

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference at CPIC

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE - 21 November 2002**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 21 November 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PIC Steering Board in Brussels.• The reform agenda is based on three key principles.• London Conference on Fighting Organised Crime in South Eastern Europe.• Technical meetings on VAT.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entity Ministers of Education present education reform agenda to the PIC in Brussels.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appeals following Non-Certification.• Advertisement Campaign for State Border Service.
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No statement.
e. ICTY	Rafik Hodzic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requests denied for provisional release of Dragan Obrenovic and Vidoje Blagojevic.• An appeal hearing is scheduled for today in the case against Tihomir Blaskic.• Report discussing the financing of Serb Forces becomes available in the Milosevic case.
f. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No statement.

2. Twenty members of the media and no television crews attended the conference.

3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

A. Ollivier

Col. (FR A),

Chief Operations and Plans

Patrik Volf - OHR

Good morning. I three things for you.

First, as you know, the Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board are meeting in Brussels today. This morning the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities presented their plan on the way ahead in education. The presentation was welcomed unanimously and there was full agreement that reform is essential for the process of reconciliation, sustainable return and economic development. The Steering Board voiced its full support for reform of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the objectives that have that been developed to de-politicise education and systematically remove discrimination and intolerance.

The reform agenda is based on three key principles.

First, that all children have access to high quality education, in integrated schools, based on the respect of the rights of all children.

Second, that returnee children get ready access to education in their area of return, free from political, religious, ethnic, cultural or any other form of bias or discrimination.

Third, that the process of reform involves those with the greatest stake in education, that is, students, parents and teachers.

I would also like to inform you that following a discussion among the Steering Board member states last night, the ORAO affair and its political consequences will be on the Peace Implementation Councils agenda today.

At 13:00 the High Representative will hold a press conference. In the afternoon, the High Representative will brief the European Union Political and Security Committee. He will focus on the problems of organised crime in the region.

In his speech he will say and I quote, "Bosnia and Herzegovina's politics through corruption and the abuse of patronage, deters investors, undermines the legal system and siphons off into criminal hands hundreds of millions of euro, which ought to be paying teachers and doctors and building hospitals and schools. That is why customs reform, and the replacement of the iniquitous sales tax with VAT, is so urgent and so essential, not only to pay for essential services but also to wrest entire support systems away from the criminal world."

More information you, as there is no television here it is probably not much use. There will TV footage available on the Peace Implementation Council meeting from the Europe by Satellite network.

Staying with problems of organised crime in the region I would like to inform you, next Monday, 25 November, the High Representative will be in London attending a Conference on Fighting Organised Crime in South Eastern Europe. This is a European Union led conference being hosted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and should be seen in the context of the European Union Stabilisation and Association Process.

The Conference will focus attention on the need to tackle criminal activity in a more co-ordinated way across the region. The conference will be attended by some 300 delegates including Justice, Interior, and Foreign Ministers from the countries of the region, neighbouring states, the European Union and other international partners, as well as senior officials from multilateral organisations, including the European Commission.

The delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina will be led by the Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija, and will include the Republika Srpska Interior Minister Dragomir Jović, and the Federation Interior Minister Ramo Maslesa.

The conference will seek to engage high level ministerial commitment to generate new political impetus to tackle organised crime, establishing a better co-ordinated approach to regional and international activity and to achieving real short to medium term progress in the battle against crime.

Finally I would like to inform you, over the last two days, representatives of the agencies engaged in the working group on VAT held technical level discussions with representatives of businesses and the government in the Republika Srpska. I can tell you that these discussions have proven to be very constructive and fruitful. There are a lot of misunderstandings out there, among experts, but also in public. The International Community will therefore continue with these talks in the coming weeks, on an expert as well as on a political level. That is all from my side for today, thank you.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE

Good morning.

As we speak, the Entity Ministers of Education are presenting the education reform agenda to the Peace Implementation Council in Brussels. The agenda, reforming education to give Bosnia and Herzegovina a better future is a comprehensive document, listing goals for education reform and focusing on the action needed to realise those goals.

The OSCE mission has played a co-ordination role in preparing the reform agenda. But, the bulk of the work has been done by six working groups, which bring together both Bosnian and international education professionals.

Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, who is also addressing the Peace Implementation Council, applauded all those who drafted the document, saying he was and I quote, "impressed and inspired by their commitment and energy". He also welcomed the fact that a large majority of those were Bosnia and Herzegovina nationals.

Now that the strategy is in place, the focus must move to implement it. Ambassador Beecroft has repeatedly pointed out that as much of this strategy as possible has to be in place in time for the next school year. But, equally important is that the strategy lays the foundation for work on medium and long-term goals. I have put outside a document listing the five main targets of the education strategy, with examples of the concrete action that needs to be taken keep in mind these are only examples the document itself I believe is around 18 pages. We will also issue a press release later today with Ambassador Beecroft's comments on today's Peace Implementation Council meeting. Thank you.

Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

Good morning. I have two items for you.

The first one is on the issues of certification, non-certification and appeals to these decisions that as we can all see still draw a lot of interest. I can tell you that as of yesterday, there were 262 appeals that have been filed with UNMIBH and the appeals commission has now started reviewing these cases.

Again, as outlined by Special Representative of the Secretary General Jacques Paul Klein, in his recent statement on the subject, this appeals review process is a process conducted independently from the IPTF chain of command. The appeal review panel will examine each appeal case on the basis of information that was not available at the time the original decision on this case was made. The panel will then refer the case back to the IPTF Commissioner for reconsideration of his original decision. This process was designed in order to allow due process and fairness to the officers concerned.

The second item is an announcement; today a new advertisement campaign for positions in the State Border Service has started. The newspapers Oslobođenje, Dnevni List and Nezavisne Novine should carry these job vacancy announcements in their issues today. A total of 61 vacancies are being announced, covering high and middle management positions as well as specialised and administrative posts in a number of State Border Service offices all over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Persons applying for positions requiring police experience should get an application form from any IPTF station. Persons applying for administrative positions should follow the instructions in the advertisement and apply directly to the State Border Service in Lukavica. That is all I have for you today, thank you.

Bakir Jalovcic - UNHCR

The UNHCR has no statement today.

Rafik Hodzic - ICTY

Good morning. I have several short items for you.

The first being that, Trial Chamber II presided over by judge Wolfgang Schomburg, has on 19 November, again denied requests for provisional release of Dragan Obrenovic and Vidoje Blagojevic. Following the initial decision to deny provisional release, which was tendered on the 22 July 2002.

Upon appeal the Appeals Chamber quashed this initial decision on the 3 October, and returned the matter to the Trial Chamber directing it to take into consideration guarantees given by the Republika Srpska. In this latest decision the Trial Chamber denied requests maintaining, among other things, that it was not satisfied that if released, accused Obrenovic and Blagojevic would appear for trial and would not pose a danger to any victim, witness or other person.

As you are probably aware, an appeals hearing is scheduled for today, in the case against Tihomir Blaskic, it will start at 14:15. According to the scheduling order issued by the Appeals Chamber, both sides will today present oral arguments on the issue whether the new evidence submitted by the defence justifies a new trial against Tihomir Blaskic, on some or all of the counts of his indictment. Each side will have 75 minutes for their submissions and 30 minutes for replies.

We wish to remind all of you who are interested in following this hearing as with all other hearings, that you can do so live via our Internet site www.un.org/ICTY.

And lastly, for those interested we have a copy of a report that has become available in the Milosevic case, which discusses the financing of Serb Forces in Croatia and Bosnia, in the period between 1991 and 1995.

This is the second report prepared by financial expert Morten Torkildsen, and it is based on a large quantity of material and evidence gathered by the Office of the Prosecutor. The scope of the report was to determine what financial support was provided, during this period, by organisations under the alleged control of Slobodan Milosevic, to areas referred to as Republika Srpska Krajina and Republika Srpska. This is a lengthy document I have a copy here and if you wish to have a copy please contact our office here in Sarajevo. That is all.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

Nothing from SFOR this morning.

Patrik Volf - OHR

Thank you can I ask for your questions please.

Questions and Answers

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic - Reuters

Yves, tell us was the lawyer of Mr. Fijuljanin, allowed to see his client?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

I could barely hear you.

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic - Reuters

The lawyer of the man detained by SFOR in Tuzla, whether his lawyer was allowed to see his client?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

Fijuljanin has not asked to see a lawyer.

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic - Reuters

Has not asked?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

He has not asked to see a lawyer.

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic - Reuters

It is contrary to the media reports?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

I can tell you that this morning, I got confirmation that he has not asked to see a lawyer.

Q: Julie Poucher Harbin - WPR

Kirsten, about the certification you said 262 appeals was that number not higher a few weeks ago or does that mean some of the appeals are gone or it is the first round?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

It is the first time I have announced the number of appeals that have been filed with us. You maybe mixing it up with the number of police officers that have not received certification that is a different issue, they then of cause have the right to lodge an appeal. The information I gave today is first on the overall number of appeals that have reached us so far and that is 262.

Q: Julie Poucher Harbin - WPR

So, out of those 400 and some odd police that did not receive certification 262 appealed?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

That is correct and these appeals are coming from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Q: Julie Poucher Harbin - WPR

And that will be in eight days or is that just the deadline that they had to file the appeal?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

No the deadline would be the end of the mission if you want to take it strictly otherwise there is no other deadline.

Q: Viola Gienger - Freelance for Cox newspapers

Patrik, I want to check on the Bulldozer Committee are they considering the income tax at all or is anyone considering lowering income tax?

A: Patrik Volf - OHR

So far we have had a preparatory meeting and what I have heard from consultations we had, not in the form of the committee but aside from that. It was surely an issue that some of the businessmen are concerned about. As we announced beforehand we will discuss what is presented to us as concerns and that might well be among them, once the committee is fully functional.

Q: Fedad Forto - BH Press

Patrik, maybe I did not understand you correctly, but did you say that all participants of the meeting on education supported the document?

A: Patrik Volf - OHR

Yes what I said is...

Interrupted by Fedad Forto - BH Press

Not signed?

A: Patrik Volf - OHR

No supported what I said was...

Interrupted by Fedad Forto - BH Press

I am asking because Minister Ugljenic gave me a statement yesterday in which he said he expected the document should be signed by all sides involved in the education process?

A: Patrik Volf - OHR

My understanding is that this presentation was unanimously welcomed and supported by the Peace Implementation Council, because it was a presentation to the Peace Implementation Council...

Interrupted by Fedad Forto - BH Press

Just welcomed and supported not officially signed?

A:Patrik Volf - OHR

Not to my knowledge, no.

Q:Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

Kirsten, out of those guys that submitted appeals are the 19 members of the special police from Sarajevo Canton among them?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

Yes.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

All of them?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

All of them.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

19?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

19.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

Yves, did Fijuljanin explicitly say he did not want a lawyer?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

He did not ask to see a lawyer.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

Is he aware that he has a right to one?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

I do not know if he is aware or not. It is not like we have to offer the same information a police force would where you are read your rights, that you have the right to remain silent and that you have the right to a lawyer. We do not have the same procedures as a police force. If he wants to have a lawyer he can ask for one and we will deal with that when he does ask for one.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

So, in other words if he had asked for a lawyer you would have allowed him to get one?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

We would have dealt with the situation at the time. Right now he has not asked for a lawyer and I am not going to speculate as to what we will do when he does ask for a lawyer or if he ever does ask for a lawyer.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

I think that you should at least tell us, does he have a right to a lawyer or not?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

We will cross the bridge when we get there. He has not asked for a lawyer.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

That is not a good answer I am afraid. Because, we asked you the same things last time and you have had two days to get us some answers. We really want to know whether or not he has the right to a lawyer. That is all we want to know, is that so difficult to answer?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

I will get you an answer.

Patrik Volf - OHR

Any further questions for today, then thank you very much and have a nice day.