

High Representative welcomes RS resignations and dismissals but calls for perpetrators of violence in Trebinje and Banja Luka to be brought to justice

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, welcomes today's decisions of the RS Government concerning resignations and dismissals of senior officials in Republika Srpska in connection with the Trebinje and Banja Luka riots. They include the RS interior minister, Perica Bundalo, deputy RS interior minister Brano Pecanac, the RS security chief, Dobrislav Planojevic, and the Head of Public Security Center Banja Luka, Vladimir Tutus.

This shows that, in the new political atmosphere prevailing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and throughout the region, the principles of political responsibility and accountability of Governments are finally taking root in this country.

Nevertheless, these resignations must not be the end of the story: investigations must be carried out to their full conclusions, with justice being done, not just being seen to be done. The relevant RS authorities – the police and the courts – must ensure that the perpetrators and the organisers of the violence face justice.

The RS authorities must make a priority an investigation which establishes which groups and individuals of extreme nationalistic ideology were behind the violence.

The High Representative will be watching very closely to ensure that the authorities – from Municipal to Entity to State level – provide an atmosphere in which returnees feel safe and secure. This means the authorities across BiH must also do much more to prevent violence in towns like Janja and – again – bring the perpetrators to justice.