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BiH State-related issues

OHR: We suppose a number of passports were issued to foreign citizens outside of the regular procedure

In a shorter statement for Dnevni Avaz, OHR's spokesperson, Alexandra Stiglmayer, said that the issue of BiH

passports obtained by foreign citizens have naturally become more visible after the terrorist attacks in the US. She said that the BiH parliament could consider checking the foreigners who have become BiH citizens partly by strengthening the Commission for revision of citizenship obtained between 1992 and 1995. Stiglmayer, however, explained that the Commission is not authorized to audit passports and citizenship obtained after 1995, which leaves out a significant number of foreign citizens who have become naturalized in the post-war period. "Thus, (the Parliament) could broaden the scope of the audit so it could also include the period after 1995. It could also order more rigorous control of passport issuance," Stiglmayer said and explained that OHR presumes that a number of individuals have obtained BiH Passports outside of the regular procedure.

Commission for Revision of Citizenship: Couple Dozen Mujahedeen live in BiH

The presiding of the commission for revision of the status of naturalized citizens of BiH, Bakir Dautbasic, told Srna news agency that "a two dozen Mujahedeen who were members of BiH army still live in the country". "Perhaps a couple dozen of Mujahedeen, former members of the BiH army, are presently residing in BiH. As long as they respect the laws and regulations of BiH, no one will disturb them" - said Dautbasic. He explained that the Commission will hold a regular session on September 28 to consider any next steps in the process of revision of BiH citizenship.

Parliamentary members call for a joint fight against terrorism

Members of the parliamentary commissions for defense and security in the RS and the Federation condemned on Monday the terrorist attacks in the U.S. and called on the creation of joint policy for the fight against terrorism in all parts of the world. The first joint meeting, which was devoted to the issues of importance for defense and security in both BiH entities, was held in Brcko, and was organized by the RS National Assembly.

Croatian President meets with BiH Presidency chair Jozo Krizanovic

Croatian President Stipe Mesic talked to the Chair of the BiH Presidency, Jozo Krizanovic on Monday at the Zagreb Autumn Fair. Together they visited the BiH pavilion and agreed that the relations of the two countries are good and friendly, but the economic cooperation needs to be intensified and that the two countries should join efforts when going out on foreign markets, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Federation

Party for BiH remains in the Alliance; "Satisfactory" solution found for Aluminij

At a press conference, the Secretary-General of the Party for BiH, Safet Halilovic, said that this party will remain in the Alliance for Change despite its earlier doubts caused by the "inadequate" legal audit in the Aluminij Factory in Mostar. Halilovic stressed that the S BiH found a "satisfactory solution for the injustice done in that company" together with the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen. He did not want to elaborate on this, however, he did say that the "satisfactory solution" partly pertains to an urgent financial audit in Aluminij.

Ante Jelavic makes his second appearance before the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo

Federation and Croatian media report that the dismissed HDZ president, Ante Jelavic, made his second appearance before the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo on Monday. Although he "showed respect for the process," notes Slobodna Dalmacija, his lawyer, Josip Muselimovic, filed a request for the removal of the Court's Investigative Judge, the president of the Sarajevo Cantonal Court as well of the president of the BiH Supreme Court. Muselimovic also said that Jelavic's defense is therefore suspended and that final decision will be made at a general session of the BiH Supreme Court.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Ante Jelavic asks for a dismissal of Sarajevo Canton judges: Petritsch above the law

Will the investigation in the "Jelavic" case be continued before the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo (CCS) or will it be continued before the competent court, that is the question that has to be answered by the Supreme Court of the

Federation of BiH, reads Slobodna Dalmacija. Jelavic arrived to the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo right on time on Monday, where his attorney, Josip Muselimovic, lodged a complaint asking for a waiver of the Investigative Judge, all Judges of the Cantonal Court, President of the Cantonal Court and the President of the Supreme Court. Muselimovic said at the press conference that he had to do it "in order to abide by the laws, Constitution and the European Declaration of the Rights of Man in our country, BiH". He also said that he, together with his client, came to Sarajevo assuming that the Sarajevo Cantonal Court will declare itself incompetent because a court needs to be circumspect of this *ex officio*. But, according to Muselimovic, nobody reacted to it and any continuation would represent an introduction of anarchy in the judiciary. Why was the case given to the CCS and not to the competent court Muselimovic could not answer, but he said that the decision was made by the High Representative (HR) Wolfgang Petritsch which was contrary to current laws and the European Convention. "If the investigation were to be continued before the CCS, I am going to express my gratitude to my client for his cooperation because I cannot provide a legal protection in this country", says Muselimovic. Ante Jelavic, answering a journalist's question whether he still considers himself the President of the HDZ, said that the HR did not have the mandate to deprive people of fundamental human rights such as the right to vote and the right to perform political work, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Vecernji List quotes Jelavic: 'Regardless of what the HR thinks I am the HDZ President. I hope that we still have enough time to change the course of constitutional reforms. The minimum that the Croats can accept is the imposing of the same constitutional solutions in both entities. The best solution would be the federal organization of BiH. All other solutions are cosmetic changes.'

Bugojno: Bosniak teachers would lecture in the Croat(ian) language

Contrary to expectations, classes for Bugojno pupils, that should have started a new school year in two separate classes in the Uskoplje Secondary School (USS), did not start on Monday 17, reads Slobodna Dalmacija. Namely, pursuant to the new Law on Secondary School, a founder, in this case the Canton, is obliged to provide classes for all pupils under the same conditions, regardless of the curriculum and the language it's in. After the talks between the competent Cantonal Ministry, Uskoplje Secondary School, Bugojno Grammar School (BGS) and the Bugojno Municipal authorities, a request on behalf of the Secondary School Uskoplje and the Cantonal Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport was sent to the Head of Municipality Bugojno, Mustafa Strukar, requesting a formation of two separate classes for the Uskoplje Secondary School in Bugojno. Furthermore, the Minister of Education in the Central Bosnia Canton, Mirsad Busatlija, ordered the Bugojno Grammar School to allocate the necessary space to the pupils that attend the Uskoplje Secondary School in Uskoplje. In light of that, a meeting between the USS Principle Josip Jurina and teacher Lucija Pavlovic and the BGS Principle Mesud Secic took place on Monday, September 17. But, even after the long talks they could not reach an agreement. As Jurina pointed out, the BGS Principle does not want to allocate the classrooms until he gets a consent from the Bugojno Municipal Council, and even after that the classes for the Croat pupils would be, according to Secic's interpretation, lectured by Bosniak teachers in the Croat(ian) language, which stunned Jurina who said that he could not accept that under any circumstances. Jurina said that the Croat officials in the Bugojno authorities would try to get the necessary consent from the Bugojno Head of Municipality, Mustafa Strukar, and as far as classes are concerned it would be lectured by the staff as determined by the Law on Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Central Bosnia Canton, said the adamant Jurina. According to some expectation the classes should start on Thursday, the latest, unless something unexpected pops up again. Slobodna Dalmacija carries another article on the same issue in which Josip Boro, Cantonal Deputy Minister for Education expresses his concern and dissatisfaction with the developments surrounding the start of the school year and mentioning of his name in that context. He says that there were no joint meeting in the Ministry and accuses Minister Busatlija of running the Ministry one-sidedly without consultations that eventually led to bad relations in the Ministry. Boro says that Busatlija is becoming "an exponent of a political option that does not recognize co-existence in this Canton". (see also Gornji Vakuf- Uskoplje item in the International Community section)

Republika Srpska

DNS no longer supports Mladen Ivanic

Today's edition of Nezavisne Novine reports that the DNS (Democratic National Alliance) Executive Board decided

not to support Mladen Ivanic's Government any more. "This means that the DNS no longer takes part in the parliamentary majority", said Dragan Kostic. Kostic backs the DNS's decision with catastrophic social policy, production decrease and bad results of the privatization process. "Ivanic's government did not pass the test. After regional boards of DNS had submitted their report, we unanimously decided not to support the RS Government any more. We have been accused of being interested only for personnel issues but these accusations are unfounded", says Kostic. He also says that the DNS will not vote for the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY because the Law does not say anything about the cooperation but about tasks that the RS authorities have to do and extradition of our citizens to the ICTY. As to the set of tax laws, Kostic says that he cannot give any general assessment because some laws and provisions are good and some are bad and DNS is not going to support them.

RS National Assembly to Hold 9th Session Today; Law on Cooperation with the ICTY on the agenda

The 9th regular session of the RS National Assembly is to take place in Banja Luka today. 39 points on agenda are expected to be discussed during this session, including the proposed law on cooperation between the RS and the ICTY, the set of tax laws, the report of the RS Government on realization of budget in the period from 1 January through 30 June 2001. Although public debate has been held on the adopted draft law on cooperation between the RS and the ICTY, the proposal of this document will be the most important point of the agenda. According to some announcements, the majority of delegates' discussions would refer to the essence of the proposed law, namely the procedure and the type of cooperation, and an issue of dividing authorities of the international and the national courts.

Deputy RS NA Speaker Says RS Law on Cooperation With ICTY Opens a New Way of Cooperation

Both Banja Luka dailies quote Deputy RS NA Speaker, Zoran Djeric as saying that the purpose of the RS National Assembly delegation's visit to The Hague was to visit prisoners from the RS and to find out more about the work of the ICTY. "We met with the President of the ICTY, Claude Jorda and the Chief of his Cabinet, ICTY Chief Prosecutor's Advisor, Anton Nikiforov, Chief of the ICTY Investigation Team, Patrick Lopez and Chief of Prosecutor's Unit, James Stewart." Djeric said they informed the ICTY representatives that the RS NA will soon discuss the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY and that they jointly concluded that the RS needs this law if it tends to make the cooperation with the ICTY easier. He also said that the RS NA delegation supported the ICTY representatives' initiative that local courts should take over some cases. Glas Srpski quotes Djeric as saying that during the talks it was said that charges against Croats and Bosniak for crimes committed against Serbs would soon be pressed."

OHR: RS National Assembly must adopt the Law on Cooperation with The Hague

OHR spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer told SRNA news agency that the OHR expects the RS National Assembly to pass the proposed law on cooperation with The Hague Tribunal although this would be "only a symbolic gesture, which may mark the beginning of a new era." "It is an important step, but the RS can not stop there; it must implement the cooperation with the Tribunal in concrete ways," she said, adding that this meant, among other things, apprehending war crimes suspects.

Mladen Ivanic Says PDP Deals With Reforms, SDS With Personnel

Nezavisne Novine quotes the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, as saying that the government reshuffle will not start until the RS National Assembly session ends. Ivanic said that the government reshuffle depends on the adoption of the RS Law on ICTY and set of tax Laws. "If the RS NA passes the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY and the set of Tax Laws, then the government reshuffle will be reduced to the team refreshment. However, if this does not happen, then a more radical reshuffle will happen", said Ivanic. As to relations within the ruling coalition, Ivanic says that the SDS mostly paid attention to personnel issues while the PDP was dealing with reforms. He says that these "games" seriously affect the privatization process because potential investors get an impression that politics affects the process to the great extent and that is why the politics should be out of it. Ivanic also says that the RS went bankrupt but most people in the RS still have not realized it.

International Community

High Representative announced satisfactory implementation of his Decision on Zepce

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, declared on Monday that his October 6th (2000) decision on the integration of Zepce municipality into Zenica-Doboj canton is final and binding. Petritsch stressed during the press conference held in Zepce that a consensus has been achieved in the interest of all citizens of Zepce and surrounding municipalities. He also appointed Alexander Rothert from Germany to replace Richard Williams, the thus far supervisor for Zepce. (See OHR press release carried very prominently in both electronic and print media in the Federation!)

Media report that a number of dissatisfied residents of municipalities and villages which were not included into the decision were peacefully protesting yesterday in front of the municipal building in Zepce. Their representatives met with Petritsch and informed him about their grievances.

The Chairman of the Interim Board in Zepce, Nedžad Hodžić, told the press yesterday that High Representative's decision on Zepce was "imposed and has been implemented in the same spirit." "Bosniaks are deeply concerned and we think that the decision will be confirmed on the local elections. If Bosniaks take part in the elections, the decision will be considered implemented," said Hodžić.

The vice president of the Zepce Municipal Council, Ivica Ramljak believes that the decision represented a genuine compromise. "It (decision) should become the foundation of the future relations and of the overall progress in this area," said Ramljak.

The High Representative confirms the Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje decision

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Saturday issued a decision confirming and supporting the Agreement on Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje signed in Travnik on August 2, 2000. The decision, which abolished the parallel structures in this municipality and purports to strengthen the BiH Federation, also names Bernd Burwitz as supervisor for Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje. The decision was presented yesterday (Monday) to officials in the Central Bosnia canton by the Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn. (see OHR Press Release. Carried by all news agencies, electronic and print media in the Federation – rather prominently only in print media. Slobodna Dalmacija also carried the PR)

Officials mark fourth anniversary of UN helicopter crash near Fojnica

Numerous local and international officials, as well as diplomatic representatives in BiH paid respect on Monday to 12 members of international peace mission in BiH who died four years ago in a helicopter crash in the vicinity of the Prokosko Lake near Fojnica.

See joint OHR/UN press release and High Representative's speech.

POLL: BiH (Federation) public supports High Representative's request for an urgent economic reform

According to a poll conducted by Avaz Agency, 67% of Federation citizens support the request of the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, that local authorities accelerate the economic reform in BiH. Only 20% of the polled individuals were against Petritsch's initiative, while 13% had no opinion on the matter.

Note: The telephone poll was conducted among 300 individuals in Sarajevo, Zenica and Tuzla using a method of random sampling.

Editorials and Articles concerning the effects of terrorist attacks

on the US on BiH

Dnevni Avaz: A Test for the New Authority

By Fadil Mandal

People are longing for work and the functioning system of public service. Younger, educated generation is increasingly searching for a future elsewhere, abroad, because it does not see it in BiH – the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, wrote among other things in his article for Dnevni Avaz.

These two sentences reflect all the weight of the present difficult economic and political situation in this country. Who should and how change this situation?

Petritsch offers a direct answer to that question: In the spirit of the partnership process, the High Representative asks the local authorities to undertake decisive and concrete steps towards the structural economic reform.

In reality, the new authority has not taken such steps yet. The privatization is still lingering in place, new work places are not opening, foreign investors are bypassing BiH as a place not very safe for investments. The systematic laws are still wondering somewhere in the hallways between the Council of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

Now, the ball is in the court of Zlatko Lagumdžija and other leaders of the Alliance for Change.

It is up to them to decide how to use the undivided support of the International Community. Should they continue with the opportunistic politics and dealing with ephemeral instead of essential matters, there will be no reform, nor will the young and educated people have any reason to stay in the country which is still rolling in the filth of the unpunished crime and corruption.

Wolfgang Petritsch himself warned about the possible consequences of the evident halt of the economic reforms.

Naturally, Petritsch did not directly mention the next general elections scheduled for the next year, however, those who can read between the lines, will realize that the time is passing and that, for a successful leadership, it is not enough just to assume positions and distribute ministries and directorial posts to personal friends.

A successful authority must offer much more to its citizens.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Islamic groups from BiH are on the American list

(...) Most of the crimes that were committed against the Croats and Serbs in the Lasva Valley had been committed by the mujahedeens, some of them being Osama bin Laden's closest associates. The latest indictment against BiH Army generals Alagic and Hadzihasanovic and colonel Kubura describes crimes committed by the mujahedeens. It also states that they tortured prisoners, beat them with rifles, sticks, boots, cables etc (...) Mujahedeens from the El Mudzahid Unit said that they only obeyed Alija Izetbegovic. Apart from the mujahedeens, Movement for Islamic resistance (Palestinian Hamas), GIA – Islamic armed forces, Egyptian Jamaa al Islamiya were also active in Bosnia. All these Islamic terrorist groups are on the list of 33 groups that was unveiled by the USA (...) Mehrez Amdouni, an associate of Osama bin Laden's who was arrested in Istanbul in 1999, fought against the Croats in Central Bosnia. He was a member of "El Mudzahid" Unit and a BiH Army officer. He was in Bosnia in 1993, and his last task prior to the arrest was to assassinate the then Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Lamberto Dini. It is now irrefutably established that Osama bin Laden has spread his net in Bosnia. Many of his followers got the BiH citizenship. USA is taking resolute steps to expel the mujahedeens from BiH and so far they have been somewhat successful. Bin Laden's handwriting was particularly evident on September 18, 1997, in Mostar. On that day a car bomb exploded on the Split Street, in front of the Police Station, (...) Haris Silajdzic accused some Croat extremists for planting the explosion. Then there are leaflets in Turbe, signed by the mujahedeens, that threaten the Travnik Croats. All these occurrences are known to representatives of the IC, including the ones from the USA. But it seems it was not a threat enough that the world is facing a growing danger of Islamic terrorism. Unfortunately, the role and activities of the mujahedeens in BiH has not been described as appropriately, whilst they came into BiH via Belgrade, Zagreb, Split and other neighboring states and cities, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Vecernji List: The Arabs who do not have a two-way ticket have been banned from entering BiH

By Zdenko Jurilj

Apart from the American Embassy, OHR, UN and the other international organizations and Embassies, the Sarajevo airport has become one of the most protected buildings in Sarajevo last week. The Sarajevo airport, which was until recently characterized as a place through which every day about ten émigrés from the Middle East countries were entering BiH illegally, now reminds of a big Police Station.

Due to the terrorist attacks against the USA, the citizens coming from the Middle East countries, that is, from the countries from the so-called 'a risk group', were put on a special list and their entrance to BiH through the Sarajevo airport has been banned if they do not have the two-way ticket. The number of passengers who come on a regular basis by a flight Istanbul-Sarajevo has been considerably reduced after this measure was introduced.

They also make a stricter control of the parking lot in front of the terminal that duty Policemen control. Allegedly, the UN and SFOR experts are also involved in the control of the entrances through the Sarajevo airport and they monitor every move of the Security Services in the Sarajevo airport and this way they want to contribute to the efficiency of the passengers' control.

***Vecernji List*: Sarajevo condemns terrorism and warns of anti-Islamic campaign**

Because Muslims-Bosniaks are a majority in BiH, this country is among 34 countries which are indirectly linked with the acting of Saudi billionaire Osama bin Laden. According to the Commission for the Revision of the BiH Citizenship Acquired by Naturalization they are mostly persons who were studying and who graduated in BiH and all their documents were checked and none of them was persecuted. However, it is not a valid argument for the public, especially since it is known that bin Laden also graduated and his name is linked with the military unit called El Mujahed, which was active on the territory of Bocinje, near Maglaj, during the war.

Janet Bogue, the Assistant of the American Secretary General for European and European-Asian Affairs, during her visit to Sarajevo on Saturday stated that she does not expect the strike of the American forces on BiH, but she reminded that the BiH Authorities did not meet the American request to expel persons who are originally from the Arabic countries and who were members of the military unit El Mujahed during the war.

Rabit Abdullah bin Abdul-Muhsin the Secretary General of the Islamic World League, condemned the terrorist attack, criticizing the American and European media that they blamed Muslims without any evidence. Reis Mustafa Cerić also warned of it. During the gathering of the Islamic theologians, which was held last weekend in Sarajevo, Alija Izetbegović condemned the attacks but he also criticized the anti-Islamic campaign in Western Europe and the USA.

It is an interesting information that the policeman, who instead of the license plates had the plate that reads 'bin Laden', has been recently arrested in Sarajevo.