

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 16/10/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: RS does not want Court of BiH to be placed in Sarajevo Ramiz Salcin military barracks; A scandal at the session of the SDP Presidency – Nijaz Durakovic's "state coup" on waiting

Dnevni Avaz: A drama in the SDP Headquarters – Lagumdžija escaped from Durakovic

Dnevni List: Brcko District endangers economic position of BiH Federation

Vecernji List: Battle against election engineering

Slobodna Dalmacija: International and domestic political combinations block forming of new authority: New elections threaten?

Glas Srpski: Eviction of Slavko Ivanovic from Brcko – Rainy days for "white cane"; Banja Luka – They clean what they pollute

Nezavisne Novine: BiH marks white cane day – State forgets blind people; Paddy Ashdown – No dismissals without OHR; Durakovic interrupts session of SDP BiH leadership

Vecernje Novosti: Djindjic: I wish that Kostunica won; DSS: President is elected

FRY Nacional: DSS organises demonstrations?; Behind G17 are ambitious politicians; Jovic: Mesic makes up stories about a Great Serbia

Blic: Zarko Pandurevic arrested in Sarajevo; SFOR: We have not sized anything from "Orao"; Old passports valid until 28 November; Beecroft: New curriculum; Sarovic: No haggling about equality

Council of Ministers reconsiders Court of BiH residence

The BiH Council of Ministers has no proof that the Ramiz Salcin military barracks (former "Viktor Bubanj") in Sarajevo had used to be a detention camp for Sarajevo Serbs. However, the Council has asked the OHR and other international and

entity institutions to ascertain whether human rights had been violated in the barracks during the war in BiH. Taking into consideration public complaints from the RS to a decision on placing the Court of BiH in the barracks, the Council decided at a session in Sarajevo on Tuesday that the final decision about the use of the barracks would be made after the relevant authorities supply the requested information on what had taken place here between 1992 and 1995. BiH Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications **Svetozar Mihajlovic** told a news conference following the session that the decision to relocate the court into the building of the contested barracks was made at the OHR's proposal but he did not say precisely what the OHR based this proposal on. If it is determined that the barracks had been used as a detention centre for Serbs, Mihajlovic added, the Council of Ministers would have the authority only to revoke the decision about the Court's residence. *"Possible human rights violations will be established by institutions which deal with war crimes,"* Mihajlovic said, saying he was surprised that the issue had not been investigated much earlier if the accusations from the RS that the barracks used to be a concentration camp for Serbs from Sarajevo were true. He also said that the Council of Ministers condemned a media outburst by Speaker of the BiH House of Peoples **Nikola Spiric** in which he had accused the council, and especially its members representing the RS, of making, as he said, such a shameful decision. The Council of Ministers is awaiting the High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** to voice his opinion on the issue soon. (**Oslobodjenje**, front page, pages 4-5, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 8, **Dnevni List**, p 5, **Glas Srpski**, p 3, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 5, **Blic**, p 2)

With regard to claims about alleged human rights abuses in the Ramiz Salcin (former Viktor Bubanj) military barracks during the war, **Oslobodjenje** (pages 4-5) carries statements by Senad Kreho, the president of the Military Court placed in the barracks during the war together with the military prison, and Vladimir Spoljaric, a judge in the Court, who both denied there had been any human rights abuses in the prison. However, Nedeljko Mitrovic, the President of the RS Commission for Missing Persons, said that, although there were evidence of torture against Serbs in the Viktor Bubanj prison, some one

else should speak about this political issue and not a humanitarian worker like him.

"And what is all this about? Whether Spiric really cares about the truth? Or he maybe cares about that BiH never gets the Court? The talk on the camps always counts. It is just bad that those always speak about the camps and torture who should shame on them and keep silent," Oslobodjenje Editor-in-Chief Senka Kurtovic wrote in the In Focus editorial.

The High Representative's activities, related news

"The civil servants must serve citizens and not political parties," the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, told a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday, while speaking about the appointments of new officers in the public institutions. Ahead of the meeting with the leaders of the strongest political parties in BiH (according to the election results), he emphasized that the OHR would be monitoring the appointments in order that the current servants are not removed just because of their political unsuitability. (Oslobodjenje, p 6, Dnevni Avaz, p 3, mentioned on the front page, Dnevni List, p 3, Nezavisne Novine, front page, p 3)

"The outgoing BiH Federation Government will honor the instruction by the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and it will not make any appointment until the official end of its mandate, neither it will make any major financial decisions that might burden the next government," Ismet Trumic, the Government's Secretary, told Oslobodjenje (p 3).

Oslobodjenje reports (p 4) that the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, informally met on Monday in Sarajevo (in the SDA premises) with the Honorary SDA President, Alija Izetbegovic. The newspaper unofficially learned that the two politicians had discussed the implementation of the election results and that Ashdown had allegedly wanted to hear Izetbegovic's opinion about the current political situation in the country. However, Oslobodjenje concludes (Azhar Kalamujic) that since

the meeting had been described as a private one and since there had been no other OHR and SDA officials presented, it was certain that no serious talks on the possible post-election coalitions had taken place on the occasion (in terms of reaching any concrete deals).

Dnevni List (page 4) reads that the London-based BiH World Diaspora Association addressed a letter to the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, in which it requests that Lord Ashdown intervenes on the issue of double citizenship so that BiH could sign bilateral agreements with countries that are inhabited by the BiH emigrant community without conditioning with previous agreements with the neighboring countries. The Association reminds the High Representative that five years after the Law on BiH citizenship has come into effect, the BiH State has not yet signed bilateral agreements with neighboring Croatia and FRY on double citizenship. *"This has been and still is, as it was explained to us, a precondition for signing of the same agreements with other countries in which BiH Diaspora is present. Thus, due to ignorance or obstruction in BiH on one side and the same conduct by the authorities of the neighboring countries, the numerous BiH Diaspora is left in the state of waiting for the solution of this crucial issue"*, was stated among other things in the letter. According to Association's estimation, should this status remain, BiH could soon lose 150.000 citizens. (**Glas Srpski**, p 2)

Nezavisne Novine quotes (p 3) RS President **Mirko Sarovic** as saying that the Serb representatives in BiH joint institutions, including the CoM, are interested in principles of rotation, consensus and equality and there is no bargaining about these issues. Commenting on the **High Representative's proposal on transformation of the CoM** into BiH government, Sarovic said that they could discuss all the other aspects of the CoM's work such as efficiency and functionality. *"It seems to me that Ashdown only mentioned the term government only in*

principle, because the CoM is defined by the DPA and that the RS NA has to agree with any change", said Sarovic. (Blic, p 2)

In a response to last week's commentary (by William Pfaff) in **The International Herald Tribune** suggesting that BiH should be carved up, High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** noted that such eccentric ideas are unacceptable for the International Community and dangerous for the Balkans. *"First, such a division would deliver a dishonorable victory to individuals indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia for 'crimes against humanity'. Second, it would lead to conflict. Third, it would immediately block the whole region's path to Europe. And fourth, it runs so counter to the facts in this country that I can only presume that Pfaff hasn't been here for some time,"* argues Ashdown, adding that any attempt to divide BiH along the ethnic lines would produce more bloodshed. *"Map drawing is easy and tempting. It costs lives. This region has seen much of it...Some 250,000 died the last time people tried to partition BiH. I hope we will not repeat that mistake."*

Dnevni List (page 4, by Dr. Kadrija Hodzic) carries an editorial saying that it is impossible that new authorities do 6 tasks that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, gave them. The author says that one of the reasons is a six-month deadline, which is too short. Also, according to the author, *'election campaigns of the parties did not contain consistent economic programs and it is hard to gather economic experts in such a short period of time.'* The author wonders *'whether future BiH authorities are capable to do 'technical details' when they cannot strategically agree upon anything even now: free and unique economic space does not have a chance as long as the entities exist.'* The editorial concludes: *'Ashdown is right, things cannot go this way any longer.'*

Post-election news/statement/commentaries

Nijaz Durakovic, a member of the BiH SDP Presidency who led

the list of the Party for BiH in this year's parliamentary elections, suddenly appeared at a session of the SDP Presidency in Sarajevo on Tuesday. Asked by astonished SDP leader Zlatko Lagumdžija what he was doing at the session, Durakovic replied he had been elected by the Party Congress, which was accordingly the only body having the authority to remove him. The session was after this unpleasant Lagumdžija/Durakovic dialogue interrupted. Durakovic is expected to attend the session of the SDP Main Board scheduled on Saturday and explain, as he said to the press, why he believed Lagumdžija should leave the top position in the party. (Oslobodjenje, front page, p 3, Dnevni Avaz, front page, p 4)

"If the election results are not honored and implemented, meaning if we are brought in a position in which the losers will be declared winners, that we will have at the scene mass protests of people, citizen's disobedience or citizen's disorder, depending on how one describes a manifestation of dissatisfaction of voters losing their trust in democratic principles and the point itself of the elections holding," the acting HDZ President, Barisa Colak, told Dnevni Avaz (p 2).

Vecernji List (front and page 2, by Zoran Kresic) reads/learns from a party source that *"election winners SDA and HDZ"* will probably meet sometime in the next few days, probably on Friday in Sarajevo, to discuss post-election issues such as organization of new authority and agree upon a common stance on electoral engineering of the BiH Election Commission regarding the compensation mandates. The daily reiterates the well known story about dissatisfaction of some parties with allocation of compensation mandates and goes on to say that independent legal experts are of opinion that the 3% threshold should be applied consistently for both direct and compensation mandates. VL says that the BiH Election Commission's interpretation (of the BiH Election Law) soothes the defeated political parties thus weakening the political scene with too many political parties on it. VL says that situation could cause an unstable authority that could not

implement reforms. However, VL says that there are signs that the BiH Election Commission could make a compromise that would satisfy the election winners, the situation in which the losing sides would get a few mandates in order to become a serious and constructive opposition.

Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 13, by Tomislav Zoric) reads under a title: *"International and domestic combinations are blocking formation of authority: Are we threatened by new elections!?"* that one cannot be 100% sure when talking about post-election coalitions due to the compensation mandates, however the daily says that when it comes to the Federation of BiH, it looks likely that HDZ and SDA will form a coalition. When it comes to the Federation, SD says that it is the House of Peoples which hold the key to the problem because the Bosniak and Croat caucuses will be dominated by SDA and HDZ respectively whilst it is expected that SDP will dominate the Serb caucus. *"Considering the complicated decision-making (process) by the chamber, only when it has been convened, one will know whether SDA and HDZ would be able to form a majority government at the Federation level without problems. There is a possibility of a long blockade of forming of a new authority. If the formation of authorities at State or Entity levels ends up in a stalemate, new elections, for the Federation of BiH only, cannot be ruled out, since the support to national parties in these elections in the RS is lesser than the support to the so-called moderate parties"*, says SD. The author goes on to say that unofficial information say that the US does not want to have SDA as the strongest BiH party because it would compromise a genuine BiH support to the Americans regarding the situation in Iraq. In that context, the author says that the American Ambassador to BiH, **Clifford Bond**, saved the President of SDP, **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, who almost had to withdraw from the post following the defeat in the elections. Allegedly, Bond needs a unified SP to implement American projections in BiH. Finally, a separate article reads that when it comes to the State level, SDA, HDZ and SDS do not

have a majority. In that context, the daily says that SNSD and PDP refuse to form a coalition with SDA and that the two parties could form a new Alliance at the State level. According to SD, the composition of the State Parliament could result in failure to form an authority for a long time.

Vecernji List (page 2, Dalibor Ravic) carries an editorial in which the author wonders *'whether the International Community wants stable Governments or Governments with minimal parliament majorities, that will not be able to rule (efficiently).'* The editorial says that *'if there is a sincere wish to implement reforms, than it is necessary to have stable Governments on the ground of parliament majorities.'* The editorial goes on to say that *'all efforts exerted against the BiH Election Commission so that the Election Commission creates some new Alliance, lead towards new instability and inefficiency of new-old authorities, and even to public protests of citizens.'* Ravic also says that *'the authorities, formed by the post-election engineering, would not be able to pass reform laws, and the reforms that **Paddy Ashdown**, the High Representative, would impose would not be successful'*. The editorial concludes: *'Therefore, if the IC wants that domestic authorities take over responsibility for the future of BiH then it will stop pressures exerted against the Election Commission and it will demand a consistent implementation of the Election Law because in this way it will contribute to the establishment of the stable Governments, that will be able to respond to all challenges. And if it wants to preserve non-proclaimed protectorate then it will create incapable and illegitimate authority.'*

Nezavisne Novine carries (p 2) an interview with **ICG Deputy Director, Michael Doyle**, in which he comments on election results and post-election deals. When asked whether he thinks that the RS will be deprived of any international assistance if only SDS forms a government, Doyle said that it is possible when the governments of UK and US are concerned. "However, I

do not think that the RS awaits the economic embargo if SDS enters the government. The status of RS depends on the RS' s cooperation with the ICTY, refugee return, human rights record, etc. When asked to comment on post-election deals, Doyle said that it is possible to form the government in RS without SDS, adding that the RS can expect bigger international assistance if the SDS is excluded from the government. Doyle also said that that it will be very difficult to form a coalition that will exclude the parties, which represent returnees to the RS and that it will also very difficult to form a government without the BiH Federation-based parties.

President of the RS Helsinki Committee for Human Rights **Branko Todorovic** on Tuesday called on all political parties in BiH to say publicly names of their members against whom criminal procedures have been launched because of misuse of office, organised crime or theft, in order to prevent their nomination for functions in the entities' parliaments or BiH parliament. *"If political parties refuse to do so, we think the High Representative should order them to do it,"* Todorovic said. (**Blic** p 7)

Property Laws implementation

"The Property Law Implementation Plan agencies, OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, CRPC and UNMIBH, wish to make it absolutely clear that obstruction of property law implementation by local officials will not be tolerated. The right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes is one of the cornerstones of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Implementing the property laws is not discretionary; the local authorities are obliged to carry out the law, and it makes no difference whether they are operating under a post-election technical mandate. Around 110,000 claimants all over Bosnia and Herzegovina are still denied their property rights, this is mainly because local authorities are enforcing the laws selectively and do not always provide enough alternative accommodation," OHR Spokesman **Kevin Sullivan** said at a press conference in

Sarajevo on Tuesday. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 8, **Dnevni List**, front and page 3, **Glas Srpski**, p 2, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 8)

The evictions of the temporary occupants of someone else's properties in the BiH Federation and Republika Srpska have to be carried out urgently regardless of whether the alternative accommodation for the evicted families is ensured, OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic and CRPC Spokesperson Vanesa Zecevic told Dnevni Avaz (p 11).

Glas Srpski quotes (p 2) **RS Assistant Refugee Minister Drago Vuleta** as saying that the plan for property law implementation, titled "New Strategic Direction", has come into force yesterday. *"The New Strategic Direction was adopted by the IC on September 12th this year. According to the Plan, all repossession claims will be resolved by the end of 2003 in accordance with a strictly defined chronological order. The Plan does not include claims exempted by the High Representative, which mostly pertain to multiple occupants, people living in collective centres and minority police officers who are waiting on their property to be repossessed. The Plan also requires the municipal, cantonal and entity authorities to provide more funds for alternative accommodation"*, said Vuleta.

Trials/police issues/war crimes

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Eldina Medunjanin) reads that **Alija Izetbegovic**, a former Chair of BiH Presidency, and **Rasim Delic**, a former commander of BiH Army, could become defence witnesses in the Pogorelica case that is being conducted before the Federation Supreme Court. The daily tried to get a confirmation of this from the Court and from SDA but without success. However, VL reads that **Bakir Alispahic**, one of the suspects in the case, was seen in company of **Bakir Izetbegovic**, Alija Izetbegovic's son, in the SDA election HQ on the night of October 5 where the two followed the outcome of the elections. VL goes on to say that Izetbegovic himself, being convinced in Alispahic's innocence, accepted to be summoned as a witness and promised that he would appear in the

court if summoned by the defence.

Dnevni List (page 5) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (back page) carry statement of UN Spokesperson **Kirsten Haupt**, who stated that, there are currently 120 police officers who are either illegal or double occupants or have not provided any documentation to clarify their housing situation. Haupt added that after checking diplomas of about 15,000 police officers, 173 were found to have fraudulent diplomas. There remains however a large number of diplomas where verification is required abroad as well as within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those within Bosnia and Herzegovina include cases where files were destroyed or went missing during the war.

Glas Srpski (p 5) and **Nezavisne Novine** (p 3) report that a returnee to Sarajevo, **Zarko Pandurevic**, was arrested in Sarajevo upon an order issued in April 2000 by the Canton Court in Sarajevo. Pandurevic is accused of war crimes committed against civilian population in Sarajevo. *Nezavisne Novine* quotes a judge with the Sarajevo Canton Court Ibrahim Hadzic as saying that the indictment against Pandurevic has been approved by the ICTY. *Glas Srpski* carries statements of Pandurevic's friends and family who were present when Pandurevic was arrested. The paper also carries a statement, issued by an NGO from Sarajevo "Democratic Initiative of Sarajevo Serbs", which states that the arrest of Pandurevic is really too much. *"Every younger Serb returnee gets arrested for some reason. It turns out that all the Serbs are guilty for something. Serbs were arrested in Sarajevo before and in those cases there was an approval of the ICTY. However, in many cases it turned out that these people are innocent and that those so-called "witnesses" could not even recognise them"*, reads the statement. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 6, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 26, **Blic**, p 16)

Glas Srpski reports (p 2) that the **ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte**, on Tuesday requested that the EU countries apply pressure on the FRY to arrest former RS Army Chief of

Staff, Ratko Mladic, claiming that Mladic is being hiding in Serbia and is under protection of the FRY Army. *"We know exactly where he is, but there is no political will on the part of the FRY authorities to arrest him"*, said Del Ponte. She said that she does not understand what the problem is regarding the Mladic's arrest, because the FRY authorities extradited Milosveic without any problems.

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Tuesday, 1900)

- War crimes suspect Zarko Pandurevic has been arrested
- Iraqis went out for referendum
- As of now, public functions will be performed by qualified ones only
- 15th October, International Day of Blind Persons

FTV 1 (1930)

- Several wagons burned in the arson at the Sarajevo train station
- Council of Ministers demands international and domestic institutions plea regarding alleged human rights violations in the former Viktor Bubanj military barracks
- High Representative announced strong control of the appointments in the state and public services
- Rare and modest celebrations in BiH, without concrete aid to blind persons

RTRS (1930)

- OHR to monitor appointments on the state and public functions
- Political parties use opportunity to bring compensatory mandates in relation to alleged "election engineering"
- Head of OSCE Mission to BiH Robert Becroft met President and Vice-President of RS Mirko Sarovic and Dragan Cavic
- Arrested Zarko Pandurevic is suspected for war crimes over civilians in Sarajevo's settlement Grbavica in 1992 and 1993