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BiH State-related Issues

BiH House of Peoples adopts law on the state attorney office

Oslobodjenje reports that the BiH House of Peoples interrupted its session late on Thursday due to a lack of quorum. In the course of the session, the House adopted draft Law on the BiH State Attorney's Office.

Lagumdzija and Petritsch urge faster implementation of the constitutional reforms

The Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdzija, and the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, assessed that the Decision of the BiH Constitutional Court on the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire BiH's territory should be implemented as soon as possible, according to a press release issued on Thursday by the Public Relations Office of the Council. (Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine carried the release) Lagumdzija and Petritsch

met in Sarajevo on Wednesday to discuss the issue, as well as the activities related to independence and efficiency of the judicial bodies and the results achieved in the reform of the judicial system so far. As for the return of refugees, Lagumdzija pointed out the problem concerning the Serb refugees from the Republic of Croatia, who

should, according to the valid laws, vacate someone else's properties in BiH, but the conditions for their return to their pre-war homes in Croatia were still not created. In this regard, Lagumdjija requested the High Representative to do his best within his powers to support solving the problem.

BiH Council of Ministers confirms abolishment of the BiH citizenship status to yet five foreigners

The BiH Council of Ministers on Thursday confirmed the decision of the BiH Federation authorities to abolish the citizenship status given to five naturalized Algerians, Deputy Minister of European Integration Rasim Kadic said following the session. The five men, Mustafa Ait Idir, Boudellaa Haj, Mohamed Nechle, Abdulkarim Al-Sabahi and Boumediene Lakhdar, are already in prison due to alleged participation in "certain terrorist activities," Kadic told a news briefing. The Council also granted citizenship to the two handball players from Yugoslavia, Marko Dobrkovic and Dragan Pocuc, Onasa reports.

Dnevni List: Ibrahim Hosni, son of Osama bin Laden, is a BiH citizen

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

A well-informed West-European diplomat, who wanted to stay anonymous, gave this information to Dnevni List. The same source revealed the identity of two BiH citizens, whose BiH passports were seized in Afghanistan after talibans had run away from the one of the Al-Qaid strongest military bases. The one of them is Ibrahim Hosni, who apart from his original Egyptian passport, also has the BiH passport. It is

interesting that the BiH passport was issued to him by the Police Administration Maglaj, during his stay in the mujahedeens' colony Bocinja. Another BiH passport belongs to Morsy Rokaja, a 23 Albanian.

Since the investigation is still on, the source did not want to reveal as to who and where issued the passport to bin Laden's son. However, the diplomat finished his talk with a Dnevni List journalist, with an intriguing question, which is, actually, a comment on the high-ranked BiH officials, who recently appeared in public protesting against the violation of human rights of their fellow people, allegedly, by the members of the foreign Secret Services: 'Who will guard the guards?'

Federation

BiH Federation House of Representatives fails to adopt the 2001 rebalance Budget

The BiH Federation House of Representatives failed to adopt the entity's rebalance Budget for this year at the session held in Sarajevo on Thursday. According to Oslobodjenje, a total of 70 deputies (the Alliance for Change and DNZ) voted for the Budget rebalance drafted by the Government, 31 deputy (SDA, HDZ, HKDU) voted against the proposal as six deputies abstained from voting.

Dnevni List: Interview with Ivica Marinovic, the Head of the HDZ Caucus in the House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament

Interview conducted by I. Bakovic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Mr. Marinovic, have the requests, that the HDZ set when they left the Parliament, been met, and if they have not why the representatives are returning to the Parliament?

By our participation in the work of the Parliament we are sending a message to our people. (…) Although we opposed all points of this session, the public could see that the HDZ representatives were not able to pass a decision on any issue. (…)

The Alliance representatives from the line of the Croat people support Houses of Peoples. How do you comment on this sudden twist of events?

The key of making decisions is in the House of Peoples and for this reason the House of Peoples was obstructed by famous rules of the Interim Election Commission, by which it was not possible for the Croats to participate in the Authority. (…) As far as your question is concerned, I can tell you the following: Out of these 5 representatives none of them was elected, they were all appointed by the HR, Divkovic and all the others. Divkovic is a representative in the Parliament House of Representatives. However, he was recruited by the HR, so that he can obstruct the will of the Croat people. Having in mind all these facts, it was useless to talk to these people until they declare themselves. They declared themselves with those remedies. However, they are completely in the line of the HDZ remedies. They took over our material. They did not expect that we shall show up in the Parliament House of Representatives. They wanted to use an opportunity and enter a political space, which was created due to our non-participation. Now when they have taken over what we had given them long before the constitutional changes, naturally, we can talk to them. Their remedies are completely in the light of the things that the HDZ demanded.

Have they departed from the party policy by doing this?

Now, I am expecting that the Alliance parties, especially the SDP, and the HR will sanction them because of their disobedience. This is a sort of rebellion of the Croats within the SDP. (…) We shall not allow that the constitutional

changes are implemented tacitly, as it was planned. Some remedies have been made, however, the public was not informed about them. They have been waiting to put it in the Parliament procedure tacitly, to implement it and after the change of the Constitution, like this one was, it will not be possible to improve the constitutional position of the Croat people for decades. (…) The criminal charges filed against Alija Behmen, the President of the Federation Government, is a test for the IC and Independent Judiciary on this territory. It is impossible that someone spends 95 million Marks from the budget in a way that it was not planned by the budget, and that he is not held responsible for it, although he directly violates the Law on Budget Execution. (…)

Dnevni List: Interview with Mate Bandur, former Head of the HTV Mostar, on the current situation in BiH Federation media

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni list carries an interview with Mate Bandur, published in Hrvatsko Slovo. The author of the interview says that they decided to make this interview because there is a threat that HTV Mostar will be shut down.

'The CRA is under a direct competence of the HR. Namely, BiH is a protectorate, however, this fact has not been stated publicly. It is the worst possible situation: People in the Executive Authority are held responsible, while they have to obey Petritsch, who is justifying his autocracy by the Dayton Peace Agreement. (…) Reasons because of which we were sanctioned were the events in Mostar, that took place on April 6, when the SFOR raided Hercegovacka Bank in a violent way. Our TV crews were following what was going on and HTV Mostar showed the material where you could see destroyed safes, robbed vaults, destroyed cabinets and burnt money. British Ambassador Munro claimed that it was not a case. (…) As the media that publishes the truth, we simply disturb IC

representatives because they want to present to the public 'the dressed up' truth, that suits them. (…) The IC purpose is to put the Croat people in a subordinate position in order to make out of them a national minority. (…) You can imagine what is the Fed TV program like, since it is being produced in Sarajevo, almost without Croat journalists and Croat reports. (…) Commenting on the SFOR raid into the premises of the HTV Mostar and Croat Radio Mostar, Bandur stated: 'It is just another way of the demonstration of force and inspection in 'a democratic' way.'

Slobodna Dalmacija: Why is Alliance refusing to appoint new Federation Minister of Labour?

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija analyses the story about the withdrawal of Rifat Skrijelj's candidacy for the post of the Federation Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Refugees and DPs, the post that was held by Safet Halilovic, now a The Hague indictee. The papers learns from a source, who is involved in the whole scheme about the liberation of the Bosniak indictees, that the return of the indictees, especially in the Halilovic's case, in counted on. The article also reads that Zlatko Lagumdzija, in order to deport the generals to The Hague thus showing cooperation with the IC and ICTY, assured the indictees to go to The Hague voluntarily and that the BiH authorities would give their guarantees to the ICTY for the pre-trial release. In the capacity of the SDP leader, Lagumdzija also ordered all Federation Ministers from his party to support every motion aimed at giving the guarantees, the operation for which he personally tasked the Federation PM Behmen.

Vecernji List: Interview with Zvonko Mijan, the Federation Minister of Justice

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List carries an interview with Zvonko Mijan, the

Federation Minister of Justice. In answer to the question about a possible pre-trial release for Sefer Halilovic and other Bosniak generals, Mijan said that it was a request from their lawyers and that the decision is now up to the trial chamber of the ICTY. Answering the question if something similar could happen as far as Croat indictees are concerned, Mijan said it is up to their defense council because they are the ones who should make the first move, as well as the Tribunal that should consider their request.

Asked to comment on a possible launch of investigation against Ante Jelavic, the Minister said that he, in principle, does not want the Ministry to comment on ongoing court proceedings.

Speaking of the mini-ICTY to be set up in Sarajevo, Mijan said they think some war crimes should be prosecuted before this tribunal because all the cases conducted before entity courts so far show that there is a high degree of distrust in the work of the judges.

As for the possibility of forming a mixed governmental commission that would be paying visits to the ICTY indictees of all nationalities, the Minister said it is an obligation of the Federation Government and that the Prime Minister requested something of the sort.

Vecernji List: Toby Robinson dismisses Eronet Steering Board Chair

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Marinko Planinic, the CEO of the Oil Company Croherc-AG, has been dismissed from the position of Chair of the Eronet Supervisory Board by a decision of the Hercegovacka Banka Provisional Administrator Toby Robinson. Vecernji List says "the most recent dismissals confirm the earlier prognosis that the Office of the Provisional Administrator will not give up that easily on its share in the ownership in the company that is part of the Hercegovina Holding, which is still making a

huge profit, in spite of concession. The HPT management still claims the purchase of the Eronet shares was illegal and is claiming the return of 49% of the shares, which, they say, belonged to them prior to illegal privatization."

Jutarnji List: Possible liquidation of Hercegovacka Banka

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Prime Minister of the Federation BiH, Alija Behmen, announced a possibility of liquidation of the Hercegovacka Banka d.d. Mostar in other words settling of liabilities. According to Behmen, the Federation Government had 17 million in the Hercegovacka Banka, because of the fact that the bank was one of two deposit banks in the Federation. The liquidation would represent a loss for public and private companies in Herzegovina and 80.000 small depositors, reads Jutarnji List.

Republika Srpska

RS National Assembly passed the 2002 Budget

Both Republika Srpska dailies report the RS National Assembly adopted the RS Budget for the next year in Banja Luka on Thursday. A total of 56 deputies voted for the draft, 10 were against while 12 deputies abstained from voting. Majority of the deputies agreed with the remarks that the Budget should have provided greater funds for the RS Interior Ministry, RS Army, pensioners, health care, agriculture, refugees an displaced persons, sport and culture, according to Glas Srpski. RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic stated that "the budget is not to be a collection of someone's political wishes. "It is not aimed to create opinions of citizens on the basis of false promises and illusions. 12 salaries will be paid to the budget beneficiaries, which could be the first time in the RS history," Ivanic added.

RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic meets with OSCE Head of the Mission Robert Beecroft

Nezavisne Novine and Glas Srpski report the OSCE Head of the Mission to BiH, Robert Beecroft, announced that the international community would continue to put pressure on the Republika Srpska authorities when it came to the process of the refugee return. After one-hour meeting with the RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic, Beecroft assessed that one could not talk about the development of democracy in BiH until results in return of refugees are improved. “Obviously there are some politicians who do not wish to see refugees ever returning to their homes”, said Beecroft adding that OSCE was not satisfied with current situation in this field.

RS Deposit Insurance Agency still not started its operations

Glas Srpski reports that the Republika Srpska Deposit Insurance Agency has not started its work yet because the donors had failed to pay 10 million KM for its establishment and the start of its operations. According to the daily, the reason for that is the proposal coming from the international community to establish a state level Deposit Insurance Agency, which would have two affiliate offices in the RS and in the BiH Federation. Entity authorities, as well as BiH Parliamentary Assembly have to express their view on this proposal. Mirko Strazivuk, the Assistant RS Finance Minister, explained that regardless of the level at which the Agency would be established, the clients of certain banks would have guarantees for their deposits amounting up to 5,000 KM.

International Community

Petritsch meets with Hombach

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, met with the

Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe Bodo Hombach in Sarajevo on Thursday, the Sarajevo dailies report. Hombach welcomed the economic reforms carried out thus far in BiH and appealed for the improvement of the regional cooperation in this field since it was the best way to strengthen mutual trust and development. “In recent times, BiH has made significant progress in the banking sector. The banking system is now well-functioning, as the legislation in the economic field has been significantly improved. BiH is now on the right path towards Europe,” Hombach told journalists following the meeting. Hombach arrived in BiH to attend the second working table of the Stability Pact taking place in Sarajevo. At the meeting, the senior representatives of BiH, Slovenia, Croatia and FRY signed an environmental-related letter of intent on the revitalization of the Sava river.

SFOR says Joint Resolve exercise a positive step as BiH moves towards a single military structure

SFOR Spokesman Daryl Morrell told journalists in Sarajevo on Thursday that Exercise Joint Resolve, which was finishing in the course of the day, had been the largest integrated training exercise ever undertaken by SFOR with 780 personnel involved including the support unit from the IPTF. “Our intent was to assist with the integration of all local police and law and order units involved in controlling civil disturbances. Having the Federation and Republika Srpska at the Joint Resolve exercise is a positive step, and bodes well for future cooperation and flexibility as Bosnia and Herzegovina moves towards one government and a single military structure. This kind of training is important as the police have the primary role of maintaining the safety of their communities,” Oslobodjenje quoted Morrell as saying.

Dnevni Avaz: Petritsch to impose amendments to the property laws, legalize the exchange of

apartments?

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and the BiH Federation Urban Planning Minister, Ramiz Mehmedagic, reached the agreement on the amendments to the property laws at their meeting in Sarajevo on Wednesday. Mehmedagic told Dnevni Avaz that the amendments to the Federation law, which might be imposed by OHR on Friday, would be in compliance with the valid entity law on the housing relations. "The High Representative agreed to impose a decision, which will legalize contracts on the exchange of apartments only if they were approved by the owners. This means that the exchanges carried out by the occupancy right holders themselves will not be recognized," Mehmedagic said.

Reuters: French report lays wide blame for Srebrenica

U.N. members including France and Britain must share blame for failing to stop the 1995 massacre of up to 8,000 Bosniak men and boys by Serb forces in the U.N. safe area of Srebrenica, a French report found on Thursday. The parliamentary report, launched last year after allegations that a French U.N. commander in the area deliberately allowed the Serbs to capture the town, said U.N. peacekeeping operations were half-hearted and poorly resourced. It criticized France, Britain and the United States, as permanent members of the U.N. Security Council which directed operations, for "undertaking commitments they did not respect because they did not equip themselves with the means". "The reason for the fall of Srebrenica is to be found in the lack of strong political will to intervene – by France, Britain, the United States and the Bosnian authorities in Sarajevo themselves," the report concluded.

AFP: RS should do more for reconciliation: OSCE

An international envoy to Bosnia warned here Thursday that authorities of Republika Srpska (RS) needed to do more to

promote reconciliation between people after 1992-95 Bosnia's war. "The RS Government and the authorities, both at entity and local levels, can do more for reconciliation and the return of refugees of all faiths," Robert Beecroft, the OSCE Head of the Mission to BiH said. Beecroft, who met representatives of the Serb Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic and Jewish communities in the RS, stressed that they were all agreed that "much more can and should be done for refugees no matter what their religion." He noted that that there were still obstacles in the way to rebuilding religious edifices of all confessions destroyed during the war. Banja Luka, the capital of RS, was the scene of anti-Muslim riots in May at a ceremony to lay the foundation stone to rebuild a 16th century mosque which left one Muslim dead and 30 injured. It is estimated that some 200,000 people lost their lives during 1992-95 war in BiH, some 2.2 millions were forced to leave their houses, while hundreds of religious objects from all faiths were destroyed.

The United States to return the Jasenovac Museum collection to the Republic of Croatia

Glas Srpski, on the cover page, extensively writes about the official transfer of the museum archives from the Jasenovac memorial center from the American Memorial Museum of Holocaust in Washington to Croatia, which will be carried out on December 5. The Museum of Holocaust in Washington did not wait for the decision of the UNESCO related to the protection of the Jasenovac collection, the daily writes. The newspaper also caries a statement of the Republika Srpska Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, who said that handing over of the Jasenovac historic archives to the Croatian authorities was "a catastrophic humiliation for the victims of Jasenovac Camp and represents another bad move of the former RS Government." "The RS is now put in a position to ensure through the international institutions that the dignity of the Jasenovac victims is protected."

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz

Hamza Baksic commented in the Oslobodjenje editorial on the holidays once celebrated in the former Yugoslavia, such as the November 29 – The Day of the Republic. In the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day, Faruk Cardzic welcomes the SDP-led Alliance for Change's decision to remove certain officials from the executive authorities in the Sarajevo Canton. He concluded that its was good the SDP-nominated officials would be the first to be removed, because this party had been the loudest in promising changes.