# Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

***OHR, Chris Bennett***
***ICTY, Matias Hellman***
***EUFOR, Lt Cdr Niel Mathiesen***

**OHR**

**Transfer of Competencies**

The Office of the High Representative (OHR) is concerned about recent statements by the RS Government concerning agreements on transfer of competency.

To date, there have been only three formal transfer agreements – in the fields of judicial reform, defence reform and indirect taxation – none of which was imposed by the international community. Moreover, the possibility to withdraw unilaterally from a transfer agreement previously passed by democratic consent of both Entity legislatures is legally questionable. It could only be determined by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the wake of the transfer agreements, a series of important benefits have accrued to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Transfer agreements have contributed to progress regarding Euro-Atlantic integration. The invitation to join NATO's Partnership-for-Peace programme, increased revenues through the single account and ITA collection method, and uniform rules and regulations with regard to judges and prosecutors all resulted from transfer agreements. Steps to roll back transfer agreements would place these benefits at risk and could put into question Bosnia and Herzegovina's European

perspective.

**Ambassador Bond in Srebrenica**

Ambassador Clifford Bond, the High Representative's envoy for the Srebrenica region, is currently in Srebrenica. Yesterday, he met, among others, with returnees and representatives of non-governmental organisations. This morning, he is meeting with the Mayor and Speaker of the Srebrenica Municipal Assembly, as well as the Srebrenica Police Chief. This afternoon, he will be meeting with the Mayor and Speaker of the Bratunac Municipal Assembly, as well the Bratunac Police Chief.

Tomorrow, Ambassador Bond will be visiting schools and a health centre in Srebrenica, in addition to further meetings. And on Thursday, he will be meeting with the Women of Srebrenica.

Ambassador Bond has found his initial meetings to be extremely informative and useful. He only wishes to communicate with media, however, when he has something concrete to present.

**ICTY**

Good morning on behalf of the ICTY.

The Tribunal's Appeals Chamber will render its judgment for former Bosnian Serb Army officers Vidoje Blagojević and Dragan Jokić tomorrow at 11am in courtroom I. This case concerns Srebrenica. I refer you to our press advisory from yesterday for information, and I invite all journalists to follow the judgement hearing on a live broadcast on the Tribunal's website. As usual, we will also issue a press release briefly after the judgement is rendered.

Then a few other developments:

Last week, the Prosecution finished it's presentation of evidence in the case of Dragomir Milošević. On 3 May 2007, the parties presented oral submissions pursuant to Rule 98bis. During this session, the Trial Chamber dismissed Rule 98*bis* motion for acquittal of Dragomir Milošević. This means the defence will have to answer to all charges contained in the indictment, that is, terror, murder, inhumane acts and unlawful attacks on civilians, charged as crimes against humanity and violations of laws and customs of war.

You will have seen our press release concerning the 27 April Decision of the Referral Bench to refer the case of Milorad Trbić to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a filing dated 2 May, Trbić announced he did not intend to file an appeal against the referral decision.

As I told you two weeks ago, In the case of Milan and Sredoje Lukić, Milan Lukić appealed the 5 April Decision to refer the case to Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereas Sredoje Lukić decided not to appeal that Decision. The Registry of the Tribunal filed a submission on 25 April, seeking clarification and direction from the Referral Bench if it may proceed with arrangements for the transfer of Sredoje Lukić under the current situation. I am not aware of a response from the Referral Bench on that matter at this point.

In the case of Dragan Zelenović, the Defence filed a notice on 27 April concerning an appeal against the sentencing judgement of 4 April by which Zelenović was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for rape and torture committed in Foča in 1992. The defence argues that mitigating circumstances were not properly taken into account in the determination of the sentence.

That is all, thank you for your attention.

**EUFOR**

**Signing of transit agreement with the government of Montenegro plus information on reserve forces**

Yesterday, 7th May 2007, the Commander of the EU Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rear Admiral Hans-Jochen Witthauer signed an International Agreement, with the Republic of Montenegro's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Milan Rocen, which will allow EUFOR troops to transit Montenegrin territory.

This technical arrangement supports the European Union's efforts to promote peace and security in the Balkans region. The Republic of Montenegro has agreed to allow EUFOR assets to transit Montenegro by road and air, at short notice, to reinforce NATO Forces in Kosovo (KFOR) in the event of an emergency.

This practical arrangement is part of a series of agreements with neighbouring countries, which facilitate the movement of EUFOR troops in this region.

These arrangements will also operate for KFOR troops if the need to reinforce EUFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina arises. Other reserve elements include over the horizon battalions in Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and France.

EUFOR reserve forces are held at a high state of readiness to deploy to Bosnia-Herzegovina at any time.

In order to rehearse the practicalities of reinforcing EUFOR, a party of KFOR troops from Pristina, travelled by road via Serbia and arrived in Sarajevo at the weekend. They met at Camp Butmir with command elements from the reserve battalions in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. This visit is the first in a series of reserve forces rehearsal exercises which will culminate in a full battalion deploying to BiH and thus proving the ability of EUFOR to meet any serious challenge to

the safe and secure environment.

**Eufor assist in civilian medical evacuation**

On Sunday 6 May 2007, a EUFOR helicopter transported a civilian patient from Bihac hospital to Kosevo hospital in Sarajevo.

A 25 year old woman had been severely injured in a car accident at the end of last week in the area of Bihac, and she was recovered to the local hospital. On investigation, it was discovered that she was in a life threatening condition and required urgent specialist neurosurgeon assistance which was not available in the local area. She therefore required transportation to Sarajevo but due to medical reasons was unable to be transported by road.

Due to the poor weather conditions throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina at the weekend, no domestic aircraft were able to fly and thus an urgent request was transmitted to EUFOR for military assistance via the EUFOR LOT House in Cazin near Bihac. EUFOR helicopters would never normally be used in such a condition however in this exceptional case, an Italian medical evacuation team from Camp Rajlovac in Sarajevo was despatched to Bihac along with a specialist neurosurgeon. The patient was prepared for flight and was then transported to Sarajevo Kosevo university clinic centre.

This kind of aid typifies the commitment that EUFOR gives to the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Military transport is never normally used in such cases however because of the poor weather conditions and the critical condition of the patient, exceptional circumstances were in place.

The helicopter crew found the flight quite a challenge as it had to be carried out under night flying regulations and they and the rest of EUFOR now wish a speedy recovery to the young

lady patient.