

BiH Media Round-up, 23/8/2001

BiH State-related Issue

- Discussion on BiH accession to the Council of Europe to take place on September 2 in Georgia
- Mirko Banjac says Ivanic destroying refugees
- A SDS deputy says Election Law will create chaos in Bosnia
- SPRS welcomes adoption of the Election Law
- *Vecernji List*: HDZ BiH says Election Law incomplete

Federation

- SDP expresses concern over Mostar Aluminum audit
- Party for BiH says OHR expert team's audit of Mostar Aluminum legalizes robbery
- Rebuilding of the Stolac Careva Mosque agreed
- Soljic invites BiH Croat political and religious representatives for a meeting
- *Slobodna Dalmacija*: Alija Izetbegovic was passing all decisions during the war
- *Vecernji List*: Stjepan Kljucic on the Hague investigations in BiH
- *Vecernji List* : Dzevad Mlaco retreats into isolation because of The Hague

Republika Srpska

- Construction of house in Kotorsko continues despite OHR's ban
- RS refugee association to hold street protests if RS Government fails to fulfil its demands
- Who is persuading war crime indictees to Surrender to the ICTY?
- SNS claims "PDP Experts" are getting nervous
- PDP spokesman says party's leadership to discuss

possible RS Government's reshuffle in 15 days

- DSP Vice-president claims Ivanic is a hostage of SDS policy

International Community

- UN assesses unprofessional the behavior of Banja Luka police during May 7 incidents
- CRA issue long-term license to 24 broadcasters
- Beecroft says extradition of war crime suspects represents obligation according to the international law
- Clarke says the schooling year in the District to begin regardless of all possible obstacles
- *Slobodna Dalmacija*: The Hague is demanding extradition or hearing of 120 persons from BiH including 30 Croats
- *Vecernji List*: The Hague Tribunal removes HDZ BiH's hard-liners
- *Vjesnik*: OHR says crimes cannot be time-barred

Editorials

- *Oslobodjenje*: End of the story
- *Slobodna Dalmacija*: The Hague claims its due
- *Slobodna Dalmacija*: A truck-driver is driving to prison

BiH State-related Issue

Discussion on BiH accession to the Council of Europe to take place on September 2 in Georgia

Since the election law was adopted, the Council of Europe does not see any more obstacles to the BiH admission into the full membership of the organization, says Esad Mavric, the executive secretary of the Council's office in BiH. The issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Council's Political Committee scheduled for September 2 in Georgia. According to *Oslobodjenje* and *Dnevni Avaz*, the Presidency of the European Union, US Embassy to BiH, as well as the majority

of the BiH political parties also welcome adoption of the election law, expressing the hope that the BiH House of Peoples would do the same in next days. Jutarnje Novine reports that the House of Peoples was expected to address the issue on Thursday. (All Sarajevo dailies carry the joint OHR, OSCE PR issued late on Wednesday).

Mirko Banjac says Ivanic destroying refugees

In an interview with Nezavisne Novine, the senior SDS official, Mirko Banjac comments on the adoption of the Election Law. He criticises PDP and its leader Mladen Ivanic for voting for the Law, which is, according to Banjac, very damaging for refugees and displaced persons. Banjac says that SDS abstained from vote because the proper procedure was not followed, since the deputies did not have the opportunity to discuss the Law and propose the amendments. That is why, Banjac says, the Law was not adopted but imposed. "It is about an expression of violence and force in BiH. And Ivanic and PDP approved the adoption of the Law", says Banjac. Asked to comment on fate of refugees and displaced persons after the Law is passed, Banjac says that they should direct all their queries to Ivanic and PDP. "All problems that refugees and displaced persons may have in the future are connected to PDP, so let them ask Ivanic and PDP to resolve their problems. They should not be turning to SDS or any other party but to those who brought their deputy from the coast (Mirjanic was on vacation) to make sure that even a single vote is not missing. That is PDP", says Banjac. He also says that everything was well concocted because Ivanic met with Lagumdzija in Sarajevo on Sunday. "This is a double game and public has the right to be informed about it. If this is good for the RS then PDP should be given a credit for it", says Banjac.

A SDS deputy says Election Law will create chaos in Bosnia

The SDS deputy in the BiH House of Representatives, Milos Jovanovic, said that "the adoption of the Election Law as such

will create an election chaos in Bosnia and Herzegovina". "A large number of citizens in the Republika Srpska, who are using other people's property, will not be able to register themselves for voting in the places of their pre-war residence. If they somehow registered themselves, they might find it difficult to go there and vote because they are old or for some other reason", Jovanovic said at a press conference in Zvornik. Jovanovic expressed his dissatisfaction with a fact the law had been supported by the deputies of other Serb political parties.

SPRS welcomes adoption of the Election Law

SPRS issued a press release saying that the adoption of the Election Law was very important, because it was opening up a great prospect for BiH. "The text of the adopted Election Law is certainly not perfect, but it is a product of objective circumstances which have determined the level of compromise," the SPRS says in the release.

Vecernji List: HDZ BiH says Election Law incomplete (provided by OHR Mostar)

HDZ BiH welcomes the enacting of the new election law, being aware of its necessity for any democratic country, especially for BiH, because the law is a prerequisite that had to be met in order to join the Council of Europe. But, the HDZ deems that the Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent status of the people should have been implemented before the election law was passed. Because of this, the HDZ is of opinion that the law is not complete and leaves room for various speculations and manipulations. In other words, after a constitutional reform, the election law would, in line with the Constitution, ensure full and equal rights of every people and citizen and a transparent and democratic election process. Because of that, the HDZ BiH is of opinion that a constitutional reform is more than required in order to put an end to discrimination of the citizens and peoples, which the

election law is full of, because a vast number of citizens, because of their ethnicity, or place of residence, cannot vote or be voted for. Without a constitutional reform, BiH remains divided, with the Republic of Srpska as a Serb national entity and the Federation of BiH as a civil entity dominated by the Bosniaks. HDZ BiH calls on the OHR, OSCE and other international organization to speed up the constitutional reform, so the election law could be passed with all solutions that could serve a multinational community such as BiH.

Federation

SDP expresses concern over Mostar Aluminum audit

The BiH Social Democratic Party sent on Wednesday an open letter to High representative Wolfgang Petritsch expressing its concern over a way in which an audit team members and especially its leader had done their work in the Mostar-based Aluminum Company. "In the final report, the international member and head of the audit team say that it is not necessary to recommend a special financial audit of the company. This is explained by a fact that the international consultants will review the financial structure of the Aluminum during the process of its privatization," the party said in the letter. It added that it was strange the international audit expert was not aware of a fact that the mentioned international experts had no at least a minimum legal authority to assess the financial structure of the company, according to Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz.

Party for BiH says OHR expert team's audit of Mostar Aluminum legalizes robbery

The Party for BiH expressed its concern over the OHR audit team report on the ownership structure of the Mostar Aluminum Combine, which, unfortunately, legalized robbery of the most important BiH Company in favor of an illegal group headed by

Mijo Brajkovic. "If the information are correct that the OHR audit team report legalizes the fictive reduction of the Company's capital without the participation of the authorized institutions representing the state as the owner, than it is about a legalization of criminal change of the ownership structure," the party said in a press release, according to Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz.

Rebuilding of the Stolac Careva Mosque agreed

OHR Spokesperson in Mostar Avis Benes told journalists on Wednesday that the representatives of the international community had on June 1 this year agreed with the Stolac municipal authorities on the beginning of the town's Careva Mosque rebuilding. Benes reminded that, according to the Dayton Agreement's Annex 8, the mosque was on the list of national monuments. She added that the Stolac local authorities were now responsible for the issue.

Soljic invites BiH Croat political and religious representatives for a meeting

According to Dnevni Avaz, Vladimir Soljic, the head of the BiH Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna, has scheduled a meeting of the BiH Croat political and religious representatives for the next Wednesday in Sarajevo. The invited officials include Cardinal Vinko Puljic, Head of the BiH Franciscan Community Friar Mijo Dzolan, BiH Federation President Karlo Filipovic, NHI leader Kresimir Zubak, Ivo Komsic, Nikola Grabovac, Ilija Simic and others.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Alija Izetbegovic was passing all decisions during the war

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Arrests (they were arrested and they did not voluntary turned themselves in as the Bosniak media and politicians tried to delude the public) of three high-ranked BiH Army officers, who

were charged with the crimes committed over BiH Croats during 1993 and 1994, disturbed the BiH public, especially the Bosniak one. During this time the Presidency of the Republic of BiH was the Commander-in-Chief of the BiH Army. However, persons, who were the members of the Presidency at that time, evade the responsibility through the media, claiming that they only had a passive role and that Izetbegovic was pulling the strings.

It is extremely unethical to use all beneficiaries that the Presidency membership implied and to turn a blind eye to all negative things that were taking place and keep silent on it. The question whether someone was preventing them to withdraw from the Presidency, dissatisfied with their passive role, and to inform the domestic and international public about the reasons of their act, remains open. If they had done it Alija Izetbegovic, Ejup Ganic, Haris Silajdzic, Jusuf Pusic, Sefer Halilovic, Bakir Alispahic, Rasim Delic, Rusmir Mahmutcehajic, Hasan Cengic and their sinister designs would have been unmasked.

During the greatest sufferings the Central Bosnian Croats were sending a message to Ivo Komsic to leave the Presidency. However, the Presidency was sending a message that only the BiH Army is the only legal Army, while all the others are para-Armies, aggressors, including the HVO. As long as they needed him he was a good, honest Croat and patriot. However, now they 'are washing his dirty linen in the public' claiming that during the war he knew how to employ his son (who only has a secondary education) in the BiH Embassy in Germany.

Although it might not be relevant, it should be said that the first mass crime during the Croat-Muslim conflict took place in the period when the missing minutes and transcripts from the Presidency sessions were made. Namely, on January 30, 1993, members of the 7th Muslim Brigade brutally killed 5 imprisoned HVO soldiers and older civilians of a Croat

nationality. This crime committed in Dusina is a part of The Hague bill of indictment issued against the three BiH Army officers of the 7th Muslim Brigade (whose direct Commander was Alija Izetbegovic).

Vecernji List: Stjepan Kljujic on the Hague investigations in BiH

(provided by OHR Mostar)

You have recently stated that the BiH Army had committed crimes against the Croats. Could the political leadership around Izetbegovic influence the events in order to prevent those things?

I said that it was evident that the 7th Muslim Brigade had committed crimes and that the senior BiH Army officers who are in The Hague would have to give some answers. Did they do it under their leadership or perhaps they did not command the unit? If not, who and why did?

The Hague Tribunal mentions new indictments against BiH politicians? How could it reflect the political events in BiH?

The Tribunal is slowly finding out what was going in these areas. Of course, after the principle of the command responsibility was accepted, high officials will be summoned too, including the civil authorities (...) Some names have been mentioned by the Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia, Goran Granic(...)

Vecernji List : Dzevad Mlaco retreats into isolation because of The Hague

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Chief of the Bugojno Police Administration, Selmo Cikotic, had to testify, following the order from the Tribunal, before The Hague Tribunal last week about expulsions and killings of the

Croats during 1993. Selmo Cikotic, the current Chief of the Bugojno Police, who was also the Commander of the 307th Brigade of the BiH Army at the time of the HVO-BiH Army conflicts, had to disclose some new data to the Prosecutions Office and elaborate on the circumstances surrounding the expulsions and killings of the Bugojno Croats. The Hague Investigators, during his testimony, focused their attention on the role of the former Head of Bugojno War Presidency Dzevad Mlaco. Because of that interest of The Hague Tribunal, the Municipal Board of the SDA Bugojno removed Dzemal Mlaco from the position of its President (...) The new staff arrangement was probably conducted from the HQ of the party in Sarajevo. Dzevad Mlaco's removal coincides with his name being mentioned in the context of expulsions and killings of the Bugojno Croats. The SDA, by this move, wants to distance itself from persons whose wartime past is overwhelmingly compromised. The SDA's HQ also wants to "get rid of" a few more names before the party's convention in order to clear the party's leadership of any suspicious wartime past. Dzevad Mlaco seldom appears in Bugojno since the visit of The Hague investigators that took place in May 2001, he is even seldom seen by his party colleagues and does not visit his favorite Caffee "Evergreen", says a Vecernji List's source(...)

Republika Srpska

Construction of house in Kotorsko continues despite OHR's ban

Dnevni Avaz and Oslobođenje report that the construction of houses for the displaced Serbs in Kotorsko, on the disputed land claimed by Bosniaks, has been continued in spite of the OHR's order of August 10 on its temporary stoppage until the documentation on the issue is reviewed. "The construction has never been stopped, and it has been even intensified following the OHR's order," said Zijad Zecevic, the representative of the Bosniak returnees to the village.

RS refugee association to hold street protests if RS Government fails to fulfil its demands

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the Republika Srpska Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons held an extraordinary session in Bijeljina on Wednesday and set an ultimatum to the RS Government to accept decisions and conclusions, reached at this session, till September 4th. Otherwise, refugees and displaced persons will organise protest rallies throughout the RS and probably will try to block the road and railway traffic in the RS. The Association requests the RS Prime Minister to reshuffle the RS Ministry of Refugees and Displaced Persons because it is extremely inefficient in resolving their problems. The Association also requests the RS and local authorities to decide on deadline for further allocation of land plots to refugees and displaced persons and to provide assistance for reconstruction of houses. One of the conclusions reached at the session is that the Association will not accept any decision made by the international community which is not in line with the RS legislation and international laws and conventions. "We demand equal treatment, freedom of expression, freedom to choose the place of our residence. We also demand the High Representative to make a decision on urgent cessation of evictions of families who fear to return to their pre-war homes and whose property is destroyed or occupied", say representatives of the Association.

Who is persuading war crime indictees to Surrender to the ICTY?

Nezavisne Novine quotes the member of the SNS (Serb people's Alliance) Executive Board, Jezdimir Spasojevic, as saying that the party will request the RS Government to inform the public about persons responsible for organising a group in charge of persuading war crime indictees to surrender to the Hague Tribunal (ICTY). According to Spasojevic, the SNS has an

information that this group exists in the RS and that the group is formed so that the RS Interior Ministry would avoid all unpleasant situations when it comes to arrest of war crime indictees. Spasojevic says he believes that SNS will raise this issue before the RS National Assembly. RS Prime Minister's Adviser for co-operation with the ICTY, Sinisa Djordjevic, denies Spasojevic's statement that such group exists in the RS. "It is absolutely absurd to organise such a group having in mind the situation we have here", says Djordjevic. Djordjevic says that this is just a political game and the opposition has the right to attack the Government. "But if they think that the Government should be overthrown because of the co-operation with the ICTY, then I think it is out of line. There is no need to take advantage of the situation like this one and cause suspicion amongst the RS population", says Djordjevic.

SNS claims "PDP Experts" are getting nervous

Both Banja Luka dailies carry a press release issued by the SNS (Serb national Alliance) which says that it seems that PDP (Party of the Democratic Progress of Rpeublika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic) experts are suffering from amnesia and forgetting who they are sharing the power with. They also forget that many PDP members have a SDS background. The press release further reads that "PDP experts" are getting nervous because everybody knows that every day the economic and social situation in the RS is getting worse and worse.

PDP spokesman says party's leadership to discuss possible RS Government's reshuffle in 15 days

Commenting on a possible Republika Srpska Government reshuffle, PDP Spokesman Igor Crnadak said that that the PDP leadership would discuss the issue in 15 days. He added that it was up to RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic to make a final decision, once when the work of each ministry is thoroughly analysed.

DSP Vice-president claims Ivanic is a hostage of SDS policy

Nezavisne Novine quotes DSP Vice-president Momir Malic as saying that DSP is completely dissatisfied with work of the RS Government. According to him, the RS Government is not comprised of experts but of a group of completely inept people – out of whom 70% are completely incapable to do their job, as 30% are hard-line nationalists. “It seems that Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and the Government cannot do anything regarding the SDS demands simply because their hands are tied. Ivanic is a hostage of SDS policy, as the SDS wants to fulfil political demands of its members,” says Malic. He adds that an equals sign must not be put between the SDS and the RS because it is well known that the RS is becoming weaker as the SDS is getting stronger. He also says that the RS will disappear unless Ivanic breaks with SDS. Malic emphasises that DSP welcomes the adoption of the Election Law.

International Community

UN assesses unprofessional the behavior of Banja Luka police during May 7 incidents

According to the reports made by the UN Mission to BiH's Department for Human Rights, a total of 72 Republika Srpska police officers acted unprofessionally during the May 7 incidents in regard of a laying of the Ferhadija cornerstone ceremony in Banja Luka. UN/IPTF Spokesman for the Banja Luka and Bihac regions Alun Roberts told journalists on Wednesday that the Department had submitted a total of 62 reports on the issue specifying names of the 72 policemen.

CRA issue long-term license to 24 broadcasters

The Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA) announced on Wednesday in Sarajevo that 24 stations (6 TV and 18 radio) had qualified for long-term broadcasting license in the Sarajevo

region.

Beecroft says extradition of war crime suspects represents obligation according to the international law

OSCE Head of the Mission to BiH Robert Beecroft met on Wednesday with Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic and Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic to discuss issue of the extradition of the war crime suspects to the Hague Tribunal. Beecroft reiterated that the hand over of Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic and the others represented an obligation according to the international law, and that the entity therefore did not need any special law on the issue.

Clarke says the schooling year in the District to begin regardless of all possible obstacles

The International Supervisor for Brcko, Henry Clarke told journalists on Wednesday that the schooling year would start in the District regardless of whether the Assembly would adopt the plan of elementary and secondary education. In the course of the day, Clarke addressed the District secondary school teachers on the issue.

Slobodna Dalmacija: The Hague is demanding extradition or hearing of 120 persons from BiH including 30 Croats (provided by OHR Mostar)

The Croatian Government has at its disposal numerous and different documents. They have different political and security meaning and they include documents ranging from analyses of some military operations to unofficial and unchecked notes of some members of Security Services, first of all of SIS and HIS, which functioned on the BiH territory. Ivo Lucic and Miroslav Tudjman had hidden this extensive documentation, which was collected without any selection, to Makarska and then they took it to Zagreb.

The Hague is interested in Prlic because of the events that

took place in the prison camps under the HVO control. They are interested in Coric because of his role in the Ahmici massacre. Praljak was the Commander of the HVO units during the greatest conflicts with Bosniaks.

Wolfgang Petritsch, the UN (obviously the author made a mistake) HR, was the first person who brought the information that Ljubo Cesic Rojs and Stanko Sopta are on the list of the suspects. During his talk with Cardinal Puljic, after his return from the USA, the HR stated that Cesic is being directly charged with the alleged murders of Serb civilians and Serb Major Lukic. However, The Hague does not have any evidence against Sopta, and for this reason it is possible that Petritsch's information was supposed to have a propaganda and psychological effect. Although, the IC representatives would like to see Sopta in The Hague, because they believe that he is an advocator of extremist solutions for the BiH Croats, The Hague has not shown any interest for him yet.

During the Bosniak-Croat conflict he was an ordinary soldier and he became the Commander of the 3rd Homeguard and the 2nd HVO Brigade afterwards. It is well known that during the final operations the units, whose Commander was Sopta, imprisoned 2000 Serb soldiers in front of Banja Luka, who had been taken to Heliodrom and then exchanged.

Finally, it is not clear as to why The Hague is collecting evidence against Zlatan Mijo Jelcic. During the greatest Bosniak-Croat conflict Jelcic did not have any prominent commanding duty. As late as at the beginning of 1995 he became the Commander of the HVO Military Police and he participated in the operations Cincar, Juzni Potez, Oluja. The Special HV units did most of the operations during Oluja and the HVO Military Police carried out security operations.

Vecernji List: The Hague Tribunal removes HDZ BiH's hard-liners

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Well informed sources say that The Hague's interest in the HVO generals has risen after the recent radicalization of the situation in BiH, caused by proclamation of the self-rule and disbanding of the HVO. International representatives, especially the US politicians, have put blame on "the people around Jelavic" for the HDZ's conduct, before all on Stanko Sopta Baja, who is Ante Jelavic's best friend. Even the HDZ's "renegades" claim that behind all Jelavic's moves are in fact Generals Zlatan Mijo Jelic, Valentin Coric and Stanko Sopta Baja(...) It is a general opinion that the disbanding could have never been realized without a great influence that Sopta has on the HVO members. Apparently, even the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch has warned the Peace Implementation Council that a deal with the HDZ "moderates" could be struck had it not been for the hard-liners gathered around the charismatic generals. International diplomats in Sarajevo are of opinion that if Stanko Sopta and Mijo Jelic were taken to The Hague, a democratization of the HDZ would be enabled. Allegedly, the already prepared indictments against Slobodan Praljak and Ljubo Cesic Rojs fit in this story accordingly. The Federation Government has already demanded to prevent this two from accessing BiH because "they work on disintegration of BiH".

Vjesnik: OHR says crimes cannot be time-barred

Avis Benes, the Spokesperson of the OHR Mostar, while commenting on the statement of Goran Granic, the Croatian Deputy Prime Minister, stated the following: 'All war crimes committed in BiH should be processed, regardless of a perpetrator's nationality. She stressed that the crime cannot be time-barred and added that in a long-run a just processing of the war crimes can lead toward the normalization of the situation in BiH.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje: End of the story

In the *Oslobodjenje* In Focus column, journalist Zija Dizdarevic comments on a possible referendum on the creation of a "Croat republic" in BiH. According to Dizdarevic, the Vice-president of the self-styled Croat National Assembly, Petar Milic, has recently in an interview with the Rijeka daily *Novi List* announced that the referendum would take place in the autumn. Milic emphasized that the Croat republic inside BiH represented an already agreed thing supported by the United States and progressive political parties in Europe. Dizdarevic wrote that the HDZ and its satellites were obviously preparing the ground for further radicalization counting on powerlessness both of the BiH authorities and the international community to beat the unconstitutional behavior of the Croat right wing. In this context, the HDZ is attempting to use, in an optimum way, recent testimonies of Cardinal Vinko Puljic and Mostar Bishop Ratko Peric before the US Congress, in which they lobbied for a support to the creation of a "Croat entity" in BiH. The *Oslobodjenje* columnist reminds that any such referendum has no legality, and it may only lead BiH into a bloody chaos. He concludes that, now, the next move regarding this issue should be made by BiH (Federation) authorities, OHR and Washington should say something about this as well.

Slobodna Dalmacija: The Hague claims its due

Written by: Davor Krile (provided by OHR Mostar)

After three high-ranked officers of the BiH Army, charged with the war crimes committed over the Croats in the Central Bosnia, silently and without a word of protest of the Bosniak hip-hoppers moved from Sarajevo to Scheveningen The Hague also raised the issue of the criminal, dark side of Susak-Boban para-state, with Gabela, Dretelj and Heliodrom as its greatest

prison camps and with 40 more, smaller prison camps for Bosniaks. People from Mostar, Capljina and Stolac were taken from their living rooms, very often wearing HVO uniforms, because they were of a wrong nationality or because of their property and money. By the will of the politics, over the night they turned from the ally in the struggle against the Great Serbia aggression and 'flowers of the Croat people' into a mortal enemy and obstacle for the Tudjman-Milosevic plan on the division of Bosnia. Dzevad Kolukcija, who was the correspondent of 'Slobodna Dalmacija' at that time, was imprisoned in the Heliodrom, while Vice Vukojevic, the current Judge of the Croatian Constitutional Court, raped 17 year-old Bosniak girl, in the prison camp Vojno, close to Mostar, and her testimony was published in the book of Irfan Ajanovic 'I was begging them to kill me'.

The information that The Hague is demanding from the Croatian Government all documents, that the office of the former President has at its disposal, should not be ignored.

Slobodna Dalmacija: A truck-driver is driving to prison

Written by: Stjepan Kljujic (provided by OHR Mostar)

Bozidar Vucurevic, one of the closest Karadzic's aids, is among the first persons on The Hague list. A copy of his bill of indictment will be handed over to Montenegro and Serbia because they suppose that he is no longer in Eastern Herzegovina.

The rest of the editorial carries already known information with regard to the statement of Goran Granic on The Hague bills of indictment against BiH Croats.