

OHR Bulletin 50 - June 4, 1997

No. 50, issued June 4, 1997

Table of Contents

Peace Implementation Council

Steering Board of PIC met in Sintra to review progress in implementation of Peace Agreement and to set out international community's near-future strategy

Luxembourg

Newly appointed HR Carlos Westendorp and outgoing HR Carl Bildt held press conference on 2 June

Albright Visit

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright paid 1st visit to Bosnia on 1 June

Council of Ministers

Council of Ministers met to complete remaining work on economic laws of Quick Start Package on 29 May

Common Institutions

Standing Committee on Military Matters established on meeting

Presidency

Agreement on Law on the Central Bank and Single Currency reached on 28 May

Human Rights

UNMIBH officials announced via statement UN Mission was disturbed by continuing reports of Human Rights violation by police

BiH Federation

5th Session of BiH Federation House of Representatives concluded on 28 May

United Nations

UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations visited BiH region from 1-3 June

Right to Return

Violations and early successes of project for return

Economic Assistance

German NGO, Cap Anamur, provided 1 million DM for Coalition for Return (CfR)

Mostar

Presidents of Mostar municipal councils signed agreement to initiate establishment of 6 town municipalities

Please consult our [Bulletin Category List](#) for related information

Peace Implementation Council

The Steering Board (SB) of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) met at Ministerial level in Sintra, Portugal on 30 May to review progress in implementation of the [Peace Agreement](#) and set out the international community's strategy for the months ahead. The SB also nominated Mr. Carlos Westendorp to serve as High Representative from 20 June 1997. The meeting was attended by Foreign Ministers of the eleven PIC Steering Board members, including the nations represented in the Contact Group. US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright and British Secretary of State, Robin Cook also attended their first Steering Board in their new capacities. The Presidency of BiH, as well as of the Federation and the RS also attended, while the [United Nations](#), [NATO](#), [OSCE](#) and the [UNHCR](#) attended in an observer capacity.

The SB gave its unconditional support for obtaining the critical funding urgently needed to conduct municipal elections, carry out economic reconstruction in Brcko, provide full support to the Real Property and Human Rights Commissions, and carry out the programme of equipping and training democratic, restructured local police forces. There was a strong endorsement of the principle that international assistance should be conditional upon full compliance with the Peace Agreement. The SB stressed that the international community's commitment to Bosnia would be sustained and long-term. There would be no premature exit from Bosnia – the international community would stay the course. The SB further found it unacceptable that the authorities in BiH were failing to live up fully to their obligations under the Peace Agreement and demanded that they accelerate their work. A Sintra Declaration expressing the determination of the international community to press forward with implementation of the Peace Agreement was adopted at the meeting. The 94 point Declaration called on the BiH authorities to fully live up to their responsibilities and included a number of specific tasks and deadlines:

- The SB urged that the Standing Committee on Military Matters be made immediately operational. This would facilitate dialogue with the international community on security arrangements within the broader European security structure for years to come. There would have to be a specific reduction in military expenditure in the region.
- Attempts at partition, de facto or de jure, would not be tolerated. Agreements for special parallel relations between the Entities and neighboring countries must be aligned with the Constitution of BiH.
- The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and BiH must move immediately to establish full diplomatic relations and Embassies in respective capitals – Ambassadors of BiH should be appointed or confirmed by 1 August 1997. Action would be considered if this were not done. A quick decision was also expected on the common flag. After 1 September, the SB would recommend that existing flags and symbols not be recognised unless so decided under the Constitution.
- Proposals for laws on citizenship and passports would also have to be approved speedily by the Council of Ministers (CoM) and the Parliamentary Assembly. If such laws were not in place by 1 August the High Representative would recommend action to the SB.
- Failure to hand over indicted war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague remained a grave concern, particularly in RS where Radovan Karadzic continued to exercise influence. The SB noted the High Representative's proposal that persons co-operating with or condoning the role of persons indicted by ICTY should be denied visas to travel abroad.
- On economic issues the SB supported the HR's recommendation to deny new economic assistance to municipalities which continued to tolerate indicted persons working in a public capacity and would follow this up. It called on the Presidency and the Parliamentary Assembly to speedily approve the economic parts of the Quick Start Package agreed by the CoM. A Donors' Conference was planned to be held in Brussels at senior official level on 24 June – subject to agreement with the International Monetary Fund. BiH authorities were urged to adopt the second package of essential legislation before the PIC in December 1997. To allow trading and contact to take place the SB demanded the immediate and unconditional opening of the entire border between BiH and Croatia.
- Since none of the authorities in BiH had abided by the provisions of the Peace Agreement on return of refugees and DPs it was decided that assistance for housing and local infrastructure would be dependent on the acceptance of return and that priority would be given to municipalities receptive to minority returns and UNHCR's Open City Project. International support for housing reconstruction should also be conditional upon the Entities amending their property law.
- Both Entities should accelerate the process of restructuring their police forces in line with the principles and plans prepared under IPTF guidance, as well as comply with recent IPTF reports related to incidents in Mostar, Brcko, Gajevi and Drvar.
- Concerning freedom of movement the SB fully endorsed the IPTF Checkpoint Policy and supported the determination of IPTF, SFOR and OHR to take necessary steps to ensure

compliance. Action would also have to be taken in establishing a uniform system of car registration. After 1 January 1998, only cars with new number plates agreed by the Bosnian authorities would be allowed to cross international borders.

- Integration of the telephone system should start by 15 July at the latest. The HR should recommend appropriate measures to ensure compliance if necessary. The Bosnian authorities should also ensure that the Civil Aviation Authority is reconstituted and in operation by the end of July, otherwise the SB would recommend that international aviation authorities cease to operate with the existing body.
- Underlining the importance of the municipal elections on 13-14 September, the SB endorsed the concept for election implementation agreed between the OSCE and OHR.
- On media issues the SB endorsed the aim that by the end of the year, every sizeable community in Bosnia should have access to independent radio or television reporting and called on governments supporting the Open Broadcast network to draw up a plan to this effect to be coordinated by the OHR. It also declared that the HR had the right to curtail or suspend any media network or programme whose output was in persistent and blatant contravention of the Peace Agreement.
- The SB endorsed the procedures for return to Brcko announced by the Supervisor Ambassador Farrand. It expressed deep concern with the failure of the RS authorities to safeguard freedom of movement in the area and strongly censured the Federation for its failure to cooperate in the Brcko process.
- The SB praised Mr. Bildt for his outstanding performance as HR and nominated Mr. Westendorp to serve as HR from 20 June 1997.
- It asked the HR to supply a list of shortcomings or non-compliance by the authorities in BiH with the Peace Agreement, and to recommend specific action to be taken by the international community.

Luxembourg

After a meeting of the European Union members in Luxembourg on 2 June, newly appointed High Representative, Carlos Westendorp, and outgoing HR Carl Bildt, held a press conference at which Westendorp acknowledged the difficult task ahead of him. "[I have taken over] a huge responsibility, but I hope that, with help of the international community which will have to give priority to the peace process in the Balkans, we will be able to reach our goal," he said. Mr. Westendorp's new job – a *"very difficult task with a reasonable probability to make peace irreversible"* – would be helped by the *"renewed engagement"* of the international community and efforts to *"counteract the tendencies to live separately"*. On the issue of war criminals, Mr. Westendorp said that *"every effort must be made to bring [them] to the [ICTY] court"*. He added that *"new ways and means of producing results"* would have to be looked at and that *"a lot of opportunities had already been studied"* in that regard. *"After a short period of time I will come up with my own conclusions"*, he said.

Albright Visit

On 1 June US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright paid her first visit to Bosnia since assuming her new role. She arrived in Sarajevo, following the previous day's frank talks with the leaderships in Zagreb and Belgrade in which she warned that non-compliance with the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, particularly on the issues of war criminals and refugee return would not be tolerated and would result in US opposition to aid and other benefits.

During her visit to Sarajevo Mrs. Albright met with the joint Bosnian Presidency, Alija Izetbegovic, Kresimir Zubak and Momcilo Krajisnik.

Mrs. Albright also travelled to Brcko where she visited the US Military camp McGovern with Co-Chairman of the

CoM, Haris Silajdzic, Supervisor for Brcko, Bill Farrand and US Special Envoy Robert Gelbard. Following the official opening of the Brcko bridge, which had been closed since the war, Mrs. Albright said that the bridge symbolised a "road to Europe". "If you travel in that direction, you will eventually reach a Europe where borders unite rather than divide, a Europe where reason has triumphed over revenge. A Europe where new democracies have traded pettiness for prosperity". She added, "to those who will obstruct the Dayton Agreement let me say that Europe will come together with or without you. You can reap the benefits that come with cooperation or you can take a pass and take your places as the leaders of the "no future party" in Bosnia." Before concluding her tour of Bosnia, Mrs. Albright visited Banja Luka for a meeting with RS President Plavsic.

Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers (CoM) met in the National Museum on 29 May and completed the remaining work on the economic laws of the Quick Start Package with the signing by Co-Chair Haris Silajdzic of the Law on Customs Policy and the adoption by the CoM of the Law on Customs Tariffs. The CoM session, which was also attended by Principal Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Michael Steiner, also considered the OHR draft agreement on opening the northern border crossings with Croatia. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jadranko Prlic was charged with producing a new draft to be discussed in Sintra which would include all border crossings.

On 1 June Mr. Prlic announced that an agreement had been reached on the opening of eight road and four rail crossings with his Croatian counterpart, Mate Granic. According to Prlic, the crossings would be opened within a few weeks

Common Institutions

The Standing Committee on Military Matters, the last of the remaining common institutions to be set up, was established on 1 June at a meeting between US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, the BiH Presidency Chairman Alija Izetbegovic and Presidency Members, Kresimir Zubak and Momcilo Krajisnik, Principal Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Michael Steiner, and SFOR Commander General Crouch. The Standing Committee, which will coordinate the activities of armed forces of the two Entities of BiH, consists of the three Presidency Members, the Entity Defence Ministers and the Commanders of the armed forces of the Entities as well as a senior representative of the BiH Foreign Ministry.

The first working session of the Constitutional Court was held on 23 May in the OHR. All judges met for the first time and the three international judges made a solemn declaration thereby officially constituting the court. The beginning of the session was attended by HR Carl Bildt and representatives of the Council of Europe, the Contact Group and the EU Presidency. The Court began its work by discussing rules of procedure, session venues, staffing and finances.

Presidency

The BiH Presidency session on 28 May yielded an agreement on the Law on the Central Bank and the Single Currency. The meeting at the National museum in Sarajevo was also attended by US Special Envoy, Robert Gelbard, as well as Central Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and US Embassy representatives.

The Presidency members signed the Law on the Budget in Sintra on 31 May setting up a budget for BiH and clearing the way for the signing of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan of US\$ 100 million, as well as the holding of the Donors Conference, now scheduled for 24 June.

Human Rights

UNMIBH (United Nations Mission in BiH) officials announced in a statement that the UN Mission was disturbed by continued reports of human rights violations by local police. Most recently, the UN had been informed of two cases – in Sarajevo and Velika Kladusa – where Federation policemen had beaten detainees. The statement said that UN IPTF would independently investigate the cases and demand disciplinary action be taken against those found guilty of human rights abuses. UN IPTF would not hesitate to publish the names of the officers involved and would ensure they no longer served as policemen. “Respect for human dignity is one of the fundamental principles of democratic policing – a principle that must be adhered to and not violated”, said the statement.

BiH Federation

The fifth session of the BiH Federation House of Representatives (which started on 16 April) was concluded on 28 May. Legislation on protective measures for domestic production and for management systems in the Federation were adopted, as were a number of draft laws concerning administrative, agricultural and health matters. The proposal for the 1997 budget was not adopted because of a lack of quorum due to abstention from the opposition parties. Debate on restitution, privatisation and property issues were deferred until the next session. Representatives of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) boycotted the session following a refusal by the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) representatives to debate the acts already passed on 14 May (adoption of the Law on Split and New Municipalities).

United Nations

On his visit to the BiH region from 1-3 June, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Bernard Miyet, travelled to Brcko where he met with Supervisor Bill Farrand, as well as the three mayors of the city. In Sarajevo he held meetings with Federation President Soljic, Co-chairman of the Council of Ministers, Haris Silajdzic, and the Principal Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Michael Steiner. Mr. Miyet also met with representatives from OSCE, UNHCR and SFOR and visited officials in Mostar and Banja Luka, including RS President Biljana Plavsic.

UN officials announced the formal opening on 2 June of the joint UN IPTF and ICITAP (US Government sponsored International Criminal Investigators Training Assistance Programme) Training Programme at the police High School in Grbavica, Sarajevo.

Right to Return

In a letter to the UN IPTF Commissioner, Manfred Seitner, RS Interior Minister, Dragan Kijac informed that four civilians and nine local police officers had been fined, as well as eight individuals charged for their part in disturbing the peace in the incidents in Gajevi where on 2 March about 150 Serb civilians set fire to prefabricated houses built for returning Bosniac refugees. On 11 March approximately 30 Bosnian Serbs had torched the remaining houses.

Federal Minister for Social Affairs, Displaced Persons and Refugees, Rasim Kadic, announced on 30 May that 25 towns in Federation territory had been earmarked for the return of 55,217 Serb minority citizens. This represents part of an initiative for refugee return agreed in Geneva on 23 April.

UNHCR announced that they were resuming efforts to return Bosniac refugees to the Croat controlled town of Stolac. A group of 106 expelled Bosniacs paid a successful visit to the town on 29 May, and this is to be followed up with further assessment visits. This push to follow through the pilot project for return in this town follows a previous unsuccessful attempt on 31 January, when an SFOR escorted convoy of refugees was forced to turn back after being stoned by local citizens.

Economic Assistance

The German NGO Cap Anamur has provided 1 million DEM for the Coalition for Return (CfR) roof project. The CfR plans to help reconstruct 1,000 roofs this year and this donation will enable 250-280 roofs to be rebuilt.

In contrast with large humanitarian aid agencies who mainly carry out their reconstruction projects in specific target areas, the CfR will focus on assisting with individual cases on a self-help basis. Beneficiaries will include in-country DP's as well as refugees in host countries who wish to rebuild their homes in BiH. Although rebuilding will be carried out by the beneficiaries themselves, the CfR will provide all the necessary materials. Applications with present place of residence and the address of return included can be addressed to the Coalition for Return Information Centre at: Azize Sacirbegovic 80, Sarajevo.

Mostar

The Presidents of the Mostar municipal councils of the HDZ BiH and SDA, Mile Puljic and Zijad Hadziomerovic respectively, signed an agreement to initiate establishment of the six town municipalities envisioned in the Dayton Peace Agreement. The agreement follows a series of meetings also including the Mostar Mayor Ivan Prskalo and his Deputy Safet Orucevic brokered by the OHR Regional Head, Sir Martin Garrod. The inter-party agreement provides that the Head of the City Municipality and President of the City Municipal Council will both be from the majority nation in the city municipality and both their deputies will be from another nation. The Agreement also commits both sides to implement fully all those articles of the agreement reached between the parties on 24 January 1997 applicable to the city municipalities of Mostar. The parties also agreed that until such times as a Statute for the Six City Municipalities was adopted the Presidents of the City Municipal Councils would convene meetings of the Councils.

Looking Ahead

30 May

Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council meets in Sintra, Portugal

2-4 June

Plenary meeting on Succession Issues for the Former Yugoslavia, Brussels

4 June

UN Special Rapporteur on Human Right, Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn begins visit to FRY, Croatia and BiH

24 June

Donors' Conference at senior official level, Brussels (planned)

See our [*Chronology*](#) for a full list of activities

The OHR Bulletin is produced by the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo and aims to give an overview of what is happening on the ground in the civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

Tel. (387-71) 447 275 ext. 562. & Fax (387-71) 447 420.

Callers from outside BiH dial via Brussels switchboard: Tel. (32-2) 737 7500 & Fax (32-2) 737 7501.

If you would like to be added to the OHR Bulletin e-mailing list, or if you have any information/comments about the Bulletin, please 'phone/fax on the above numbers, attention Monika Stedul or send an e-mail to: monika.stedul@ohr.int

You are warmly welcome to visit to our OHR web site which offers substantial information about the OHR and its

work, local BiH news summaries (updated daily), HR statements, press briefing transcripts, major conference conclusions, OHR Bulletin back issues, chronology, further links and more. <https://www.ohr.int>