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BiH State-related Issues

Lagumdzija's advisor says BiH Council of Ministers against any exchange of land

Kenan Reso, an advisor for BiH Council of Ministers Chairman, commented on a letter sent by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to Zlatko Lagumdzija, which was published in Dnevni Avaz before the New Year holidays and in which Petritsch pointed out at elements that should be a part of the restitution law. Reso said that Lagumdzija had received the letter more than a month ago. He added that the discussion on the draft restitution law prepared by the BiH Ministry for Civil Affairs and Communications at the 41st session of the BiH Council of Ministers was largely based on the contents of the letter. "The Council considered the draft foreseeing a natural restitution, assessed it failed and rejected it as such. The appearance of Petritsch's letter in public is therefore a

little bit unclear,” Reso said. “But when the contents of Petritsch’s letter is now available to the public, we want to make it clear that the Council of Ministers has never considered any solutions that would include any kind of the exchange of land. In this regard, it is completely unclear what is the meaning the remarks from Petritsch’s letter concerning the land exchange,” Reso said.

Brcko District Budget suffers daily loss of 250,000 KM due to an economic blockage

Brcko Mayor Sinisa Kistic told Fena news agency on Wednesday that the District Budget was suffering a daily loss of 250,000 KM due to an economic blockage of the District by the both BiH entities and the Republic of Croatia. According to Kistic, the blockage of the District caused a major damage in the transportation sector as well. Oslobodjenje reports that it is about the Croatian Road Administration’s decision banning the vehicles with weight of over six tons to use the Gunja-Brcko bridge. Kistic believes that certain senior officials of the both BiH entities took part in making such a decision.

BiH Council of Ministers to discuss draft Budget for 2002 on Thursday

Oslobodjenje reports that the BiH Council of Ministers is to hold its first session in this year in Sarajevo on Thursday. The Council is expected to discuss the draft Budget for 2002 and the BiH international obligations in the year.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Dossier – How are transitional administrators violating human rights in BiH (part 1)

Written by Marijan Puntaric (Provided by OHR Mostar)

In the past twenty days, there have been numerous discussions about the state of human rights and the new role of the

international community in BiH, with a high degree of criticism of the politics of the international associations when it comes to human rights in BiH, says Slobodna Dalmacija.

Senior representatives of the international community, says Puntaric, have suspended and violated all Dayton Peace Agreement Annexes that provided guarantees of human, civil and political rights and freedoms in BiH. Independent analyses of the political practice in BiH indicate to incessant, but unauthorized extension of the High Representative's powers at the expense of the implementation of the Dayton Agreement parts that guarantee free elections (Annex 3), implementation of the BiH Constitution (Annex 4), and protection of human rights and freedoms (Annex 6).

There is an absurd situation in which the international community representatives, in the name of the Dayton implementation, have been violating its provisions systematically in the past two years and have "erased" all of the Agreement's provisions calling for the respect of human rights and freedoms. The daily says neither the UN Security Council nor the Dayton signatories should turn a deaf ear to such dramatic findings and warnings.

Warnings and direct criticisms of an inequitable treatment and double criteria applied by the international officials in BiH when it comes to human and general civil rights have been coming from various addresses both inside the country and abroad. The BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, BiH Human Rights Chamber, European Stability Initiative (ESI), Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Office of the Federation Ombudspersons and the Serbian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights have started looking for a new politics in BiH.

Only a joint regional initiative of the official state institutions and non-governmental associations could contribute for the "progressive administration" of BiH,

conducted in the manner of the liberal British imperialism of the 19th century, and for the prescribed “harsh despotism” of the international administrators in BiH who are using the John Stuart Mill colonialist formula to “facilitate” the transition of peoples into the state of higher order, to be replaced with a new and responsible role of the political factors inside of BiH, says Puntaric.

Federation

BiH Steel Company sold 174,000 tons of products in the last year

According to Oslobodjenje, the Zenica-based BiH Steel Company in the last year sold 174,000 tons of its products. Mirsada Tuce, the Director of the Company’s marketing sector, said that 93,000 tons of products were sold to the customers in the country as the rest was exported mainly to the business partners in the former Yugoslavia’s territory.

Tihic says public debate on the amendments to the RS Constitution will just deepen current political differences

SDA BiH President and a member of the Republika Srpska Constitutional Commission told Dnevni Avaz that the upcoming public debate on the amendments to the RS Constitution would just deepen existing differences in political views on the issue among the Commission members. He emphasized that the experts from the BiH federation would not be allowed to take part in the debate so that only the Serb side would be heard. “I am afraid that the public debate organized in such a way can not help reaching a compromise on the amendments to the RS Constitution,” Tihic said.

HDZ claims BiH Croats support establishment of a federal BiH

The dismissed (unrecognized) Vice-president of the HDZ BiH, Marko Tokic, told the Banja Luka Alternative Television that the BiH Croats were supporting establishment of a federal BiH with at least three federal units, Fena news agency reports. "We would also support an idea on the establishment of more than three federal units, but under condition that there is an equal number of units in which a particular people represents majority," Tokic said.

Izetbegovic's health condition improving

The health condition of ex-member of the BiH Presidency and honorary SDA President Alija Izetbegovic has improved after he had undergone the treatment, which normalized his heart rhythm eliminating arrhythmia, the SDA said in a Wednesday press release, ONASA reports. Izetbegovic is feeling well, and he himself has confirmed this in a phone talk with SDA President Sulejman Tihic. Izetbegovic (76) had been flown on Saturday on board a special airliner to the Saudi Arabia for medical treatment in the King Faisal Specialist Hospital, opened in 1975. King Fahd bin Abdulaziz al Saud had sent an airliner to transfer Izetbegovic to Saudi Arabia.

Vecernji List: Eronet could lose battle for third GSM license

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reads that the situation surrounding the Eronet situation has deteriorated to an extent that this GSM operator could go down if they are not awarded the state concession adding that few heads have already rolled, perhaps even Jerken Torngren's, the already ex chief of the CRA. On one side of the Eronet conflict you have HPT management together with Council of Ministers and the Federation Government and on the other you have the Hercegovacka Banka Provisional

Administration and the Croatian Telekom which owns 49% of the Eronet shares. The problem occurred three years ago when the control package of Eronet shares, at the time owned by the HPT Mostar, was transferred to three private companies. Croatian Telekom reacted to this by suing the HPT, claiming that the sale was illegal. In the meantime Eronet found itself under the Provisional Administration because the Croherc and Hercegovina Osiguranje, which had bought 40% of Eronet shares from the HPT Mostar, are owned by the Hercegovacka Banka. The PA for HB, Toby Robinson, believes that the solution lies in the HPT Mostar buying back the shares sold three years ago. The companies had allegedly agreed to that but the HPT Mostar declined the proposition. **Slavo Kukic**, the Chair of the HPT Mostar Steering Board, says that the Federation Privatization Agency detected illegal operations in June last year and ordered the HPT management to return the ceded property back into its business books. "It is true that the current management and the Steering Board of the HPT Mostar are doing everything to return the property. But it is also true that the representatives of the three private companies have not been ready to return what they do not own. Instead of that they want to sell what we already own and sell it dearly", says Kukic. Kukic also says that the Croatian Telekom are suggesting the HPT Mostar the same "compromise" adding that he and the HPT's CEO are not willing to back such an operation up because that would be "an aid to the legalization of the plunder". "Since there is no readiness to return what the HPT owns within the Eronet the only solution is the court. It will be done through the Federation of BiH, which owns the aforementioned capital. And then we will see who gets what", says Kukic confirming that the Eronet could wind up as the loser in the whole deal. The whole problem lies in the fact that the free-of-charge concession is awarded, in accordance to the new legislation, to companies that are owned by the state, which is not the case with the Eronet.

Vecernji List: Slavo Kukic says did not improve his car park

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List carries Kukic's denial of the information published in the latest Globus. Kukic said that he could only agree with the opinion that if the case came before the Court it might have negative consequences for Eronet and that everything else was untrue. As far as the new Mercedes is concerned, he stated that the former Manager of the HPT Mostar bought this car (worth 178.000 KM) and that obviously somebody saw Kukic in the car.

Vecernji List: Enervaza Hrustanovic says Grabovac refused to approve Aluminum audit

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reads that Ernevaza Hrustanovic, the President of the Commission for the Implementation of the Article 143 of the Law on Labor, stated in a TV show of the Federation TV that everything in Aluminij has been done according to the Law on Labor. Since she was obviously more frank than she was supposed to be she fell into disfavor of some people from the Federation Government. Also, according to reliable sources Nikola Grabovac, the Federation Minister of Finances, refused to sign an order on the Aluminij audit. Alija Behmen, the President of the Government, who is not in charge of it, did it instead of Grabovac. However, Grabovac has been objected because he did not present to the public the Behmen's illegal order. Arab investors are also interested in this company, and with the support of Haris Silajdzic and Safet Orucevic they want to invest their capital in Aluminij. The statement of Enervaza Hrustanovic made the Trade Union from Mostar East really angry, which was established by Safet Orucevic himself. By its establishment Silajdzic and Orucevic wanted to make the situation in Mostar even more tense.

Dnevni List: Secret services called off security for Ante Jelavic

Dnevni List reads that during the Christmas holidays the Mostarians could see Ante Jelavic driving an Audi A6 all by himself and going to cafes without being escorted by bodyguards looking after him as was the case before. Head of the SNS (Croat Intelligence Service) Ivan Vuksic explained as to why Jelavic is not being escorted any more: "We are an intelligence service that protects state institutions and institutions of authority and not political parties, their facilities and officials. If Jelavic were officiating a state function he would be a protected person".

Republika Srpska

Sarovic convinces RS Army generals Pandurevic and Milosevic to voluntarily surrender to The Hague

Nezavisne Novine quotes an anonymous source close to Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic as saying that the RS President persuaded RS Army generals indicted for crimes, Vinko Pandurevic and Dragomir Milosevic, to voluntarily turn themselves in to the ICTY. The same source told the paper that, after the indictments for the generals have been unsealed, the RS President went to Belgrade and had talks with Milosevic and Pandurevic. "After several hours-long conversation, Sarovic persuaded Pandurevic and Milosevic to voluntarily turn themselves in to the ICTY. The two indictees agreed and in return asked Sarovic that the RS authorities provide financial assistance to their families", said the source and added that their gesture is supposed to show that the RS cooperates with the ICTY. Pandurevic and Milosevic are supposed to surrender to the ICTY between Orthodox Christmas (7 January) and Orthodox New Year (14 January). The paper also quotes Bozidar Spasic, (owner of detective agency and former

top official of the Serbian National Security) as saying that an agreement in principle has been made with the indicted RS Army generals regarding their surrender. Spasic refused to name RS top officials who negotiated with Pandurevic and Milosevic, but when asked whether Sarovic was one who negotiated, Spasic said: "You said that, but basically that is it. Your guess is right and that information is correct". Spasic also said that apart from Pandurevic and Milosevic, the two officers from the Vukovar trio should also go to The Hague – Miroslav Radic and Veselin Sljivancanin while the third indictee, Mile Mrksic, is currently in hospital. Spasic says that if Radic and Sljivancanin go to The Hague together with the indicted generals from the RS Army, then the Serbian Government will provide guarantees for them.

Radisic says the RS Constitution should be in line with will of the people

Both Banja Luka dailies quote Serb member of the BiH Presidency Zivko Radisic as saying that he believes the solution regarding the amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution will be found and that there will be no need for the High Representative to impose the final decision. "It is not in the interest of the international community, the RS, the BiH Federation and BiH as a state," said Radisic in an interview given to BiH Radio 1. Radisic also said that there is only one important issue left in the RS and that is the basis for establishment of authorities – whether that will be the 1991 Census or the will of the people (election results). "I personally prefer the will of the people. There is a huge difference between the 1991 Census and the current situation. It is not very wise to raise new tensions and use vocabulary that reminds us of the situation we had 10 years ago. The negotiations are not going smoothly, but it is still the guarantee that what we agree on will be an internal cohesive factor, crucial for stability in BiH", said Radisic.

Banja Luka Bishop Franjo Komarica says RS Government did not give a pfenning for reconstruction of Catholic churches

Nezavisne Novine carries an interview with Banja Luka Bishop Franjo Komarica in which he says that he does not have to say that the Republika Srpska authorities obstruct the return, since a large number of refugees and displaced people said that. "Anybody can make his or her own conclusion as to who is right? RS Minister of Refugees and Displaced Persons Mico Micic or these disinherited people who have been waiting for several years for some of the OMI (RS refugee ministry's municipal departments) officials to ensure them to have their property repossessed," said Komarica.

International Community

Vjesnik: Petritsch's Office indulges Republika Srpska

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vjesnik quotes Sarajevo weekly Slobodna Bosna as saying that the OHR's draft of constitutional reforms, openly suggesting that the vital interests in the RS be protected by the Commission for Protection of Vital National Interests instead of the House of Peoples, could cause a new political crisis in BiH which might as well result in a complete division of BiH. International officials are willing to accept the minority status for Croats and Bosniaks in the RS, which is why Croats could restore their third entity demand, reads the daily.

On the same issue Dnevni List quotes OHR spokesman Oleg Milisic who told HINA news agency: "It is too early to say that a Commission for protection of vital national interests would be introduced within the RS Parliament and not the House of Peoples".

Slobodna Dalmacija: Petritsch should stay!

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija carries an editorial written by Dino Mikulandra in which he says that the New Year carries the biggest post-Dayton offensive against the BiH Croats during which the Bosnian nationalists will try to unify BiH using the old Yugoslav model from communist times adding that the BiH Croats cannot count on Croatian authorities which are in the state of hibernation when dealing with BiH related issues. The author says that the news that Wolfgang Petritsch is leaving BiH and the knowledge that he would be replaced by Paddy Ashdown only brings more headaches to the whole Croat(ian) corps bearing in mind the famous napkin from the London dinner which Ashdown took to The Hague as evidence of the already agreed division of BiH.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Bosnian Arabs could be saved by UN litigation against BiH?

Written by Zvonimir Cilic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija says a number of political parties, organizations and institutions have reacted in protest of the case of stripping the 94 Arabians who illegally acquired the BiH citizenship, of their passports. However, no one reacted when Vlatko Kupreskic was arrested in a brutal way, when SFOR and the Federation police broke into Hercegovacka Banka, and no one is reacting to hundreds of rigged trials against Croats that are either in progress or under preparation, says the daily. Dusko Tomic, the Secretary General of the Children's Embassy in Sarajevo reacted to the decision of the BiH authorities by threatening with a UN litigation against BiH because many of those Arabs married Bosniaks and have children who would thus be deprived of the love of their fathers.

SFOR says Harvest operation in Bijeljina region successful

The Harvest operation in the area controlled by the SFOR Multi-National Division North (MNDN) has given good results in the past year, MNDN said, according to ONASA. In the period from January 1 to December 29, 2001, the MNDN has collected 2,736 pieces of various weapons (rifles, machine-guns, pistols), more than 461,000 pieces of ammunition, 528 mines, 6531 hand grenades, 1128 rocket motors, 50 pieces of explosive ordnance, and 4,740 kilograms of explosive. The operation will continue in 2002.

UNMBIH Spokesman says number of evictions in Banja Luka doubled

UNMBIH Spokesman for the Banja Luka and Bihac Regions Alun Roberts told a news conference in Banja Luka on Wednesday that a number of evictions in the Banja Luka region was doubled comparing to the 2000 figures. He said that during the last year 2,068 evictions had been scheduled in the Banja Luka region (Banja Luka, Gradiska, Prijedor and Kotor Varos) with 1,820 carried out successfully. As to the Banja Luka municipality, 1,557 evictions were carried out thus enabling 850 Bosniak families, 293 Croat families, 367 Serb families and 47 families of Others to return to their pre-war homes.