

OHR Local News Issues, 23 April 1997

Sarajevo– The official ceremony of signing contracts for professional engagement in the FBiH Army has taken place today. In the presence of the President of the BiH Presidency Alija Izetbegovic (who has made the decision on professional engagements in the army), FBiH Vice President, Ejup Ganic, and Federation Deputy Defence Minister, Sakib Mahmuljin, a number of generals signed professional contracts. Asked why this process had not started earlier, FBiH Deputy Defence Minister Mahmuljin replied that the reason was of a technical nature and related to the structuring of the FBiH Army. He declared that the resolution of all open issues was in sight and that the draft-law on defence was prepared for adoption.

3'00"

Geneva – Under the chairmanship of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, and in the presence of HR Carl Bildt, UN SRSG Ambassador Eide and representatives of host and donor countries, the working group for humanitarian issues held a meeting. A UNHCR document on the 1997 repatriation in BiH, which was elaborated in cooperation with the Ministry for Civilian Policy and Communication in the CoM as well as relevant ministries of the two entities, was presented. FBiH Minister for Refugees, Rasim Kadic, acknowledged that the FBiH was agreeable to the return of all Serbs currently in Brcko who originate from other parts of the Federation. In addition, he expressed concern with the discrepancy in the actual number of returnees and the designated number.

Representatives of the international community have reiterated that the party(s) which fulfil its obligations will be supported while others will be sanctioned.

4'00

Kotor Varos and Jajce – The Presidency of the municipality Kotor Varos issued a statement to the effect that “a planned settlement of Serbs from Croatia into houses of expelled Bosniaks has begun”. The statement further maintains that the remaining Bosniaks are being forced to leave and hand over their houses to local authorities.

Enver Sabic, President of the municipality Jajce, issued a statement informing that more than 500 Bosniak houses in that area are empty, while their owners are scattered all over central Bosnia. Croatian authorities prevented every attempt of those owners to return, added Sabic. Moreover, in the last 45 days, 15 Bosniak houses were set ablaze.

2'50"

Donation– “The Japanese Government provided funds worth US\$ 40 million for the restoration of BiH economy” informed the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The funds will be used for purchase of energy resources, equipment, etc.

1'00

Geneva -At the 50th session of the European Economic Conference, BiH Foreign Minister Dr. Jadranko Prlic appealed to the international community to organize a donor conference on BiH without delay and thus contribute to recovery of the country.

1'50"

Zvornik– “Despite verbal warnings of the international community, which unmistakably remind of the Srebrenica tragedy, a court sentence against seven Bosniaks will be passed tomorrow’, maintained the comment. Federation defence lawyers were not allowed to defend the accused who only had 45 minutes to state their case.

The report quoted extensively excerpts from a press conference held in Pale where IPTF, OHR and OSCE representatives strongly condemned such practice in the RS judiciary system.

3'00"

Summary SRT News

Jahorina – Seventh session of the RS Peoples Assembly – After a five-hour discussion, the MPs

adopted, in principle, the basic economic policy of the RS for this year. Prime Minister Klinkovic addressed the Parliament and said that the essence of the economic programme is consolidation and reconstruction of the RS. Apart from other laws, the Re-balance of the RS budget for 1996 was also adopted.

10:00

Banja Luka – RS President Plavsic's meeting with the Russian Federation Ambassador in Sarajevo, Jacob Gerasimov – The discussion was focused on implementation of the DPA, particularly the implementation of the Award for Brcko.

2:00

Pale – President from the Republika Srpska in the BiH Presidency, Momcilo Krajisnik, held a meeting today with the Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy, Robert Beecroft, and discussed the implementation of the civilian part of the DPA, including the issues of the Central Bank and the work of the joint institutions of the Federation and RS.

:00

Geneva – UNHCR Humanitarian Issues Working Group Conference – UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, said that a return of 200,000 refugees to majority areas is expected this year. Although all the delegations that were present tried to find constructive solutions for repatriation, the Muslim delegation made another attempt to sabotage the agreements made so far, through a now notorious policy of unfounded accusations, untrue or incomplete reports, and discussion of issues which are not on the agenda.

3:00

According to the State Commission for Exchange of the Missing and Imprisoned Serb Soldiers and Civilians, approximately 400 Serbs are held in prisons of the Muslim-Croat Federation.

3:00

World News:

The Hague – Lawyers of the three Muslims facing trial before the Tribunal, filed a protest against the reports of Serbian newspapers that prejudge the verdict of the Tribunal. Although the trial is going on for seven weeks now, it is being widely ignored by the domestic press, whereas the Tadic trial had been making the headline news almost every night, and Tadic had been called a sadistic murder, all until it was proven that the key witness for his case had given a false testimony.

2:00