These operations give the population an opportunity to hand in ammunition and small arms to EUFOR for safe disposal. These operations continue to prove fruitful and in one house last week MNTF(NW) uncovered:

1 x M53 Medium Machine Gun

1 x M80 64mm Rocket Launcher

2 x AK47 magazines (loaded)

2 x M52 Hand Grenades

2 x M75 Grenades

1 x PMA3 Mine

2 x M60 Rifle Launched Grenades

200g TNT

Approx. 250 Rounds of Ammunition

EUFOR conducts these operations closely with the local authorities and the EUPM and the growing role of the local authorities in these operations is another indication of their willingness to take responsibility for the safety of all people in BiH.

Last week EUFOR also uncovered a large cache of ammunition in the MNTF(SE) area in Misevina. The ammunition was found in a hole in the woods after a tip off from a local resident. The ammunition consisted of numerous mortar shells and a big amount of antipersonnel and anti-tank mines, enough to fill a truck. The ammunition was removed and will be safely destroyed in the near future.

These finds demonstrate that weapons and ammunition are still being hidden and stored in this country. As part of the EUFOR mandate to provide a safe and secure environment for BiH citizens to live in EUFOR will continue to carry out its HARVEST OPERATIONS and also to act on any intelligence that may lead to the recovery of hidden weapon caches

## **RTQs**

**Fedzad Forto, FENA**

Is HR going to Srebrenica today?

**OHR**

As we said earlier, unfortunately the HR is not in the country.

**Fedzad Forto, FENA**

During previous events in Srebrenica the security risk assessment was high. Is there a similar assessment for today? Are you engaged in security operations around Srebrenica today?

**EUFOR**

We are engaged. We have got local people there from EUFOR and also EUFOR commander Chiarini is there today as well. Security is there from EUFOR. We are trying not to make it high visibility but we are involved along with the local authorities.

**Fedzad Forto, FENA**

Is security situation in Srebrenica today regular or?

**EUFOR**

It's slightly higher today, obviously, but not significantly.