

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 22 August 2002

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

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Patrik Volf	• HR issued several decisions harmonising the prosecutorial systems.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• OSCE to implement the 'Fair Employment Practices' project.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	• Law on Internal Affairs. • Football Match. • Certification of Police Officers. • Next Round of testing at Banja Luka Police Academy.
d. IJC	Sanela Tunovic	• FBiH and the HJPC of the RS will begin to announce vacancies for top-level judicial and prosecutorial posts.
e. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	• No statement.

2. Nineteen 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

Welcome to our press conference today. I am happy to welcome back a familiar face on this panel, Sanela Tunovic, who is now working as the Spokesperson for the Independent Judicial Commission.

As far as we (OHR) are concerned, I have a reminder for you. As you have seen, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown yesterday issued several decisions harmonising the prosecutorial systems in the Entities and in the Cantons.

The High Representative's decisions amend the existing laws governing the prosecutors' offices in the Federation Cantons and in both Bosnia and Herzegovina Entities, consolidating the prosecutors' offices at Canton District levels.

The High Representative's decisions reform the current prosecutorial system, closing all municipal-level prosecutors' offices and consolidating positions into existing Cantons and District Offices, Canton Offices in the Federation and District Offices in Republika Srpska. The State-level prosecutor's office is not effected by these changes.

Currently municipal prosecutors are required to deal with all types of prosecutions including ever more complex cases of fraud and organised crime. By expanding the Canton and

District Prosecutors Offices, it will now be possible for prosecutors to specialise in specific types of prosecution.

The High Representative's decisions sets up a more efficient, professional and modern prosecutorial system across Bosnia and Herzegovina. These reforms are part of the High Representative's focus on justice and ensuring the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is essential for job creation and the further development of both international and domestic investment. A proposed plan for the restructuring of the court system across Bosnia and Herzegovina has been forwarded to the relevant Entity Institutions. That is all from my side for today.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

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

Filuks Company from Dobož today signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the OSCE to implement the project 'Fair Employment Practices'. Filuks is the eighth company to sign such a Memorandum of Understanding with OSCE.

The goal of the 'Fair Employment Practices' project is to set solid examples of good employment practices in companies and institutions in both the public and private sector. Companies in Gradiska, Prijedor, Maglaj and Gorazde are already participating in the project.

Research conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1999 confirmed that cases of discrimination in the post-war period are mostly based on national ethnic origin and political affiliation. This mainly affects returnees, which presents an obstacle for creating the conditions for sustainable return and prosperity of the country. OSCE personnel will provide professional advice regarding personnel policies, such as employment of new staff, improvement of work evaluation methods, and disciplinary and dismissal procedures. That is all from me today. Thanks.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I have quite a long statement today.

First, some comments on the Law for Internal Affairs for the Federation. This was part of the decisions that were passed yesterday by the High Representative. UNMIBH welcomes the decision of the High Representative to harmonise the texts of the Law on Internal Affairs of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There has been close co-ordination on this issue between the Office of the High Representative and UNMIBH for over a year.

This new legislation opens the door for the establishment of a modern, non-politicised and democratic police force in the Federation. It is now up to Federation authorities to implement the provisions of this new law and move towards the appointment of senior management in the Federation Ministry of Interior.

The second item – some comments on police performance yesterday at the football match. UNMIBH would like to commend the Sarajevo Canton police on their professional performance at yesterday's football match between Yugoslavia and Bosnia. Prior to the match the police had made thorough security preparations. More than 250 police officers were deployed yesterday, including support unit officers and traffic police.

Unfortunately, the police were put to a test when, after the match, a number of spectators attacked supporters of the Yugoslav team who were escorted out of the stadium by the police. The response of the police was entirely appropriate and very professional, keeping the situation under control and preventing any further disturbances. Eight persons were arrested and 19 police officers were injured last night – two of them seriously.

It is very deplorable that this game, which was announced as a

friendly encounter, was used by a number of people to express their violent and aggressive attitudes. UNMIBH strongly condemns any forms of hooliganism and violence. These attitudes have no place in a modern democratic society.

The third item is quite an important issue. It is about certification of police officers. You may remember that some weeks' back, I was talking about a number of criteria. One of them was a school certificate. I'm coming with more details today.

One of the main aspects of the establishment and sustainability of effective democratic law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina is that all law enforcement personnel meet international standards of professional competence and personal integrity. UNMIBH has designed a certification process, during which all police officers in Bosnia-Herzegovina will have to prove that they meet these standards.

Police officers with provisional authorisation to exercise police powers must meet the following requirements in order to receive certification:

- Demonstrated ability to exercise police powers
- a clean criminal record and no pending criminal cases
- valid educational credentials
- completed UNMIBH or IPTF compulsory courses
- full compliance with property law legislation that refers to legal housing situation
- proof of Bosnia and Herzegovina citizenship.

Should any of these criteria not be met, the officer will not be certified.

Over the last two years, UNMIBH was checking the housing situation of all police officers. However, a number of police officers throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina have not yet regularised or clarified their housing situation. On 15 August 2002, IPTF Commissioner Sven Frederiksen in a letter has urged all Ministers of Interior, the State Border Service Director and the Acting President of the Federation Supreme Court that refers to the court police to remind these police officers to regulate and legalise their housing status.

Police officers who are violating property law legislation will not be certified. Without this certification, a police officer will not be able to work ever again in any position in any law enforcement agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNMIBH has always stressed that certification was not automatic and that a number of criteria as mentioned above had to be met. It is the responsibility of each and every police officer to ensure that he or she meets all of the preconditions to receive certification.

The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina need and deserve a professional and democratic police force with officers of a high level of professional competence and personal integrity. The UNMIBH certification procedure will ensure that only those police officers who meet those standards will remain on the police force.

Lastly, an announcement. The next round of testing for admission to Banja Luka Police Academy will start on Monday 2 September 2002. Testing will take place for the seventh class at that academy. The IPTF Selection Unit has started contacting eligible candidates in order to invite them for testing. Candidates for the Republika Srpska Academy who have not been notified should call the Selection Unit at UNMIBH Headquarters. I have the number with me and you can get it after the briefing. Thank you.

Sanela Tunovic – IJC

Good morning on behalf of the Independent Judicial Commission.

The High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council – HJPC of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the HJPC of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the HJPC of the Republika Srpska will begin to announce vacancies for top-level judicial and prosecutorial posts at both the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Entity levels.

The HJPCs, pursuant to their competencies under law, will announce open competition for appointments to posts for judges and prosecutors in the following; Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina Supreme Court, the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina Prosecutors Office, the Republika Srpska Constitutional Court, the RS Supreme Court and the Office of the Republika Srpska Prosecutor.

In total, a maximum of 106 positions are being announced in this first set of vacancies. To determine the exact number of appointments in these Courts, the HJPCs will rely upon recommendations from the Independent Judicial Commission's plan for restructuring courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Further announcements of other judicial and prosecutorial posts will be made over the coming months.

The Independent Judicial Commission previously distributed the application materials to be used by applicants for judicial and prosecutorial office in the upcoming re-selection process for judges and prosecutors. These application materials will provide the HJPCs with comprehensive information relating to each candidate, the forms have been standardised so that they allow for complete transparency in the appointment process.

A full press release will be available outside after the press conference. In the press release you will find the full list of locations where the application materials are available. Also in the press release, the new contact information for the

IJC Press Office is included and copies of vacancy and application material will be available for you outside. That is all. Thank you.

Major Scott Lundy – SF0R

Dobar dan from SF0R. I have nothing for you today, but I am here to answer any questions that you may have.

Patrik Volf – OHR

Which brings me to the question, are there any questions?

Questions and Answers

Q: Fedzad Forto – FENA

Patrik, last night the High Representative met with two United States Senators. Can you provide more information about the meeting?

A: Patrik Volf – OHR

No, I cannot at this stage. I will have to look into what was discussed.

Q: Fedzad Forto – FENA

You do not know anything?

A: Patrik Volf – OHR

No.

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje

Scott, any comment on the Radisic statement that the Commander of SF0R wants to see one Ministry of Defence in the country?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

I am aware of the comments he has made through the press. The whole issue of eligibility for Partnership for Peace could not be any clearer. The NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson has stated the prerequisites on numerous occasions. General Sylvester was simply trying to ensure that everyone who was engaged in the discussion knew what those preconditions or prerequisites were. And I will say them again: “a common security policy, democratic parliamentary oversight and control of the armed forces, the provision of a state level command and control of the armed forces including a state level ministry responsible for defence matters, full transparency for plans and budgets, development of a common doctrine and common standards to train and equip the armed forces of this country.” That is a quote. General Sylvester did not invent this; this was something that the Secretary General and the Ambassadors to the North Atlantic Council came up with and these conditions remain in effect.

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje

Commander SFOR is also a member of Standing Committee for Military Matters. Does SFOR intend to pursue the issue through that body?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

SFOR continues to look at the entire issue of helping Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole to enter the Partnership for Peace Programme. It is one of the things on our agenda. We do work through the Standing Committee for Military Matters with the Entity Governments to discuss the whole thing, and we have a dialogue. At this point, we are confident that the dialogue is moving forward. However, it is not going to happen overnight. We will have to see what comes in the next months and go from there.

Q: Fedzad Forto – FENA

Scott, I forgot to ask you earlier. These two Senators also meet General Sylvester. Can you provide more information about that meeting?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

That was an office call, which means it was a closed-door meeting. I do not know what was discussed and I do not expect I will be a party to their discussion. I'm afraid I cannot tell you; I simply do not know.

Q: Fedzad Forto – FENA

At least, do you know why it was a closed-door meeting?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

All troop-contributing nations send delegations from their parliaments – from their Governments – occasionally. This was one of those visits to discuss, at a very high level, what was taking place here as it relates to the mission and as it relates to the United States. That is all I know of the discussion.

Patrik Volf – OHR

Anything else? All right then, have a nice day.