

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 22 October 2002

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday 22 October 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Patrik Volf	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR at UN and in Washington.• Letter to principle leaders.• PDHR meets with political party leaders.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All property claims solved in Lopare, Sekovici, Kresevo and Srbac.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ferhadija trial.• Downsizing of UNMIBH.
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No statement.
e. ICTY	Rafik Hodzic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unsealing of indictments.• Report on the judicial status of ICTY.• Carla del Ponte visit.
f. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forthcoming COMSFOR press conference.

2. Thirty-four members of the media including six 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

The High Representative Paddy Ashdown, will today travel to New York, where he will address the United Nations Security Council tomorrow, together with Special Representative of the Secretary General Jacques Paul Klein. This will be a very important occasion. It will be the last time that the Security Council discusses Bosnia and Herzegovina while still having an extensive United Nations mission in this country.

On Thursday, the High Representative will travel on to Washington, where he will meet with senior United States Administration Officials.

Secondly, the High Representative Paddy Ashdown, and UNMIBH Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Souren Seraydarian, today sent a letter to political party leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Condemning in the strongest possible terms any form of political obstruction of the work of law enforcement agencies and extending their full support to all Police Commissioners, and their counterparts at the Entity and state level in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the senior operational police commanders.

It has come to the International Communities attention that enormous pressure is being placed on senior police officers by a number of political players, including Ministers of Interior and political parties, in an attempt to exert political influence on the police. Political interference in operational police matters is in clear contradiction with the principles of democratic policing and entirely unacceptable.

The International Community will not tolerate any attempt by political or criminal elements to obstruct the work of the police forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and use them for the realisation of their own objectives. We will unrelentingly continue with democratic police reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the eradication of political interference in police matters. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve a non-political police force that serves them and not the politicians or their parties. Politicians who continue with political obstruction of the police are clearly no servants of the people and will have to bear the consequences of their irresponsible acts.

As we speak, Principle Deputy High Representative Don Hays, is meeting with representatives of the political parties represented in Parliaments throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There is a clear message that the High Representative sent to the political leaders immediately after the elections. He said, "Whatever government is formed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in its Entities, in the Cantons, Bosnia and Herzegovina has to move forward with reform."

This is precisely what the meeting between Don Hays and the political party leaders is about. Discussing the tasks ahead and preparing the way forward, whatever Government will be formed. There will be a press conference after the meeting at 13.00 at the Office of the High Representative and you all have been notified about this.

My last announcement regards, the meeting between Principle Deputy High Representative Don Hays and ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla del Ponte, later in the day. They will both address the press after their meeting at 17.45, also at our premises. That is all from me for today, thank you.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning everyone. A piece of good news finally.

On behalf of all the agencies involved in property law implementation, that is, OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, CRPC and UNMIBH, we applaud the housing authorities in Lopare, Sekovici, Kresevo and Srbac who have solved all the claims submitted to their offices.

In doing so they have created conditions for the return of all claimants to their pre-war properties and proven once and for all that full implementation of the property law is possible. Although these four are not the only municipalities, which have resolved the property cases submitted to them, they are the first ones with more than a handful of claims to have done so.

Lopare had a total of 833 claims, Srbac had 222 claims and Sekovici and Kresevo had 148 claims each, making them the municipalities with the highest number of claims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so far to have completed the process. This development is in line with the progress that the Federation and the Republika Srpska have made in the implementation of property laws since the beginning of 2002. As a result the Republika Srpska is closing in on the Federation, the difference in implementation rate now stands at less than 10%, as opposed to 18%, at the beginning of the year.

The Property Law Implementation Plan Agencies are expecting Cantonal, Entity, and State authorities to support the local authorities in the implementation of the New Strategic Direction, which we launched last September, if you recall, in order for them to follow the examples of Lopare, Sekovici, Kresevo and Srbac. As of October 15, no delays in implementing the property law will be tolerated. As a part of a New Strategic Direction for property law implementation, the Property Law Implementation Plan Agencies, will continue to treat any deviation from the strict implementation of the property laws as obstruction of the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. That is all from me, thank you.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning. Two items from UNMIBH.

The first is the Ferhadija trial, more than a year after the violence that took place during the laying of cornerstone of the Ferhadija Mosque on 7 May 2001, in Banja Luka.

Prison sentences were pronounced yesterday, for some of the perpetrators of the crimes committed during the event. While it is a positive sign that, finally, perpetrators have been brought to justice, UNMIBH believes that the sentences are very mild considering the seriousness of the crimes committed during the incident. UNMIBH also remains concerned over the inefficiency and lack of professionalism of the judiciary in handling the case.

UNMIBH will continue to monitor the subsequent proceedings, including the forthcoming appeals. With this pronouncement of sentences, the legal proceedings in relation to the Ferhadija Mosque incident are still incomplete. UNMIBH will continue to urge the local police to continue their investigations into the incident and to identify the main organisers of the riots.

Information on the downsizing of UNMIBH, with the UNMIBH mission drawing to a close in a little more than two months, the downsizing of personnel, in particular IPTF monitors, has started. Since last week, groups of IPTF monitors are leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina and return to their home countries.

The reduction of IPTF personnel will continue over the next weeks, but a certain number of international police officers, about 470, will remain and become European Union Police Mission staff at the beginning of next year. UNMIBH, in co-operation with the European Union Police Mission, advance team will ensure that this transition phase will pass smoothly and all mandate-related projects will be completed as foreseen. That is all I have for you, thank you.

Bakir Jalovcic – UNHCR

Good morning. No statement from UNHCR.

Rafik Hodzic – ICTY

Good morning. I have three items for you today.

The first is more details on indictments, which were unsealed yesterday, by Judge Schomburg, against Drago Nikolic, Vujadin Popovic and Ljubisa Beara, these indictments were originally confirmed on 6 September, for Drago Nikolic and on 26 March of this year for Popovic and Beara.

During the attack on the Srebrenica enclave by Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995, and the subsequent killings and executions of Bosniak men, Drago Nikolic, served as Chief of Security of the Bosnian Serb Army First Light Infantry Brigade in Zvornik, Zvornik Brigade. Vujadin Popovic was the Assistant Commander of Security on the staff of the Drina Corps. and Ljubisa Beara was Chief of Security of the Main Staff of the VRS.

In the several days following the attack on Srebrenica, VRS and MUP forces captured, detained, summarily executed, and buried over 7,000 Bosniak men and boys from the Srebrenica enclave, and forcibly transferred the Bosniak women and children of Srebrenica out of the enclave.

The indictments against, Drago Nikolic, Vujadin Popovic and Ljubisa Beara, refer to their alleged involvement in, among other things, opportunistic killings in Srebrenica, Potocari, Bratunac, and Zvornik areas. Wide-scale and organised killings in Srebrenica, Bratunac and Zvornik areas killings and mistreatment of prisoners captured along the Bratunac-Milici road. The separation and transportation of Bosniak women and children in the Potocari area, the handling of Bosnian Muslim prisoners in the Potocari and Bratunac areas, the capture, detention and transport of Bosnian Muslim

prisoners along the Bratunac-Milici road and opportunistic killings in Potocari and along the Bratunac-Milici road.

According to the indictments, Drago Nikolic, Vujadin Popovic and Ljubisa Beara, together with other VRS and MUP officers and units, were members of and knowingly participated in a joint criminal enterprise. The common purpose of, which was among other things, to forcibly transfer the women and children from the Srebrenica enclave to Kladanj, on 12 July and 13 July 1995, and to capture, detain, summarily execute by firing squad, bury, and rebury thousands of Bosniak men and boys aged, 16 to 60, from the Srebrenica enclave from 12 July 1995, until and about 19 July 1995.

Indictments charge, Drago Nikolic, Vujadin Popovic and Ljubisa Beara, on the basis of their individual criminal responsibility, with genocide, alternatively, complicity to commit genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war. The full press release is outside and also the full text of the indictments can be obtained from our office or from our website.

The second item is related to a document that you can also find outside, which you can for the first time see in its entirety, it is a report on the judicial status of the ICTY and prospects for referring certain cases to national courts.

This document has the detailed outline of ICTY's strategy with timetables and proposals for referring certain cases to the Bosnian judiciary. If you have any further questions regarding this issue you can always contact me to discuss them.

Finally, and I am sure something that interests you the most, some details on the programme of Madam del Ponte, as Patrik said earlier, she will be meeting with Principle Deputy High Representative Hays, today at 17:00. Following this meeting there will be a short press opportunity.

Tomorrow she will hold meetings with the Commander of SFOR, representatives of United Nations mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and European Union Ambassadors in Bosnia and Herzegovina before departing to Zagreb. This is more or less all I can give you on the visit. Thank you.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Good morning. I have only one point for you today.

The Commander of SFOR, Lieutenant General William E. Ward will be available for a question and answer session with the press at 12:00 noon, Tuesday 29 October on completion of our regular press briefing.

Members of the press are encouraged to use this opportunity to meet and ask questions of Lieutenant General Ward, who became SFOR's seventh commander on 8 October. This is all from SFOR.

Patrik Volf – OHR

Thank you very much.

Questions and Answers

Q: Aleksandar Dragicevic – AP

Yves, any update on the ORAO case?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No there is nothing more to add then what was said in our press statement on Saturday.

Q: Aleksandar Dragicevic – AP

There is some speculation about countries Yugoslavia, Iraq et cetera. Can you comment on this?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No I am not going to comment on press reports. The only thing I can tell you at this time is that SFOR conducted the inspection of ORAO, as laid out in the General Framework Agreement for Peace and as implemented in the Instructions to the Parties. We did find evidence that ORAO through a contract was involved in the unreported export of weapons systems component outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have informed the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence of this fact and also reported the findings through our chain of command and to the International Community leaders. The evaluation of the information that we gathered through the inspection will last, three, four maybe five weeks. As soon as we have more information we will communicate it to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence and to the International Community, but that is all I have at this time.

Q: Aleksandar Dragicevic – AP

Rafik, talking about these three guys, according to your intelligence are they hiding in Bosnia or Yugoslavia?

A: Rafik Hodzic – ICTY

I cannot comment on our intelligence. The fact warrants for the arrest of Popovic and Beara, were issued in August, and transmitted to Yugoslav authorities.

Q: Merijana Sadovic – ABC

Yves, why are you so secretive about the names of the countries with which, the ORAO factory had links with?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

The investigation is still on going right now and there might be more evidence coming through in the next few weeks. The evidence that we found was communicated through the appropriate authorities, the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence and the International Community. We want to let the

Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence, know that we did find something very significant and hopefully they will do something about it. That is why we cannot release anymore information at this time.

Q: Stojic Milan – RTRS

Is the report published in the Belgrade based Blitz, true? Their information is that a company called Yugoimport exported a large quantity of equipment to Iraq?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I am not going to comment on what is published in various newspapers or broadcast on radio stations. What I can tell you is whether there is further evidence of non-compliance to United Nations Resolution, is a matter for SFOR to report through its chain of command and to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence. I am not going to comment on any specific news reports that might be out there today, or in the next few days.

Q: Stojic Milan – RTRS

A question for the IPTF, can you tell us anything about the problems with Republika Srpska Radio and Television encountered yesterday, in Brcko?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

No.

Q: Stojic Milan – RTRS

When I say problems, I am mostly referring to verbal problems, oral problems?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

No. We have not received any reports on that. If there is a problem it has to be reported to the police and through the

police and IPTF will know about it. But, I have seen no such reports at all today.

Q: Jasmin Rawashdeh – KUNA

Did you find any evidence in the ORAO factory that the Republika Srpska or Yugoslavia directly co-operated with Iraq?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I am not going to comment on that. What we found is clear evidence of a contract, which links ORAO with the unrecorded export of weapons systems components outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that is all I am prepared to say at this time.

Q: Jasmin Rawashdeh – KUNA

Did the co-operation include spare parts or technical systems co-operation?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I am talking about weapons system components.

Q: Jasmin Rawashdeh – KUNA

Rockets?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Weapons system components.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – AFP

You say, you found evidence of a contract maybe I do understand you very well. But, are you trying to tell us something, it is not a contract, is it some kind of indirect link to a contract. What is it, what is evidence of a contract?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

We have the contract between ORAO and other parties, which indicates unreported export of weapons systems components outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Q: Nedin Dervisbegovic – AFP

Assuming it is a contravention to the Dayton Peace Agreement, it is a contracting dated after the war?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Correct. It is something that ORAO was not supposed to do, because it violates instructions, laid out in the Instructions to the Parties.

Q: Nedin Dervisbegovic – AFP

Could you explain to us, what factories can do, in what way can they export stuff like weapons systems components?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

The Instructions to Parties is a very thick document, which sets out what Government Ordinance Factories can and cannot do. I cannot go into the details because it would take a long time. When we do an inspection, we have to ascertain that the factory maintains appropriate record keeping, that what is in the books actually reflects what is in the factory itself, correspondence that emanates from the factory follows the Instructions to the Parties. That is why it takes so long to finalise the inspection report. We are looking at maybe another four to five weeks before we can have an actual final report. Within just a short time of having information we are able to ascertain the fact that there is a contract that links ORAO with the unreported export of weapons systems components and that is a violation of the Instructions to Parties. There might be other evidence of violation as we go through the information, only time will tell. We have to go through the information and that will take time there is a lot of

information and we will make sure we do a thorough job.

Q: Amra Hadiošmanovic – AFP

What represents violations of instructions, the fact that export was reported, the type of the component or the end user?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

The fact is that, it was unreported, undocumented, it was sent out of Bosnia and Herzegovina without the appropriate documentation being completed and that is a violation to the Instructions to Parties.

Q: Anita Lisica – BHTV 1

Patrik, in what way will the laws that the High Representative has imposed, do for foreign investors to become interested in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

A: Patrik Volf – OHR

That is what the High Representative elaborated on quite extensively yesterday, this is a package of economics laws that are of crucial importance for any foreign investor if you look through it. I will not go through every single law now, through the list we are talking about twelve laws. These were essential laws that were already before that in the parliament and could not find a majority there at the time, but laws that investors were already waiting for. If you want to discuss any of the laws in detail we can certainly do so.

Q: Zeljko Tica – FTV

The contract that you found, does it violate a United Nations Resolution?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

The contract that we found contradicts the Instructions to the

Parties and that is what SFOR's mandate, is to do an inspection of ORAO to find if the company was following the guidelines established in the Instructions to the Parties. Having found that document, which links ORAO to the unrecorded export of weapons systems components outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina constitutes a violation of the Instructions to the Parties. SFOR went in to ORAO as a way to enforce Instructions to the Parties only.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Can you define weapons systems components, what are they?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

They would be parts of a weapons system, that when put together you would have weapons.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Weapons what kind of weapons?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I cannot go into details of what kind of weapon we are looking at. It is like you have a transistor, the transistor could just be a transistor it could be used for commercial application, but that transistor put into a weapons sensor, becomes a weapon.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Are we talking about one specific type of weapon or various types of weapons?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I cannot get into any details at this time. I know it is frustrating that I cannot provide you with the answer and I can understand that, but you also have to understand that there is so much information that we have to go through. We

are looking at five weeks of intensive work from our team of inspectors, looking at documents, tracing documents, putting all of these documents, to arrive at a picture. So, that we can go back to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence and say this is what has been done correctly and this is what has been done incorrectly. If it does not fit within the Instruction to the Parties or the General Framework Agreement for Peace, then we send that information through our chain of command to other agencies for them to take action. I know it is frustrating because there is so much information, when you look at the fact that our SFOR troops arrived at ORAO at 13:00 on Friday afternoon and left on Sunday, and worked through the night going through the entire complex. You have to imagine there is a lot of information and it has to be put together to get a good picture as to how ORAO has been complying or not complying with the Instruction to the Parties.

Q: Stojic Milan – RTRS:

For years ORAO had agreements like working with Rolls Royce, tell me for example did you find any evidence regarding the aircraft engines?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I cannot comment on the specifics of what we have found out to date. It is going to be a long process and when we do find something we will inform the appropriate authority the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence and the International Community. We just cannot go bit by bit as to what we find today, what we find tomorrow, we will be here for ever and until we go through all the information. I cannot go into details, because these details taken separately can mean many things. We can only at this time say that we have a contract, which links ORAO to the unrecorded export of weapons systems components outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is a violation to the Instructions to Parties.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

If I am not wrong, I think you informed the Republika Srpska Defence Minister about your findings on Saturday. Did he do anything about that and how long will you wait before he does something?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I did not get the start of your question could you repeat please.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Did you inform the Republika Srpska Defence Minister about your findings on Saturday?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Yes we did that.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Did he do anything about that?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I cannot comment on that, because I do not know the answer to your question. I do not know if he has responded or has been in communication with COMSFOR. I do not know the answer to that question.

Q: Alem Karamesic – Hayat

The removal of Mr. Alibabic, I would like to learn more details about it, what is the background of this removal, was he involved in any illegal affairs, illegal activities, what is behind this removal of Mr. Alibabic?

A: Patrik Volf – OHR

I can quote you from the decision were the High

Representative, always lays out the basis for a removal and there he says. "Mr. Munir Alibabic, holds the position of Director of FOSS, this office is one in which, the holder is subject to highest fiduciary duties in relation to intelligence and security in the Federation. As such he holds a position at the head of a service, which has special duties and responsibilities over and above those in other public bodies. The holder of such an office must be active in exercising the highest integrity the full confidence of the citizens of the Federation including the staff of the service is essential in order for the services work to be successfully accomplished. Mr. Alibabic, as the holder of such office has failed in his duty to adequately protect intelligence information from improper use and in his duty to maintain the confidence of the public in the Federation. Mr. Alibabic, has through this and other means failed to take effective action to protect the reputation of the office he holds and of the said service. He has thereby in premises failed to demonstrate active and unreserved support for the peace process." I do think I have to add much more to that.

Q: Jasmin Rawashdeh – KUNA

Since you have found clear evidence in the ORAO factory of violations of United Nations Sanctions?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I did not say that. I did not say United Nations Sanctions; I said violation of the Instruction to the Parties.

Q: Jasmin Rawashdeh – KUNA

Do you have any guarantee in the future since the factory is still open and still working that ORAO will continue or increase military relations with Iraq?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

What we have to do right now, is go through the entire information we have, communicate it through the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence and inform them of our concerns. What will happen in the future I do not know, but I would expect that if the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence is informed that ORAO has been doing something that it should not, they would take the appropriate actions. I do not know what is going to happen, we have to go through all the information. There will be more discussion between SFOR and the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence and that is going to take a few more weeks to go through. What is going to happen in the future? I cannot predict the future, we will just have to wait and see.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic – AFP

Is ORAO functioning right now?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Yes. When we went to do the inspection it was not our objective to shutdown ORAO, if we did find something. We always said that if we do find evidence of violation to the Instructions to the Parties, after the entire investigation has been conducted and the appropriate people have been informed, that action would be taken against those individuals who violated the Instructions to Parties.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic – AFP

Maybe they are right now working on completing this contract?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I do not know what they are doing right now.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic – AFP

So, you have not done anything to prevent further

export?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Could you say that again please?

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP

You have not done anything to halt the incorrect export?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

We are in discussion with the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence we have told them there is already evidence of a violation to the Instructions to the Parties. We have to give time for the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence to take what we provided them, look at it and then give them the chance to do something about it.

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP

Has there been a deadline given to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No. There is no deadline given because we are still conducting the investigation. The final results of the investigation are not available yet and that is going to take and I'll say once again, at least a month to go through all of the documentation.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

It is obvious you are not willing or able to help us at the moment, but can you please tell us, how serious is the situation with the ORAO factory, quite serious, very serious, extremely serious?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

It is a serious violation of the Instruction to the Parties.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Is it very serious or just serious?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

It depends on what you qualify as serious. It is a serious violation to the Instructions to the Parties. It is something that should not have taken place, the instructions are very clear and we expect these factories to respect them and to have the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence ensure that these guidelines and ways of doing this are respected by their factories. It did not take us long to find out that there was a contract. So, oversight has to be done by these various agencies.

Patrik Volf – OHR

This was definitely the very last question. Thank you very much for today