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BiH State-related Issues

Chair of the Council of Ministers to ask Petritsch to suspend distribution of land in Kotorsko

After a meeting with representatives of Kotorsko residents who have been protesting in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo for the past two days, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdžija, said he will ask the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, to re-examine his decision which permits the RS authorities to distribute plots of "private" land in Kotorsko and other places in the RS. Zijad Zečević of the Kotorsko Board for Return informed Lagumdžija that "the RS authorities, together with the OHR, have been illegally allocating privately -owned land in this area for the past two years."

Meanwhile, OHR spokesman Kevin Sullivan said that the OHR is presently reviewing the documentation which was submitted to the OHR by Kotorsko residents and which refers to the allocation of land in the Dobojski area.

Council of Ministers Working Group Says the Bid for CIPS Project Should be Expanded

Today's edition of Nezavisne Novine reports that the Council of Ministers working group, comprising of Svetozar Mihajlović, Jadranko Prlić and Muharem Imamović, thinks that the bid for the CIPS project should be expanded and that the final decision should be made within 45 days if the Council of

Ministers accepts it.

Cardinal Puljic on relation between the US and BiH

Cardinal Vinko Puljic said on Tuesday that he believed that the new American administration led by President George Bush would reexamine its relations towards BiH. Puljic confirmed that he, during his recent visit to the United States, warned that the international community must have the same approach towards all peoples in BiH. "There are no positive reports about Croats in the public, and if someone is guilty, he should be individually accountable," Puljic said, HINA reported. Puljic criticized the Dayton two-entity arrangement of BiH, and condemned the abolishment of the name "Republic" from the state name of BiH, and the giving of it to one of the entities – the Republika Srpska (RS). Commenting on the recent articles in newspapers, which criticize him and equalize him with the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ), Cardinal Puljic said that he is not interested in the party," but in his people." The Sarajevo's magazine "Dani" published on the front page of its newest edition a portrait of Cardinal Puljic, at which a photo of the late Croatian President Franjo Tudjman is put instead of the cardinal's cross. "That is a violation of religious holy objects since the cross is holy for us," Puljic said. Puljic also criticized acts of Croat politicians, and said that they have been spending their energy on mutual conflicts. Cardinal Puljic believes that the Croat National Assembly (HNS) cannot replace the state institutions, but that it can be supporting means for molding of the strategy of Croats in BiH.

Federation

OHR: Report on privatization of Aluminijum ready by the end of August

OHR spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer told Oslobodjenje that

the OHR will issue a final report on the privatization of the Aluminijum Factory in Mostar by the end of August, when it should be revealed who is the actual owner of this Herzegovina giant. She said that the OHR has conducted a comprehensive revision of the privatization process and it is presently developing a "plan of action" for this company. The daily notes that the OHR in conjunction with the Federation Privatization Agency decided that the Aliminijum case will serve as a blueprint, or a model, for the revision of privatization of hotels in Mostar and Neum. Thus, Oslobodjenje concludes, if Aluminijum is returned to the Federation, the entity will become the legitimate owner of dubiously privatized hotel in the two towns.

Ante Jelavic to ask for a trial in Croatia?

Dnevni Avaz reports that the dismissed HDZ president, Ante Jelavic, will demand a trial in Croatia if the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo gathers enough evidence to start a criminal process against him and five of his colleagues because of the alleged undermining of the BiH and Federation defense capacity and violations of the BiH Constitution. The daily writes that Jelavic will, as a Croatian citizens, demand that this trial is transferred to the neighboring state in order to demonstrate to BiH Croats that local courts in BiH are not impartial and objective.

Petar Milic: I will not comply with the court summons

The founder of the Croat Christian Democrats, Petar Milic, said on Tuesday that he would not comply with the court summons after the Cantonal Prosecutor's Office in Sarajevo filed a request for initiation of an investigation against him. "I am going to take a highwayman's life," said Milic, refusing any court summons. "We are ready to fight for a Croat Republic in BiH until the last drop of our blood", Milic pointed out, advocating the establishment of a third entity in BiH.

Association of Croats Displaced from Konjic sends an open letter to the High Representative – New models of resettlement of Croats in effect

Vecernji List says that many are still hoping that all those who committed crimes during the war will be indicted now that the three BiH Army officers have been arrested. The daily adds that Konjic Croats have made a number of attempts in that direction in the past years.

The paper carries an open letter that the Association of Croats Displaced from Konjic addressed to the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch. In the letter, they remind him that nationalistic incidents and cases of discrimination against Croats continued to occur in Konjic even after the war. They also claim that much is being done to prevent Croats from returning to the Municipality, and remind the High Representative that the BiH Army built the biggest mosque in Herzegovina on a private non-Muslim land in Bradina where Muslims never lived. They say the driver's licenses issued to Croats in Konjic bear the inscription 'Republika BiH' on its cover and that Republic of BiH was not abolished the same day as the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia was. They warn the High Representative that the municipal authorities have recently added to the ethnic intolerance by allocating building lots to 52 Bosniaks alone, contrary to the ban passed by Wolfgang Petritsch's predecessor Carlos Westendorp.

The daily reads that the Association members earlier addressed the OSCE Office in Jablanica with a warning that a person suspected of war crimes, against whom a criminal report was filed with the ICTY, was on the list of the elected municipal councillors in Konjic. According to Drago Simunovic Maglja, the Association President, they have received no formal reply yet.

Marko Tokic replaces Bozo Ljubic at helm of HDZ BiH?

Bozo Ljubic, the leader of the moderate faction in the HDZ, said that the representatives of the International Community (IC) and the members of the Alliance for Changes could soon see that there was a problem which they should talk about with the leading Croat party in BiH. Disappointed at the failure of the talks he led on behalf of the HDZ with the American Ambassador Thomas Miller, the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch and his Deputy Matthias Sonn and the German diplomats in BiH, Ljubic has announced, explaining his last week's withdrawal from the HDZ's negotiating commission he had headed, a "turbulent autumn". Ljubic says that the IC and the Alliance think that there is not a problem that they should talk about with the HDZ but also that an important reason why the negotiations had failed was that there were different views within the party when it came to the objectives of the negotiations. It is more than obvious that Ljubic was alluding to the obstructions by the so called "hard-line" faction within the HDZ BiH, which requested, as was speculated before, his withdrawal from the position of the party Vice-President.

As "Vjesnik" found out, the convention of the HDZ BiH, announced for the 6th of October, could see the hard-liners taking over the key functions in the party, the people who advocate a separate Croat entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. An important indicator to this possible turnabout at the party's convention is a fact that the key positions for the preparation of documents for the convention have been taken by the rightists led by Marko Tokic.

Encouraged by the initial failures of the Alliance-led Government, the announced change of the American policy towards BiH and by the High Representative's involvement in the scandal of awarding of lucrative deals to the "SIEMENS" (along the "private line", allegedly), the HDZ rightists could, come autumn, especially with the start of a new school year, organize a string of protest rallies against the IC and the Government which was formed against the will of the

majority of Croats in BiH and undertake some other radical steps.

The HDZ in their struggle for accomplishing the national interests, as seen by this party which by the way according to recent research enjoys supports from 75% of the voters, has acted more or less within the Constitution and law. If the "hard-liners" win at the convention, an escalation of the crisis which would undoubtedly lead into a catastrophe is not ruled out. The leader of the "moderates" Bozo Ljubic has so far refused to say if he is going to submit his candidacy for the position of the party's president. It is clear that the international representatives want to see him as the future leader of the BiH Croats in the country, and the Alliance have respect for him too, especially among the Alliance parties with the Croat prefix. Kresimir Zubak once said "there are people in the HDZ that should stay in politics", thinking of Bozo Ljubic and his brother Mariofil.

After all, Miller, Petritsch and Sonn agreed to talk to him as a prominent member of the HDZ. But the fact that he is accepted by the IC could cost him the support within his party. After all, Kresimir Zubak left the HDZ in a similar fashion, as did Jadranko Prlic, and Neven Tomic has thus lost the party's support to stay at the Mostar Mayor's position.

Federation Justice Ministry Says Oric and Plevljak Indicted for War Crimes

Today's edition of "Glas srpski" learns from a source close to the Federation Justice Ministry that the Federation Justice Ministry received two sealed indictments. According to the papers one is for Naser Oric, war commander of Srebrenica and the other one is for Fikret Plevljak, war commander of the Fourth Motorized Brigade. Plevljak is charged for crimes committed against Serbs in Sarajevo settlements Hrasnica, Sokolovic Kolonija and was allegedly involved in crimes committed against Serbs in Tarcin prison in vicinity of

Sarajevo.

Federation President Karlo Filipovic visits West Herzegovina Canton

Federation President Karlo Filipovic paid a two-day visit to the West Herzegovina Canton, reads Slobodna Dalmacija. He was welcomed at the 'Royal' Hotel in Siroki Brijeg by Mladen Ivankovic, the Minister without Portfolio in the Federation Government, Jerko Ivankovic, a delegate in the BiH House of Peoples, Marinko Ivankovic, a delegate in the West Herzegovina Cantonal Assembly, and the representatives of the Cantonal Customs and Tax Administrations.

Filipovic said the objective of his visit was to learn about the state of economy in the Canton, the realization of the plans from the BiH Federation competence and the problems that the businesspersons face in realizing the tasks from the competence of the BiH Federation.

In answer to the question as to why he did not plan to meet with the representatives of the Cantonal authorities during his first visit there, Filipovic said that an impeccable functioning of all authority levels requires their closer co-operation. "My associates and I are open to communication," said Filipovic.

German CDU delegateVolker Schimpff expresses support to the Croat self-rule in BiH

Volker Schimpff, a CDU (Christian Democratic Union) delegate in the Saxon Parliament, supported the work of the Croat National Assembly and Croat self-rule as institutions working to achieve a constituent status for Croats in BiH.

"In any case, we will direct our attention at violations of the essential Washington and Dayton Agreements. They are not being violated by Croats, but by the international administration which changed the BiH Election Law contrary to

those Agreements,” stated Schimpff.

He said that he would point before the Parliament of European Regions that the High Representative is working to have BiH centralized and the regional democracy removed, as well as that he would stand in support of Croat self-rule in BiH before that institution.

He expressed his discontent over the political developments in the Republic of Croatia and did not spare words of criticism at the expense of the ruling Social Democratic Party. “It is not good that the so called Social Democrats are in power in Croatia,” he said. In his words, the moves that the current Croatian leadership has taken to bring the country closer to the European Union have not led to desirable results.

Republika Srpska

Milorad Dodik Says “Typhoon” Terrorizes Banja Luka

Both Banja Luka dailies quote president of SNSD, Milorad Dodik, as saying that leading people of the RS Customs Administration are involved in illegal business and that the money earned in this business is being used for financing of Karadzic’s security. Dodik accused an SDS official, Ljuban Ecim and the group called “Typhoon” of being involved in racketeering business people from Banja Luka.

International Community

OHR: Petritsch has not been informed that his work is being investigate by the US Congress

OHR spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer told Dnevni Avaz yesterday that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, has not been informed that his work is being investigated by

the US Congress. Commenting on the recent articles in the Croatian press which claim that the US Congressman Henry Hyde told Petritsch that he will be held accountable for the situation in BiH, Stiglmeier said that there has been no direct communication, written or oral, between Hyde and the High Representative. She also said that the OHR does not have any information about the speculated arrival of a US Congress "fact-finding mission" to BiH. The BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs also denied that any US delegation is to come to BiH in the near future.

OHR still not paying pension insurance to PIO Fund

Oslobodjenje reports that, despite the recently signed agreement with the Federation government, the OHR has still not started paying social and pensions insurance for its local employees, and there are indication that first contribution will not be made before September. The daily notes that the main obstacle to this process is the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not yet ratified the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the OHR and the Finance Ministry.

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.

Principal Deputy High Representative meets the Presidency chairman

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, met yesterday with the chairman of the BiH Presidency, Jozo Krizanovic, and discussed the present situation in BiH and all other issues of concern for the new PDHR. During the meeting, Hays said that he arrived in BiH without prejudices and with

intention to behave as a typical American – guided in his work only by the prospects of future. He also said that he would try to achieve that all peoples and citizens of BiH experience BiH as their own country.

Carla Del Ponte Says Milosevic Will Be indicted For Genocide in Croatia and BiH, Not Kosovo

Both Banja Luka dailies quote the ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, as saying that former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic will be indicted for genocide in Croatia and BiH, but not in Kosovo. “We did not find sufficient evidence to indict him for genocide in Kosovo”, says Del Ponte. Milosevic is due to appear before the trial chambers on 30th of August. Carla Del Ponte says she hopes that the French and US forces in BiH will soon arrest people from the ICTY most wanted list, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic. Asked if there is a concern that Milosevic could commit suicide, Del Ponte says that the only opportunity he could have used to do it was March 30th when Serbian authorities arrested him, but now he is under supervision. “We want him alive and healthy in the court”, says Del Ponte.

UNMIBH concerned about re-routing of Air Bosna flights from Turkey to Tuzla

The UNMIBH is very concerned by the decision of national airline Air Bosna to begin rerouting their regular flights from Istanbul, Turkey, to BiH. “Air Bosna has recently redirected its flights from Istanbul by first stopping in Tuzla, and then proceeding to Sarajevo. This move raises suspicion and based on the data collected by the Tuzla Canton authorities, it appears to be a response to the strict border controls being implemented by the State Border Service (SBS) at the Sarajevo airport,” Spokesperson of the UNMIBH Stefo Lehmann said on Tuesday.

According to Lehmann, the Air Bosna flight arriving to Tuzla

from Istanbul last Sunday (August 5) carried 118 passengers, mostly Turkish citizens. Out of these 118 passengers, 100 disembarked in Tuzla and only 18 continued to Sarajevo. Lehmann said that these numbers appear to indicate that Air Bosna is deliberately trying to circumvent the State Border Service controls, which are not yet deployed at the Tuzla airport and facilitate the entry of illegal immigrants to BiH.