

BiH Media Round-up, 9/5/2002

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Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

The High Representative appoints judges to the Court of BiH

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Wednesday issued a Decision appointing Milos Babic, Suada Halilagic, Venceslav Ilic, Branko Morait, Muhidin Niksic, Nedžad Popovac and Martin Raguz as judges to the

Appellate Division of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby also establishing the Court. The seven judges were chosen from a list of 19 suitable candidates selected by the Commission for the Nomination of Judges of the Court of BiH. (All Sarajevo dailies carried the [Press Release](#) as Reuters just reported on the [Decision](#))

BiH moves towards creating own war crimes court

A team of legal experts, tasked by the OHR and supported by the UK and Swedish governments to identify the issues that have to be addressed and the resources that are needed to facilitate war crimes prosecutions in BiH in accordance with international standards, has concluded four weeks of fact-finding, Reuters, Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz report. At a press conference held in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the journalists were addressed by members of the group: John Ralston, Former ICTY Chief of Investigations, Peter Bach, Former Head of OHR's Human Rights/Rule of Law Department, Judge Kjell Bjoernberg, former Head of the UN Judicial Systems Assessment Program, and Judge Almiro Rodrigues, Former ICTY Judge, as well as Christopher Harland, Head of OHR's Human Rights/Rule of Law Department. The group concluded a special war crimes division should be set up within the new state court. "We will recommend the establishment of a court within the proposed state court of Bosnia-Herzegovina to deal specifically with violations of international humanitarian law," said John Ralston. Ralston added a state prosecutor's office should be established to deal with war crimes cases countrywide, and the prosecutor should be a foreigner for the first five years. The judges would be both international and local. The OHR Spokesman Kevin Sullivan indicated that model was on the cards to make the best use of limited resources. "With the establishment of the state court, and the potential establishment of the war crimes prosecution capability within the context of the state court, there is a clear synergy in terms of the use of resources and expertise," Reuters quoted Sullivan as saying.

Belkic addresses special UN General Assembly session dedicated to children

The Chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, on Wednesday addressed a special session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to children. Belkic pointed out the most difficult problems of children in BiH, particularly in the past ten years, which were marked by war, poverty, children trafficking, mine fields, separation of families etc. On behalf of BiH children, Eliza Kantardzic, a 17-year old from Banja Luka, told the participants that "the best thing you can do is stop war — prevent ... I hope that you will remember my words when you get the opportunity to make another decision."

Commercial electronic media in BiH concerned about possible non-loyal competition with the public broadcasters

According to Dnevni Avaz, the BiH Association of Electronic Media expressed its concern about the announcements that the law on the BiH Public Broadcasting Service would be adopted without any consultations with the Association. In a letter signed by the President, Elvir Svrakic, the Association requested that the draft law is sent to public debate and that the Association is actively involved in the entire process. According to Rasim Kadic, the BiH Deputy Minister for the European Integration, the BiH Council of Ministers is expected to discuss and adopt the draft law on PBS at its session scheduled for Thursday. The PBS Director, Drago Maric, told the newspaper that the Association of the BiH Electronic Media should probably be involved in the process. In a statement for Dnevni Avaz, the Head of the OHR Press Office, Alexandra Stiglmayer, said that the PIC Steering Board had discussed the process at the session held on May 6 and 7 in Sarajevo. "It was concluded that it is necessary to adopt the law on PBS, which will be harmonized with European standards," Stiglmayer added.

Federation

Vecernji List: How Prime Minister Behmen refused request of Party for BiH to block accounts of Aluminij?

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In relation to yesterday's report that the Federation Government did not authorize the Federation PM Alija Behmen to sign a document on international arbitration for "Aluminij" Company of Mostar, today's Vecernji List carries an article entitled "Prime Minister refused to cause unrest in Herzegovina" which reads that the "Aluminij" case is the biggest reason behind the evident rift within the Government. VL reads that at requests of Party for BiH's Ministers to involve the Federation Financial Police in the "Aluminij" case, the Federation PM Alija Behmen angrily said that he would not be that naïve and take such a decision, a decision that would cause unrest in Herzegovina which would follow if the "Aluminij" account were to be blocked. However, Aluminij is not the only problem of the ruling Coalition. Vecernji List learns that there are serious problems in the relations between Ministers from Party for BiH and their Croat Deputies, who are members of SDP and NHI. It has been especially intensified after the conflict between Nikola Grabovac, the Minister of Finances, and Sefika Hafizovic, his Deputy, who is also a cadre from Party for BiH. A well-informed source, close to the Federation BiH, says: 'Hafizovic demands greater authorities, and all Deputies in the Ministries whose Ministers are from Party for BiH have been completely de-authorized during the last few months. Deputies in these Ministries, no matter whether they come from NHI or SDP, increasingly complain that the Ministers have turned them into ikebana.'

Party for Bosnia opposes international arbitration for Mostar Aluminum company

The Party for BiH is resolutely against the announced international arbitration in the Aluminum Company and believes that the auditing of the privatization of this company should be carried out by the legitimate institutions of the Federation of BiH, the chairman of the presidency of the Party for BiH, Safet Halilovic, told a news conference in Sarajevo on Wednesday, Fena and Sarajevo dailies report. According to Halilovic, the international community should create conditions for the relevant institutions of the Federation to establish the value of capital in the Aluminum Company, rather than impose international arbitration.

Mostar-based MEGA COMM meat importer evaded 32 million KM

The biggest meat importer in BiH, the Mostar-based MEGA COMM, which is a company exclusively established to meet needs of the Lijanovici Meat Industry from Siroki Brijeg, has evaded 32 million KM, Oslobođenje learned from a source close to the Office of the Federation Prosecutor. In mid-April, the Office asked the Custom Administration to collect additional evidence and information about the illegal business operations related to meat import. Under a grounded suspicion, owners of Lijanovici as well as all other persons from an organized chain of collaborators from MEGA COMM and a Mostar-based custom office were to benefit from the deal. CAFAO runs the investigation into the case. The daily reports that the MEGA COMM case is only one in a chain of suspicious meat import-related businesses that involve Lijanovici.

Dnevni List: Situation in HN Canton - A loan for Bosniak salaries will be returned by Croats

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In relation to the loan amassing to 1,5 million KM that the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton received from the Federation Government, Dnevni List contacted the HNC Prime Minister Omer Macic to get his view on the loan. When asked as to who the money is assigned to, Macic said that the money was assigned to the budget beneficiaries who had not received August 2001 salaries to which the daily responded that it is the Bosniak beneficiaries who did not get the aforementioned salaries. Macic added that another loan that would be used for payment of September 2001 salaries was asked from the same source but not realized yet.

DL comments the whole case saying that the loan will be returned by Croat taxpayers in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.

Slobodna Dalmacija: OHR says catastrophic financial condition in the HN Canton highlighted by the non-adoption of this year's budget

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

"Catastrophic financial condition in Herzegovina Neretva Canton is highlighted by the fact that the budget for this year is still not adopted. Croat members of the Cantonal Government have submitted their proposal of the budget, and Bosniak members have not done even that", stated Avis Benes, a spokesperson of OHR, at the regular Press Conference of the international organizations on Wednesday in Mostar.

SDA Presidency requests resignations

At a session held in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the SDA BiH Presidency decided to request Edhem Bicakcic, former BiH Federation Prime Minister and current (unrecognized) SDA Vice-president, to resign by Saturday, May 11, when a session of the SDA Main Board is scheduled to take place. Senior SDA officials, Ahmed Smajic, Kemal Brodlija, Dzevad Mlaco, Mirsad Veladzic and Jusuf Zahiragic, were also requested to resign. At the same time, the Presidency recommended to the Main Board to accept their resignations. All aforementioned officials are banned from holding public office by High Representative's Decisions.

Vecernji List: Interview with Prof. Dr. Bozo Ljubic, a member of HDZ BiH Presidency

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List carries an interview with Bozo Ljubic, who says that he does not want to run for the position of an Acting President of HDZ. Ljubic stated that HDZ needs to walk the path of modern European parties, but at the same time, HDZ should not lose people who have established the party. Saying that HDZ is going through the period of crisis, Ljubic added that HDZ was facing some wrong estimations and decisions of International Community. However, he continued, HDZ has made mistakes of their own. He said that he hopes that IC should correct their mistakes towards Croats and let that legitimate representatives of Croats enter all levels of the Government. Speaking about the time when he was a leader of the delegation, which negotiated with OHR, Ljubic said that he gave up on that for he saw that there was no true readiness of international representatives to solve some crucial issues of Croats in BiH. Commenting on constitutional amendments Ljubic said that their imposition was losing a chance to correct illogical things and unjustness of the Dayton Accord, but the amendments themselves did not change the position of Croats for better or for worse. He said that it is important to prevent collective national frustration, for that is the way one can gain nothing but can lose a lot. Ljubic added that future High Representative Paddy Ashdown has bad picture of Croats and that he will have to use diplomatic skills and political temper to persuade Croats that he is not partial.

Vjesnik: Interview with Barisa Colak, a member of the HDZ Presidency

Interview conducted by Mario Marusic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vjesnik carries an interview with Barisa Colak, a member of the HDZ Presidency, who says that he hopes that during the session of the HDZ Central Board, which is to take place on Friday, they will elect an acting HDZ President and new members of the HDZ Presidency, instead of removed ones. Colak said that before that session

they will also hold a session of the HDZ Presidency and prepare a new Book of Rules, because so far, they have not had a situation that they have to elect a new leadership at the session of the HDZ Central Board. Colak said that he wants to stress that this will not be the new leadership, which is being elected at the party's Convention, because the acting HDZ President will be performing this duty 9 months at the most, and the Central HDZ Board can decide that this period is even shorter. Colak said that constitutional changes imposed by Petritsch bring the Croat people to the position of a national minority. Colak said that HDZ does not have a right to participate in the Executive Authority at the Federation level and, according to the present situation, most probably at the state level too. Asked about the third entity, Colak said that there is no need to talk about the third entity as about something forbidden, because, according to Colak, Croats have a right to demand the third entity, if other two peoples already have their own entities. Colak says that the only disputable thing with regard to this issue is as to how get the third entity. Asked about divisions within HDZ, Colak said that he would not call them the divisions, but different stands within the party. He added that so far there were also different stands within the party, however, the HDZ position was much different than the present one.

Republika Srpska

RS vice president says there will be no joint army

EuroBlic quotes RS vice president, Dragan Cavic, as saying at a news conference dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the RS Army, that the RS Constitution and the BiH Constitution clearly define the position of the RS Army and that there is no reason to change that position. "It should be clear that the RS Army will survive and that a joint army in BiH will not be formed", said Cavic.

RS officials welcome PBS news program launch, warn of possible sidelining of the entity's radio, television

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Hailing Tuesday evening's broadcast of the first joint central news by Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), officials of the RS repeated their stand that the PBS is necessary but must not be to the detriment of entity televisions, ONASA news agency reports. Referring that the BiH Presidency has been from the beginning engaged in the activities over forming the PBS, member of the Presidency, Zivko Radisic told ONASA that the PBS is not and cannot be to the detriment of RS Radio-Television (RTRS) or BiH Federation Television BHFTV and that the whole system needs to be compatible. He expects that the activities on passing the laws on the PBS and RTRS will be accelerated soon, in order to settle the relations to the benefit of all. Asked to comment on last night's promotion, Radisic said that he failed to watch it due to other obligations, adding he had sent a letter of support and congratulations to the PBS. RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic said the government's assignment was that a special service be formed, or the PBS, which needs to be seen on the entire territory of BiH. The RTRS program must not be reduced in order to increase the PBS program, said Ivanic, adding that RTRS must be part of the PBS and an independent service of the RS as well. Ivanic said that he is surprised by the inefficiency of the OHR in declaring the government's draft law on RTRS, having in mind the government sent the request nine days ago. "If this non-reaction continues on demands of the RS government, we will think that RTRS has been made dependent of the PBS. The government will never allow this and will block all laws on the PBS," he stressed. "Passing of laws on RTRS, in which all democratic principles are respected, must be conducted. This will remove all fears that introduction of the PBS means disappearance of RTRS," the prime minister concluded.

RS National Assembly will not discuss Law on RTRS

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski reports that the RS National Assembly (RS NA) will not discuss the Proposal Law on RTRS at today's

session, because the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, still has not responded to the veto filed by Bosniak members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission. The paper reminds that Bosniak members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission request that ethnic structure of the RTRS management be harmonized with the constitutional changes. Bosniaks also request that the Law on RTRS defines ethnic structure of correspondent network and that returnees and those who have not repossessed their property be exempted from paying TV subscription. Bosniaks also request that the Law on RTRS should clearly say what ethnic background the RTRS general manager will be and that all important RTRS documents should be passed by all three peoples in both 'chambers' of the RS National Assembly.

RS Deputy Justice Minister says reform of judiciary will not be possible without IC assistance

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski quotes RS Deputy Justice Minister, Mladjen Mandic, as saying that it will not be possible to implement the reform of judiciary in BiH without the IC's financial assistance. Mandic said that the RS Government supports the reform of judiciary and added that at this point it is not possible to say how many judges in the RS will be left out of work. "Certain number of judges will be retired. As for judges who will be dismissed, the RS Government will help them to find some other job.", said Mandic. He also added that competencies of the BiH High Judicial Council are still not quite clear. This practically means that it remains unclear whether the BiH High Judicial Council selects, proposes and removes judges of courts at the entity level or the state level.

SNS: RS Government exerts pressures on those criticizing its work

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

SRNA news agency quotes Jezdimir Spasojevic, a member of the main committee of the Serb National Alliance (SNS), as saying that the recent questioning of Mirko Blagojevic, the chairman of the executive committee of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) at the Bijeljina centre for public security was "yet another example of pressure being exerted on those who criticize the RS government". "The aim of Blagojevic's questioning is to render public criticism of the RS government less scathing, which is increasingly frequent as the elections in the BiH Federation and the RS are drawing closer," Spasojevic told journalists in Bijeljina. He went on to say that the SNS welcomed the decision by the SRS to participate in the forthcoming elections and that he expected "the future High Representative in BiH (Paddy Ashdown) to explain why the SRS was banned from the RS and BiH elections up to now".

Charges to be filed against Federation over concealing information about graves with remains of Serb war victims

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski quotes the chairman of the commission in charge of missing and imprisoned persons of the RS, Nedeljko Mitrovic, as saying that in May the RS Association of Families of Imprisoned and Missing Soldiers and Civilians is set to file charges with the BiH Chamber of Human Rights against the BiH Federation government for covering up information about post-war moving of graves containing Serb victims in the Federation. "The main hindrance to the commission's work is the lack of information about places where the Serbs were killed during the war in the BiH Federation and about moving of Serb graves in the western Krajina, Ozren and Sarajevo areas," Mitrovic said. He went on to say that an additional problem was the insufficient number of registered families of killed and missing persons in the RS. He recalled that the DNA laboratory in Banja Luka would start to work at the end of May, which would greatly contribute to the identification of mortal remains of Serb soldiers and civilians. The commission in charge of missing and imprisoned persons is tracking down about 5,000 missing soldiers and civilians from the RS.

International Community

PIC Steering Board assesses substantial progress was made in BiH during Petritsch's three-year mandate

The Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board, which met at the level of political directors on May 6 and 7 in Sarajevo, noted that substantial progress was made in Bosnia and Herzegovina during Wolfgang Petritsch's three-year mandate, which has been marked by the decline of nationalism and the strengthening of tolerance and multi-ethnicity, ONASA, Oslobodjenje, Jutarnje Novine and Nezavisne Novine report. "The Steering Board thanks him for his successful work, aimed at encouraging domestic ownership, consolidating Bosnia and Herzegovina's statehood and improving the social, economic, and cultural condition of its citizens. The Steering Board also expresses its appreciation for the efforts of Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, in view of his departure this summer," said a Communique issued following the session.

Ashdown ends his ten-day political tour by meeting top NATO officials in Brussels

According to Dnevni Avaz, the incoming High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Wednesday ended his ten-day political tour by meeting with NATO Secretary General George Robertson and his associates in Brussels. "During the meeting, Lord Ashdown reiterated that crime and corruption represent the biggest danger for BiH," Julian Braithwaite, the Spokesperson for the future High Representative, told the newspaper. He added that, with his hosts, Ashdown also exchanged information about the NATO mission in BiH, the number of SFOR soldiers and BiH's accession to the Partnership for Peace Program.

Ashdown to work on the reform of military in BiH

During yesterday's meeting in Brussels with NATO Secretary General George Robertson, the newly appointed High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, announced that during his mandate in BiH he would work on the reform of the military forces in the entities and their mutual cooperation through the Standing Committee for Military Matters (SCMM), RTRS Radio reported. Ashdown said that one of the signs of success in the implementation of the Dayton Agreement was the downsizing of the SFOR contingent in BiH.

NATO in Bosnia distributes leaflets urging war criminal arrests

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that Sfor threw leaflets on Wednesday morning from a helicopter on the towns of Cajnice and Kalinovik, according to information received from Sfor. One side of the leaflets lists the benefits of the arrests of Karadzic and other persons accused of war crimes, such as the increase in the amount of aid and the number of jobs which full cooperation with the international community would ensure. The other side of the leaflet shows the photograph of Radovan Karadzic and a statement he gave to Montenegrin newspaper Monitor: "If I thought that surrendering to the Hague tribunal was in the best interest of the Serbian people, I would do so instantly". Both sides of the leaflet contain contact information for the program "Award for Justice". The statement goes on to say that Sfor maintains the stance that Radovan Karadzic and other accused persons should be brought to justice. The program "Award for Justice" encourages those who perhaps have contact with Karadzic or other accused persons to come forward with information on their whereabouts. Previous distribution of leaflets has resulted in a significant number of calls.

A rally of support to Karadzic held in Montenegrin town of Niksic

According to ONASA and Oslobodjenje, approximately 2,000 people gathered late on Tuesday in the Montenegrin town of Niksic at a rally of support to the most wanted war crime suspect Radovan Karadzic.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- Mostar-based MEGA COMM owes 32 million KM in unpaid taxes – Lijanovici involved

Dnevni Avaz

- The SDA Presidency requests resignations: Bicakcic must resign by Saturday

Jutarnje Novine

- OSCE warns the Federation Minister Grabovac: Money for elections should be paid

Dnevni List

- Initiative for investigation of suspicious wartime history: From forcible recruitment to chair of head of state?
- For payment of salaries to Bosniak beneficiaries of HNC budget 1,5 million KM borrowed from Federation budget: Loan for Bosniak salaries will be returned by Croats
- Petritsch appoints first BiH Court judges

Vecernji List

- Quarrels in Alliance over Mostar “Aluminij”: Prime Minister refuses to cause unrest in Herzegovina
- Bozo Ljubic: Candidate for President of HDZ: HDZ needs consistency not noise

Glas Srpski

- Students to enroll in secondary schools without taking entrance examination
- Petritsch looking into veto;

Nezavisne Novine

- Airplane crashed in China – All 112 passengers dead
- George Robertson: NATO stays in the Balkans