

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

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 29 August 2002

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 29 August 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Patrik Volf	• SDHR Schroembgens to visit Republika Srpska.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• Meeting between education authorities and international representatives. • Nine municipalities have completed the Municipal Infrastructure Finance and Implementation program. • RS defence ministry agrees to co-operate in issuing the guide for demobilised soldiers.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	• First results of the verification of diplomas. • Canton 6 launches disciplinary proceedings against 25 police officers. • Public information campaign aimed at crime prevention. • Inauguration of Gorica SBS Unit.

d. ICTY	Rafik Hodzic	• International Day of Disappeared. • Reference to an article, which appeared in local newspapers.
e. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	• No statement.

2. Twenty-one members of the media and two television crews attended the conference.

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

C. Barraud
Lt. Col. (FR A),
Chief Operations and Plans

Patrik Volf – OHR

Good morning everybody and welcome to our press conference.

I have just one short announcement for you today and that is, the Office of the High Representative Senior Deputy High Representative Ambassador Gerhard Schroembgens, will visit Sanski Most, Prijedor and Banja Luka next week. On 3 September, he will visit Sanski Most in the morning and Prijedor in the afternoon before finally arriving in Banja Luka. He will have meetings with entity and municipal officials, including Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic, the minister for Refugees and Displaced Persons Mr. Micic and the Mayors of Sanski Most and Prijedor. This will be Mr Schroembgens first visit to the Republika Srpska. A detailed programme regarding press opportunities any everything, will be sent out in the coming days. That is all from my side.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning.

I will start with a reminder of a meeting that took place yesterday, between education authorities and international representatives. They discussed the way forward on issues such as education legislation, the drafting of a strategy paper on education and the education of returnee children. Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, Head of the OSCE mission, emphasised the urgent requirement to improve the level, quality and availability of education for Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens, and underlined the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens and the International Community to work together to achieve success. He stressed the need to produce an education strategy paper for the Peace Implementation Council, which is to take place in November, in Brussels, which should define the highest priorities in education and the process and timing for achieving them. Ambassador Beecroft urged the local authorities to involve themselves actively in setting those goals. The full text of this press release is outside.

Secondly, nine municipalities have successfully completed the OSCE's Municipal Infrastructure Finance and Implementation programme, also known as MIFI, they are the first to finish the project since it was established in 1998.

In 2002, altogether 35 Municipalities are taking part in this intensive programme, which combines training seminars with technical assistance tailored to the needs of participating Municipalities. The nine municipalities are Ilijas, Gorazde, Gradiska, Tesanj, Velika Kladusa, Gradacac, Kalesija, Trnovo and Trnovo both in the Federation and the Republika Srpska.

The MIFI municipalities have made strong improvements in the following areas; efficiency of the local administration, financial sustainability and improved financial management

practices, responsiveness of local administration to community needs and increased citizen participation in policy making.

Examples of good practices have been an increased accessibility to municipal assembly and council sessions, publication information on the municipal budget, adherence to budget and accounting legislation, inclusion of citizens in municipal development planning, and establishment of regular meetings with citizen groups. A full text of this is available outside as well.

And finally, just a short note to tell you, that the Republika Srpska defence ministry has agreed to co-operate with the OSCE in issuing a Republika Srpska version of, the guide for demobilised soldiers, planned to be issue late this fall. Thank you.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning. I have several items for you.

First of all further on the certification process, about a month ago I spoke to you about the issue of verification of school diplomas, we can now present the first results of this exercise.

We have been verifying the school diplomas of all 18,000 provisionally authorised police officers. Having by now checked the credentials of 11,000 police officers, UNMIBH found that 355 police officers appeared to have fraudulent diplomas.

On 26 August 2002, the IPTF Commissioner Sven Frederiksen informed all Ministers of Interior as well as the Chief of Police in Brcko and the directors of the State Border Service to inform them that a certain number of their police officers have been found to have suspect educational qualifications.

The letters contained lists with the names of those police officers whose credentials appeared to be fraudulent. Of the 355 police officers, 192 are in Federation, 129 in Republika Srpska, one in Brcko, five in the court police and 28 in the State Border Service.

The IPTF Commissioner requested the Ministers of Interior and Chiefs of Services to take appropriate action under relevant local law to remove those officials who were found to have fraudulent diplomas by the deadline 10 September 2002.

In the meantime, the verification of diplomas continues. Foreign diplomas need to be verified as well as educational credentials in cases where school registry files are missing.

There are about 1,400 police officers that either have not yet submitted their diplomas at all or have submitted illegible diplomas or documents. These officers have been requested via the relevant Ministries of Interior and Chiefs of Services to present valid educational documentation by 23 August 2002, this deadline has passed and only in a few cases have we received the required documentation.

The verification of diplomas is part of the certification process and it aims at establishing the authenticity of educational credentials of law enforcement personnel. That should ensure that police officers meet higher standards of professional competence and personal integrity.

Now another subject, the Ministry of Interior of Canton 6 has launched an internal disciplinary investigation against 25 police officers from the Vitez area for their involvement in prostitution. Following a raid in the bar Roki in Vitez on 20 June 2002, five young women of foreign nationalities were found in the bar. All five of them were found to be victims of human trafficking who have been forced into prostitution. In their statements given to the IPTF STOP team and later to the police, the investigative judge and the public prosecutor,

the women identified these 25 police officers as customers of the bar. Most of these police officers were also identified as having had sex with these women.

In this connection, UNMIBH is very astonished at the reaction of the Public Prosecutor in Vitez Basic Court who saw no grounds for a criminal investigation against these police officers. Who were customers in a bar where trafficked victims were forced into prostitution and most of them also had sex with these women. UNMIBH will very closely follow the internal investigation of the Ministry of Interior of Canton 6 and will also look into the legal side of the case. Pending the outcome of the disciplinary investigation, UNMIBH will also take appropriate measures against implicated police officers.

Another item, UNMIBH today launches a nation-wide campaign to raise public awareness about the citizen's role in crime prevention. The campaign that will last all through September and will promote the benefits gained when citizen based crime watch schemes work in co-operation with police to minimise preventable crime. It will also emphasise that, although crime prevention is primarily the job of the police, it is also every citizen's responsibility to contribute to crime prevention in order to improve quality of life in the community.

In the last three years, the IPTF and local community policing teams had been implementing programmes that focused on community mobilisation and the partnership between the police and the community. This public information campaign was developed to reinforce the aims of those programmes, which are still being maintained by local policing authorities. In addition, the campaign stresses the importance of reporting crime to the police without which, the police have less of a chance to pursue and apprehend offenders. To this end, the campaign reinforces the new police hot line telephone number 122, which is now operational all over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Campaign material includes 60 billboards that will be displayed across Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as posters and leaflets that will be distributed throughout the country, you have them outside, this is what they look like.

The last item I have for you today, is the inauguration of the second –to-last unit of the State Border Service, in fact as we speak, this unit is being inaugurated in Gorica in the South west of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This unit is the second-to- last one to deploy. With the deployment of this unit, the State Border Service of Bosnia-Herzegovina will cover 97% of the national borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The unit at Gorica will consist of 142 police officers and will control 54 km of border and two international crossings at Osoje and Gorica. The last remaining unit State Border Service will be deployed in Strmica at the end of September, which will then bring the State Border Service to control the entire land borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina. That is all I have for you, thank you.

Refik Hodzic – ICTY

Hello. I have two items for you today.

The first is related to tomorrow's occasion, were numerous associations of families of missing persons will mark 30 August, the International Day of Disappeared. While marking this symbolic occasion, these families will repeat calls for information on the whereabouts of thousands of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina many of whom are missing as a result of war crimes committed during the conflict.

ICTY uses this occasion to call on witnesses who have information related to the crimes and the fate of the missing persons to come forward and report to the relevant authorities. Witnesses are the most crucial element of any war crimes trial and are certainly instrumental in discovering

what happened to those whose disappearance resulted from such crimes.

In keeping with our mandate to address war crimes, we express full support for all efforts on the part of members of the police, the prosecutors and the courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina who continue with investigation and prosecution of war crimes committed during the conflict.

As you know in January 1996, the Rome Agreement was signed, according to this agreement war crimes cases need to be reviewed and deemed consistent with international standards by the ICTY before persons suspected of war crimes can be detained in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this review process, where there is sufficient evidence to provide reasonable grounds for believing that a suspect has committed a crime a standard marking "A" is given. We would like to point out that out of some 500 standard markings "A" that were returned to courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina before 2002, only some 60 persons were indicted and brought before courts. Courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina have a concurrent jurisdiction with the ICTY and it is their obligation to prosecute war criminals. The most effective way to resolve war crime cases and to get to the truth about the victims is to hold transparent trials. Where witnesses will be protected from intimidation, free to tell what they know and in doing so help the families to find out what happened to their loved ones who are still missing seven years after the war.

The second item is just a brief reference to an article, which appeared in local newspapers yesterday in relation to the issue of Jonathan Randell, an American journalist who was subpoenaed to appear as a witness in the Brdjanin and Talic case. The article stated that a decision was made by the Tribunal to approve Randaell's appeal and that, according to that decision journalists can not be subpoenaed to testify before ICTY. I would like to say that this is not correct and that no such decision has been made, the matter is currently

before the Appeals Chamber, which is considering the appeal made by the amicus curiae on behalf of Jonathan Randell. That is all.

Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

Good morning from SFOR.

I have no formal statement for you, but I will be pleased to take any questions you have.

Patrik Volf – OHR

Thank you very much from the podium. Any questions?

Questions and Answers

Q: Ankica Posavljak – HRT

Kirsten, is it true that 6 police officers from Prijedor, that are suspected of the killing of Matanovic are still at large, is it also true that the documentation regarding this case has been forwarded to the ICTY?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Let me start with the second part of the information, indeed the case file on the 21 police officers has now been forwarded to the ICTY. As you probably remember, there has been quite a delay, we will have to wait and see what the decision of the ICTY will be, we expect this case will be given back to the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities in order to launch a trial. Regarding those 6, I will have to check my information again and get back to you later.

A: Rafik Hodzic – ICTY

If I can just clarify, nobody can be arrested without approval from the ICTY or detained for a crime involving crimes we have jurisdiction for. War crimes in this case, so they cannot be arrested before there is standard marking “A” given by the ICTY.

Q: Ankica Posavljak – HRT

But they have already been arrested. They have already been in a local prison. They cannot be arrested for a war crime... They cannot be arrested for a war crime without prior consent of the ICTY an investigation can be launched, they can be arrested for anything else, but a war crime without the approval or the standard marking “A”?

A: Rafik Hodzic – ICTY

They cannot be arrested for war crimes without the ICTY approval. They can be arrested for anything else, but not for war crimes without approval standard marking “A”

Patrik Volf – OHR

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