

OBN News Review, 19 August 1999

Headlines

- Number of tragic victims of disastrous earthquake in Turkey gets higher by the minute
- Protest of the Opposition in Serbia is the last warning to Milosevic to resign
- Author of the article in New York Times on corruption in B&H firmly stands by his findings
- "Relax. Everything will be OK", says Robert Farrand, OHR Supervisor for Brcko, after the Annex to the Arbitration Decision was adopted
- Council of Ministers dissatisfied with the way border posts are being opened

Turkey

The number of victims of the Turkish earthquake continues to grow. More than 6,300 dead and 30,000 wounded have been found. There are fears that final numbers will be higher because the most badly affected region counted for 45% of the entire population. Fire in the biggest refinery in Izmit is still raging and threatening the whole region. More aid is about to arrive from abroad. Report was produced by OBN reporter Slobodan Maksimovic.

Corruption in B&H

The U.S. Embassy comment on the New York Times' article on corruption in B&H was that the article referred to losses in public funds in B&H and not to international humanitarian aid. This included losses of the entity governments and taxpayers due to uncollected tax, smuggling and tax evasion. Ralph Johnson, Principal Deputy High Representative, also pointed out that this fraud referred to public funds. "The article was

written to show the disappearance of money from local funds", said Mr. Johnson. Officials from U.S. Embassy admit that their losses mostly concern USAID credits to Bosnian companies that have still not been repaid and a fund deposited in a B&H Bank that became bankrupt. Report was produced by OBN reporter Duska Jurisic.

Hedges' reaction to accusations

Chris Hedges gave an interview to Sarajevo magazine "Slobodna Bosna" as a reaction to various accusations against his article in the New York Times. On being told that Bakir Izetbegovic threatened to sue him unless he proved every single accusation, Mr. Hedges replied that his article had nothing to do with different nationalities. It dealt with honesty. He also added that this kind of reaction was typical of shortsighted people who were criminals and belonged in jail. On OHR's denial of the existence of a 4,000-page-long report Mr. Hedges said that the report exists, and that he personally saw it. Report was produced by OBN reporter Bakir Hadziomerovic.

Brcko

International Community representatives claim that there are no winners or losers in the final version of the Annex to the Arbitration Decision for Brcko. The final Arbitration Decision, by which Brcko became a district, was adopted in March. Now officials are able to start establishing the District. Robert Farrand, OHR supervisor for Brcko, said that the priority now was to create the status of a District. "I hope that Brcko will become a model for the whole of B&H", said Mr. Farrand. Report was produced by OBN reporter Vedran Persic.

Council of Ministers

At today's session of the Council of Ministers the main topics of discussion were the ratification and adoption of several

agreements, such as the agreement on remission of debts between the Council of Ministers and the governments of USA, Finland and Switzerland. Council of Ministers also agreed to request the International Community to publish a report on corruption in B&H. Reporter was produced by OBN reporter Adis Saranovic.

Banja Luka

Government of RS held a session in Banja Luka, at which Vice President Ostojica Kamenovic said that the government had not yet received the text of the Annex to the Arbitration Decision for Brcko. Mr. Kremenovic said that the Ministry of Justice would find the right answers to the problems of the control system and inspection teams in RS. Report was produced by OBN reporter Adis Saranovic.

Protests in Belgrade

The opposition in Serbia organised the biggest protests ever held in Belgrade. The main message of the protests was "Milosevic we want you to resign". Protesters came from Nis, Kragujevac, Jagodina, Pancevo, etc. There have been no riots and the police are controlling the situation. From Belgrade OBN reporter Danica Ilic.

Voices of Serbia

"Slobodan Milosevic brought us into misery, and that is the reason why he must leave politics", said Vuk Obradovic, Leader of Social-Democrats. "We need changes and Milosevic must go. But these changes need to be accomplished as peacefully and painlessly as possible", said Ognjen Pribicevic, SPO. Report was produced by OBN reporter Slobodan Maksimovic.

Kosovo

Tensions are still present in Kosovo. A sniper killed one KLA member last night. Shootings continue between KLA and Serbs

and 2 Italian soldiers were wounded during a burst of open fire. KLA announced that they had fulfilled all the conditions of demilitarisation. 60% of KLA's ordnance, according to KLA's General Ceku, has been surrendered to KFOR in Kosovo. Report was produced by OBN reporter Slobodan Maksimovic.

Dagestan

Conflict between Russian troops and Islamic rebels in Dagestan continues. Russia is sending 500 additional parachute troops to Dagestan. Russia and USA intend to continue the process of disarmament of nuclear weapons. Negotiations on START3 will start as soon as the Russian Parliament ratifies an already signed agreement on START2. Report was produced by OBN reporter Slobodan Makismovic.

SDA Committees in RS

Regional SDA Committees in RS started an initiative for adopting the Law on taxes on salaries, and incomes in the Federation in order to help the process of return to RS. Expenses for agricultural needs and livestock are not planned in the State and Federal Budgets. The amount of taxes is not yet defined. Report was produced by OBN reporter Amarildo Gutic.

Stock breeding in Livno valley

27-year-old Ilija Smiljanic re-opened a sheep farm in Livno valley although more and more young people were leaving the region. He started the project by buying 1,300 sheep and starting to produce cheese. Report was produced by OBN reporter Mirela Pehar.

Revision of school books

Teams of experts from the Ministries of Education from Federation and RS agreed on changes in school books in national subjects. Alexandra Stiglmyer, OHR spokes person,

pointed out that if they do not sign the final agreement a team will be made up of OHR members who would reach a final decision. Reporter was produced by OBN reporter Mirna Sadikovic.

Igman

4th anniversary of the tragic death of American and French peacekeepers was celebrated on Igman today. Representatives from U.S. and French Embassy, and from Federation Army were present at today's commemoration. "They will always be present in our hearts", said Ambassador Kauzlarich. Report was produced by OBN reporter Anes Alic.

Sport

31st International handball competition continues. Reports on APTN and WTA matches. Chess.