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BiH State-related Issue

The BiH House of Representatives adopts permanent election law

All media in BiH report that the BiH House of Representatives on Tuesday adopted permanent election law as drafted by the Council of Ministers. The law was voted by deputies of all political parties having seats in the House except the representatives of the HDZ, SDS and a deputy of the SDA. It left open certain disputed issues including the way of election of the BiH Federation and Republika Srpska Presidents and Vice-presidents, as well as deputies to the BiH Federation House of Peoples. These provisions will be defined once when the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire country's territory is fully implemented. Moreover, the deputies to the BiH House of Peoples are being elected according to the valid BiH Constitution until the implementation of the Court's decision. In order to come into

effect, the same version of the law must be passed by the BiH House of Peoples.

The BiH Presidency satisfied with adoption of the election law

According to the ONASA news agency, the BiH Presidency is pleased with the fact that the BiH House of Representatives passed on Tuesday the permanent election law, the Office of Presidency Chairman Jozo Krizanovic said in a press release. At its Tuesday session in Sarajevo, the BiH Presidency members expressed their hopes that the BiH House of Peoples will adopt the same version of the law as soon as possible.

OHR, OSCE welcome adoption of the election law

According to the TV BiH, OHR and OSCE Mission to BiH welcome adoption of the permanent election law by the BiH House of Representatives on Tuesday.

The Brcko District Assembly fails to adopt the education plan

ONASA and Dnevni Avaz reports that the Brcko District Assembly on Tuesday failed to adopt a plan for elementary and secondary education as drafted by the District Administration, although the next schooling year is to start in ten days. The plan was not accepted because, according to a number of deputies, it did not contain all basic principles under which an integrated education process should be carried out.

BiH Presidency appoints 28 new Ambassadors

At a session held on Tuesday in Sarajevo, the BiH Presidency dismissed 33 current BiH Ambassadors and appointing 28 candidates as their replacements. According to the BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija, the new candidates for the Ambassadors have been selected under strict criteria, primarily knowledge of foreign languages and experience in international relations.

Federation

BiH Federation Defense Minister meets with PDHR

Dnevni Avaz and ONASA report that Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic on Tuesday met with Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays and Martyn Gardiner, the military adviser for the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, to discuss the situation in the Federation Army and Defense Ministry. According to the Ministry, Hays was particularly interested in the re-arrangement of the Federation Army and possibilities that military forces are engaged for certain civil purposes. Anic said the processes had been launched to create a single professional army of BiH. Besides guarding the BiH border, he said the army might also become a part of the peacekeeping missions in the world and help civilians in the case of natural disasters.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Western-Herzegovina Canton HDZ Board responds to Jerko Ivankovic (one of the Lijanovic Company owners)

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Cantonal Board of the HDZ of the West Herzegovina Canton released a press release today, reacting to Jerko Ivankovic's letter that was recently published in the media. The release says that the HDZ members are "appalled with incredible political pondering, observations and consciously placed lies of Jerko Ivankovic's press release. We are aware that superficial and incorrect political analysis in the letter could be explained by the author's lack of education, but it does not give him a right to manipulate with the victims of the Croat people and to speak on its behalf. He did not experience the difficult struggle and victims of the Croat people in BiH in the past decade", says the HDZ's press release. The Croat people recognized its interests and goals in the HDZ's policy which gives the HDZ the legitimacy to

ponder upon models and methods of political struggle for equality of the Croat people in BiH. Reminding that the HDZ got majority of votes of the BiH Croats and “respecting the will of its electorate, the HDZ BiH has decided not to give the Parliament an alibi for illegal decisions, outvoting of the Croat people, legalization of the unified state, centralization and implementation of politics which treads and denies political and other rights and systematic impoverishment of areas with Croat majority”(…) “Regarding millions of KMs of the Canton that have gone missing, Jerko Ivankovic can ask the auditors that the Federation authorities (in which he participates as a self-proclaimed Croat representative) has sent to audit the budget beneficiaries but failed to detect any illegal activities”, says the press release of the Cantonal Board of the HDZ (…)

The Board asks Jerko Ivankovic “how much tax do you pay and how much do you evade” recommending the tax offices, in order to fill the budget efficiently, to control the “Lijanovici” company as they control other tax payers. The Lijanovics have taken upon themselves, as self-proclaimed Administrators of this Canton, to elect and appoint not only the Heads of Tax Office but most of the inspectors, says the release. “Everyone can see that the personal gain is the issue here and not the professionalism and moral”(…)

Slobodna Dalmacija: Livno Cantonal Coordination Board of opposition parties discusses formation of an alternative government (provided by OHR Mostar)

The main topic of the meeting was the initiative to create a Cantonal alternative government which was instigated by the member parties of the Alliance for changes. The parties have been invited to declare themselves on participation in the work of the alternative government (…)

The instigators of the initiative announced that the alternative government will be formed and operational by September 1, the latest.

Vecernji List: Jelavic to appear before the Sarajevo Cantonal

Court on August 29

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Ante Jelavic, the dismissed HDZ President, was served with the summons to appear in front of the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo on August 29. Marko Tokic, Ivo Andric Luzanski, Miroslav Prce, Dragan Curcic, Zdravko Batinic and Petar Milic were also served with the summons. According to our source, Jelavic and his party colleagues will appear in front of the Court. Together with them a few hundred of their party colleagues and party supporters might come as well. They say that this is a political process aimed against the Croat people and for this reason they 'will support their President and their leadership'.

Jelavic stated for Vecernji list: 'I will respond to the summons. I will not run away. However, first of all, we shall do everything to stop political processes against the Croats that are being led in Sarajevo just like during the darkest Communist time.'

He judges the instituting of the legal proceedings as a great neurosis of the Alliance and a part of the IC politicians 'who are about to leave and who have not achieved any significant result'.

Jelavic added: 'Since they have not done anything they want to draw the attention to other, marginal issues. They started with the political persecution just like during the worst Communist time. They have done all this in order to deprive the Croat political leadership of the space at the eve of the constitutional reforms.'

Unofficially we have learned that that the members of the Helsinki Committee are closely watching the whole case. They will also participate in the investigation. Many Croats, that we have talked to, say that they did not believe that the political persecution will start again.

People from the Croat National Assembly stated: 'The Alliance's staged processes, investigations and political trials, this time organized in the Sarajevo Cantonal Court, are becoming increasingly similar to the Communist Belgrade, which was systematically persecuting the Croats because they had a different opinion.' They added that in the eyes of the Croats such Sarajevo is only a continuation of Belgrade.

Vecernji List: The wartime HVO commanders anxious regarding the upcoming arrival of Carla Del Ponte (provided by OHR Mostar)

Although BiH Croats were expecting that this time Carla Del Ponte will arrive with new ICTY bills of indictment, that will not contain their names, the information coming from well-informed sources tells something else. Those, who are well-informed, say that one bill of indictment contains the names of Valentin Coric, a former Minister of the Herceg Bosnia Police, Slobodan Praljak, a former HVO Commander and Zlatan Mijo Jelic, the War Commander of the HVO Military Police, who was the Commander of the Croat Component of the Federation Army until recently. According to the same source, The Hague Prosecutor charges them with the crimes committed over Serb and Bosniak soldiers. It seems that this time, also, it is about a very objective commanding responsibility of the military and Police leaders, and duties and names on the bills of indictment are a logical continuation of the usual practice of The Hague.

Stanko Sopta Baja and Ljubo Cesic Rojs, who are, allegedly, on the second bill of indictment, were mentioned as possible passengers to The Hague. The high official of the International Administration in BiH informed Cardinal Puljic about this bill of indictment ten days ago. The Sarajevo press wrote about Rojs' departure to The Hague a few times. They were accusing him that while visiting the Kupres front-line he killed the Serb Major Radoslav Lakic, the Commander of the RS

3rd Brigade, and four Serb soldiers. According to the same source, Sopta's role is connected with Mladen Naletilic Tuta, since Sopta was his Deputy Commander. The IC would be glad to see Sopta leaving to The Hague because they see Sopta as a hard-lining radical, who is imposing his attitudes to Jealvic and the HDZ.

Sources from The Hague say that The Hague investigators want to hear a number of persons, who are connected with the work of the Croat Military and Intelligence Services in BiH. The subject of their interest is first of all the information that HIS and SIS were connected with the war crimes that para-military or regular units committed during 1993. Within this context, the prison camps in Dretelj and Heliodrom are the most interesting for The Hague investigators. They will try to get an answer to this question by hearing Jadranko Prlic, Ante Jelavic, Ivan Lucic, Bruno Stojic... Prlic is most frequently accused of these camps because, allegedly, he signed the order on their establishment. However, there are people who claim that Prlic had to sign such an order because these camps had already been established. However, in order to be able to abolish them legally he had to legalize them first.

It is interesting that all possible defendants are from Herzegovina and this confirms a thesis of those who stated that it was agreed a few years ago to send to prison the Croats from the Central Bosnia first, and then the Croats from Herzegovina.

Republika Srpska

RS Defence Minister denies the allegation of Vojvodina's Canak on joint manoeuvres

According to Oslobodjenje, Republika Srpska Minister of Defense denied on Tuesday the allegation of Speaker of the Assembly of Vojvodina Nenad Canak that the armies of the RS

and Yugoslavia had planned joint maneuvers aimed at to overthrow current authorities in Serbia. Describing Canak's statement as "nebulous," Slobodan Bilic told reporters that the joint maneuvers of the RS Army and Yugoslav Army had never been planned. (both Banja Luka dailies also reported on the denial, adding the one with the same contents made by RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic))

OHR, SFOR on Canak's statement

ONASA reports that the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in BiH on Tuesday denied an information that High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch had put a veto on the conduction of military exercises of the Yugoslav and Republika Srpska armies. These joint manoeuvres were, as Vojvodina Assembly Speaker Nenad Canak said, to be used for the state putsch in Serbia. "This is not true. We nearly fainted when we learned about the story; we do not know how the story appeared," OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer told reporters in Sarajevo. "The OHR has in no way participated in the prevention of the state putsch in Serbia," OHR Spokesperson in Banja Luka Sonja Pastuovic said, commenting on the Canak's statement, that Petritsch had prevented a putsch prepared by Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica in cooperation with the two armies. Pastuovic added that this statement was "completely incorrect." SFOR Spokesman Hubert Genest said on the issue that SFOR representatives are in good relations with the commanders of the BiH entity armies and that such maneuvers "would not pass unnoticed."

SRNA news agency Steering Board accepts Davidovic's resignation

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the SRNA Steering Board formally accepted Dragan Davidovic's resignation. According to the papers, the RS Government was suggested to appoint Mladen Krsmanovic as an acting general manager.

RS Army Chief of Staff confirms Federation Army violates BiH Constitution

The RS Army Chief of Staff, Col General Novica Simic, confirmed on Tuesday that the BiH Federation Army had passed through the northern part of the RS, thus bypassing a procedure laid down in the BiH Constitution. "According to the Dayton Agreement, the entity armies cannot cross from one entity to another without the consent of their governments. The BiH Federation Army had not forwarded this kind of request to the RS Government, which means that the constitutional procedure was not respected," Gen Simic says in a statement. The statement also reads that the RS Army is preparing a transport unit which is to take part in peace operations in Eritrea.

City of Banja Luka sues RS Government

Nezavisne Novine quotes Banja Luka Mayor Dragoljub Davidovic as saying that the City of Banja Luka requested the Republika Srpska Constitutional Court to assess whether the RS Government's decision to change the status of Banja Luka-based companies is in line with the entity Constitution. Davidovic also says that the RS Government decision on appointment of steering boards is illegal and at variance with the Constitution. "Even 85 companies in Banja Luka are under jurisdiction of the city authorities and we want to run these companies", says Davidovic.

Mirko Banjac says PDP's policy harms RS

Wednesday's edition of Glas Srpski quotes the senior official, Mirko Banjac, as saying that the policy of the Mladen Ivanic's PDP is extremely harmful for the Republika Srpska and that PDP proved it at Tuesday's session of the BiH House of the Representatives. "The PDP deputies outvoted themselves. I have never supported the policy of PDP, nor I ever will", says Banjac.

International Community

OHR, OSCE investigate into work of Glas Srpski and SRNA

According to Dnevni Avaz, ONASA and both Banja Luka dailies, Spokesman for the OSCE Regional Office in Banja Luka Pearce McCorly confirmed on Tuesday that the OSCE Mission to BiH and Office of the High Representative (OHR) “have been conducting an investigation into the work of the Banja Luka’s daily Glas Srpski and the SRNA news agency.” According to McCorly, the investigation is being conducted in order to determine whether the Republika Srpska Government has been involved in the work of these media houses and in which way. He said that the results of the investigation would be publicly announced. The OHR is concerned about the situation in the media houses in this country, and its wish is that the governments are not involved in their work, according to OHR Spokesperson Sonja Pastuovic.

OHR to review disputed documentation on Kotorsko land by end of the week

OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer told journalists on Tuesday in Sarajevo that the OHR should review documentation on the disputed land in Kotorsko by end of this week and then decide further steps. She said that OHR believed that the construction works had stopped but that it was not 100% sure. “We are still checking and yesterday we received conflicting reports, so we are looking into it again, Stiglmayer emphasized, adding that, of course, the works had to stop.”

The report on the Mostar Aluminum audit completed

Asked to comment on the accusation from the Dani magazine that OHR was preparing to legalize the privatization of the Mostar Aluminum Combine, the Office spokesperson, Alexandra Stiglmayer, said at a press conference on Tuesday in Sarajevo that the OHR was not preparing anything. “The Office of the High Representative has commissioned a report by an

independent audit team headed by Professor Timmermans. The report is finished and Professor Timmermans will soon hand it over to the Federation Government and the management of Aluminum, as well as other parties involved, the Cantonal Privatization Agency, the Federation Privatization Agency, etc. and this report can serve as a basis for talks and perhaps trigger a solution to the current deadlock. But it is not an Office of the High Representative report," Stiglmeier said.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Osi says his mission will not succeed without support

(provided by OHR Mostar)

OHR's new Special Envoy for eastern Herzegovina, Hungarian Ambassador Istvan Osi announced in Trebinje, during his inauguration to the function, that his mission could not succeed without a full support from the local authorities. He said that he expected a joint engagement in solving issues related to economy and economic prosperity, return of refugees and displaced persons and reconstruction of religious facilities for members of all three religions. Deputy High Representative for BiH, Russian Ambassador Alexander Zotov expressed his confidence that Osi, who replaced Spaniard Daniel Ruiz who had been beaten up by Serb extremists in this town, will succeed in establishing a good relationship with local authorities in eastern Herzegovina.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Commander Dodson says during his visit to Zagreb SFOR will for sure arrest Mladic and Karadzic (provided by OHR Mostar)

The current military situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is calm, and the commanders of the two military components in BiH are working well with SFOR, said the SFOR commander, Lieutenant-General Michael Dodson after a meeting in Zagreb with the Croatian Minister of Defence Jozo Rados and the

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Croatian Army Lieutenant-General Josip Lucic. Lt-Gen Dodson said that SFOR would make efforts to arrest the suspects for crimes Karadzic and Mladic. "They have a lot of friends who offer them protection and that is why it is hard to apprehend them. But it is a question of time, if we are going to arrest them, or they would turn themselves in or they would be extradited by the countries they are in", said Dodson(...)

Jutarnji List: Croatia and The Hague (provided by OHR Mostar)

Goran Granic stated that before the beginning of the summer The Hague demanded from the Government some documents about the war in BiH. It is about the documents that are important for the processing of the crimes committed on the Herzegovinan front-line.

He clarified: 'The Prosecution is opening the Mostar issue now, especially the issue of the prison camps in Herzegovina and someone will have to be responsible for them.'

He stated that the names of 30 persons, selected in 4 groups, were mentioned in The Hague request. However, all of them are not the persons who might be charged with the crimes finally. Among them are the persons who were in a contact with incriminating documents. The only names that he could remember from the list are the names of Slobodan Praljak and Jadranko Prlic.

The Hague is demanding a part of correspondence led between Mostar and President Tudjman at that time just as well as the transcripts from the President's Office with regard to this issue. The Hague will have to wait for all these documents since due to leaves the Government has not put the delivery of these documents into procedure.

Granic stated that Carla del Ponte is not coming to Croatia in September. She will visit Sarajevo and Belgrade. Since there are no any special issues related to Croatia she postponed her

coming. Asked whether the arrest of General Gotovina is no longer of special interest for Carla del Ponte, Granic answered that 'according to her judgment Gotovina is not a problem yet.'

Editorial

Dnevni Avaz: A robbery continuation

In the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day, journalist Almasa Hadzic wonders can anyone stop further robbery of the private property in the Republika Srpska, which is changing an ethnic picture of the areas once dominated by Bosniaks. "Bijeljina Mayor Dragomir Ljubojevic promised two days ago to the Serb veterans he would give them fresh parcels of "socially-owned" (actually Bosniak) land in Bijeljina and Janja for the construction of houses. In such an illegal way, approximately 12,000 parcels have been allocated in the RS, with more than 6,000 in Podrinje, during the past to years to the Serbs (according to their own acknowledgment), who do not want to return to the places of their pre-war residence. Unofficial information are even more drastic and say that these figures are almost three times bigger," Hadzic wrote. She adds that this means approximately 24,000 Serbs will, for example, settle on the Bosniak land in Podrinje, which will be enough to change the pre-war ethnic picture of this area, as well as others such as Kotorско. And all this will be done in a way once introduced by the criminal headquarters of the most wanted war crime suspect Radovan Karadzic. "Entire suburbs have already been built up on the land taken away from Bosniaks. In spite of all protests, the Serb authorities have wisely decided not to say a single word, although they are also aware of the High Representative's decision preventing the allocation of someone else's properties. Their silence will probably last all until someone in OHR realizes its decisions must be not only made but implemented as well,"

Hadzic concludes.