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BiH State-related Issues

BiH Council of Ministers agrees nationwide plan to combat terrorism

BiH Council of Ministers, responding to a U.S. report listing the country as a place believed linked to supporters of Osama bin Laden, on Tuesday agreed a nationwide plan to combat terrorism. The Council said it adopted a series of measures related to the issuing of identification documents, civil aviation regulations and cooperation with international organizations. "The plan reflects the responsibility of BiH, as a member of the united international front, to combat this challenge to mankind," BiH Deputy Foreign Minister Ivica Misic told a news conference. Misic said the plan was the first joint action agreed by all levels of administration in the entire BiH. He added that a Council's commission would by October 15 at the latest review all passports issued to

foreigners from 1992, as there were indications some were handed out illegally during and after the Bosnian war.

BiH experts exhume 120 bodies from former mine

Forensic experts have exhumed the remains of 120 bodies, believed to be Bosniaks killed in BiH's 1992-95 war, from a former iron mine in the northwest of the country, a government official said on Tuesday. Jasmin Odobasic, an official from the BiH Commission for Missing Persons, said the exhumations at the Jakarina Kosa site, near Prijedor, which began last week would last at least 10 more days. He said the grave was not the bodies' original burial site. They were transported from their original location and thrown into an 85-metre deep pit and covered by large amounts of earth.

Federation

Ex-BiH Army chief flies to The Hague Tribunal

A BiH Federation Government minister and a commander of the wartime BiH Army surrendered to The Hague war crimes tribunal on Tuesday to face charges of failing to prevent the killings of dozens of BiH Croats in 1993. Sefer Halilovic is charged with violating the laws and customs of war while chief of the supreme command staff of wartime Bosniak-led army during an offensive against Croat forces near Mostar in southern BiH in September, 1993 (see the attachment).

SDA says unpleasantly surprised with raising indictment against Halilovic

According to Oslobodjenje, the Democratic Action Party (SDA) said in a press release issued on Tuesday it was unpleasantly surprised with the indictment raised by The Hague Tribunal against Sefer Halilovic, a retired BiH Army General. Halilovic was a high-ranking officer of a legal army, which was

defending an internationally-recognized state from outside aggression, the party says in the release. It adds that the BiH Army attempted to thwart crimes and revenge, since a horrible genocide had been committed against Bosniaks. Unfortunately, not a single war, neither the defending one, can avoid civil victims, the party emphasizes. It concludes that what can be done in such cases is just to bring the number of victims to a minimum.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Sefer Halilovic leaves for Scheveningen as Izetbegovic paying a secret visit to The Hague

Written by M. Landeka

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Sefer Halilovic, wartime commander and retired General of the Army of BiH, left for The Hague on Tuesday morning in a special plane of the UN Mission. Muhamed Besic, the Federation Minister of Interior, Mijat Tuka, the Federation Deputy Minister for Welfare, Refugees and Displaced Persons and around a hundred members of the Bosnian-and-Herzegovinian Patriotic Party (BPS) that Halilovic is the President of, came to the Sarajevo Airport to see him off.

Balijagic said Halilovic's defense will be based on that the then top state leadership is responsible for the crimes and that Halilovic had nothing to do with the crimes he is charged with.

A source close to the SDA told Slobodna Dalmacija that Alija Izetbegovic has recently paid a secret visit to the Hague Tribunal, however, it is unknown if Izetbegovic went there as a witness or as a suspect.

Balijagic stated for Slobodna Dalmacija: "We brought to The Hague a sky-high pile of documentation. Sefer Halilovic was formally not the commander of the operation in question. (…) I have a document that proves Sefer Halilovic was 35 km away

from the crime scene on the night of the crime, 8 September. It also proves that when he found out about the crime, two days later, he instructed Security Chief Namik Dzankovic to have the crime investigated thoroughly and to have the perpetrators prosecuted. However, the criminals were never prosecuted because such were the instructions from the top state leadership."

Balijagic said the selection of evidence in this case was performed by the services that were preparing the evidence, which means that this false documentation was fed to the ICTY to present Halilovic as a commanding officer.

Jutarnji List: Faruk Balijagic says AID (Bosniak secret service) planted evidence

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Indictment against Sefer Halilovic reads that Halilovic attended a meeting on September 26, 1993, at which Alija Izetbegovic said that he did not want to have anything to do with soldiers who kill women and children. Halilovic did not have anything against that. In an interview for BiH TV on Friday night, Balijagic accused the Bosniak secret service "AID" of planting evidence against Halilovic. Moreover, Balijagic says that the indictment has been based on an Izetbegovic's speech that he gave shortly after the crimes in Grabovica.

***Vecernji List:* Prlic is preparing a book on events from 1993 and 1994**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Former Prime Minister of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia (CRHB) Government and current Deputy Minister for Trade in the Council of Ministers of BiH, Jadranko Prlic, whose name is allegedly mentioned in the latest Hague indictments, is preparing a book on events that took place during the HVO-BiH

Army conflicts. Jadranko Prlic plans to elaborate on details of the work of the CRHB Government during his mandate as its President on more than one hundred pages.

“The book should cover all the moves and decisions made by the Government and my engagement in organizing of the prison camps in Dretelj and Heliodrom”, announces Prlic. The real organizers of the camps were not from the institutions of the CRHB Government. Prlic is obviously ready, although he never said that in the media, to reveal the moves of the people from the shadow who made the decisions. Although he did not go out with any names, in attempts to save his own skin, Prlic said on numerous occasions that the real organizers are still at large. So the information that he requested to organize a private conversation with The Hague investigators and the Prosecutor’s office should not come as a surprise. Prlic has apparently already arranged details of the meeting in order to elaborate on developments of the situation in Herzegovina during 1993 and 1994. Sefer Halilovic will take that sort of stance too, having been encouraged by assurances given by Federation institutions and International Community. His attorney, Faruk Balijagic, told Vecernji List that the Defense would reveal new details and that there were some names from the former BiH Presidency. With that he meant Alija Izetbegovic. Testimonies of Prlic and Halilovic, be it as witnesses or indictees, could have a negative effect on junior political and military officials whose names are mentioned in the most recent indictments. “Regardless of everything, The Hague Prosecution will request witnesses and indictees to go out with details that could serve as alibis for the wartime period. It is another issue whether their efforts would bear fruit because regardless the parallelism during the war, both of them were officiating senior political or military duties”, says a source close to Federation Government.

“I don’t know the names”

During many interviews prior to speculations on indictment

against him, Jadranko Prlic said he did not know the names of the people who organized prison camps in Dretelj and Heliodrom. But during his appearance on the main BiH TV news show, Prlic said that he had an idea which political groups were planting him with the indictment, and that their role during and after the war was not clean, reads Vecernji List.

Jutarnji List: Prlic says clerical-fascist elements responsible for war crimes

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Jadranko Prlic, the Deputy Minister for Trade and International Relations with the BiH Council of Ministers, states: “I stated my attitude towards The Hague as early as 1993. It is a part of the peace agreement and we are obliged to cooperate regardless of what we think about its decisions. I will respond to each summons from The Hague and in any capacity” (…)

Being a guest on the BiH TV on Monday evening, when he talked extensively about his role during the war in BiH, Prlic said that the culprits for the war crimes committed in the prison camps near Mostar and Capljina should not be sought from the ranks of the former Herzeg-Bosnia Government. As he puts it, that Government never made decisions on opening of the prison camps and that the Government played the most constructive role, helped by a part of the Republic of Croatia’s Government, especially by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mate Granic, in closing of the camps down. Prlic claims that there are no evidences on accountability for war crimes in the records of the Herzeg-Bosnia Government and ads that the Government never discussed the issues of opening of prison camps or separation of a part of the country. He also thinks that the former Herzeg-Bosnia Government did not have the real authority. The Government did not, according to Prlic, suit “the believers in the real thing”, the ones that assigned themselves with a post WW II missionary role, who

thought that all means can be used in the fight against communism and for protection of the national sovereignty, in order to achieve the ultimate goal being the annexation of parts of BiH to Croatia. Prlic says that the CRHB Government never implemented that policy (…)

BiH Federation House of Representatives adopts Law on Citizenship

At the continuation of its session started on September 5, the BiH Federation House of Representatives on Tuesday adopted the Law on Citizenship and a declaration condemning all forms of international terrorism. Speaker of the House Ismet Briga interrupted the session after the deputies failed to pass the amendments to the law on taxes on wages and social contributions. Commenting on the failure, BiH Federation Finance Minister Nikola Grabovac said following the session that it would produce a number of negative consequences including a lack of necessary money in the pension fund, which could mean even 20-percent reduction of regular pensions. At the session, the House also addressed High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch's Decision on Zepce. The deputies adopted a number of conclusions tasking the House Speaker, his Deputy, BiH Federation President, Vice-president and Prime Minister to meet Petritsch on the issue.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Federation Defense Minister visits Stanislav Baja Kraljevic barracks in Mostar

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic inspected the ranks of the Second Guardian Brigade of the HVO at 'Stanislav Baja Kraljevic' barracks in Mostar on Tuesday.

In his address, Anic told the soldiers that they "chose to be professional soldiers" and that they "have to act professionally because there is no place for politics in the army."

“You must know that you, in effect, have no years of service because my predecessors did not pay contributions for you, although they were obliged to do it,” Anic told the soldiers.

Speaking of cutbacks in the Federation Army, Anic said that around 9,000 persons will be demobilized, but that the Ministry will make sure not to leave anyone in the street and to see that everyone is taken care of.

“I expect that very soon we shall have joint, umbrella institutions in the defensive structure of BiH, i.e. a single Ministry of Defense and an integrated commanding structure at the state level, because that is the minimum of conditions we have to meet to be able to join the Partnership for Peace,” said Anic.

He sees BiH Army as a joint army with three components and the structure of BiH Army that would include the components of Federation Army and RS Army, in his words, would mean a permanent cementing of what he does not think is the proper solution.

Minister Anic also paid his first formal visit to ‘Bozan Simovic’ barracks in Capljina on Tuesday, where he reiterated most of what he stated in Mostar, that politics should be kept out of the army and that his next goal is the organization of the army by the Swiss model.

Slobodna Dalmacija: **Anic announces criminal charges to be filled for crimes committed in the BiH Federation defense structures**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Mijo Anic, the Federation Minister of Defense, stated that criminal charges will be instituted against several persons soon on account of the crimes they committed in the past years while working at the Ministry of Defense and the Croat component of the Federation Army.

“I do not want to see the HVO, i.e. the Croat component of the Federation Army, incriminated, because the foul dealings are tied to certain persons. Very soon you will have a chance to see those scoundrels, and heavy scoundrels,” stated Anic at a press conference.

He added that yesterday he received from “a company in Croatia,” whose name he did not want to disclose, “a bill which requires the Defense Ministry to pay around a million Marks for some alleged works that have not been carried out at all.”

“It will be known very soon who the criminals in the Croat component are. When I assumed the duty, I found 1,660 vehicles registered in possession of the Croat component, and we only need 200 vehicles,” stated Anic.

Milan Jovicic says an action plan adopted for continuation of the Mostar reintegration

According to Sarajevo dailies, the Chairman of the Mostar City Council, Milan Jovicic, issued a press release on Tuesday saying that the Council had on Monday adopted a plan of action for continuation of the town’s reintegration. He added in the release that Mayor Neven Tomic and his Deputy Hamdija Jahic were due to sign the plan in seven days and start to implement it. However, Tomic denied that the plan had been adopted. According to Jutarnje Novine, he sent a letter to Jovicic saying he would not sign the document. Avaz reported that the OHR would express its position on the issue at a regular press conference on Wednesday in Mostar.

Slobodna Dalmacija: List of Croat candidates for Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje Interim Municipal Council submitted

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The High Representative’s Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje Decision of 15 September stipulates that within fifteen days of the Decision,

the new Interim Municipal Council will meet.

With the purpose of meeting the deadline, an inter-party meeting was held in which it was agreed that the inaugural session of the Interim Municipal Council will take place on 1 October.

According to Nikola Milic, former Mayor of the Uskoplje Municipality, the OHR Supervisor for the Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje Municipality, Bernd Burwitz, was handed the nominations for the chief municipal posts on Tuesday, and those are supposed to be approved by the OHR by Friday.

On behalf of the Croat side, the nominee for the position of Municipal Council President is Nikola Milic, and for Deputy Mayor Zrinko Tokic. The Croat Heads of Departments nominated are Anto Alvir – Department for Economy and Finance, Branko Sain – Department for Urbanism and Construction, and Branko Matijanic – Department for Administration and Civil Affairs.

In Milic's words, if they fail to co-ordinate the party wishes and to appoint Heads of Departments at the inaugural session, a new inter-party meeting will be held on 5 October.

Slobodna Dalmacija: **Herzegovina pensioners in a difficult position**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Representatives of the Associations of Pensioners in Cantons 7, 8 and 10 that are beneficiaries of the Pension Fund (MIO) Mostar, on Tuesday discussed the difficult position that their members have found themselves in, and actions that need to be taken in order to improve their status.

Ivan Maric, the President of the Association in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, stated that MIO Mostar provides for 30,000 pensioners and yet, not a single one of them is a member of any steering board.

Maric pointed out the problem of unsettled pensions for a certain number of pensioners who have been receiving 150 KM a month for a long period time, which he finds unacceptable.

The Associations of Pensioners are not against integration of the MIO and PIO funds if it leads to an improvement of their status, but they insist on having an audit conducted beforehand in order to establish the amount of funds with which each of the funds enters the integration.

Prce denies responsibility for dismissal of HVO units

At a Tuesday hearing before the Sarajevo Canton Court, former BiH Federation Defense Minister Miroslav Prce denied his responsibility for undermining the entity's defending power. He emphasized that there had been no any dismissals of the (the Croat component of the BiH Federation Army) HVO units, but that just certain number of soldiers had been temporarily sent home due to economic reasons.

***Vecernji List:* Jelavic prepared to meet with Petritsch**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In an attempt of settling the political passions and setting a possible thaw in the political relations with the International Community, the (dismissed) HDZ BiH President, Ante Jelavic could meet with the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch soon.

A source close to the HDZ in Mostar confirmed this for Vecernji List and said in addition that Jelavic will request Petritsch, on the eve of the Seventh Convention of the HDZ BiH, to formally lift the sanctions from his engagement in the party. Wolfgang Petritsch has allegedly already expressed his verbal readiness to do this.

Ante Jelavic, whose mandates of HDZ BiH President and BiH Presidency Member were contested by the High Representative on

7 March this year, thinks that lifting of the ban on his engagement in the party, borders on violation of basic human rights and the right to political expression. Petritsch's predecessor Carlos Westendorp made the same move by annulling the decision of banning SDS leader Zoran Cavic from performing duties in that party.

The future role of the HDZ in the authorities of BiH and the Federation of BiH could depend on the Jelavic-Petritsch meeting. Some politicians in the party speculate that the Seventh Convention of the HDZ could see a rift between different factions within the HDZ on account of political diversities in the perception of party development, unless Jelavic, as "the integrating factor is re-elected the President of the party."

Republika Srpska

***Vecernji List: Ivanic wonders* why ICTY hiding Karadzic address if it knows it?**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In a short interview for Vecernji List, Mladen Ivanic, the Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska, stated that all those who have evidence of contacts between the RS Government and the war crimes suspects, are hiding war criminals. "If the ICTY know where Radovan Karadzic is, but fail to make it public, then they are committing an act of cover-up," said Ivanic.

In answer to a question about the quality of co-operation between the RS Government and the Hague Tribunal, Ivanic said that the co-operation is getting better, but they do not think the Hague Tribunal is efficient enough.

RS Prime Minister's advisor Sinisa Djordjevic says Halilovic

responsible for suffering of Serbs as well

Glas Srpski carries a statement of the Republika Srpska Prime Minister's advisor for relations with The Hague Tribunal, Sinisa Djordjevic, who said that the Tribunal would soon have enough evidence to extend indictment against (wartime BiH Army commander) Sefer Halilovic and to accuse him of war crimes committed against Serbs as well. According to the newspaper, Djordjevic refused to specify details, and he just said it was about war crimes committed against Serbs during the years of 1992 and 1993.

OHR studies a disputed RS Government's decision on forest cutting

Nezavisne Novine carries OHR's reaction to a decision of the Republika Srpska Government, made at the session of July 18 2001, to approve compensation worth 647 439. 45 KM to the Ribnik-based private company "Trgokomerc" (Director of the company is a PDP – Party of Democratic Progress-deputy to the RS National Assembly) through allowing it to cut forest. OHR Spokesperson Sonja Pastuovic said that OHR was currently reviewing things in order to learn all the details, since this was a very complex issue. The daily also carries a statement of Cvijeta Kovacevic, Head of Government's Press Office, who said that annulling of this decision was not discussed at the government's session on Tuesday. She added that this was not a decision of the Government as a whole but an individual act, without explaining the difference.

International Community

SFOR may support joint NATO action

The NATO-led peacekeeping force in BiH (SFOR) might provide support for any collective alliance response to this month's attacks on the United States, its spokesman said on Tuesday.

In reaction to the suicide hijackings, NATO invoked Article Five of its founding treaty, which declares that an attack on one alliance member is treated as an attack on all of them. “It is possible that SFOR will provide support to the Article Five operations consistent with maintaining the security and safety of people inside BiH,” said SFOR’s Captain Daryl Morrell. But Morrell declined to elaborate on the nature of any possible support and whether it would involve SFOR engagement inside or outside Bosnia. “We are not going to discuss anything about our ongoing operations,” he told a regular news conference of the international organizations in Sarajevo. “And, I want you to clearly understand that before any kind of action like that was undertaken we need to consult with the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina,” he said, adding he was not aware of any such contacts having been made so far.

A memorial ceremony to US victims held in Sarajevo

Oslobodjenje reports that, on Tuesday, fifteen days following horrible terrorist attacks in the United States, a memorial ceremony to thousands of innocent victims was held at the Sarajevo-based US Embassy to BiH. The ceremony, hosted by US Charge d’ Affairs Christopher Hoh, was attended by top BiH and international officials including Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency Beriz Belkic, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, BiH Federation President Karlo Filipovic, his Deputy Safet Halilovic and many others.

Sonn visits Posavina Canton

Oslobodjenje reports that Senior Deputy High Representative Matthias Sonn on Tuesday visited Orasje, where he met with the Posavina Canton leaders to discuss the implementation of property laws and the process of return t the Canton and Republika Srpska. It was agreed that the cantonal and municipal authorities would in cooperation with UNHCR establish a working group to accelerate the processes.

IPTF says Bosnians arrested in Kosovo arms smuggling case

Police have arrested two Bosniaks suspected of smuggling weapons into Yugoslavia's volatile southern province of Kosovo, the IPTF mission in Bosnia said on Tuesday.

The two men were arrested last Friday in the eastern town of Gorazde on the basis of arrest warrants issued by international judges in United Nations-run Kosovo, mission spokeswoman Kate Frieson told a regular news briefing. Frieson said the case against the two was opened on June 13 after members of Kosovo's U.N. mission and NATO-led peacekeeping force seized several hundred long-barreled automatic weapons from a shipment off a truck coming from Bosnia. The two men are in detention in Sarajevo and their case is being handled by the Sarajevo-based Supreme Court, Frieson said.

Reconstruction of Serb property in Republic of Croatia

Glas Srpski, on the cover page, reports that Serbs from Croatia who wish to return to their pre-war homes and whose property was damaged, should submit a request for the reconstruction aid by December 31st this year. The requests could be submitted to any Croatian consulate in BiH or to the local offices for reconstruction in Croatia. The aid could be requested by Croatian citizens or individuals, who were registered there as residents in 1991, as well as persons who are owners or co-owners of certain property in Croatia. In case that nobody is able to submit the request by the deadline, one could write a "letter of intention" to the consulate, stressing the wish to return and need for assistance in reconstruction.