

OHR Local News Issues, 26 June 1997

Vlakovo – The BiH team of experts continued the exhumation and identification of one of the mass graves in the area. Of 82 bodies exhumed, only 26 have been identified so far because the victims killed from a fire arm which was either held at point blank range to their neck or put in the mouth. The majority of victims were from the Airport District or Ilidza. The exhumation will continue on July 1 since the experts assume that there is a number of mass graves in the vicinity.

3:00

London – The BiH delegation, headed by the CoM Co-chairs Silajdzic and Bosic, talked with the London Club of Creditors about writing off and reprogramming of BiH debt which was inherited from the former Yugoslavia. Silajdzic said that the Club should also take into consideration the current situation in BiH, adding that the BiH infrastructure was mainly destroyed during the war and that the reconstruction will directly depend upon the results of the talks.

3:00

Brussels – NATO Conference – The NATO Supreme Commander for Europe, General Joulwan expressed his concerns with regard to the NATO withdrawal from BiH scheduled for mid-summer of 1998. He asked of NATO to increase its presence during the local elections.

2:00

Strasbourg – Parliamentary session of the Council of Europe – The Council discussed the current situation in BiH, especially with regard to the human rights and indicted war criminals. The human rights representative of the Council underlined that the Council should pay attention to the protection of human rights in BiH especially during the local elections. The head of the Ombudsmen Office in BiH, Haller stressed that the Council should rather discuss the BiH membership to the EC instead of its current situation, regardless of the RS representatives' non-attendance. The member of the BiH delegation, Bicakcic expressed his concern with regard to the postponement of the donors' conference, whereas Mariofil Ljubic, Federation House of Representatives Speaker, said that BiH is a democratic country. The joint position of all representatives at the session was that the idea of human rights will remain an illusion if indicted war criminals are not handed over to the Hague.

4:00

Sarajevo – The Group of Islamic Conference Member Countries for Gathering of Aid for BiH will hold its 7th session on June 27 and 28. The Conference was established after the NATO bombing in September of 1995 in Kuala Lumpur. Sarajevo will host the Conference for the third time. The Group announced that BiH will be given \$ 241 million for reconstruction. All the resources have been gathered through bilateral contracts.

2:00

Helsinki – The Conference of the Pan-European Transport Communications Council – The Council included BiH and Croatia in its Map of Traffic Communications by approving two routes which directly connect BiH to Europe. The first one [No. 5] goes from Ploce via Sarajevo to Budapest, whereas the other one [No. 10] goes from Ljubljana via Belgrade to Athens.

3:00

Today, another Bosniak family returned to Stolac within the pilot project of refugee return.

HR Deputy Steiner didn't hide his dissatisfaction with his farewell visit to Croatian President Tudjman who held a one-hour lecture on Croatian history, the same as he had done during Carl Bildt's recent visit. Steiner said that he didn't have a chance to talk to Tudjman, not to mention the important issues such as the current situation in Mostar, and the Mostar joint police forces which should have been established a long time ago. Tudjman decided to be abstract with regard to BiH, not giving any specific promises but endlessly repeating that Croatia will help the implementation of the peace agreement. 'We would like to hear the Croatian 'yes' spoken out loud,' Steiner said.

2:00

Summary SRT News

Jahorina – The ninth session of the RS National Assembly began today. RS President Biljana Plavsic is attending the session as well. During the first part of the session, deputies participated in an open debate, posing questions on various issues. The predominant topics during this debate were related to the status of war invalids, veterans, families of dead soldiers and pensioners.

During the second part of the session, deputies adopted a law draft on the interior ministry. Before a debate on this draft, the legislative commission refused to consider amendments submitted by Principle Deputy HR Michael Steiner with the explanation that under the Rules and Procedures amendments can be submitted by the Government, legislative commission or working bodies or at least 10 deputies only. The commission further underlined that the draft in question had been formulated in accordance with the highest European standards providing protection of citizens' rights and freedoms. All parliamentary parties supported this stand, with the exception of SDA deputies. Vlado Brkes, a SDS member, touched upon the issue of SFOR's arrogant behaviour, with a specific reference to the humiliation of Serb police in Brcko, which he perceived as a humiliation of the entire Serb nation. He warned that SFOR troops should mend their ways or else they would be considered as an occupational force, and proposed that Interior Minister Dragan Kijac should submit a report on the Brcko incident at the next parliamentary session.

4'50"

RS President Biljana Plavsic offered her greetings to VRS Chief of Staff Gen. Pero Colic on the occasion of St. Vitus Day.

1'00"

Brussels – The Nato Council is supposed to make a decision tomorrow on whether to send an additional 3000 troops to BiH in order to secure successful local elections.

The report quoted the Italian press as maintaining that an additional US\$ 9 million were needed for the elections in the RS and FBiH.

The media quoted the Vatican's paper *Observatore* as claiming that the World Bank had blocked a loan worth US \$ 30 million to Croatia for failing to meet its commitments regarding Serbs in Eastern Slavonia and preventing a larger part of Serb population from voting. The paper further maintained that Croatia was also sanctioned because of strict media control and obstruction of opposition leaders to address their voters.

1'50"

Split – Late last night, six Serb prisoners crossed the bridge near Gradiska, after being released from the notorious prison, Lora, in Split. Another nine Serbs are waiting to be released on 3 July. The report underlined that the released Serbs were POWs kept in Croatian prison for more than 2 years and that Croatia clearly had violated the DPA by having not releasing all prisoners.

1'50"