

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 12/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Customs Affairs: Criminal charges in MegaComm case; Srebrenica – a prayer for 10,000 killed Bosniaks

Dnevni Avaz: Srebrenica – seventh anniversary of the massacre; AM-SPED: Police report does not mention Lagumdžija or Behmen

Jutarnje Novine: Srebrenica pays tribute to its victims; Mikerevic rejects CIPS project report, asks for additional information

Glas srpski: Foreign lawyers to represent BiH in a law-suit against FRY – Swindle of the Bosnian top leadership; BiH Federation Pension/Invalid Insurance Fund rejected agreement on pension and invalid insurance;

Nezavisne novine: Anniversary of the tragedy in Srebrenica marked; Slobodan Bilic resigns;

Blic: Minister Bilic resigns; Mustafa ef. Cerić – Our strength is in piece

Vecernji List: Americans consciously helped the Storm action in Krajina; Srebrenica commemoration

Dnevni List: Defense Ministry scandal

Slobodna Bosna: How did Ilidža become Bosniak Beverly Hills?

BH DANI: Srebrenica – 12,089 killed Bosniaks

Srebrenica commemoration

Over 3,000 (some reports quote even 6,000) survivors of Srebrenica massacre, together with most senior representatives of the diplomatic core in BiH, marked on Thursday the seventh anniversary of the death of thousands of Bosniaks killed by the Serb forces led by the indicted war criminal, Ratko

Mladic, in July 1995. At a solemn ceremony in Potocari, the head of the Islamic Community in BiH, Resu-l-ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić, voiced hope that crimes against civilians will become a thing of the past. *"We pray for the sorrow to become hope, for revenge to become justice and for a mother's tear to become a reminder so that Srebrenica and New York will never happen again,"* Cerić said. *"This is a very important date. We gathered here to, together with Srebrenica mothers, pay tribute to all victims in this area,"* said the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown. The BiH Presidency members, Beriz Belkic and Jozo Krizanovic, Paddy Ashdown, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Jacques Paul Klein, the US Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, and numerous other senior dignitaries attended the ceremony. As in the previous years, Federation and foreign media note, there were no RS or Serb representatives at the commemoration. (front pages of all Sarajevo media and first item in all electronic media prime time news, Glas srpski p. 3, "Religious ceremony of Bosniaks in Potocari – The event finished without any incidents, and Nezavisne novine, front page, p.3, "RS Government ignored the event in Potocari", Slobodna Dalmacija last page, Vecernji List p. 15, Vjesnik p. 2)

The RTRS reports that RS officials will mark today (Friday), also in Srebrenica, the tenth anniversary of the mass killing of Serbs in Podrinje, Srebrenica and Bratunac by Bosniak forces.

Although no incidents were reported during the official ceremony, the commemoration was not entirely void of difficulties. According to all media in the Federation, as well as the BHTV 1, the Federation TV team, which was traveling to Srebrenica to prepare a live broadcast of Dileme from this town, was stopped by the RS Ministry of Interior and not allowed to cross the Intern-entity boundary line nearby. *"After a four hour wait at the IEBL and after numerous failed attempts of the Federation authorities and the IPTF to persuade the RS Police to let us through, we decided to return to Sarajevo and prepare the broadcasting of the show from our studio...The FTV will however continue its fight for the truth*

and our profession despite of those who set up borders in place where the State Border Service does not exist,” said Marija Topic Crnoja, the editor in chief of the FTV. The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, asked RS authorities to conduct an immediate investigation of the RS police’s behavior in this case. *“This incident is very serious. Freedom of movement and the right of media to freely report represent some of the basic freedoms delineated in the Dayton Peace Agreement and the European Convention on protection of Human Rights,”* OHR said in a press release. (Oslobodjenje p. 4, Dnevni Avaz p. 4)

Oslobodjenje (p. 4) reports that the RS Police also stopped representatives of the Serbian NGO “Women in Black” who were coming to pay tribute to Srebrenica victims. *“They told us that we have to return as our visit was not announced in advance, which is not true. One of the police officers told us that we should go to Bratunac, Bujanovac or Presevo, and not to Srebrenica,”* the NGO president, Violeta Djikanovic, told Beta news agency. (Oslobodjenje, ONASA)

Financial Scandals/Affairs

CIPS

At yesterday’s press conference in Sarajevo, the chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Dragan Mikrevic, said that the CoM asked the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications to provide additional information and details about the implementation of the CIPS (Citizens Identity Protection System) project. *“The Council of Ministers would show a serious lack of competence if it fails to see the CIPS project to the end as planned. We will demand responsibly of all and investigate the allegations put forth by some media,”* Mikrevic said. *“If someone fails to do his share of work, he will have to resign...for we are talking about 33 million KM of tax payers money.”* Mikrevic told the press that there are still several controversial or unclear issues which have to be

addressed in more detail, such as the ownership of the main printing house, as well as some personnel and technical aspects of the project implementation. Dnevni Avaz notes that the atmosphere at the session of the CoM was very tense as no one could provide the answers needed to clear up confusion about some issues. According to the daily, the only competent official on this, Mirko Skrbic, the CIPS director, was on vacation. (Dnevni Avaz by S. Numanovic and E.Sarac on p. 2, Oslobodjenje by V. Zivak on p. 3, Jutarnje Novine front page, Nezavisne Novine p. 5, Glas Srpski p. 2, one of the top stories in all electronic media)

Dnevni List (p. 3) also carries an article on CIPS affari, noting that the project is being implemented in a notoriously non-transparent manner.

AM-SPED

Dnevni Avaz (p. 10 by E. Sarac) reports that the Federation Ministry of Interior submitted to the Sarajevo Canton Prosecutor a comprehensive information about the 21 million KM bribe allegedly offered to the SDP leader Zlatko Lagumdžija and his party colleague and the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, by Tino Bralo (AM-SPED owner) in exchange for the return of 42 million KM of funds frozen in criminal activities. According to the daily, the report does not mention the names of the two officials, however does confirm that Bralo and Mirko Anic, the AM-SPED owner on paper, had numerous meetings with Krunoslav Jelic and Tihomir Curak, assistants to the former Federation Finance Minister, Nikola Grabovac.

"One year ago, Haris Silajdzic asked from me 500,000 marks of bribe in order to help me to get back 3,2 million KM that were blocked in the budget of Federation BiH. Damir Fazlic came to me with Silajdzic's offer, but I refused it because I know that I have all legal grounds for return of my money", Tino Bralo, told Jutarnji List (page 6) accusing the leader of the

Party for BiH for framing him with the 'AM Sped' affair. Vecernji List (page 18) carries a whole-page article on this issue and quotes Bralo as saying that the money that Federation Government should return to him (another 1,7 million KM) are already spent. Slobodna Dalmacija (page 15) and Belgrade's Vecernje Novosti (p. 10) also report on the affair.

ELECTIONS

Oslobodjenje (p. 7) and Dnevni Avaz (p. 8) report that the BiH Election Commission decided this week to grant the job of printing election ballots to Croatian company Zrinjski. *"Although initially it was nearly certain that the job would be awarded to one of the local companies which applied to the tender, it was concluded that none of them fulfills the technical requirements for the printing of ballots, personnel capacity or the necessary prior experience,"* Lidija Korac, the president of the Election Commission told Oslobodjenje.

The BIH Association of Graphic Design and Printing press workers, as well as the Printing House Planjax from Tesanj (which applied for the tender), strongly protested against this decision. *"It is shameful that companies from abroad are awarded these multimillion KM jobs, while BiH printing houses are without work. There are at least three or four companies in BiH which are capable for doing this job. However, it is not the first time that this kind of work is being done outside of BIH borders. The same happened with text books, passports and now with the CIPS project and the elections,"* said Franjo Soldo, the president of the Association.

PENSION FUND

The Steering Board of the Federation Pension Fund decided yesterday to sign a contract with Croatian company "Informatica" which is to set up a new information system in this institution. Dnevni Avaz (p. 3) argues that this new

contract implies that the PIO will have to break a contract with its present contractor ERC XIP0 from Sarajevo which may cause a multi-million KM damage to the Fund. The ERC director, Mirza Ceric, told the daily that the new contract will cost over 10 million KM and could cause the delay in disbursement of pensions in the Federation. *"This new company from Croatia has only two employees and will be awarded a 10 million KM worth job. In addition, this company has a very insignificant experience in electronic data developing,"* said Ceric.

CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION

Oslobodjenje reports on its front page today (by A. Omeragic) that the Federation Customs Administration opened up a possibility of starting the first case of organized crime in this area by broadening the criminal charges against MEGA COMM director Gojko Mandic, who evaded customs duties, thereby damaging the Federation budget by 32,4 million KM. According to the daily, officials in the Customs Administration suspect that Mandic may be only a small link in a broader meat affair which could be a part of an organized crime in BiH. *"We have submitted to the Prosecutor criminal charges which list all irregularities made by MEGA COMM, Lijanovici and Mostar Customs Office, however we have not labeled this as an organized crime. It is up to the Prosecutor to determine whether they have the case or not,"* CUS Director Zelimir Rebac told the daily.

FEDERATION DEFENSE MINISTRY

Vecernji List (page 3, signed by Zdenko Jurilj) reports that the **Federation Ministry of Defense**, together with the **Federation Ministry of Interior** and the **OHR** continues the investigation on the case of weapons sale to the US and also on a role of **Ferid Buljubasic**, the Deputy Federation Minister of Defense, in this affair. Vecernji List says that there is suspicion that millions Marks were also evaded on the weapon which was sold to Africa. According to the article, some

details regarding the recent disclosing of hidden weapon on the territory of Mostar East are related to the sale of weapon abroad and to the fact that a full amount of taxes was not paid. Jurilj concludes that in the case that the investigation concludes that Buljubasic was involved in this affair the **High Representative** will remove him from his current position.

WV GOLF

Slobodna Bosna reports that 57 domestic companies importing vehicles into BiH argue that the VW Golf has unjustly and undeservedly privileged position of a domestic product at the BiH market. According to the companies, despite the fact that popular golfs are only assembled in BiH but out of the imported parts, they have a status of domestic product, which indeed grants them a privileged status. *"All other imported vehicles are burdened with customs (20%) and duty (20%) which immediately disqualifies them in the market race with the VW."* However, Slobodna Bosna notes that the Council of Ministers' provision freeing VW of taxes refers to any company which decides to assemble cars in BiH, not only to VW. *"So, if it is really true that assembling cars bring such a profit, why are domestic producers not using this opportunity?,"* asks the weekly.

BiH State-level issues

Glas srpski (front page) quote the Advisor of the Serb member of the BiH Presidency, **Slobodan Radulj**, as saying that the appointment of the Dutch lawyer, Von van den Bisen, as a deputy agent who represents BiH in a law-suit against the FRY before the International Court of Justice *"is nothing but another swindle of the Bosniak leadership."* The paper also quotes **Mirjana Micevska**, the CoM Spokesperson, as saying that neither the name of this lawyer nor hiring any international lawyers has ever been discussed at any CoM session. BiH Presidency requested that the CoM sets aside the money for the international lawyers from budgetary reserves of the BiH common institutions.

Social/Health Issues

Glas srpski (front page) quotes the RS Pension/Invalid Insurance Fund Director, **Ostoja Kremenovic**, as saying that the BiH Pension/Invalid Insurance Fund refused to accept the Agreement on joint rights and obligations for the implementation of pension/invalid insurance as a starting point for further negotiations. According to the paper, the main principle of the agreement is that pensioners get their pensions and invalid insurance in places where they earned them. The paper quotes Kremenovic as saying that the meeting, which was held in Sarajevo, concluded that governments of both entities discuss this issue. *"If we fail to reach an agreement by September 1st, then pensioners who earned their salaries in the BiH Federation will be removed from the RS Pension/Invalid Insurance Fund list"*, said Kremenovic.

RS Defense Minister resigns

Glas srpski (p.3) and **Nezavisne novine (p. 2)** report that at yesterday's session the RS Government appointed former Deputy Finance Minister, Simeun Vilendecic the new RS Finance Minister and accepted the resignation by the RS Defense Minister, Slobodan Bilic. Bilic is a former member of the RS Socialist Party who recently joined another party, the People's Socialist Party (NPS), and was subsequently asked to resign. (**Vecernje Novosti** p. 13, **Blic** p. 3, 11, **Nacional** p.8)

Adnan Kadric affair

Slobodna Bosna speculates that **Adnan Kadric**, who was suspected of planning an assassination of the COMSFOR, **John Sylvester**, came to Mostar to kill **Dinko Slezak**, a Mostar businessman. The weekly quotes several policeman who claim that Kadric was a professional assassin and if the police discovered the name of the person who ordered the assassination, it would be easier to determine who was the target.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- More than 3,000 Srebrenica survivors mark the seventh anniversary from the massacre of thousands of Bosniaks

by Bosnian Serb forces

- Federation TV protests against the RS Ministry of Interior decision not to allow live programming of Dileme show from Srebrenica
- BiH Presidency welcomes the appointment of three international judges to the BiH Constitutional Court

FTV

- More than 3,000 Srebrenica survivors mark the seventh anniversary from the massacre of thousands of Bosniaks by Bosnian Serb forces
- Journalist associations, FTV protests against the RS Ministry of Interior decision not to allow live programming of Dileme show from Srebrenica
- BiH Council of Ministers asks the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications to create a more precise report on the implementation of the CIPS project

RTRS

- Srebrenica anniversary
- Serbs to mark on Friday the tenth anniversary of death of Serbs from Podrinje, Bratunac and Srebrenica
- ICTY-related issues