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BiH State-related Issue

SDP’s Skenderagic says urgent intervention needed in RTV BiH

Dnevni Avaz published on Saturday an exclusive statement of Nijaz Skenderagic, the member of the SDP BiH Presidency and deputy in the BiH Federation Parliament, regarding a complaint he had lodged to the Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA) against the August 6 commentary of TV BiH journalist Amarildo Gutic. According to Skenderagic, Gutic attempted through direct verbal attacks on the SDP, its senior officials and the Alliance for Changes to prevent all, including the legal

institutions from exercising their right to comment on the work of the RTV BiH. And, Skenderagic emphasized, the situation in the RTV BiH was also due to unprofessional journalists and managers disastrous and the SDP would therefore continue a partnership dialogue with the High Representative on this issue. "A worsened situation in the media house shows that the transformation of the RTV BiH goes in an unwanted direction and that an intervention is necessary," Skenderagic said. He added that the CRA had been requested to investigate into the allegations from the aforementioned commentary, as the TV BiH was demanded to publish an apology for such the allegations in its central news program. According to Monday's Oslobodjenje, the CRA has already responded to Skenderagic advising him to directly address RTV BiH editorial staff and request broadcast of his denial.

Oslobodjenje: Destiny of the third GSM tender still unknown

In another article on the issue of the third BiH GSM license, Oslobodjenje journalist Aldijana Omeragic wrote on Saturday that the talks on the new tender have still not started. According to the newspaper, the officials of the Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA) on Friday informed BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdžija that the future CRA moves would be in compliance with the wishes of the Council. Disappointed by fresh disputes with the state officials, the CRA leaders offered a hand of reconciliation to the Council of Ministers saying that they "regret media reports," which were not completely correct. Omeragic emphasized that neither OHR nor Council of Ministers representatives had been prepared on Friday to comment on the current status of the third tender issue. The Oslobodjenje journalist concluded that more disputes between the international community and the BiH state structures over the tender would not bring benefits to anyone. The third GSM license should therefore be returned where it belongs – in the area of business.

The Alliance almost agreed its draft election law

According to the weekend edition of Jutarnje Novine, the political parties belonging to the Alliance for Changes have almost agreed their draft election law. The draft is expected to be discussed by the BiH Council of Ministers after the August 20 this year and then sent into the parliamentary procedure. Ilija Simic, the Chairman of the BiH House of Peoples, told the newspaper that, if approved by the Council of Ministers, the draft would probably be considered and adopted in the first and the second reading at a joint session of the both BiH parliamentary houses.

SDA says the Alliance for Changes delaying adoption of the election law

Halid Genjac, the member of the SDA Main Board, told journalists on Friday in Sarajevo that the Alliance for Changes was deliberately delaying adoption of the election law in order that the elections are not held next year, which would ensure that the Alliance remains on power. Genjac also said that the SDA protested the way in which the three BiH Army wartime commanders had been detained and handed over to the Hague Tribunal.

Deputies in the BiH Parliament have the highest salaries

Glas Srpski, on its cover page, writes about salaries of the deputies, this time stressing that the highest salaries among all budgetary users are of the BiH parliamentary deputies (calling it the most profitable profession). According to the newspaper, professional deputies in the state parliament monthly receive around 3 000 KM when all benefits are taken into account.

Federation

Sarajevo Canton Court summons four HNS officials for a hearing

The Sarajevo Canton Court's investigating judge, Idriz Kamenica, confirmed on Friday that the Court had summoned for an initial hearing four out of seven Croat National Assembly (HNS) officials, including former BiH Federation President Ivo Andric Luzanski and former Federation Defense Minister Miroslav Prce (yet two summoned are Zdravko Batinic and Petar Milic). The Canton's Prosecution Office recently requested the Court to launch an investigation into the activities of dismissed HDZ BiH leader Ante Jelavic and six of his close associates due to a reasonable doubt they had jeopardized the BiH's territorial integrity. According to the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, Kamenica said that Jelavic and two other HNS officials (Marko Tokic and Dragan Curcic) had still not been summoned because the Court did not know their exact home addresses. Prce told Dnevni Avaz (Monday's issue) that he would appear before the Court completely convinced in his innocence since he had nothing to do with the HNS and its activities.

BiH Federation Defense Ministry assesses apprehension of three BiH Army wartime commanders as inappropriate act

The BiH Federation Defense Ministry issued a press release on Friday in regard of the recent apprehension of the three BiH Army wartime commanders, Enver Hadzihasanovic, Mehmed Alagic and Amir Kubura, assessing the act as inappropriate since all three officers had already appeared as witnesses before the Hague Tribunal for several times. The Ministry hopes the Hague Tribunal will therefore change the method of apprehension of members of the former BiH defenders in the future. It also expresses a conviction that the senior officers and wartime commanders of the BiH Army, who are proud on their participation in the defending war, are also prepared to tell the truth and hold responsibility for possible mistakes.

Anic distances himself from support to indicted BiH Army officers

According to Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz Sunday's issues, BiH Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic distanced himself from a support to the three BiH Army wartime commanders indicted for war crimes, which had been expressed in a BiH Federation Defense Ministry's press release issued on Friday. Neither Anic nor any of his associates were consulted in making such a position, which is absolutely unacceptable practice, particularly when it is about pretty serious and sensitive issues, the Federation Defense Minister said in his press release issued on Saturday. According to Anic, it is indisputable that a large number of war crimes had been committed also against BiH Croats, some of them by the BiH Army members, and the perpetrators have to be punished. Indictments against Enver Hadzihasanovic, Mehmed Alagic and Amir Kubura do not necessarily mean that they are responsible for war crimes against Croats in central BiH, and their possible responsibility or innocence will be proved during the proceedings before the Hague Tribunal, Anic concludes in the press release.

Payment of the first of five backlog pensions to start on August 23

According to the weekend edition of Jutarnje Novine, the payment of the first out of five backlog pensions will start on August 23 this year. Zarif Safic, the spokesman for the Sarajevo-based BiH Pension-Disability Insurance Fund, told the newspaper that the International Monetary Fund had approved the payment.

Gornji Vakuf – Uskopje requests more donations and investments after the integration

Slobodna Dalmacija, in its Saturday edition, reads that the Municipality of Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje is looking at more

substantial investments and donations from the International Community now that it has been integrated. Uskoplje Mayor Nikola Milic said the humanitarian organization "Help" is interested in providing the Municipality with funds for the return and reconstruction. On a negative note, the paper mentions that SFOR units are going round the newly established Municipality making a list of café bars and shops.

The Zepce officials meet with Williams

Slobodna Dalmacija on Saturday reported on the meeting of the local officials in Zepce with Richard Williams, the Zepce Supervisor, Alexander Rothert, the Head of the OSCE Office in Zenica and the OHR representative Christine Zandvliet. The daily reports they discussed the protests of the residents of Mladosevica, Strupina, Galovac and Vrbica, who are discontent for not having been integrated into the Municipality of Zepce. It was concluded that all the disputable issues should be discussed at the level of Zepce, Zavidovici and Maglaj municipalities because the provisions of the OHR arbitration decision is irrevocable unless the representatives of all the three municipalities reach a consensus to change them, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Behmen meets with SFOR Commander Dodson

According to the Dnevni Avaz Saturday's issue, BiH Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen and SFOR Commander Michael Dodson assessed on Friday that strengthening of the institutions at the state level was of a crucial importance for the BiH's future, as was making a concept of joint army. Dodson, who was in a farewell visit to Behmen, said that the concept of joint army would help not only BiH but also its neighbors to come closer to the NATO Partnership for Peace program.

Thirty three judicial police officers promoted

Thirty three new BiH Federation judicial police officers were promoted on Friday in the Sarajevo-based Police Academy of the

BiH Federation Interior Ministry. All police officers successfully completed a six-week training and will assume their duties in the judicial police departments in Siroki Brijeg and Mostar.

Ramiz Celo Delalic apprehended on Saturday

According to the Sunday's *Oslobodjenje*, the BiH Federation police officers on Saturday in Konjic arrested Ramiz Celo Delalic, a controversial wartime BiH Army commander in Sarajevo, who was being mentioned on several occasions in relation with war crimes committed against Serbs in Sarajevo and Croats in the area of Grabovica. However, the BiH Federation police denied rumors Delalic had been apprehended on the basis of the Hague Tribunal's indictment. The apprehension was conducted at the request of the Sarajevo Municipal Court, which had sentenced Delalic to seven months in prison for a bodily attack on a police officer.

Croatian Government donates \$500,000 for the reconstruction of the Mostar Old Bridge

Vecernji List (Saturday) learned at the Office for the Old Bridge Reconstruction in Mostar that the Croatian Government will donate 500,000 \$ for the reconstruction of the Old Bridge.

***Slobodna Dalmacija*: BiH Army started war with HVO**

Written by Ivica Mlivoncic (a witness-expert of the General Blaskic defense)

(provided by OHR Mostar)

A careful analyses of the Hague bill of indictments issued against Mehmed Alagic and Enver Hadzihasanovic, BiH Army Generals, Amir Kubura, the Colonel of the BiH Army, and against HVO Generals Tihomir Blaskic, Darijo Kordic and Marijo Cerkez has shown a deep gap and many contradictions between

these documents. After a short analyses of aforementioned documents one can notice that that the bills of indictment are being written and trials are being conducted according to different criteria, political moments and needs, and that the history of the recent war in BiH is being written out of BiH and without its experts. All these things refer to a need for a very reasonable and careful relation toward The Hague, but also to the fact that the justice suffers in all this.

The first and deepest contradiction between the bills of indictment issued against BiH Army officers and a sentence pronounced against General Tihomir Blaskic, which is still invalid, is determining of the day when the conflict between the BiH Army and HVO in Lasva Valley started. New bills of indictments indicate clearly that the BiH Army units started the war, and this means that the sentence pronounced against General Blaskic has been seriously brought into question. If the war in the Lasva Valley started by the attacks of the BiH Army against the HVO and the Croat areas in the Lasva Valley, what is about the claim from the sentence pronounced against Blaskic about the aggression of the Republic of Croatia that Blaskic himself was implementing. A famous statement of Ejup Ganic, given in summer 1993, when he was a Vice President of the BiH Presidency, that the BiH Army 'will take Lasva Valley one way or another' testifies that that the Muslim politics was planning to bring the whole Lasva Valley under its control.

Although General Blaskic was sentenced for the persecution of Muslim civilians, Muslim officials were not sentenced for the persecution of Croat civilians. Also, in the bills of indictment issued against the Muslim officers the massacre that the BiH Army committed in Krizancevo Selo, a village next to Ahmici, on December 22, 1993, when 74 Croat civilians were killed, was not mentioned. A chronology of the crime in Lasva Valley clearly shows that massacre over the Croats was committed in 24 places and 328 Croat civilians and HVO

prisoners were killed while 8 imprisoned soldiers of the BiH Army were killed. This data clearly shows that the Croats are the greatest victims of the war conflict between the BiH Army and HVO in Lasva Valley.

Also, it is The Hague policy to stress that mujahedeens committed most of the crimes over the Croats. If the crimes over the Croats were committed then it is better that they were committed by the mujahedeens than by domicile Muslims because this spoils an impression that the Muslims were the only and biggest victims of the war in BiH.

Vecernji List: Neum in a difficult position

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List article reads that the current borderline between Croatia and BiH is causing big problems for Neum because, according to the Law on the State Border Service, the entire Municipality is – a borderline. All of the important municipal facilities such as the sewer and water systems, pools, schools and municipal offices are within the borderline and all, including minor works require a permit from the State Border Service based in Sarajevo. The author of the article, I. Raguz, wonders how it is possible for a civil society to function under such conditions. It is odd that Croats from Neum cannot bring sand from the Neretva River through the border crossing at Metkovic, and yet, citizens of Montenegro, the FRY, Slovenia, Croatia and other states can transport anything through Neum without any obstructions, reads the article.

Vecenji List: Verheyden says ordinary Hercegovacka Banka depositors will get their money back (provided by OHR Mostar)

Should Hercegovacka Banka be liquidated, ordinary depositors will be paid out their money, Johan Verheyden, the Spokesperson for the Hercegovacka Banka Provisional Administrator stated in Mostar, reports Vecernji List. The

daily quotes him as saying that the depositors' money has been transferred to a safe place, i.e. the BiH Central Bank in Sarajevo.

In his words, it could be established soon as to what happened to the 54 million DEM from Hercegovacka Banka that are believed to be missing, which served as the reason for the High Representative to introduce Provisional Administration in the Bank in April this year, reports Vecernji List.

Vjesnik: Halilovic's lawyer claims that cases 'Grabovica' and 'Seve' are connected (provided by OHR Mostar)

Faruk Balijagic, the lawyer of Sefer Halilovic, the former BiH Commander, demanded from Carla del Ponte to unite the investigation on war crimes committed over the Croats in an Herzegovinian village of Grabovica and the crimes that members of a secret group called 'Seve', which was a part of the BiH Ministry of Interior, were responsible for. Balijagic stated that the cause for this initiative is a reaction caused after a Halilovic's request for the replacement of Serif Patkovic, who was the Commander of the 7th Muslim Brigade, and who is according to The Hague bill of indictment directly responsible for the murder of a Bosnian Croat. For Sefer Halilovic, the President of the BiH Patriot Party (BPS), this was an occasion to demand his removal. However, the BPS Cantonal Board, refused the request of the President of the party. Balijagic told Carla del Ponte that this is an organized campaign and continuation of actions directed against Halilovic. He warned the Chief Prosecutor that the Sarajevo Authority falsely informed about the crime in Grabovica.

Republika Srpska

RS Army Colonel Vidoje Blagojevic apprehended

According to all Sarajevo dailies, the SFOR members

apprehended early on Friday in Banja Luka RS Army Colonel Vidoje Blagojevic on the basis of sealed indictment issued by the Hague Tribunal. Blagojevic, who was after the apprehension transported to the Hague, has been indicted for genocide committed in 1995 against Bosniaks in the area of Srebrenica. NATO Secretary General George Robertson welcomed the operation saying that not a single indictee would avoid facing the justice. The Republika Srpska Justice Ministry expressed its surprise with the Blagojevic's apprehension assessing that the move had not been taken in a suitable moment since the entity was making efforts to pass the law on cooperation with the Hague Tribunal.

Both RS dailies, in the weekend editions also report on the Blagojevic's arrest. Glas Srpski, in Monday's edition, carries reactions to the arrest: "The manner in which the arrest was conducted suggests that The Hague Tribunal does not need our Law on Cooperation with it, since they would continue with arresting people in the streets and beating them up with bats", said Dragan Kostic, the President of Democratic Peoples' Alliance (DNS). "I think that it was a part of overall activities of the International Community, or The Hague, which was result of a lack of action by the RS authorities", said Momir Malic, the Vice-president of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). RS Socialist Party's Krsto Jandric said that his party was against any regional international courts.

Dodik says all war-crime indictees must prove their innocence or guiltiness

Leader of the Party of the Independent Social Democrats and former Republika Srpska Prime Minister Milorad Dodik on Friday told the Banja Luka Alternative Television that all persons of the Serb nationality indicted for war crimes would have to prove their innocence or guiltiness before the Hague Tribunal. According to the Sunday's Oslobodjenje, he added that the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal was a reality the RS had

to accept. Dodik expressed his hope that the most prominent Bosniak politicians including Alija Izetbegovic, Ejup Ganic and Haris Silajdzic would also be tried due to their political responsibility for what had happened in these areas. He emphasized that, if former RS President Biljana Plavsic could be indicted for war crimes on the basis of commanding responsibility, there was no reason that Izetbegovic, Ganic and Silajdzic are not tried as well.

Banja Luka pensioners dissatisfied with their position

According to the Sarajevo dailies, the representatives of the Banja Luka Pensioners Association on Friday warned the Republika Srpska Government that they would organize protests including the blockage of the public institutions' work if their material and social position is not improved. The current RS Government is not capable to control financial flows in the entity, the Association's president, Nenad Ratkovic, told journalists on Friday in Banja Luka. He added that the pensioners were likely to come out on the streets in September and protest their difficult position. Nezavisne Novine carried an interview with Ratkovic, who confirmed that the pensioners would ask for resignation of the RS Government unless it took up urgent measures to improve standard of this category of citizens.

Serb refugee association says OHR not respecting its own decision on Kotorsko land

The weekend Jutarnje Novine reports that the Doboj-based municipal branch of the Serb Refugee Association Ostanak (Stay-In) maintains that the OHR's request to Doboj Mayor Nikola Gavric to ban further construction of the houses at the locality of Kotorsko puts Serb refugees in a situation to fight back. The Association gathering Serbs who do not want to return to their pre-war homes in the BiH Federation emphasizes that the OHR pressed by unrealistic demands of Bosniak returnees to Kotorsko does not respect its owned decisions

related to the locality.

Srebrenica women held another peaceful protest

The Srebrenica women held another peaceful protest on Saturday in Tuzla reiterating their demand to learn the truth about their missing relatives. They expressed their full support to the efforts of the Hague Tribunal in prosecuting all those responsible for the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. They also welcomed the Friday apprehension of RS Army Colonel Vidoje Blagojevic, one of the wartime commanders of the Serb forces in the area.

International Community

IJC welcomes Petritsch's decision

The Independent Judicial Commission (IJC) welcomed a decision of High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to amend the BiH Federation Law on the Judicial and Prosecutorial Service, the Commission said in a press release issued on Friday. (Dnevni Avaz carried on Saturday the BHP news agency's report on the [issued IJC Press Release](#))

Transparency International to publish a report on the problems of transparency in the work of the international community at the end of the month

In an interview with the Monday's Dnevni Avaz, Boris Divjak, the director of the Banja Luka-based Transparency International NGO, said that the organization was preparing to publish at the end of the month a report concerning the problems of transparency in the work of the international community in BiH. According to Divjak, there will be many officials who will not be pleased with the report, but, having in mind an importance of the international community's role in BiH, it is logical to conclude that it hold a significant part of responsibility for such a poor situation in the country.

The report will, among other things, address the issue of the third GSM license. It specifies a series of failures in the tender's documentation, which lead to a conclusion that certain bidder was being favored through ensuring better access to the relevant data. Nezavisne Novine in its weekend edition also published a short interview with Divjak, in which he speaks about the level of corruption in BiH. Divjak mentions the study done by Bulgarian Research Center according to which BiH, together with other countries in the region, had a very high level of corruption. He adds that the most corrupted in the Republika Srpska are, according to research conducted by the Transparency International, the customs offices, the entity's administration, as well as the Government's services and the municipal administrations. In the BiH Federation, the most corrupted are also governmental services, followed by the tax offices and local authorities. When answering the question if the International Community was linked with local authorities in terms of corruption, Divjak said that the ICG, in its report, accused the International Community, of being responsible for all failures in BiH. "There is a link and it has been going through different phases. The International Community was aware of different misuses in the entity's governments, which were not published at the time," said Divjak. (see attachment for full translation of the [Divjak's interview with Nezavisne Novine](#) – provided by OHR Banja Luka)

ICTY requests documentation on BiH war presidency sessions

Slobodna Dalmacija, in its Monday edition, reads that the ICTY requested the BiH Presidency to hand over the minutes of all Presidency sessions held in the period from 1990 to 1993. According to a source close to the BiH Presidency, The Hague request came immediately after BiH Army wartime commanders, Generals Mehmed Alagic and Enver Hadzihasanovic, and Brigadier Amir Kubura were arrested. In September 1993, the massacre over 32 Croats in Grabovica, a village close to Mostar, took

place. The Hague investigators are about to finish collecting of evidence on this case. Also, the prison camps such as the Museum in Jablanica and Celebici, close to Konjic, in which BiH Army members were torturing and killing imprisoned Croats and Serbs, existed. According to the source, Alija Izetbegovic, the first man of the BiH Presidency at that time, knew about the camps and massacre in Grabovica. Many people believe that together with General Rasim Delic and Sefer Halilovic, Izetbegovic is directly responsible for these crimes.

Croatia not imposing visas for BiH citizens

Dnevni Avaz reports on Sunday that the BiH Foreign Ministry spokesman, Amer Kapetanovic, denied the allegation Croatia would impose visas for the BiH citizens. Leader of the BiH Republican Party Stjepan Kljucic told the newspaper on Saturday that Croatia was preparing to make such move due to a large number of illegal immigrants entering BiH.

Editorials

Editorials: Dnevni Avaz, Oslobodjenje, Nezavisne Novine

In the Saturday's Oslobodjenje commentaries, Emir Habul wrote about an importance that one truth is determined by the Hague Tribunal instead of existing three different views on what happened in the past ten years in the region. In the same issue, Mirko Sagolj comments on the Sarajevo Canton Prosecution Office's request for an investigation into the illegal activities of Ante Jelavic and six of his associates. Elvedina Halac wrote in the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day about the violence against women. Edina Sarac comments in the Sunday's Dnevni Avaz on the apprehension of RS Army Colonel Vidoje Blagojevic, as Oslobodjenje columnist Zija Dizdarevic wrote about the "political invasion" of the Catholic church in BiH and Croatia. Monday's Oslobodjenje

carried a Feral Tribune's column written by Ivan Lovrenovic, as Ibrahim Prohic wrote about a "multiethnic structure" of the Hague prisoners. Nezavisne Novine's columnist Radomir Neskovic in his editorial criticizes Ivanic's government for failing to fulfill the promises, especially in terms of economic reforms, suggesting that, bearing in mind the position of PDP in the ruling coalition with SDS, one should not expect much from this government.

Feral Tribune – BiH awaiting new indictments and arrests

Written by Ivan Lovrenovic

The Feral Tribune editorial reads that there have been almost no reactions to the arrests of the three high-ranking BiH Army officers charged with war crimes and that the only larger demonstration so far was that in Sanski Most, where the demonstrators protested over the arrest of the local idol Mehmed Alagic.

Lovrenovic says the arrests were a serious challenge for the Alliance because they had to show to be abiding by the international obligations and yet, neutralize the expected attacks from their political opponents. It is understandable that Lagumdzija and his colleagues felt the need to commend the "cooperative" behavior of the indictees because they had to defend their fragile position and limited range on the BiH scene, says Lovrenovic, but the question is how the Alliance officials will act when it comes to possible new indictees of Croat or Serb nationalities.

As for Izetbegovic, Lovrenovic thinks he is troubled because each testimony by the Bosniak high-ranking officers may bring to light Izetbegovic's own ideological dimension of the war in BiH and the failure of it.