

OHR SRT News Summary, 19 Jan. 1998

Headlines

- First session of the RS Government in Banja Luka
- RS President, Biljana Plavsic, met with the Deputy High Representative, Hanns Schumacher, on current political situation in the RS
- Different reactions in the RS and abroad regarding the election of the new RS Government
- A delegation of EU monitors arrived in Algeria

The newly elected RS Prime Minister, Milorad Dodik, today visited Bijeljina where he had discussions on a peaceful transfer of power in the RS.

0:08

First session of the new RS Government was held in Banja Luka today, with the newly appointed RS Prime Minister, Dodik, in chair. The session was attended by all new RS ministers. Speaking about the work that is ahead of the new Government, Dodik stressed that it would prove that those MPs that had left the most recent session of the RS Parliament in Bijeljina were wrong. "It is certain that no individual will be able to cope with the current situation on his own. All Government members, therefore, need to work jointly". Dodik went on to stress the importance of public work of the Government. "We need to put our personal problems aside and continue to be in permanent session in order to achieve quick results". Ostoja Kremenovic, a Vice -President of the Government, then presented the session with an operational plan for the work of the Government until the end of January, which primarily focuses on the transfer of power and documents, the relocation of the Government from Pale, and the invalidation of all decisions made by the outgoing Government since it was officially dissolved last July.

1:52

The RS President, Biljana Plavsic, today announced that the RS Parliament would meet in Banja Luka this week. Newly appointed ministers are expected to take their solemn oaths at the session.

0:15

President Plavsic met with the first Deputy to the EU High Representative, Hanns Schumacher, in Banja Luka today, The meeting discussed the current situation in the RS after the crucial session of the RS Parliament in Bijeljina the other day which elected the new RS Government. "What I am particularly pleased at is the fact that discussions have been opened within the IC regarding funds needed by the new RS Government that has placed us in a different situation now where we are close to getting the planned funds shortly". After the meeting, Schumacher stressed that the new RS Government had been elected in a legitimate way which made it a legitimate representative of the RS. Speaking about the transfer of power, the Deputy High Representative hoped that this process would go smoothly. "I wish to praise Dodik's first step as the new Prime Minister today, where he met with the outgoing Prime Minister and thus demonstrated his cooperativeness". Schumacher added that: "It seems that the IC have now got Serb representatives that will be possible to cooperate with successfully". Schumacher told the press that Westendorp would be departing for Brussels as early as tomorrow to present European Union members with the election of the new RS Prime Minister and the Government. 2

2:52

Following a request by the OHR, SFOR troops last night deployed around all governmental facilities in Pale and Bijeljina, especially the building of the Ministry of Interior, for safety reasons. SFOR troops maintained their presence in Pale and on the roads leading to Pale throughout today.

0:18

The RS representative at the BH Presidency, Momcilo Krajsnik, gave a press statement in Pale saying that consultations were under way regarding the current situation in the RS, at the level of RS top state institutions. Krajsnik described the recent election of the RS Government in Bijeljina as a "well-planned scenario". "The responsible parliamentary commissions will review the legitimacy of the election of the new RS Government. I will

suggest to Kalinic to convene an urgent session of the Parliament”.

0:41

Nikola Poplasen, the President of the Serb Radical Party (SRS), who is also the Deputy Speaker of the RS Parliament, at a press conference today, said that the most recent session of the RS Parliament had been suspended at the stage where the discussion on the election of the new RS Parliament started, and that its continuation was, therefore, illegal. Poplasen stressed that his party would ask for an urgent session of the Parliament regardless of the election. “A meeting between respective leaders of RS political parties and President Milosevic reached a compromise according to which the SDS and the SRS were to accept Ivanic as the future RS Prime Minister, whereas the other side was to give up on its request to have half expert slots at the Government”.

01:20

Zivko Radisic, the leader of the RS Socialist Party, at an extraordinary press conference today, expressed the position of his party that the newly elected RS Government would be able to cope with challenges that were ahead of it. Explaining the legitimacy of the election, the Secretary of the Party, Zeljko Miranic, said that the Speaker of the RS Parliament had no right to suspend the session without a prior voting by MPs and that the continuation of the session was in line with the RS Parliament Book of Rules. Radisic believed that the SDS and the SRS had not become aware of the importance of the current moment for the destiny of the RS and described the decision by the SDS and the SRS not to continue to participate in the work of the session in Bijeljina as a big mistake.

1:40

The newly appointed Head of the OSCE mission in BH, American diplomat Robert Barry, has arrived in Sarajevo to take over the reins of his new office.

0:19

International media today continue to react to the election of the new RS Prime Minister and the Government and continue to quote foreign monitors as stressing that the new Prime Minister, Dodik, was supporting the implementation of the Dayton and Paris peace accords.

0:19

The representative of the German Government in charge of the return of refugees to BH today requested that an international plan on the economic reconstruction of the RS should be designed urgently and that the funds that had, earlier, been allocated for this purpose should be de-blocked. He, however, added that the international support for RS municipalities should continue to depend on their positions regarding the return of refugees.

0:29

OHR have today described the election of the new RS Government as a process that will end the current constitutional crisis in the RS and have expressed hope that it will contribute to the unification of the RS rather than to further divisions.

0:25

The Paris-based “Le Figaro” daily newspaper today assesses that the election of the new RS Government will only deepen the current crisis in the area. Italian “La Stampa” newspaper billed Dodik as the mouthpiece of the RS President and stressed that he had been promised international support by the High Representative.

0:15

The FRY Prime Minister, Radoje Kontic, today congratulated Dodik and other RS ministers on their recent appointments as members of the RS Government. Kontic expressed readiness of the FRY Government to continue to develop good relations between the FRY and the RS in line with the DA and the Agreement on Special Parallel Relations. The Serbian Prime Minister, Mirko Marjanovic, also congratulated Dodik on his election as the new RS Prime Minister.

0:52

A trial against the former Mayor of Vukovar, Slavko Dokmanovic, started before the Hague Tribunal today. Dokmanovic is tried for, allegedly, being responsible for the massacre of 200 non-Serb civilians in Vukovar in 1991.

0:25

The municipal electoral commission of the pro-Muslim coalition led by the local SDA officials in Zepca today accused the Croat side of blocking the implementation of the local election results in the municipality. In a letter

addressed to OSCE, the Muslim side stressed that the local Croat authorities kept insisting on the establishment of a new Croat municipality of Zepca prior to any discussions on the implementation of the local election results there.

0:19