

High Representative Suspends Three Judges

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today issued three Decisions suspending, with immediate effect, President of the Siroki Brijeg Municipal Court Ivan Brekalo, President of the Capljina Municipal Court Marinko Katic, and RS Supreme Court Judge Svetislav Stanojevic. The suspensions will apply until the High Judicial Councils review each case and decide on appropriate action.

Each of the three cases involves alleged violations of the rule of law either through a disregard for proper court procedure, or by breaking the very laws that it is the duty of judges to uphold.

The High Representative expects that the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils, which will play a central role in Judicial Reform when they begin functioning this autumn, will review these suspensions to determine whatever further action may be necessary. The High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils are tasked with ensuring the highest professional standards on the part of the judiciary in BiH and will have the power to appoint, discipline and dismiss judges and prosecutors.

The High Representative is acutely aware that until these independent institutions are set up there is no means of taking action to protect the public's confidence in the judicial system. Where serious and credible allegations are made, the High Representative will act to protect the integrity of legal proceedings and the interests of BiH citizens.