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Constitutional reforms

The High Representative discusses constitutional amendments with the PIC Steering Board Ambassadors

All BiH media prominently report that, following the adoption of constitutional amendments by the RS National Assembly on 4 April 2002, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Tuesday met with the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council at ambassadorial level in Sarajevo. "The Steering Board expressed its full support for the High Representative's exhaustive efforts aimed at ensuring that the constitutional amendments due to be passed in both Entities meet the requirement of being fully in line with the Agreement on the Implementation of the Constituent Peoples' Decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina reached by BiH's political leaders on 27 March 2002 in Sarajevo, also

known as Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. It also noted with concern that the deadline of the first week of April, by which the Entity Parliaments should have adopted the amendments in full, has passed," the OHR said in a press release. "The High Representative expressed serious concerns about the constitutional amendments adopted by the RS National Assembly. The amendments fall short of, and do not in full reflect, the 27 March Agreement," the release read. In order to facilitate a solution in line with the Steering Board's requests, the High Representative earlier on Tuesday met Alliance party leaders Zlatko Lagumdzija, Safet Halilovic and Kresimir Zubak in the company of Clifford Bond, the US Ambassador, and Rafael Valle Garagorri, the Ambassador of Spain, which currently holds the EU Presidency. The High Representative reminded the Federation politicians that it is their obligation to move ahead with the amendments to the Federation Constitution without any delay. According to Dnevni Avaz, Petritsch promised he would ensure that Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement is implemented in full in the both entities, and in a symmetric way. Party for BiH leader Safet Halilovic told the newspaper that such stand had also been confirmed by Ambassadors Bond and Garagorri. In a statement with the FTV Pogledi news program late on Tuesday, Halilovic said its party would re-consider the announced withdrawal of the signature from the Agreement if these promises come truth. On Wednesday, the High Representative will meet with the four party leaders and representatives from the RS who participated in the negotiations leading to the 27 March Agreement. According to the OHR press release, the High Representatives reminds all parties concerned that the negotiation process was completed on 27 March 2002, and that there can be no further negotiations. "The 27 March Agreement must be adopted in full as soon as possible so that the Election Law can be completed in time," the release read.

The Alliance for Change supports only full implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent peoples

According to Oslobodjenje, at the meeting in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the Coordination of the governing Alliance for Change among other things discussed the situation following the last week's adoption of the amendment to the Republika Srpska Constitution. The Alliance leaders do not accept the adopted amendments since they are reflecting neither the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of the peoples nor the spirit of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. "The Alliance requests full implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision, meaning the Agreement, which represents nothing else but the way to adopt the amendments guaranteeing equality of all peoples in the both entities," the Coordination Chairman, Ilija Simic (BiH HSS leader), told journalists following the meeting.

Croatian President Mesic and BiH SDA leader Tihic meet in Zagreb to discuss ongoing process of the constitutional reforms in BiH

Oslobodjenje reports that Croatian President Stjepan Mesic (in the capacity of the leader of the Croatian People's Party) met in Zagreb on Tuesday with the BiH SDA President, Sulejman Tihic, to discuss the ongoing process of the constitutional reforms in BiH following the last week's adoption of the amendments to the RS Constitution. The two officials agreed that not the adopted amendments but the draft amendments initially proposed by the RS Constitutional Commission were acceptable both for Bosniaks and the Croats. Mesic will discuss the issue with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in coming days.

RS President comments on constitutional amendments

– Pressures calculated in advance

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski quotes RS President, Mirko Sarovic, as saying in Bijeljina yesterday that constitutional amendments, passed by the RS NA, can be discussed in a procedure initiated before the BiH Constitutional Court, which ruled the decision. “If someone thinks that the amendments to the RS Constitution, passed by the RS National Assembly, are not in accordance with BiH Constitutional Court decisions, then he/she is entitled to initiate legal procedure before the BiH Constitutional Court which will assess whether the amendments are in accordance with the BiH Constitution”, said Sarovic. Commenting on reaction of the BiH Federation parties to the RS NA constitutional amendments, the RS President said that there are different opinions about the amendments, because before they were passed different parties had had different national interests and expectations. “The RS is not satisfied too, because the Serb side made many concessions when adopting the amendments to the RS Constitution”, said Sarovic. He also added that the passed amendments are based on the ethnic principle, which will create many difficulties in work of RS institutions, because the very same ethnic principle will not make the work comfortable. The RS President said that the 27th March Agreement, also known as the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement was a political agreement. Commenting on a campaign that the BiH Federation parties launched against the RS NA amendments, Sarovic said that is a classical manipulation and a pressure that the BiH Federation parties calculated in advance so that it makes international representatives and representatives of some embassies in Sarajevo make decision different from the one passed by the RS National Assembly. “By doing this, we are forgetting the most important thing, that is, the RS passed the amendments and now nobody mentions constitutional amendments to the BiH Federation Constitution. And the proposed amendments to the BiH Federation Constitution

do not correspond, to a great extant, to the Sarajevo Agreement",said Sarovic. He also underlined that some provisions in the BiH Federation Constitution would be harmonized with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement, but these amendments will not be implemented at cantonal level despite the fact that, basically, the great deal of authority works at this level. The RS President also said that politicians in the BiH Federation constantly expect to see some different Serbs, the Serbs made by their recipe, but such Serbs do not exist. "There are only Serbs as they exist in the RS and until they realize this, things will not get better, said the RS President.When asked about possible reaction by the High Representative regarding the constitutional amendments, Sarovic said he does not know what the High Representative is going to do. "On one hand, Petritsch knows what his authorities are. On the other hand, we said that there will be no one in the RS to implement imposed solutions", said Sarovic.

SNSD leader says Lagumdzija is a hypocrite

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies quote SNSD leader, Milorad Dodik, as saying that political situation is BiH is returning to normal, but still their is a worrying fact that political parties from the BiH Federation launched the orchestrated attacks against the RS because it passed the constitutional amendments. Dodik accused the SDP BiH leader, Zlatko Lagumdzija of being in a forefront of this campaign. Dodik said that Lagumdzija showed what kind of hypocrite he is with the fact that he signed the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement with the High Representative knowing in advance that the Agreement will not be passed by the BiH Federation Parliament. He pointed out that every time something happens in the BiH Federation, its politicians launch orchestrated attacks against the RS. "The main problem is that some politicians from the Federation have problems with the existence of the RS", said Dodik. Commenting on the

language problem, Dodik said that demands for introduction of Bosnian language tell us that these demands are aimed at affirming something else, not the language. He also gave example of Bosniaks in the FRY who request the authorities to introduce Bosniak language not the Bosnian language as Bosniaks in BiH demand. Dodik stressed that the RS has the capacity to define all amendments to the RS Constitution that are not clear and that will be resolved at the next RS NA session. When asked to comment on objections made regarding the RS President's authorities to disband the Council of Peoples, Dodik said that there is nothing contentious in it and that the authorities of the RS President have not been discussed at all in Sarajevo.

Russian ambassador to BiH commends adoption of the RS NA constitutional amendments

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski reports that the Embassy of Russian Federation to BiH commended the adoption of the constitutional amendments by the RS National Assembly. The paper carries a press release, issued by the Embassy, which states that the RS political parties which voted for the amendments, clearly demonstrated their advocacy of further development of BiH as one democratic and multi-ethnic state which consists of two equal entities, the RS and the BiH Federation. The press release also states that the harmonization of the passed amendments with the Sarajevo Agreement will be analysed.

RS political parties on Petritsch statement that nothing less that 100 percent Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement will be acceptable

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Nezavisne Novine carries reaction of the RS political parties to the Petritsch's statement that nothing less than 100% of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement will be acceptable. President

of the SNS (Serb National Alliance), Branislav Lolic said that the High Representative's statement is an announcement of new actions, and stressed that the imposition of the constitutional amendments in the RS would be a huge mistake. "The parties from the BiH Federation would like to see the High Representative imposing the constitutional amendments. The RS parties have made a big compromise and it is the Federation parties turn to do the same. Whether the solutions are symmetrical and what is accordance with the constitutional amendments can be discussed only after the Federation Parliament passes the amendments", said Lolic. Marko Pavic, member of the DNS Main Board (DNS – Democratic National Alliance), thinks that the High Representative will not impose the RS Constitution despite the BiH Federation parties' requests that the amendments be imposed. Pavic accused Lagumdzija of being at a forefront of a campaign aimed at eliminating of the RS's authorities given by the Dayton Peace Accords. "The High Representative's statement could mean that Petritsch succumbed to the BiH Federation parties and that he decided to carry out the revision of the DPA in order to ensure domination of Bosniaks on the entire BiH territory", said Pavic. DS Secretary General (DS: Democratic Party), Gavrilo Antonic is surprised with the High Representative's statement and he thinks that Petritsch has more trust in the BiH Federation parties than in parties from the RS. "Yet again it has been proven that the High Representative and the international community mostly respect views of the BiH Federation parties, while those coming from the RS are neglected," sead Antonic.

A member of RS Constitutional Commission claims his signature falsified in the letter sent to Petritsch

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski and SRNA news agency quote a representative of the Mihajlo Brelak's Office, as saying that the signature of

Mihajlo Brelak, member of the RS NA Constitutional Commission and the representative of Others in the Commission, that appeared in the letter sent by Croat and Bosniak members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission to the High Representative on Monday is falsified. The representatives of the Brelak's Office said that this can cause very negative consequences, but did not give any details about the nature of the consequences. Brelak is a SDP BiH member and his signature appeared on the letter that Croat and Bosniak members of the RS NA Commission sent yesterday to the High Representative in which they requested that the High Representative declare the RS NA amendments null and void.

RS parliament's Constitutional Commission president says adopted amendments in line with the BiH Constitutional Court's decision

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski quotes RS NA Constitutional Commission chairman, Miroslav Mikes, as saying that constitutional amendments, passed by the RS NA, are in accordance with the BiH Constitutional Court ruling on constituent status of all peoples in BiH and with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. Commenting on the BiH Federation politicians' demands, addressed to the High Representative, that the constitutional amendments be declared null and void, Mikes said that the amendments were passed in a legal procedure, and added that some minor issues can be regulated by constitutional law and some other laws. The paper also quotes RS Supreme Court judge, Mirko Dabic, as saying that demands for annulment of the constitutional amendments are unacceptable. "Constitution is the most important general legal document. All mechanisms they are complaining about should be regulated by laws", said Dabic. He said that the constitutional amendments ensure equality and constitutionality of all peoples in the RS, and added that these demands are just a part of the election campaign. "These demands can be described as maximal demands

coming from the BiH Federation in which they advocate the principle of parity in all institutions based on 1+1+1 principle. However, this principle does not match the ethnic representation", said Dabic.

Dnevni List: Zubak signed the Agreement at Mesic's persuasion?

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List learns from reliable sources close to Croatian Embassy in Sarajevo that Kresimir Zubak signed the 27 March Agreement on constitutional changes also known as Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement after being persuaded by Croatian President Stjepan Mesic. Furthermore, DL says that His Excellency Ambassador Josip Vrbosic advised HDZ negotiators to sign the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement which they declined.

In a small separate article Kresimir Zubak denied that he was talked into signing the Mrakovic-Sarajevo Agreement saying that nobody, including Mesic and Petritsch, could force him to sign anything. Furthermore, he said that he had not spoken to President Mesic in months.

Federation

Alija Behmen to propose measures for resolution of the dispute over pay-out of a deposit to AM Sped company at the next session of the Government

According to Oslobodjenje, after the Party for BiH members of the BiH Federation Government (except Interior Minister Ramo Maslesa) had walked out of the Government's Monday session because a pay-out of a 1.7 million KM deposit to the Orasje-based AM Sped Company made by Finance Minister Nikola Grabovac without consent of his deputy, Sefika Hafizovic, was not put on the agenda, Prime Minister Alija Behmen on Tuesday met with

Grabovac and Hafizovic to discuss the disputed issue. It was concluded that Behmen would propose measures for the resolution of the dispute at the next session of the Government. Dnevni Avaz reports that the financial police has started investigation into the legality of the pay-out in the premises of the Federation Finance Ministry.

HDZ holds separate celebration of the HVO's tenth anniversary

Oslobodjenje and Fena report that the Croat People's Assembly (HNS) organized an academy to mark the tenth anniversary of the HVO (Bosnian Croat forces) in Mostar on Monday night. This is the second celebration of the tenth anniversary of the HVO. The anniversary was marked in Sarajevo last week by Croat officials from the ruling Alliance for Change. The HNS which rallies the HDZ (main Bosnian Croat and Croatian nationalist party) and similar parties does not recognize the legitimacy of the ruling Alliance for Change. Corps General Stanko Sopta Baja was the only speaker at the Mostar meeting. He openly advocated a Croat entity in BiH. "We have to finish this process because the Croat people have empowered us to do so," General Sopta said. He praised the late Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and the late President of the former Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna (Bosnian Croat wartime parastate) Mate Boban. General Sopta also used this opportunity to criticize sharply the current authorities in the Republic of Croatia…

Dnevni List: Interview with Milenko Brkic, President of Croat People's Community (HNZ)

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries an interview with the President of the HNZ Milenko Brkic in which he announced that the HNZ would organize another meeting of parties with Croat prefix. According to Brkic, there are to reasons why to have such a

meeting. Firstly, because of the new situation following the signing of the Agreement and failure of the RS NA to adopt it and secondly, to try and offer principles for creation of a big coalition of parties with Croat prefix. Regarding the first issue, Brkic says that Croat parties should agree how to treat the latest situation adding that his party (HNZ) is surprised with President of the NHI Kresimir Zubak i.e. with his signature on the Agreement because, according to Brkic, NHI ignored the Stup and agreement reached at Cardinal Puljic's. With regards to the Croat coalition, Brkic reiterated previous stance that the coalition should be formed in order to lose as little Croat votes as possible, because many Croat parties, if they decided to go alone in the elections, would not be able to get past the threshold. Brkic does not understand why some party leaders form coalitions with parties they have nothing in common with and who in the same time cannot agree with parties they share the same prefix with and who count on the same electorate. When questioned whether he would attend a meeting of Croat parties with Croatian Foreign Minister Tonino Picula and Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Zdravko Tomac scheduled for Friday at Croatian Consulate in Mostar, Brkic said that he would attend the meeting at which the Croatian officials will be informed about the seriousness of the constitutional changes believing that the Croatian lately officials made some statements which did not serve the protection of Croat interests in BiH which are, in his opinion, a product of poor information that reach Zagreb. When asked to comment an information that Dnevni List acquired which says that Zubak was talked into signing of the Agreement by Croatian President Stjepan Mesic, the President of the HNZ said that he did not believe that Croatia would influence the negotiators, including President Mesic and Croatian PM Ivica Racan, in the same time not ruling out an option that Croatian authorities had been pressured.

Republika Srpska

RS to support opening of the BiH Embassy to Bulgaria

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic announced yesterday that the RS would support efforts of joint BiH institutions to open BiH Embassy in Bulgaria. In a statement to Bulgarian state radio, also carried by Srna news agency, Ivanic explained: “We are convinced that the BiH Embassy in Bulgaria would contribute to the improvement of overall bilateral and economic relations between two countries.” According to Glas srpski, Ivanic also said that it was about time to change the visa regime between BiH and Bulgaria.

Privatization of 15 thousand apartments in the RS still disputable

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The privatization of disputed apartments in the RS is still under Wolfgang’s Petritsch veto. The OHR Spokeswoman, Sonja Pastuovic, stated for Glas srpski that, last week, a request for few smaller changes that should be included in Instruction for control of revalidated contracts for disputed apartments was sent to the RS Ministry of Urbanism. Glas srpski recalls that, after Petritsch’s approval, the Instruction was publicized in the RS Official Gazette on 10th March but the High Representative did not lift the ban, even though he promised to do so. Pastuovic explains: “Domicile population – floaters, who have been expelled from their apartments during the war, should be given 75 % discount in the privatization process. Those who, under rationalization, have been moved from bigger to smaller apartments, should be enabled to repossess their apartments and also be given 75 % discount. Only when these changes are published in the Official Gazette, the High Representative would lift the ban. Until then, we are

waiting for an information from Ministry for Urbanism." The RS Minister for Urbanism, Nedjo Djuric, stated for Glas srpski that additions to the Instruction were accorded with the OHR representatives and that they were sent to the High Representative five days ago, with a request to cancel the decision on suspension of privatization. "We have accepted to allow 75 % discount to floaters (people who, during the war, did not leave places where their apartments are) and people who have been moved from bigger to smaller apartments. We suggested that 75% discount should not be granted to those who moved from smaller to bigger apartments." – Djuric explained. He added that additions to the Instruction were also forwarded to the Official Gazette for publication. The Spokesman of the RS Ministry for Refugees and displaced persons, Vojin Mijatovic, emphasized that commissions for control of the revalidated contracts were established in all municipalities, but they cannot start working until the High Representative lifts the ban on privatization of disputed apartments.

Forceful collection of taxes in RS: is it to be continued?

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The owner of "Peti Neplan" company from Omarska (Prijedor), Zeljko Romanic, stated for Nezavisne novine that the RS Tax Administration would declare today whether it accepts or not his proposal for compensation of the tax debts to the Budget. The employees of "Peti Neplan" emphasized that their very existence was in question and warned that they will protest tomorrow and block the road Prijedor – Banja Luka, if a compromise is not reached. Romanic closed the company and fired all his employees. Nezavisne novine learnt that the RS Tax Administration will send an inspection team to "Peti Neplan" in order to check whether all Romanic's employees were properly registered and whether he paid all taxes and contributions for their salaries. Also, if it is established that he does not have proper documentation for the apartments

that he offered as a compensation, the RS Tax Administration would continue with forceful collection of taxes. As confirmed to NN by Prijedor municipal assembly, Romanic does not posses construction permit for the building that he offered as a compensation but that recently, he entered the procedure to get the permit. Some thirty days ago, Romanic offered Prijedor municipal administration to rent the apartments that he builds in the town and use them as alternative accommodation, but his proposal was not accepted. If Romanic does not solve the issue of construction permit soon, the people he fired would have to look for new jobs. Romanic stated for NN: "I don't care, I know where I'll go. To be honest, I do not even think of reopening this Company again. I will recover this company, everything would be settled, it would not owe even one KM, but I do not intend to open it again. I can either sell it or rent it." Answering to a question as to why he denied his previously given statement that he was racketeered by the authorities, Romanic said that "tensions should go down". He added: "Why do you people from the media stick to that. There was no real, classic racketeering but – that is a journalistic expression." After being explained that the media carried out his statement correctly, Romanic added: What happened, happened. Lets move on."

International Community

Dnevni Avaz: Interview with Toby Robinson, the Hercegovacka Banka Provisional Administrator

"The investigation into the Hercegovacka Banka operations has still not completed and I do not know when this will happen. In the next few weeks, we will conclude the financial assessment of the Bank, after which I will be able to give final recommendation to the High Representative what to do in the future with the Bank. That will be important step forward," the Hercegovacka Banka Provisional Administrator,

Toby Robinson, said at the beginning of an interview with Dnevni Avaz.

Foreign experts to look into possibility for war crimes processing in BiH

Oslobodjenje and news agencies report that a group comprising four foreign experts in the field of war crimes prosecutions and the judicial system of BiH, arrived on Monday in Sarajevo to start work on the OHR Consultancy Project on the Future of War Crimes Prosecutions in BiH. OHR Spokesman Kevin Sullivan told journalists in Sarajevo on Tuesday that John Ralston (Australia), former Chief of Investigations at the ICTY, Peter Bach (Denmark), former Head OHR Human Rights and Rule of Law Department, Judge Kjell Bjoernberg, who is a High Court Judge from Sweden, and the former Head of the UN Judicial Systems Assessment Program, and Judge Almiro Rodrigues (Portugal), a former ICTY Judge, were part of the team. "During the next six weeks they will have discussions with local politicians, representatives of the judiciary and international organizations that are involved in war crimes trails. They are expected to complete a report including their recommendations by the middle of May. The report will address the steps that need to be taken in order to expedite and raise the professional standards of war crimes prosecutions in BiH that have been cleared by the ICTY Rules of the Road Unit. The report will also take into account the prospect of referring ICTY cases to BiH, and it will test the hypothesis that the yet to be established Court for BiH should have jurisdiction over domestic war crimes prosecutions. The project was made possible through a generous joint donation from the UK and Swedish Governments, " Sullivan said

Reuters: Yugoslav cabinet agrees compromise war crimes bill

The Yugoslav government, under pressure due to a freeze on U.S. financial aid, approved a bill on Tuesday that would pave

the way for suspects to be handed over to the United Nations war crimes tribunal. The bill, a compromise hammered out between the partners in the ruling coalition, permits the handover only of suspects who have already been indicted by the court in The Hague. “The draft law on cooperation with the Hague tribunal has been unanimously adopted. All members of the government showed awareness of the need to adopt such a law,” Federal Interior Minister Zoran Zivkovic told Reuters by telephone. Parliament was due to discuss the bill on Wednesday and it was expected to be adopted the same day. The United States froze financial aid to Belgrade last week after Yugoslav authorities failed to meet a March 31 deadline imposed by Congress for handing suspects over to the tribunal.

Poll: Majority in Serbia opposes extradition of Karadzic, Mladic

Most people in Serbia believe that Serbian President Milan Milutinovic, former FRY Vice-Premier Nikola Sainovic, and former Serbian Interior Minister Vlajko Stojiljkovic should be extradited to The Hague-based International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia [ICTY], either unconditionally or in order to avoid fresh international sanctions, according to Srbobran Brankovic, director of the Medium Index International pollster, as quoted by the *Blic* newspaper on Tuesday. Speaking at the *Out of the ICTY Labyrinth* press club debate held at the Media Center in Belgrade, Brankovic quoted results of a survey to the effect that 26 percent of the people in Serbia believe that Milutinovic, Sainovic, and Stojiljkovic should be extradited unconditionally, 20 percent think they should be extradited in order to avoid sanctions, while 25 percent believe that they should not be extradited at all, sanctions or no sanctions. However, the question of whether or not to extradite Bosnian Serb wartime army chief Ratko Mladic and Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic elicited a different response: “About 18 percent of the respondents believe that Mladic should be extradited in any event, 15

percent maintain that he should be extradited in order to avoid sanctions, while 41 percent believe that he should not be extradited regardless of sanctions. Situation is similar where Karadzic is concerned." Brankovic said. Brankovic stressed that the Serbian government is hesitating about extraditing ICTY indictees because "it fears that such a step in an election year might reflect negatively on its popularity." Political analyst Djordje Vukadinovic believes that the crisis generated by the ICTY issue is just another crisis rocking the ruling coalition and that it will be surmounted "mostly thanks to external pressure, not because there is any kind of consensus on the home front." Vukadinovic claims that "a group of politicians close to the Serbian government is deliberately obstructing efforts to settle the problem of cooperation with the ICTY in order to make up for the Perisic's spy scandal." "There is a standoff on the Serbian political stage, where one side in the government structures is not getting down to extraditions for internal political reasons, while another does not have the strength openly to oppose extraditions for external political reasons," Vukadinovic believes. He described as absurd the positions of some politicians close to the Serbian government who, "in the heat of the internal political struggle, are more determined on the extraditions than some influential US politicians," *Blic* writes on Tuesday.

Reuters: Milosevic trial told of Serb onslaught on mosques

Serbs blew up, shelled and torched more than a third of Kosovo's mosques during a crackdown against the province's majority Muslim population in 1998-99, Slobodan Milosevic's trial was told on Tuesday. Around 225 of Kosovo's 607 mosques were damaged or destroyed during a Serb offensive in the disputed province, Harvard University art documentation specialist Andras Riedlmayer said in a report presented at the Hague war crimes tribunal. "In some contexts, mosques and

other Islamic architectural heritage were the only buildings in a neighborhood that had been singled out for attack," according to the Harvard-backed report presented in evidence by the trial's 22nd witness. Milosevic's trial, which started on February 12, resumed in the Hague on Monday after a three-week adjournment. Prosecutors earlier this week called two protected witnesses to testify in closed proceedings against him. Prosecutors can request that the identity of a witness remains secret and that their testimony can be heard behind closed doors. The press and public are barred from attending closed hearings.

Reuters: Srebrenica impossible mission for Dutch – report

Dutch U.N. troops had an impossible mission in Srebrenica, but became collaborators to "ethnic cleansing" after the bloody 1995 fall of the Bosnian enclave, a report said on Wednesday. The Netherlands' official account of Europe's worst atrocity since World War Two assigned wide political and diplomatic blame for the bloodbath, when Bosnian Serbs overran the U.N.-designated "safe area" and murdered up to 8,000 Muslim men and boys.

"Humanitarian motivation and political ambitions drove the Netherlands to undertake an ill-conceived and virtually impossible peace mission," said the almost 7,000-page report by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), commissioned by the Dutch government in 1996. NIOD said the "Dutchbat" battalion of lightly-armed peacekeepers was sent with an unclear mandate to a ill-defined "safe area", and lacked adequate training, resources or intelligence-gathering capacities. "Dutchbat had to keep the peace where there was no peace," NIOD said, adding that Dutchbat had a misplaced confidence in the readiness of the United Nations to use air power to protect Srebrenica. The role of the international community was attacked. International intervention right down to the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica during the Bosnian

war was dominated by the “muddling on” scenario, NIOD said. (For text of the report in English visit: http://www.srebrenica.nl/en/index.htm)

ICTY Launches Investigation Into Crimes Against Srebrenica Serbs

The Hague Tribunal investigators questioned several close associates of former Bosniak war-time commander Naser Oric at the United Nations offices in Sarajevo over the past few days, *Tanjug* quoted Sarajevo media on Tuesday. The report said that Smail Madzic, Murat Avdic, Bejzo Sabic and Dzemal Becirevic had given statements. Tanjug alleges that Bosniak units under Oric’s command destroyed and burned 156 Serb villages, killing over 1,300 Serb civilians in the Bratunac and Srebrenica areas.

OHR: Sarovic, Ivanic and Bilic bears collective responsibility for the final solution of the Palic case

The OHR spokesman, Kevin Sullivan, told a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday that Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic, Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic Ivanic, and Defense Minister Bilic bore collective responsibility for the solution of the Colonel Avdo Palic case. “Their failure to take effective action casts doubt on their competence, their judgment and their commitment to peace in BiH. The OHR finds that the RS authorities are in violation of a binding legal ruling and consequently of their Dayton obligations. OHR reminds President Sarovic, Prime Minister Ivanic, and Defense Minister Bilic that their conduct in this case will have a direct bearing on future actions, to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Chamber’s decision,” Sullivan emphasized. “On 11 January 2001 the BiH Human Rights Chamber issued a final and binding decision in the case of Palic versus Republika Srpska. The RS authorities were ordered to pay compensation to Mrs. Palic for the disappearance of her

husband, Colonel Avdo Palic, while in the custody of Serb forces at the end of the war. The RS authorities were also ordered to investigate Colonel Palic's disappearance, apprehend those responsible, and bring them to justice. In addition, they were ordered to release Colonel Palic if still alive, or to restore his mortal remains to Mrs. Palic; and they were ordered to make all information regarding the fate of Colonel Palic available to Mrs. Palic. Compensation was paid to Mrs. Palic by the RS authorities, which the OHR views as a positive step in the right direction. However, they have failed to comply with the Human Rights Chamber's remaining requirements," Sullivan added. "On 27 February, OHR sent a letter to RS President Sarovic requesting that he intervene with the RS Ministry of Defense, which has failed sto initiate, or effectively co-operate in, an investigation, as required by the Human Rights Chamber ruling. President Sarovic has failed to reply to the OHR letter, as he was requested to do, and the Ministry of Defense has indicated that it does not intend to initiate an investigation, Sullivan concluded. (all Sarajevo dailies reported on the issue)

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz

Resad Dautefendic wrote in the Oslobodjenje In Focus column that the BiH entity of Republika Srpska would have to correct its amendments in line with the BiH Constitutional Court's decision, or Wolfgang Petritsch would have to impose the constitutional solutions, although he would not be glad to do so. According to Dautefendic, there are very few chances that the SDS-headed political parties in the RS accept any corrections to the amendments, since their only goal is to preserve Srpska as was created by Karadzic through genocide and ethnic cleansing. On the other side, if Petritsch imposes amendments, that will not damage the position of the Serb

leaders, who will than be able to say that it is about the international pressure, Dautefendic concludes. In the other Oslobodjenje's editorial, Amra Kebo wrote that no one had even thought about a possibility for any civilized solution to be found in the RS. Following such amount of war destruction, six-year obstructions to the Dayton agreement implementation, and bombs thrown on the returnees, who could even hope that the RS would to the same returnees easily give the same rights as Serbs enjoy, according to Kebo. She, however, concludes that it is therefore strange that the international community has not in a more decisive manner already imposed the constitutional solution according to the European standards. Husein Orahovac wrote in the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day that two separate celebrations marking the HVO's tenth anniversary showed how far away we were from the establishment of a single army.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- Bakir Izetbegovic denies police report: the apartment was not given to the El Mujahedeen Commander

Dnevni Avaz

- Crisis in the BiH Federation Government continues: the financial police in the Finance Ministry

Jutarnje Novine

- Business worth more than 2.8 million marks failed: milk from Tuzla returned from the Slovenian border

Glas Srpski

- Equipment for GSM operator is waiting for owner for a year and a half –

Who stands behind Korador enterprise;

- Order issued by education inspectors: people get retired at the age of 68

Nezavisne Novine

- Who owes the most tax – Government’s enterprises at the top of the list;
- RS parties accuse Petritsch of being under Lagumdzija’s influence;