

OHR BiH TV News Summary, 03 Feb. 1998

03 February 98, 19:30

The first International Conference on return to Sarajevo finished today with the adoption of the Sarajevo declaration. The declaration covers the legal matters, housing matters, employment, public order and safety, specific cases of return, and implementation of the declaration and Annex 1 (this may have been a mistake on the anchor's part). The participants agreed that these principles must characterise Sarajevo as the capital of the BiH and BiH Federation. It was also said that Sarajevo must be the unique multi-ethnic canton where all the groups in civilian and economic life must have equal treatment. The International Community will connect international aid with the progress made in the process of return of the pre-war residents. The Federation must adopt laws on housing and property that will be acceptable for the HR. The returnees will be discharged from undertaking military service for the next five years. The HR will establish a Commission for return to Sarajevo. The Commission will observe the implementation of the measures covered by the Sarajevo Declaration. Ganic also supported the declaration, while the Prime-Minister Bicakcic said that he could not accept the fact that Sarajevo must become a multiethnic city, because Sarajevo already is one. US Special Envoy Gelbard said that the US standpoint is not the multi-ethnic Sarajevo, but multi-ethnic BiH. Izetbegovic also supported this declaration, hoping that this will be the impulse for return to the other BiH cities as well. Soljic presented the data on the jeopardised position of Croats and Serbs in Sarajevo. Dodik said that the RS will keep on being partner to everyone who stands for return.

Reacting on today's Soljic's position at the conference, Izetbegovic's advisor Hajric said that whenever it comes to the return of refugees anywhere in BiH, the HDZ always stands out for announcements that scare the Croat and Serb people, and prevent return.

HR Westendorp, US Special Envoy, Gelbard and the European Commission Director Delange, said that the return of 20.000 non-Bosniak Sarajevo citizens is feasible by December this year. Gelbard said that the aim of the conference is to speed up implementation of Annex 7.

13:00

British State Secretary for International Development, Short took part at today's return conference, but also met with BiH President Izetbegovic, FA Minister Prlic, and RS Prime-Minister Dodik. Short said that UK Govt will focus on return and economic development in BiH and that the progress made in the last year is bigger than could have been imagined. Short also said that UK is proud that the British troops moved forward regarding the arrest of war criminals.

2:00

The House of People and the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament held sessions in Lukavica. HoP did not accept any of the HR proposals on BiH flag. HR deputy Schumacher appealed to the representatives to adopt one of proposals whose designs are neutral and that avoided any national symbols. Schumacher said he is opposed to anything that leads to a protectorate, but appealed to the representatives to pass the decision, otherwise it will have to be passed by the HR. The SDS representatives said that the flag proposals contain no national symbols and they cannot accept them as they are. As said by Schumacher, Westendorp will make the decision either tonight or tomorrow. The Law on Citizenship was not adopted also, and Velibor Ostojic remained the President of the Human Rights Commission. This caused the resignations of two SDA representatives in this commission. The HoP had the same items on its agenda and with the same decisions made. The Law on Citizenship was also not adopted, nor were the flag design proposals. The Law on Customs Tariffs was adopted, as well as the changes of the Law on Passports.

4:00

The Civilian Affairs Minister at CoM Albjanic did not have the authority to withdraw any decision of the Council if this decision if the CoM did not pass the contra-decision previously, said Schumacher, answering Albjanic's letter. Ministar Albjanic intended to withdraw the signature of the Serb representatives, regarding the registration plates memorandum. Albjanic said that the reason for this is that the RS Govt did not actually sign the document. However, Schumacher informed Albjanic that the RS Prime-Minister Dodik signed the agreement before Albjanic,

who afterwards said he accepts HR's explanation and withdraws his opposition.

2:00

The NATO alliance will not consider the project of the new peace forces for BiH today. The reason is discordance about the volume and mission of the future organisation.

1:30

German Defence Minister, Ruehe visited Mostar today. Ruehe attended a training course of German soldiers at the Mostar airport, and visited the Centre for Professional Education of the Federation Army.

2:00

The Police station in Jablanica announced that an explosion occurred in front of Vaso Manigoda's private building. Zagorka Manigoda suffered injuries, and was transferred to hospital. The Coalition for a United and Democratic BiH austerey condemned the terrorist act aimed against personal safety of citizens.

1:30

Sir Martin Garrod said that HR deputy will visit Stolac tomorrow in order to gain insight into the current situation. UN spokeswoman, Moore also condemned the bomb attacks in Stolac. She also said that IPTF registered 10 incidents since January 13. Garrod also mentioned yesterday's meeting in Sarajevo, where the Federation President and Co-president agreed, in the presence of HR deputy Klein, to reach agreement on opening of the Mostar airport Ortijes.

2:00

UNHCR spokesman in Geneve, Janovski announced that non-Croat refugees in Stolac are experiencing a difficult situation. UNHCR recently asked Westendorp to intervene in this case. Janovski said that the local Croat authorities in Stolac are quietly approving the violence in Stolac where the police do not intervene, or intervene too late.

2:00

Federal Minister of Justice, Tadic reacted on the statement by Ganic, saying that Ganic did not inform the public that agreement was achieved, over a year ago, that nothing will be done in Brcko that will interrupt the relations of Bosniaks and Croats in Brcko. He added that Bosniaks started to restructure the ethnic population in Brcko surroundings, affecting Croat and Serb return.

1:30