

MONTHLY TRACKER December 2000

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December 2000 was dominated by the general election results; laws imposed by the High Representative in economic areas including pensions and the closure of the payment bureaux; and the establishment of diplomatic relations between BiH and Yugoslavia.

As the results of **BiH general elections** held in November were released, combinations of possible coalitions between various parties took up much space in the media.

The most influential Bosniak party, the SDA (Party of Democratic Action), announced on December 5 that it was ready to cooperate with the other two national parties, the Serb SDS (Serb Democratic Party) and the Croat HDZ (Croat Democratic Union) at certain levels of authority. At the same time representatives of opposition parties, led by the SDP (Social Democratic Party), lobbied for the establishment of an Alliance for Change.

Haris Silajdzic and his S BiH (Party for BiH) set pre-conditions for the international community in order to join the moderate Alliance for Change coalition. The High Representative responded to Silajdzic's letter saying that the OHR cannot take over the responsibility for the implementation of the peace process from the local authorities.

Election results in the RS provoked strong reactions from the international community, especially from the United States which said it would not support a Republika Srpska government if it included members of the SDS. The SDS's senior leadership signed on December 12 a statement at the OHR promising to fully implement property legislation, push refugee returns, strengthen joint institutions and cooperate with the Hague War Crimes Tribunal.

At the **constitutive session of the RS National Assembly** held in the penultimate week of December, the SDS, in coalition with other parties, planned to secure 43 of the 84 seats in the Assembly.

On December 29 the **BiH Parliament House of Representatives** held its constitutive session, electing the SDP's Sead Avdic as chairman, the SNSD-DSP's Zeljko Mirjanic as the first vice-chairman and the HDZ's Mariofil Ljubic as the second vice-chairman.

The High Representative imposed amendments to the **Pensions Laws** in both Entities on November 12 to alleviate the hard circumstances for pensioners in BiH. RS pensioners in the first week of the month protested because of late arrival of pensions while pensioners in the Federation criticized the new law, saying their pensions would be cut and not paid on time. Pensioners demonstrated outside the OHR on December 20.

There were a series of **demonstrations** held in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo. Bosniak refugees from Bratunac held a peaceful protest demanding that the OHR ensures their safe return to their pre-war homes. Bosniak refugees from Kotorako near Doboj demanded that the High Representative prevent the RS authorities from allocating socially-owned land to Serbs who refuse to return to the Federation. The Association of Srebrenica Victims and Families in a statement protested against an OHR decision to name the former High Representative, Swedish diplomat Carl Bildt, as a member of the Advisory Board for the Potocari Memorial project.

BiH and the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia** established diplomatic relations on December 15. **BiH** and **Croatia** signed an agreement on free trade. The BiH authorities, as part of an attempt to crack down on illegal immigrants passing through Bosnia, imposed visas for Iranians who, along with Turkish nationals, make up most of those who try to reach western Europe illegally via BiH.

The High Representative's message to BiH citizens in his last public address of the year was summarised by BiH media thus: "The threat of war is over, now is the time to build the state!"

CHRONOLOGY

November 30:

- The **BiH Independent Judiciary Commission** is established following a decision by the High Representative ([PR Nov 30- IJC](#))

December 1:

- Banja Luka authorities further delay the issuance of the construction permit for the rebuilding of **Ferhadija mosque**

December 2:

- The High Representative removes **Livno canton Minister of Interior**, Branko Matic, due to his obstruction of the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the frequent abuse of his position ([PR Dec 2 -HR Removes Canton 10 Minister](#))

December 4:

- In an interview with a Sarajevo weekly, newly elected RS President Mirko Sarovic said the **RS** needs an adequate law to regulate its **relationship with the ICTY**, since the current law precludes the entity from extraditing the indicted war criminals to The Hague

December 5:

- The **SDA** announces that it is ready to cooperate with other nationalist parties, the **HDZ** and the **SDS**, on certain levels of authority
- **BiH Workers Union** warns that 200,000 workers may lose jobs due to the closure of **Payment Bureaus**
- **Pensioners** in the RS continue protests and demonstrations because of late pensions

December 6:

- Miodrag Simovic, a judge of the RS Constitutional Court, told a Sarajevo newspaper the **RS** is ready for a **new constitution** following the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court on the constituent status of all peoples on the territory of BiH
- The High Representative addresses **an open letter to BiH pensioners**: BiH authorities are responsible for collecting funds for the timely disbursement of pensions ([PR Dec 5- HR Open Letter to Pensioners](#))
- The **OHR** rejects the possibility of 200,000 workers in the Federation losing their jobs due to the closure of **Payment Bureaus**
- The High Representative issues decision **abolishing the Skelani municipality** in Srebrenica, which prevented the return of Bosniak refugees from the area ([PR Dec 6 OHR establishes a pre-war municipality](#))

December 7:

- BiH imposes **visas for Iranian citizens** because of increasingly high number of illegal immigrants who enter BiH in hope to reach a third country
- Srebrenica victims and families' associations **protest the appointment of Carl Bildt** to the Advisory Board of the Potocari Memorial project
- **BiH Pensioners** demand the withdrawal of the OHR-imposed Law on Pension Fund

December 8:

- OHR appeals to local authorities in the Federation to urgently accept laws which regulate the **official ending of the institution of the occupancy right**
- **The Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council** meets in Brussels and calls on the High Representative to continue using his powers to ensure the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement; the Steering Board also approves a 25.5 million Euros budget for the OHR in the year 2001 (PR Dec 8 SB Communiqué)

December 11:

- The **HDZ** conditions its participation in the implementation of the elections results by the **PEC's** (Provisional Elections Commission) withdrawal of its **new rules on the elections of deputies to the Federation Parliament's House of Peoples**
- The **Alliance for Changes** Troika (the SDP, the Party for BiH, NHI) widens its circle and invites smaller parties to join
- OSCE Head of Mission **Robert Barry** calls for a drastic reduction of the entity armies in BiH

December 12:

- Senior leadership of the **SDS signs a statement** promising to fully implement property legislation, returns, the strengthening of the joint institutions, and cooperation with The Hague-based war crime tribunal (PR Dec 13 Meeting of the OHR and SDS)
- The RS and the Federation Workers Unions agree to form a joint **Union in the Brcko District**

>December 13:

- The BiH Ambassador to the UN, **Muhamed Sacirbegovic**, announces he is resigning due to his dissatisfaction with the work up until now of the International Community in BiH and "too passive local factors"
- The US Ambassador, Thomas Miller, stresses that the **US Government will not support the RS Government** if it includes the SDS
- International Organizations in BiH start a new media campaign "**Dosta je!**" on housing issues (PR Dec - "Dosta je" Campaign)
- The High Representative imposes the **Law on Human Rights Ombudsman in BiH** and amends the **Law on Administrative Fees** (PR Dec 13 HR Amends law PR Dec 13 HR imposes the law on Human)

December 14:

- The SDS, the PDP and the SPRS will form a majority in the **RS National Assembly**
- OHR stresses the High Representative will not revoke the **Law on Pension Fund** and suggests pensioners to direct their anger at responsible local authorities, i.e., the Federation Government
- The High Representative publishes a book on BiH entitled "**BiH Five years After Dayton**"
- The High Representative delivers a speech at the **Swedish Institute for International Affairs** on the prospects of BiH taking part in the process of the European Integration (PR Dec 14 HR's Speech)

December 15:

- After nearly a decade after BiH's independence, BiH and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia establish **diplomatic relations**
- The OHR says the **Croat National Assembly** cannot make any legally binding decisions for Bosnian Croats
- US Ambassador to BiH, Thomas Miller, says **Petritsch's "deal" with the SDS leadership** (see item 1, December 12) is "worthless", since the SDS will unlikely hold its promises

December 16:

- Constitutive session of the **Croat National Assembly** held in Tuzla. The assembly says all decisions of this body to be binding for Croat representatives in BiH Government

December 18:

- Following a series of unexplained violent incidents in **Podrinje** (Eastern BiH), including one death in a blast from an anti-tank mine, Bosniak returns to this area are BiH temporarily halted
- The **RS National Assembly holds** a constitutive session in Banja Luka. The SDS aimed to secure 43 of 84 seats in coalition with other parties (the SDS has 31 seats); despite earlier promises, **FRY President Vojislav Kostunica** fails to visit Banja Luka during the constitutive session of the RS NA
- **Bosniak refugees from Bratunac** hold peaceful demonstration in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo demanding that the OHR ensures their safe return to their pre-war homes in the Bratunac area

December 19:

- BiH and the Republic of Croatia sign an **agreement on free trade** between two countries
- **BiH Constitutional Court** says it has jurisdiction to rule over the decisions imposed by the High Representative
- **Bosniak refugees from Kotorsko** near Doboj hold peaceful demonstration in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo demanding that the OHR prevents the RS authorities in Kotorsko from allocating socially-owned land to Serbs who refuse to return to their pre-war homes in the Federation

December 20:

- Talks between all former Yugoslav republics on the **succession of the former SFRY** property end in Brussels. First results expected in 2001
- Association of **pensioners** from the Federation hold demonstrations in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo expressing their dissatisfaction with the newly-imposed Law on Pension Fund
- The High Representative writes to **Party for BiH's** Haris Silajdzic. The OHR cannot take over the responsibility for the implementation of the peace process from the local authorities. This letter is the reply of the High Representative to November 29th requirements of the Party for BiH [SBiH] for its participation in the new government. (PR Dec 20 HR Responds to Party for BiH)
- The High Representative imposes a new **set of economic laws**, including closure of the payment bureaux, to further improve the process of the economic reform in BiH (PR Dec 20 HR imposes package of economic laws)

December 21:

- Discussing the **OHR priorities for the year 2001**, the High Representative said in Sarajevo his office will continue to focus on three issues in the next year: economic reform, refugee return and the strengthening of the state institutions
- **NATO** Secretary General, George Robertson, visits Sarajevo and appeals for a more substantial progress in the implementation of the peace process
- Head of the OHR Mostar, **Finn Lynghjem**, leaves BiH. His successor is the former British ambassador to Croatia, Colin Munroe (PR Dec 21 Judge Lynghjem)

December 22:

- The **High Representative** makes his last public address to BiH citizens in the year 2000 and **states his main priorities** for the coming period: returns, economic reform and functioning

state institutions

- The High Representative annuls the **Federation Government's** decision to allow the **import of cars** with fraudulent papers and calls the Federation Prime Minister "unfit for a position of public trust" ([PR Dec 22 HR Annuls Fed PM's decision](#))

December 26:

- Party for BiH's Haris Silajdzic replies to Wolfgang Petritsch S BiH needs a clear promise that those who obstruct the peace process will be penalized and asks for an interim solution for the decision on the constituent status of all peoples in BiH
- **SDA's** Alija Izetbegovic says his party gives a full support to S BiH requirements
- Prime Minister **Edhem Bicakcic** denies having any connection with the Federation Government's decision to allow the import of cars with fraudulent papers and asks for a public apology from the High Representative
- RS President Mirko Sarovic (SDS) nominates PDP's **Mladen Ivanic** as the **Prime Minister** designate of the RS

December 27:

- Banja Luka pensioners continue with protests and ask the RS Government to finally resolve the pensions issues

December 28:

- The Chairman of the BiH Presidency, **Zivko Radisic**, visits Belgrade and holds talks on establishment of special parallel relations between RS and Yugoslavia with the FRY President, **Vojislav Kostunica**

December 29:

- BiH Parliament's House of Representatives holds constituent session: SDP's Sead Avdic elected chairman, SNSD-DSP's Zeljko Mirjanic first vice-chairman, HDZ's Mariofil Ljubic second vice-chairman
- The RS President, Mirko Sarovic, and the FRY President, Vojislav Kostunica, agree on the terms of **special parallel relations** between the FRY and the RS
- Federation Prime Minister, **Edhem Bicakcic**, appointed as the General Manager of **Elektroprivreda** (the main electricity provider in the Federation) although not effective until published in Federations's official gazette
- BiH media report that **Biljana Plavsic**, the SNS President and a war time leader of the Bosnian Serbs, is summoned to **The Hague warcrimes tribunal**

December 31:

- U.S. Ambassador Thomas Miller and the **High Representative** designated the international personalities of the year in BiH by most Federation media
- The High Representative's **New Year's address** to citizens of BiH summarised in newspaper headline: "The threat of war is over, now is the time to build the state!" ([PR Dec 29 HR NY address](#));

ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Economic Data BiH

3rd Quarter 2000

Source: RS and F BiH Statistical Offices

Indicator	Federation of BiH	Republika Srpska
Index of Industrial Production 1-9/2000 compared to av.of 1999 1-9/2000 compared to 1-9/1999	+ 5,0 % + 10,1 %	+ 4,0 % + 7,0 %
Retail Price Index 1-9/2000 compared to av.of 1999 1-9/2000 compared 1-9/1999	+ 0,9 % + 0,6 %	+ 11,0 % + 13,0 %
Average Net Salary 9/2000 Average Gross Salary 9/2000	428,42 KM 630,03 KM	289 KM 405 KM
Registered Unemployed Employment	265.954 persons 412.767 persons	154.656 persons (data not available)
No. of pensioners Average pensions	273.728 persons (9/2000) 177,33 KM (9/2000)	169.822 persons (4/2000) 145,06 KM (4/2000)
Imports 1-9/2000 Exports 1-9/2000 Trade deficit 1-9/2000 Import/Export coverage	3,2 billion KM 0,9 billion KM 2,3 billion KM 28 %	1,3 billion KM 0,5 billion KM 0,8 billion KM 38 %

The Agency for statistics of Bosnia Herzegovina released recently the Statistical Bulletin 3/2000, which gives an extensive overview on the Gross domestic product of BiH of 1996 to 1999.

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Gross Domestic Product of BiH, current prices in million KM	4,192	6,367	7,244	8,014
Nominal growth rate		+51,9	+13,8	+10,6

RETURN STATISTICS

See Link to the UNHCR Mission to BiH web page at www.unhcr.ba or see the latest statistics on the attached PDF files: [1](#) & [2](#).

[1995](#) | [1996](#) | [1997](#) | [1998](#) | [1999](#) | 2000

Office of the High Representative