

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 14/8/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Slobodna Bosna to sue the Head of the Islamic Community and Izetbegovic?

Dnevni Avaz: Beriz Belkic – America not pressing on BiH; Ministers Tuka and Jurkovic under investigation?; The Government negotiates with OHR – Federation looking for a solution for military apartments

Jutarnje Novine: Rasim Kadic, the LDS presidential candidate – This country need a president

Dnevni List: Slobodna Bosna Editorial Staff – Izetbegovic and Ceric lie

Vecernji List: Austrian Bank to buy Hercegovacka Bank

Glas Srpski: In Bosanski Petrovac and Sanski Most – Serbs are being beaten up, churches are being stoned

Nezavisne Novine: 6,000 refugees from FRY live in BiH – Romany do not want to return to Kosovo

Nacional: Kostunica dismisses his cabinet; Seselj: Slobodan supports me because I am a patriot and his daughter Marija is a member of my party

Euro Blic: Milosevic supports Seselj; Incidents in Bosanski Petrovac upset citizens; Bond: USA does not have favourites in the elections; Health workers wait for Ashdown's suggestions

All roads to and from eastern Bosnian town of Celebici reportedly blocked by SFOR – another search for Karadzic?

All roads to and from Celebici (eastern Bosnia) from the direction of Srbinje/Foca have been blocked since this morning, **SRNA's** correspondent from Srbinje reports on Wednesday. A long column of vehicles including 70 SFOR armed personal carriers and military equipment passed through Srbinje at 0700 this morning on the way to Celebici, a village east of

Srbinje on the border with Montenegro. The Srbinje Centre for Information confirmed to SRNA that Celebici was literally under siege of the armed soldiers and Sfor vehicles and the place is constantly overflowed by helicopters. The Centre for Information told SRNA at 1200 that SFOR had also blocked all roads from Celebici to the Montenegrin border. In the centre of Celebici, next to the church and the Sveti Sava primary school, SFOR soldiers are erecting barricades, and according to a salesperson from the Perucica butcher shop, metal spikes and razor wire have been put up at the crossroads leading to Jecmiste, Rijeka and Mestrevac.

The same source said that all vehicles are being searched and sent back. The local post office in Zavajt confirmed to SRNA that their postman Milivoje Zivanovic, living in Celebici, did not turn up for work this morning. Witnesses said that he was taken away by Sfor members in his red Golf car. "We cannot contact our employee Zivanovic because his mobile phone has been switched off," the director of the Srbinje post office, Miladin Pesic, told SRNA.

Dnevni List (page 9) reads that SFOR soldiers, accompanied with IPTF members, raided house of **Vaso Ilc** in Trebinje, who claims that the soldiers were looking for Radovan Karadzic. *"They have asked me where is weapon storage and where Radovan Karadzic sleeps"*, said Ilc and then responded that there are no weapons nor Karadzic sleeps in his house. Representatives of SFOR's Multi-National Division South-East stated that the action of searching house of Vaso Ilc and **Milenko Rogan** was done as a part of the "Harvest" operation.

The residents of the villages **Bobovo and Polje Crkvicko** have these days witnessed frequent flights of SFOR helicopters over both sides of the river Tara, in both BiH and FRY. The unauthorized flights of SFOR helicopters from BiH to the FRY have been registered in the region of the FRY Army's border watchtower "Hero Predrag-Pedja Leovac". The residents of these villages believe that the frequent violations of the FRY border are the result of the search for **Radovan Karadzic** and **Ratko Mladic**, the Belgrade daily **Politika** reports.

Slobodna Bosna to sue the Head of the BiH Islamic Community and Izetbegovic

*"The **Slobodna Bosna** magazine's Editorial Staff will sue the Head of the BiH Islamic Community, **Mustafa Cerić**, and the SDA Honorary President, **Alija Izetbegović**, over the statements and accusations they were making recently against the magazine and its Editor-in-Chief **Senad Avdić**,"* Slobodna Bosna said in a statement sent to the high international officials, ambassadors and media. The magazine's editors warn that Avdić and all the Slobodna Bosna employees have, following an article published in the last week's edition (on the alleged involvement of Cerić and Izetbegović in the illegal financial transactions during the war), become *"an object of media and political lynch not recorded in the recent BiH history."* (**Oslobodjenje**, front page, p 6, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 9, **Dnevni List**, front page, p 3)

The **Council of the Bosniak Intellectuals Congress** is embittered by a **Slobodna Bosna** article on the Head of the BiH Islamic Community, **Mustafa Cerić**, and his assessment of certain court trials as injustice towards the Bosniak people. *"Cerić has actually in a fair and responsible way warned the public on the injustices being done to the Bosniak people through fabricated judicial proceedings,"* the Council said in a press release (**Oslobodjenje**, p 6, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 5, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 2, announced on the front page)

Belkic says America does not press on BiH

Nezavisne Novine (p 6) quotes the **BiH Presidency Chairman, Beriz Belkic**, as saying that the BiH Presidency has not been so far addressed by Washington regarding the bilateral agreement on non-extradition of US citizens to the ICC. Belkic says that BiH authorities are aware of the importance of the US' assistance to BiH, but that BiH has also to respect views of the EU. *"We understand that the US has its view on the ICC, but I think that BiH is the last country, which should give up on the ICC",* said Belkic. In an interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (front page, p 5), Belkic said that *"it seems there are people in this country who are disappointed with a fact the US bypassed BiH when it comes to its position on the ICC."* **Vecernji List** also carried Belkic's statement.

Vecernji List (page 3) and **Vjesnik** (page 10) carry articles that deal with politically difficult position of Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to request of US Government that is asking BiH officials to sign bilateral agreement that is guaranteeing immunity for American soldiers who would be involved in peace

operations on their territory before the International Criminal Court in The Hague. In case that BiH does not sign, say the dailies, BiH will not receive any help in military field from USA, and it is almost certain that American administration will block integration of BiH to "Partnership for Peace" program. On the other side, recommendations of European Union say that EU members are supporting work of ICC and other countries, including BiH, should not make any hasty moves.

Bridge over Una in Kostajnica to be opened for traffic on August 26

The construction works on the plateau where a border crossing between BiH and Croatia in Kostajnica will be built, have started after Monday's misunderstanding regarding the start of the works had been overcome. *"It is to be expected that the works will be completed and that – in line with requests by the UN mission in BiH, the OHR and the international community, including the European Commission which donated money for the construction of a bridge over the Una – the bridge will be opened for traffic on 26 August and thus the border crossing of a temporary importance for traffic on the joint location,"* a member of the BiH state commission for borders and one of the three cochairmen of the group of experts for border crossings and border traffic and the deputy director of the BiH State Border Service, **Tomislav Mihalj**, who visited Kostajnica on Tuesday. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Oslobodjenje**, p 5, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 5)

Federation financial affairs

The Federation Trade Minister, **Andrija Jurkovic**, and the Deputy Minister of Labor, Social Welfare and Refugees, **Mijat Tuka**, will come under an investigation of the Anti-Corruption team, **Dnevni Avaz** (p 3, announced on the front page) learned from reliable sources, who spoke under term of anonymity. The reasons for the investigation are alleged irregularities related to the purchase of the construction material for the reconstruction of houses and operations of the Capljina-based Trgoproduct Company, which is co-owned by Jurkovic.

Vecernji List (page 3, by Zdenko Jurilj) speculates that one of four Austrian banks present in BiH, most likely "**Bank Austria**" will purchase "**Hercegovacka Banka**", if the conflict between HPT Mostar and Provisional Administration of Hercegovacka Banka is solved. According to the daily, "Bank Austria", as possible owner of Hercegovacka Banka, would bring

new strategic partner to Eronet, Austrian GSM operator "Mobilcom", which is interested to invest in Eronet. Johan Verheyden, spokesperson of Provisional Administration of the Hercegovacka Banka, stated that until process of revision of the Bank it is too early to talk about future strategic partner.

Dnevni List (page 5) carries interview, conducted by Vesna Leto, with **Franjo Franjic**, a candidate for position of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finances of Federation BiH in which he stated that he does not expect to be confirmed for the position in Government. *"By removing Nikola Grabovac the International Community took responsibility, i.e. they took that Ministry under their jurisdiction ... Why the International Community did not do anything to install new Minister, it is hard to know, you should ask them,"* Franjic said. On journalist's question about decision of Deputy Minister of Finances Sefika Hafizovic to cancel contracts with 10 Croat companies, Franjic said: *"It is not sure that those information are true. However, if media have published them and no one denied them, that means that they are true."*

Dnevni List (page 2, signed by Miroslav Vasilj) carries an editorial in which Vasilj criticizes the fact that Croats do not have TV in Croatian language. Vasilj also says that **Federation TV** offers Bosniak, Serbian or Bosniak-Serbian-Croatian languages, however, there is no Croatian language. The editorial says: *'However, neither Bosniaks, Serbs nor representatives of International Community are responsible for such situation as HDZ 'experts' for media tried to present until recently. These 'experts' received a few million marks in 1995 to organize TV in Croatian language in BiH, however, they spent that money for their business, villas, hotels etc.'*

BiH state officials-related news, statements

"Only a part of the BiH Council of Ministers headed by Treasury Minister

Ante Domazet forms the oil lobby. In the RS, such lobby is headed by the Ministry of Energy and Mining, which is supported by the Government. Due to the existence of the lobbies, the RS Budget suffered damage of approximately 100 million KM, and I believe the similar situation is in the Federation," the Chairman of the BiH House of Peoples, **Nikola Spiric**, told **Dnevni Avaz** (p 4).

With regard to the alleged assassination attempt on **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, the BiH Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Vjesnik** (page 10) carries that it has been speculated that Lagumdžija made angry radical, right-wing, nationalistic circles, especially among Bosniaks. Vjesnik says that allegedly staged political processes are being ascribed to the Alliance. The article says that **Bakir Alispahic**, a former Head of AID and a former Minister of Internal Affairs, as well as **Irfan Ljevakovic** and **Enver Mujezinovic**, who used to be high-ranked agents are in prison and there is also a process regarding smuggling of weapon to Kosovo and disputable extradition of 'Algerian group' to Americans.

Oslobodjenje (p 3, announced on the front page) also published a story on the issue written by Azhar Kalamujic. Kalamujic speculates whether Bakir Alispahic, owner of the Quatro Autocenter stands behind the alleged assassination attempt on Lagumdžija.

RS-related news, reactions

"The RS Trade Union of health workers has been waiting for 15 days for an answer from the OHR which will help them to solve their difficult material situation," **Milenko Granulic**, president of the Health workers Trade Union, said. He says that negotiations with the RS Government, Ministry of Health Care and Health Insurance Fund are very slow, so the Trade union is waiting for concrete guidelines from OHR in solving that problem. (**Blic** p 16)

The US ambassador to BiH, **Clifford Bond**, said that the US neither had favourites in the upcoming elections in October, nor it would try to prevent any particular party from coming to power. "It is up to the BiH citizens to vote and decide," Bond said. He added that the IC needs partners in BiH that will implement reforms. The ambassador said that the next four

years would be of crucial importance for BiH's road to Europe and that BiH should not let this opportunity slip away.

He called insincere the statements of the RS leaders that they do not know where **Radovan Karadzic** is hiding and reiterated that the IC will continue to emphasise the issue of his arrest until he is brought to the justice. (**Blic** p 3, **Vecernje Novosti** p 4)

Director of the RS PIO Fund, **Ostoja Kremenovic**, said he would have information on Wednesday why pensions had not been paid on 10th August in the whole RS as it had been planed. *"Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and I have talked today and it is not clear to us why the pensions have not been paid because the PIO provided money for the whole RS,"* Kremenovic said on Tuesday. He said they had asked Nova Banka and Srpske Poste for an answer, because one of them kept the money over the weekend. (**Blic** p 16)

Ostoja Kremenovic said that the decision on the payment of pensions via banks could in no way jeopardise neither the PIO Fund nor the business relations with the Serb Post Offices. He said that the project of the payment of pensions meant the right of pensioners to choose between a bank and the Post Office. The negotiations on the selection of banks, which are to be entrusted with this job, are still ongoing. The assets gained from the economy of this payment will be used to raise pensions. (**Nacional** p 11)

Party of Social-Democratic Centre thinks that the decision to pay pensions via banks is *"deeply unjust and created in bank circles that want to benefit from it"*. *"This shameful decision represents a manipulation with pensioners,"* **Ranko Bakic**, president of this party, said.

In its press release issued on Tuesday the **SNSD** says a unscrupulous group of banks' robbers is in the RS authority, which is confirmed by Monday's selling of Razvojna Banka that

was sold for 1,6 million KM, and only the premises of the bank are worth double of that price. The press release reads that the SNSD will annul all cases of such privatisation within an hour after the establishment of a new RS government. (**Blic** p 3, **Vecernje Novosti** p 13)

SRNA news agency quotes the RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**, as saying in Kalinovik last night that he will resign unless he gets support of voters on the upcoming October elections. "If I do not get the support of voters to form the government (independently) as I wish, I will resign. So far I have been forced to make many compromises, which have been detrimental for both me and my party (PDP). I had to do that for the sake of having a peace in the house", said Ivanic, and added that he will not form coalitions with any party nor make any compromise.

Refugees, property-related issues, attacks on returnees

The BiH **Association of Refugees** will request the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, to declare invalid an order on the free-of-charge land allocation made by the RS Government in April 1999. *"While making decisions on the allocation of land plots to the Serbs from federation, the RS authorities are using this regulation. On such grounds, only in the eastern Bosnia, thousands of plots have been allocated, some of which are on a private Bosniak land,"* the Association President, **Mirhunisa Zukic**, told Dnevni Avaz (p 12)

Glas Srpski reports on its **front page** that in the past five days Serb refugees to Bosanski Petrovac have been attacked three times and that someone threw stones at the orthodox church in Sanski Most, the only one that has not been damaged or destroyed after 1995. The first incident occurred in the night between Saturday and Sunday in Bosanski Petrovac when a group of Bosniaks, led by a man called Marizela attacked three Serb returnees. The second incident occurred on Sunday when Bosniaks demolished a coffee bar, owned by the man who was attacked the night before. The latest incident occurred yesterday, when a group of Bosniaks attacked a man who works

as a waiter in a coffee bar owned by a Serb returnee. The paper also reports that on Sunday morning someone threw stones at the Serb orthodox church in Sanski Most and that five windows on the church have been broken..

Nezavisne Novine covered the issue in a more realistic and objective way, describing the incident as a conflict between drunk people and not as an ethnically-motivated conflict.

However, **Vecernje Novosti**, p 13, **Blic**, p 17, report that some 4,000 Serb returnees to Bosanski Petrovac are upset about incidents that have occurred in this town.

Nezavisne Novine quotes (p 6) the **Attorney for the BiH Federation Defense Ministry, Nura Zimic**, as saying that despite the fact that the BiH Federation had the obligation to implement the BiH Human Rights Chamber decision on reinstatement of 5 military apartments to their pre-war occupants until June 7th, the Federation did not implement the decision because the housing laws have not been harmonized with the Chamber's decision. *"One of the obligation that the BiH Federation had was to have the housing laws harmonized with the Chamber decision. Right after the Human Rights Chamber made the decision, the BiH Federation Defense Ministry started working on harmonization of Article 3 of the Law on Cessation on Application of the Law on Abandoned Property. However, the OHR's pace of work was not the same as ours so that the Federation Government decided to form an expert group, which drafted a working material, changed disputed provision and forwarded it to the OHR. However, so far we have not received any response from them"*, said Zimic. **Dnevni Avaz**, p 10, also carries Zimic's statement.

Belgrade Politika on latest Ashdown's decisions: BiH Challenges – Long list of problems

A Belgrade-based daily newspaper **Politika** carries an article by its Banja Luka correspondent (Milan Kapor) in which he comments on the two latest

moves made by the High Representative for BiH, **Paddy Ashdown** (double taxation and establishment of the high judicial and prosecutorial councils at the entity and state level). The author stresses the High Representative's priorities – the judiciary reform and fight against corruption – and steps that the HR is going to make in order to make BiH become a country with the rule of law. The author says that Ashdown rightly does not trust the local BiH politicians because they are focused on their personal interests. *"That is why he had to appoint foreign judges in all three high judicial and prosecutorial councils"*, said the author. *"The list of problems and issues that the High Representative will have to solve is very long and Ashdown certainly will not have enough time to have everything sorted out. But regardless, the High Representative's reform could soon affect the massive state administration. BiH is a country with less than 4 million people, which has 13 governments (at the state, entity and cantonal levels) – which is something that even rich countries cannot afford,"* he added.

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Tuesday, 1900)

- BiH in delicate situation since U.S. government launched negotiations for exclusion of U.S. citizens from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.
- IPTF Commissioner Sven Frederiksen de-authorized two police officers, Mladenko Kordic and Marko Misic, banning them to conduct no police duties in the future

FTV 1 (1930)

- BiH between U.S. requests and EU view regarding exclusion of U.S. citizens from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.
- Support of U.S. and EU equally important for BiH, said Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Milovan Blagojevic
- Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica has come out against a U.S. request for a bilateral deal to prevent American citizens from being turned over to ICC

RTRS (1930)

- U.S. launched campaign aimed at obliging of all countries that they would not extradite U.S. citizens. Only Romania and Israel signed the agreement so far

(1.30)

- Belkic said that BiH was not asked to sign such agreement. (1.0)
- Switzerland on Tuesday also thwarted U.S. efforts to win immunity for its citizens