

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

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE - 7 November 2002**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 7 November 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Patrick Volf	• Parties Agree CoM Reform.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• Finalising the strategy paper on education reform.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	• <i>Certification of police officers.</i> • <i>Trust fund project.</i>
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	• No statement.
e SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	• No statement.

2. Thirty-four members of the media including five 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

I have one item on my agenda, which is following up on the meeting Senior Deputy High Representative Gerhard Enver Shrömbgens, had yesterday with leaders and representatives of the parties represented in the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives and were talking on the reform of the Council of Ministers.

The High Representative, after the meeting is encouraged that all the parties unanimously agreed that, the status quo in the Council of Ministers will be changed that efficiency in the government must improve and that the current rotation merry-go-round system must end.

Yesterday, we saw a broad consensus on the principles essential for reforms to the way the Council of Ministers works. These reforms must make the Council of Ministers more efficient, more effective, and at the same time, cut unnecessary bureaucracy.

As the High Representative, has outlined in his post-election speech. This means ending the principle of rotation, enhancing the responsibilities of the Chair, reducing the number of Deputy Ministers, reconfiguring the Ministries themselves and reforming the civil service structures in order to improve policy planning and give Ministers more and the necessary support.

The Office of the High Representative, will be pushing ahead and will, in the coming days, be contacting these parties to discuss the details, which will enable this political consensus to be put into place effectively. Bosnia and Herzegovina has no time to waste. Everyone wants to see truly functioning institutions in place as soon as possible. There is the expectation that when the new Council of Ministers is formed it will be into this new and more effective framework, which is why it is so important to move to the end game as soon as possible. That is all from my side today, thank you.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE

Good morning. A little bit more on what happened yesterday and today as well.

Work on finalising the strategy paper on education reform, which will be introduced to the Peace Implementation Council in a fortnight, continues.

Yesterday, over 200 participants discussed the forthcoming strategy at an education forum here in Sarajevo, including Entity and Cantonal Ministers, representatives of teachers, students, education experts and members of the International Community. Six working groups, focusing on education access and non-discrimination, quality and modernisation of primary and secondary education, vocational education and higher education, education financing and management and reform of education legislation, introduced their drafts, which will be finalised in the coming days.

Co-operation with the education authorities is essential and today, Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani Deputy Head of the OSCE mission, is meeting with Education Ministers in Canton 7 and Canton 8. They will discuss the reform strategy, which will be presented to the PIC, outline development of the paper, next steps and ask for the ministers' support in its implementation. He also intends to bring up the implementation plan for the interim agreement on accommodation of specific needs and rights of returnee children and he is also discussing a meeting of all Education Ministers, which will be held in Mostar next week, on the 13th of November.

Finally, Ambassador Viktor Tkachenko, the other Deputy Head of Mission, is visiting Tuzla and Zvornik. Yesterday and today, he has met with local authorities amongst others; the Mayors of both towns and Deputy Ombudsman. He will also visit the school in Kula Grad, which has a number of returnee teachers and students. That is all, thank you.

Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

Good morning. I have a few items for you.

Firstly, certification again, it is going to be the last time I am announcing large numbers of certifications of police officers.

Today, we are announcing the certification of 2,168 police officers from four law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and those four are the police forces of Canton 8 and 10 as well as Federation Court Police and the State Border Service. All these officers have been individually checked in a joint effort by the local law enforcement authorities and UNMIBH. This certification represents the international recognition that these police officers have met strict criteria to exercise police powers in accordance with democratic standards. They have demonstrated the ability to perform police powers, to have valid educational credentials, to be in compliance with the property legislation, to have completed necessary training and to be citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Again like the previous time you will find the breakdown in the statement.

As the State Border Service and the Federation Court police are still not fully staffed and are still recruiting police officers or personnel, only those officers have been considered for certification who had previously been provisionally authorised by the IPTF Commissioner. There will be more certifiable officers in these two agencies once recruitment goes ahead and once recruits are being approved by IPTF.

In addition, the IPTF Commissioner has decided that the certification of 50 officers will be pending. At this point, these officers do not meet some of the necessary criteria for certification and they will be certified once they meet these. Most of these pending cases are officers who still have to provide proof of citizenship or court clearance, or who have to undergo necessary training. We expect that the majority of this group will clear this situation in a short period of time. Also, some of these officers still have ongoing criminal cases and they must wait for the outcome of these trials.

Again you have the breakdown of those numbers in correspondence to those four agencies.

Finally, the IPTF Commissioner has denied the certification of 72 officers from these four agencies. These officers have failed to uphold standards of human rights and the rule of law or they have not provided valid educational credentials or complied with the property legislation.

Again you will have the breakdown in the statement after the press conference.

Altogether, since 18 October 2002, the IPTF Commissioner has certified 15,786 previously provisionally authorised police officers. The certification of 545 officers is still pending, while 472 officers have been denied certification. That means altogether that the IPTF Commissioner has made decisions on 16,803 officers and that covers 24 law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I have brought today a detailed overview with all relevant figures, summarising the certification process for all these 24 law enforcement agencies and the statistics.

One comment on the certification process. There continue to be reports in the media on the certification process that still show that the process is not fully understood. Particularly, it has been stated incorrectly that UNMIBH by denying certification to a number of police officers is prejudging the outcome of court trials of police officers.

Just to clarify that again. The certification process is a process that is conducted independently from any judicial proceedings. You have to look at this process as being an administrative procedure of selection, basically similar to a recruitment process, but entirely separate from any judicial proceedings. All provisionally authorised police officers were checked to determine whether they meet the criteria required to be a police officer. If they did not meet any of those criteria they were not certified. I can only repeat that this process ensures that Bosnia and Herzegovina will have qualified police officers that meet required standards of professionalism and personal integrity.

I would also like to reiterate that every police officer who was denied certification has the right to appeal this decision and the respective police officers have all been informed about it. There is an appeal review panel in place that will consider these appeals.

The last item I have for you is an announcement. There will be a ceremony tomorrow marking the United Nations Trust Fund donation to the Association of the Hearing and Speech Impaired Citizens and to the Centre for Hearing and Speech Rehabilitation.

The ceremony will be held at the club of the Association of the Hearing and Speech Impaired Citizens, tomorrow at 10:30.

The United Nations Trust Fund has donated close to 29,000 KM to the association for the purchase of equipment and other accessories that will help improve the quality of life of the hearing impaired citizens.

The Trust Fund has also allocated almost 15, 000 US dollars that has provided the Centre for Hearing and Speech Rehabilitation with some pieces of equipment that will considerably improve the hearing and speech rehabilitation training activities there.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General Jacques Paul Klein will be present at the ceremony. You will get a detailed media advisory later in the afternoon. That is all I have thank you.

Bakir Jalovcic - UNHCR

Good morning. There is no statement from UNHCR today.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier - SFOR

No statement from SFOR this morning.

Patrick Volf - OHR

Thank you very much and can I you for your questions please.

Questions and Answers

Q: Fedad Forto - FENA

You were obviously talking about Canton Sarajevo special police are they still pending or are they definitely out?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

I will explain that to you, I will give you the breakdown, so this may be all a bit clearer. Initially it was said 59 cases have been denied certification that figure has now been corrected to 58. Of these 58, 52 police officers have been denied certification on the basis that they have not met requirements in connection with human rights and rule of law, 5 were found not to have complied with property legislation and 1 officer did not have the required educational credentials. I know that there is some confusion with on going court trials in particular, in relation to the support unit. If a police officer has an on going court trial and has on the other hand met all other remaining criteria including those that I just mentioned human rights, rule of law, property legislation and diplomas then the case is still pending. If a police officer has not met these criteria and has a court trial on going then that this is irrelevant, then it is not a prejudging of the outcome of a court trial. Because, we have found this police officer unsuitable to be a police officer based on the criteria I have mentioned respect for human rights, uphold the rule of law, compliance with property legislation and diplomas. That is really independent from parallel court trials in those cases.

Q: Fedad Forto - FENA

Urdur, why did you not put corruption in Bosnian education in your education priorities, which is so obvious?

A: Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE

I think I can assure you that corruption is one of the issues that are in the education reform, we are talking about a long and comprehensive document. Once it is ready it will be published and I think you will see that corruption in education is amongst the issues.

Q: Aida Hasanbegovic - OBN

Kirsten, can you tell me how far along is the case with the special unit from the operation Zujevina and whether they have received the decision on dismissal and on discharge from their duties and whether the Ministry of Interior has reacted promptly?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

Hold on I cannot here the translation, can you repeat the translation please.

Q: Aida Hasanbegovic - OBN

I am interested in how far along the case with operation Zujevina is with the police officers from the special unit who participated in that operation and whether they have received the decision on discharge from duties and whether the Ministry of Interior has reacted promptly?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

I cannot comment on the last question. I do not know exactly what you mean by the reaction of the Ministry of Interior. Yes, these police officers are part of the 52 that I have mentioned that have not received certification based on the findings that they have not met human rights and to uphold the rule of law. That brought about the decision not to give them certification. I do not know what you mean by the reaction from the Ministry of Interior, so you may want to clarify that.

Q: Aida Hasanbegovic - OBN

I was interested in what happened with the special police officers whether they received their documents on discharge and whether they were certified. Because the Ministry of Interior of Sarajevo Canton has this one unit

with some 20 people, so is the MUP going to stay without this unit?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

Firstly, this is more or less a technical issue. Of course letters of notification on these decisions are being sent out to the police officers via the Ministry of Interior. I cannot say at this point whether these letters have been submitted or delivered to each single police officer that is concerned in this case. Following that the Minister of Interior will also have to conduct some administrative procedure that will lead to the dismissal of these police officers. That concerns all police officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina that have not received certification. Let me also remind you, that these police officers once they have received the notification on that decision of non-certification, have the right to appeal that decision for a period of 8 days during which, they can lodge that appeal with UNMIBH and they are duly informed about this measure. Concerning internal structuring and staffing of the Ministry of Interior you will have to ask them they will have to look into this problem and yes I agree with you.

Q: Lejla Redovic - FTV

Patrik, today the Deputy High Representative Donald Hays, spoke with the Representatives of the Council of Ministers can you give me a few details about that meeting, what were the conclusions of that meeting just several pieces of information?

A: Patrik Volf - OHR

I cannot at the moment because when I left the office he was still there. I will have to talk to afterwards and get back to you on this one, sorry.

Q Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

Kirsten, about that special support team, you said that they had the right to appeal to UNMIBH, have any of them sent an appeal to you so far and if they have not when is the deadline for the appeal?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMBIH

Let me start at the end with the last part of your question. They have 8 days from the day they receive the notification.

Q Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

When did they receive that, remind me?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMBIH

That is what I said before. I cannot confirm that. I do not know whether the Ministry has delivered the letters to each single police officer that is concerned in this case. I do not know, I maybe able to confirm this latter in the day, I cannot tell you at this point. They then have 8 days to lodge their appeal upon that fact then the case is going to be reviewed again.

Patrik Volf - OHR

No further questions for today. Thank you very much and have a nice one.