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BiH State-related Issues

Representatives of local authorities discuss the RTV transformation process with the High Representative

Dnevni Avaz reports that representatives of local authorities in BiH met on Wednesday with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, to discuss the process of transformation of the RTV BiH. During the meeting, Ivo Komsic, Dubravko Lovrenovic and Nijhaz Skenderagic expressed their dissatisfaction with a “lengthy experiment of the International Community and the lack of concrete results in this field.” According to Avaz, the three stressed that there is a need for partnership between the International Community and local authorities in order to efficiently resolve the crisis of electronic media in BiH.

Sead Avdic: Shearer and Torngren must leave BiH!;

The chairman of the BiH Parliament’s House of Representatives, SDP’s Sead Avdic, said that the reconstruction process of the RTV BiH is developing too slowly and stressed that the situation in this electronic medium is chaotic. Following his recent visit to the RTV BiH together with Ilija Simic, the chairman of BiH Parliament’s House of Peoples, Avdic said that the state of the RTV is alarming and that something concrete urgently needs to be done. He also said that the International supervisors in the sphere of media, like John Shearer (High Representative’s Broadcasting Agent for RTV BiH) and Jerker

Torngren (the Chief Executive of the Communication Regulatory Agency) proved to be incompetent in their professions. "Mr. Shearer and MR. Torngren must leave," said Avdic and added that both have been doing their jobs in BiH in highly unprofessional manner and should therefore resign.

The Hague-related Items

Mixed reaction follow the arrest of Bosniak generals

The past weekend in BiH was largely marked by the news of three senior Bosniak military officials being arrested and transferred to the ICTY. Retired generals Mehmed Alagic and Enver Hadzihasanovic and the brigadier Amir Kubura were flown to The Hague on Friday, after deciding to voluntarily place themselves at the disposal of the Tribunal. "Their arrest was carried out in a dignified way, without the use of police force. They (the indictees) experienced a shock. They were as dignified as they used to be when they defended the country as prominent commanders, I dare say, this country's heroes," told the press the Federation Minister of Interior, **Muhamed Besic**.

The arrest and transfer to The Hague of the three provoked a series of mixed reaction in the Federation. While most senior world officials, including the US President George W. Bush, and other members of the International Community welcomed this open cooperation of Federation authorities with the ICTY, political parties and officials in the entity were more cautious in evaluating the arrests. The chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Zlatko Lagumdzija**, noted that the state of BiH will stand behind the three arrested military officials, and stressed that generals "are considered to be innocent until proven guilty." He also asked to press not to make any connection between the Thursday verdict to Serb general Radislav Krstic and the arrest of Alagic, Hadzihasanovic and Kubura, calling any comparison between the two "rude". Lagumdzija said that

BiH authorities will hire lawyers to defend the indicted officials. This statement provoked fierce reaction on the part of RS politicians who objected to Lagumdžija's different treatment of Bosniak and Serb suspects. "As far as he is concerned, Bosniaks wanted by the ICTY are suspects, but Serbs also wanted by the ICTY are indictees," said Mirko Banjac of the SDS. "Lagumdžija protects interests of only one people and tends to present himself as a minister who represents all three constitutional peoples in BiH", Banjac said.

In a statement for the press, the **SDA**, and several **BiH veterans association**, criticized the arrest saying that The Hague Tribunal finally succumbed to the overwhelming political pressure and started apportioning the responsibility equally to all three sides. However, both stressed that they still strongly support the work of the Tribunal and expressed confidence that the three will prove their innocence.

Other political parties in the Federation mostly welcomed, although reservedly, the arrests, stressing that this move proved that the Entity is ready to fulfill all its obligations towards the ICTY and to fully cooperate with the Tribunal. Representatives of the parties in the RS, by and large, greeted the transfer of the Bosniak generals to The Hague and stressed that it "was high time that the responsibility for the war in BiH had become more balanced."

Meanwhile, the citizens of Sanski Most, the hometown of General Alagic, organized peaceful protests expressing their support to the indicted general. According to a street poll conducted by the RTV BiH, most citizens in the Federation are a bit surprised with these arrests and expressed hope that all three will prove their innocence. Columnists in all Federation and RS commented on the arrest.

RS President Comments on Arrest of Three Federation Army Officers

Weekend edition of Glas Srpski quotes RS President, Mirko Sarovic as saying that it is very important that the ICTY establishes in its future work balance in investigations and indictments. "The change in Tribunal's perception of the war time events will be measured by the number of indictments and arrests for war crimes committed against Serbs in BiH", says Sarovic. He remarked that the way the sealed indictments were delivered and the arrests carried out by the Federation police were unusual for common practice. Commenting on the arrest of three Federation Army officers, member of the SDS Executive Board, Mirko Banjac says he will not become euphoric about arrest of officers of other two peoples until such time as war crimes and perpetrators are systematically investigated. Weekend edition of Nezavisne Novine quotes OHR Spokesman, Oleg Milisic as saying the OHR commends the arrest of three Federation Army officers. "This sort of cooperation with the ICTY should represent a norm for all sides. However, the RS authorities still have not reached this level of cooperation", says Milisic.

Two additional sealed indictments submitted to the Federation government

Srna news agency reported last night that the two new sealed indictments have been submitted to the Federation government . One is, according to the same source, for the famous Srebrenica commander Naser Oric, who is suspected of committing war crimes against Serb civilians in eastern Bosnia, while the other is for a senior Federation Army official who is to retire in the near future. The agency did not disclose the second name. All Federation media quoted this report.

In a statement for Oslobodjenje, Oric said he would voluntarily turn himself in to The Hague if he is indicted.

Wolfgang Petritsch Says Without Cooperation With the ICTY RS Can Lose Legitimacy

Weekend edition of Nezavsine Novine carries excerpts from the interview the High Representative for BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch gave for Srna news agency. Petritsch says that the RS might lose its legitimacy in the eyes of the world if the RS National Assembly fails to pass the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY. "If the RS NA does not pass the Law on ICTY it would tell much about the RS NA MPs. It would mean that six years after the war the RS NA MPs still live in a world of denial and that they are still not ready to deal with war-crimes issues, which would certainly lead to further delegitimization of the RS in the eyes of the world", says Petritsch. He points out that arrest and extradition of indicted war criminals is more than an obligation and satisfaction of justice. "The war-crimes issue is the essential for reconciliation process in BiH", says Petritsch. High Representative says he expects the RS authorities to unconditionally extradite indicted war criminals who currently live in the RS. "Obviously, it is getting very complicated for people who are high on the ICTY most-wanted list. I hope that Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic will soon end up in The Hague. This must happen in order to get this country in position to leave the past behind and turn to the future", says Petritsch. Commenting on SDS, Petritsch says that SDS is a problematic political party whose contribution to implementation of the DPA is not very impressive and its past is at least questionable. "If SDS wants to become a real partner then it has to break up with its past and deal with possible war criminals in its ranks, to distance itself from the its policy in the past and to demonstrate that SDS is reformed", says Petritsch.

Reactions to Krsitic's Verdict

Weekend edition of Nezavisne Novine reports that the High Representative for BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch commended the ICTY verdict sentencing General Radoslav Krstic to 46 years of imprisonment. "This verdict should serve as an example", says

Petritsch in an interview for Austrian news agency APA. According to Petritsch, the situation is getting increasingly complicated for 30 to 40 war criminals who are still at large. He also announces that Karadzic and Mladic will soon be arrested and transferred to The Hague. Member of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic says he disagrees with the ICTY qualification sentencing General Radislav Krstic for genocide. BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija said that Krstic's verdict is very important, just like any other verdict, since it contributes to the normalisation in the region. The daily quotes the RS Government spokeswoman, Cvjeta Kovacevic as saying that the RS Government has not discussed Krstic's verdict or the arrest of the three Federation Army officers.

Federation

Reconstruction of former separation line in Mostar begins

Citizens of Mostar began the reconstruction of the first block of apartments in Bulevar, the street which was known as the separation line during the war and the front line in clashes between the BiH Army and the HVO (Croat Defense Council). Media report that the US government provided a full donation in order to fund this reconstruction project. The US ambassador Thomas Miller and Mostar city authorities took part in yesterday's action of clearing the rubble in Belevor ruins.

"Aluminij" Factory is one of the top most successful companies in the world

Under the section of Letters from Readers, Jutarnji List publishes the reaction from the "Aluminij" Factory (AF) Press Office to the article that this daily published on Tuesday, 31 July 2001, under the headline: "OHR investigates how Brajkovic earned 250,000 DEM worth of shares."

Aluminijum says it was a non-objective and extremely biased

article about the company that is among the top most successful companies in Europe and even the world. The author of the article, according to the AF press Office, in addition to presenting a pile of untruths, "forgot" to mention that the OHR is not investigating into anything extraordinary, and therefore, they expect the OHR to react to the article, too.

However grandiose 250,000 DEM worth of shares mentioned in the headline may have sounded, any businessperson realizes it is a small amount considering the value of the business operation, says the Press Office.

"What the Aluminium Factory and its management are earning, they share with everyone through various contributions, gifts and donations, and every well-intended individual already knows it," reads the letter in conclusion.

Republika Srpska

Bosniak war victims buried in Visegrad without an incident

Remains of 152 Bosniaks killed in 1992 were buried yesterday at a cemetery in Visegrad in the first Bosniak funeral after the war. All bodies had been exhumed from mass graves in Zepa and Kurtalici, but only a dozen have been identified thus far. The mass funeral took place amidst a high security provided by the RS police, and there were no incidents reported. Srebernica and Visegrad victims associations told the press that the RS Ministry of Interior had asked them to cover the costs of security in the amount of 600,000 KM.

Kotorsko residents to hold protests in front of the OHR today

Bosniak residents of Kotorsko, Dobojski, Modrica, Bijeljina and Janja held yet another peaceful protest in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo today (Monday). In a statement for the press, the Coordination Body for the above mentioned municipalities said their residents will gather today at 10.30

am in front of the OHR and the BiH Parliament building in order to express their dissatisfaction with the distribution of socially-owned land in the RS to Serbs who refuse to return to the Federation.

International Community

[Austrian Economic Councilor: GSM tender must be feasible and offer more](#)

In a short interview with ONASA news agency, the Economic Councilor in the Austrian embassy in BiH, Michael Scherz, said that the Mobilcom Austria is still interested in acquiring the license for the third GSM operator in BiH. He stressed that the new tender must be feasible, realistic and should offer more than the previous one. Scherz added that the events surrounding the annulled GSM tender did not have an encouraging effect on foreign investors, who are still reluctant to do any business in BiH. See the attachment!

[High Representative imposes two decision improving the judicial system in BiH](#)

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issued two decision on Friday which are aimed at improving the work and enhancing the independence of the judicial system in BiH. All Federation and RS media carried the OHR press release rather prominently. Croatian Vecernji List also quoted the PR.

Editorials

Nezavisne novine – The State and The Hague (by Radomir Neskovic)

Commenting on Lagumdžija's statement that BiH authorities will hire lawyer who will represent three Federation Army officers,

indicted for war crimes, Radomir Neskovic says that this is a serious blow to the policy of the Alliance and to the reconciliation process in BiH. The fact that Lagumdzija said that BiH authorities should not hire lawyers for Karadzic, Mladic and other indicted war criminals makes things even worse and can be understood that Bosniak war-criminals are better than Serb or Croat war criminals. Lagumdzija also said: "We stand behind these three persons until they are proven guilty". Neskovic asks himself what Lagumdzija meant when he said this. Does this mean that the CoM has to stand behind Bosniak war criminals but when it comes to Serbs and Croats who are facing the same charges then the situation is changing and the CoM does not have the same obligation anymore. Neskovic also says that Lagumdzija has the full right to do whatever he wants to with his own money even to spend it on legal counsel for indicted war criminals. Since Lagumdzija is the CoM Chair then he does not have the right to spend the CoM money (from the CoM budget, collected in both entities) on legal counsel for indicted war criminals. If only Bosniak indictees have the right to be supported by BiH authorities and the same right was not given to members of HVO and VRS, indicted for war crimes, then all citizens of BiH are not equal. Neskovic concludes that Lagumdzija probably wanted to gain sympathies of Bosniaks but he forgot that he would lose sympathies of Serbs and Croats. By doing so he missed the opportunity to be accepted as a politician who enjoys trust of all three peoples in BiH. If he does not surpasses Bosniak national boundaries and limits he will not differ much from any other nationalist politician in BiH. The thing that all BiH politicians and citizens should stand for is truth, no matter how painful it is, because only with the truth BiH will be able to get rid of ballast from the recent war.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Croats expect that this will not be the last arrest of BiH Army officers

The arrest and extradition of three high ranking officers of

the BiH Army suspected by the The Hague Tribunal for the war crimes and announcements of new indictments and arrests was calmly received by the central Bosnia Croats, without the euphoria that was displayed by the Bosniaks when the indictments against the BiH Croats had been made public. This is a normal sequence of events for the Croats, may be it long overdue, and multiple visits to central Bosnia by The Hague investigators in the last two years and their interest in concrete events announced that the "big wigs" of the BiH Army could go to The Hague for the crimes against the BiH Croats. It finally came true and the Croats, with good reason, expect that the list of suspects containing the BiH Army officers does not end with generals Enver Hadzihasanovic, Mehmed Alagic and brigadier Amir Kubura. But the attention and the revolt of the central Bosnia Croats and Croats of BiH was drawn and initiated by the conduct of the Federation and the State officials from the Alliance, in which some parties with the Croat prefix take part although they have not been trusted by the Croat voters. How long and in what manner the representatives of those parties "have governed" can be seen from the acts which disturbed and surprised the central Bosnia Croats before all. In other words the Federation Government has issued an announcement, on the very day when the troika were arrested, that says the indictment represents a start of the process but not the guilt of the suspects. Because of, the release says, the widely accepted legal principle that every person is innocent until proven otherwise by a valid court ruling. There would not be anything wrong about that if the same approach were used for the Croat suspects. But those legal principles did not count for the Bosniak politicians and media and the Croat suspects remained the war criminals, murderers... It can be seen from the fact when Pero Skopljak, Marinko Katava, Ivan Santic and Dragan Papic, the Vitez people who voluntarily gave themselves up and spent time in The Hague prison (Dragan Papic spent 830 days), were released of all charges, they had not got a word of apology. A word of apology did not get the family of "criminal and persecutor" Stipe

Alilovic who was falsely accused of crimes in Ahmici. And he, together with his family, left BiH 13 months before the incriminated event to live in the Netherlands where he soon died. The three officers of the BiH Army, generals Alagic and Hadzihasanovic and brigadier Kubura were visited on the same day when they were arrested by the Federation Minister of Justice Zvonko Miljan and the authorized lawyer of the Federation Government Dzemil Sabrihafizovic and informed them about the readiness of the Government to help them prove their innocence before The Hague Tribunal. The Chair of the Council of Ministers promised the help over the phone to them and their families just before the trip to The Hague. The Government's press release also states that the competent bodies will make all the documents available to The Hague Tribunal and the defence teams to determine the truth. The Federation Government, as suggested by the Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Zlatko Lagumdzija, will appoint lawyers to the suspects. Something like that the Croat prisoners could not even dream of, although they voluntarily gave themselves up to The Hague Tribunal, and the Bosniak media and some international officials criticized the activities of the Croats who wanted to collect the means to pay the defence of the indicted central Bosnia Croats and support their families. Because the accused Croats are still treated and seen as enemies, as fighters against BiH, whilst Alagic, Hadzihasanovic and Kubura are theirs', they need help, you have to fight for their honour and defence. Do these acts and different approaches to war crimes not clearly say who is who in this state and who rules in it. In other words, the Croat officials in the Federation and the State bodies, Krizanovic, Grabovac, Zubak, Filipovic, Simic, Komsic, Anic...are "wisely" staying silent. They either approve of these acts or are afraid of the mighty Zlatko Lagumdzija, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Chair of the CoM and the President of Social Democrats (SDP) who is on top of that protected by the American Ambassador Thomas Miller. No matter whether it is a case of approval or fear,

the consequences (and injustice) for the Croats are the same.

Vjesnik: Expensive bureaucracy suffocates BiH

The weak BiH economy is having problems carrying the burden of a few thousand workers employed in the administration, among them are 13 Prime Ministers and hundreds of Ministers, their Deputies, Assistants, Advisors, not to mention many expert departments and other staff like drivers, secretaries, chefs and the rest. They represent a big burden to the budget especially with the fact that the international aid has decreased in the past years. The large administration is a result of a complicated establishment of the country that was agreed upon in Dayton. In the Federation of BiH beside the Government at the level of the entity, there are 10 Cantonal cabinets for education, traffic, health care or interior affairs. According to the data released just recently, around 700 million KMs were spent on salaries and costs of these officials only in the Federation of BiH. In the same time the public revenues were just over two billion KMs so it is evident that one third of the revenues was spent on financing of the administration. Some cantons spend almost two thirds of the public revenues on their officials' salaries. The collection of public revenues is a problematic issue and estimated to be under the realistic sums. The black market is blossoming so do the methods of tax evasions. And when it comes to services the citizens could expect from the state such as investment, creation of jobs, housing etc. the situation is far from efficient. The special problem is overlapping of authorities between administration bodies. It is a paradox but there is not a strategy for the traffic development of BiH, although the issue is dealt with by four different services. The advocates of centralization and unitarization of BiH and the Federation of BiH often state the fact of the expensive state as an argument when trying to achieve their requests. On the other hand, the members of smaller peoples especially consider the decentralization as a

way to protect their rights.