

MEASURES CONCERNING THE DETENTION OF PRISONERS, THE TRACING OF UNACCOUNTED FOR PERSONS, AND EXHUMATIONS

Banja Luka, 25 June 1996

At the invitation of the Principal Deputy High Representative Ambassador Steiner, representatives of the Republika Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Association of Banja Luka Families and the Women of Srebrenica met in Banja Luka on 25 June to discuss concrete measures to alleviate the suffering of the families of unaccounted for persons, whose main goals we all share. The authorities affirmed their commitment to fulfill the obligations that they have undertaken in the Peace Agreement and their will to cooperate. The following measures will be taken:

- 1) All prisoners detained in relation to the conflict must be released in accordance with the Peace Agreement. The Parties confirmed that they are committed to resolving this issue now. To accomplish this objective, the Office of the High Representative will convene a meeting involving all Parties in Sarajevo this week.
- 2) The Parties agreed today to set a list of priority sites and a preliminary timetable for the clearing of unburied mortal remains at the meeting mentioned above. The Parties also agreed to set priority sites and a preliminary timetable for the exhumation of mass graves for the purposes of identification at the same time.
- 3) The Parties have agreed to nominate two forensic pathologists to a joint expert commission that will be tasked with finalizing the sites and timetables of inter-Entity exhumations, and with implementing the agreed upon exhumations. These nominations will be presented at the meeting in Sarajevo this week. This commission will be convened on 2 July under the chairmanship of an international forensic expert.
- 4) The respective authorities shall provide demining and security for the sites during exhumation and clearing activities.
- 5) The Parties will set up committees with representative family groups to seek their input into deciding on priority sites for clearing of unburied corpses and for exhumations. These committees will begin work within two weeks.
- 6) IPTF will form IPTF detention investigation committees within two weeks to respond promptly to allegations of hidden detention. Family associations will designate representatives to work with IPTF committees. IPTF will report its findings on all new substantive allegations of hidden detention which are submitted to the IPTF committees within two weeks.
- 7) Consistent with the requirements of IPTF's mandate, the relevant authorities, including the Ministers of Justice, Interior and Defense, will send instructions to all persons responsible for or involved with detention that IPTF must be granted immediate, unrestricted access on a 24-hour basis without prior notice to any place in which persons are detained or where IPTF has received information that persons may be detained, and will send instructions to all responsible authorities that any person who impedes the access of an IPTF officer to a suspected place of detention will be immediately suspended and appropriately sanctioned.
- 8) The Office of the High Representative will assist in the above-mentioned programs and will work to ensure that the competent national and international institutions will cooperate.
- 9) The Office of the High Representative will also approach the authorities in Croatia and the FRY to organize similar meetings to solve the issues of the detention of prisoners, the tracing of unaccounted for persons, and exhumations.