OHR BiH Media Round-up, 24/12/2005

RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	**TV PINK** (18,00 hrs)	**BHT 1** (19,00 hrs)
Rycroft on SAA (DA interview)	Rycroft on SAA negotiations	Increased salaries for RSNA reps.
Brkic replies to Musa	Round table in RS	Impact of VAT on hospitals
RS Government in session	Kebo meets UNHCR, OSCE, EC rep.	Stankovic refused to plea
Helsinki Commit. on RS Gov't session	BL Faculty of Agriculture's problems	Trial of "Scorpions" continues
NTV Hayat (19,00 hrs)	**FTV** (19,30 hrs)	**RTRS** (19,30 hrs)
Stankovic rejects to enter a plea	Money falsification case in B. Krupa	RS Gov't crisis update
Vukov enters a plea of not guilty	Update on privatisation of "Magros"	RS Pensioners Party on budget
Karadzic,Mladic supporters identified	Impact of VAT on hospitals	Issue of retirees
Rycroft on SAA negotiations	Croatia's funds for HVO veterans	Helsinki Commit. on RS Gov't

Oslobodjenje	The problem is I am tried and protected by criminals (Stankovic trial)
Dnevni Avaz	Criminal delivered threats to prosecutors

Dnevni List	Five million euros to families of killed HVO soldiers
Vecernji List	They are trying us although we are victims (Christmas interview with Bishop Sudar)
Nezavisne Novine	Stankovic: Indictment produced by AID (Bosniak intelligence service)
Glas Srpske	One roof – hundred souls (feature story on refugees)

	War Crimes

Serb war crimes suspect Stankovic defies BiH Court	**RHB, Pink, BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni Avaz** cover page, pg 2 'Criminal delivered threats to prosecutors', **Oslobodjenje** cover page, pg 2 'The problem is I am tried and protected by criminals', **Nezavisne Novine** cover page, pg 6 'Stankovic: Indictment produced by AID' – **Radovan Stankovic**, accused of war crimes in the Foca area in 1992, has refused to enter his plea before the BiH Court in Sarajevo on Friday, which has prompted judge **Dragomir Vukoje** to note in accordance with the law that the defendant has pleaded not guilty. Stankovic, who stands accused of crimes against humanity and violations of the laws and customs of war, has said that he also refused to declare himself on the same false and trumped up charges before the NATO tribunal. The bill of indictment includes enslavement, rape and violation of the dignity of the victims. Stankovic's case is the first instance in which a trial has been handed over to the BiH Prosecution, which has adapted the Hague bill of indictment to local laws.

RS Gov't to ensure financial aid to the ICTY indictees, their families	**RHB, Dnevni Avaz** pg 2 'Victims forced to pay executors' – At the session in Banja Luka, RS Government has adopted the proposal to financially aid the war crime indictees that have surrendered to ICTY as well as to the indictees that have been arrested. In this way RS Government wanted to ensure that all indictees are equal. According to DA, the decision is discriminatory towards Bosniaks and Croats in the entity.

RS Helsinki Committee criticizes Government's decision to provide assistance to indicted and convicted war criminals	**RHB, BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, Oslobodjenje** pg 2 'RS authorities did not distance from committed crimes', **Dnevni Avaz** pg 3 'By this shameless decision RS Government confirmed it was persistent in supporting crimes', **FENA** – The RS Helsinki Board for Human Rights on Friday condemned in the strongest possible terms the *"irrational decision of the RS Government to award assistance to persons indicted and convicted for the most serious war crimes". "This shameless decision confirms doubts that the RS Government, behind the alleged humanitarian assistance for indicted war criminals and their families, continues to support and justify crimes that have disgusted the entire civilised world"*, the RS Helsinki Board for Human Rights stated. The Board further states that this confirms that the RS authorities have not distanced themselves from the policy that led to mass and brutal violations of human rights, nor are they ready for the process of facing the truth, building trust and reconciliation in BiH. *"Instead of showing solidarity towards the families of victims, the RS Government sends a clear message to the domestic and international public on remaining committed to supporting war crimes"*, the RS Helsinki Board for Human Rights stated.

SCG Defence Minister Stankovic says he does not know who support Karadzic, Mladic	**RTRS** Draga Gribic – SiCG Minister of Defence **Zoran Stankovic** stated that he had no information on who was supporting **Ratko Mladic** and **Radovan Karadzic.** He expected war crimes Prosecutor **Vladimir Vukicevic** to give detail regarding statements that persons supporting Karadzic and Mladic were identified. Stankovic also said that documents, which might be interesting to the ICTY, had not been properly archived. Serbia-Montenegro Minister of Justice **Zoran Stojkovic** said that speculations regarding dates when Karadzic and Mladic were to be arrested presented another problem. **Oslobodjenje** cover page, pg 3 'President Tadic in hunt on fugitives as well' also covered the issue.

	Political Developments/Reforms

RS Government adopted new draft 2006 Budget; salaries of RS NA members increased	**BHT** Boris Gagic – RS Government adopted the new Proposal on 2006 Budget in urgent procedure. The amount of this Proposal is 1.059.300.000 KM, the same as the previous proposal which was rejected by RS National Assembly. As RS Minister of Finance **Svetlana Cenic** explained this Proposal is different because of the internal changes of distribution of money. IN that way, the grand for salaries of RSNA representatives is 900.000 KM higher than originally planned. Also, grant for political parties is 200.000 KM higher than in original proposal. Cenic explained that the Government has made a new Proposal in accordance with the requests of the RS NA. **Dusan Stojicic**, President of the RSNA stated that the minor changes of the budget structure are not so important, adding that the 2006 Budget must be adopted. **Igor Radojcic** from SNSD stated that, if the Government is trying to buy the support of RSNA, this tactic is not going to work with SNSD. SDA's **Tarik Sadovic** said that the budget is 9% higher than last year, and therefore there is no reason why the grant for RSNA members and political parties shouldn't be increased too. The grant for salaries of Banja Luka Mayor and President of Banja Luka City Council. Reporter ironically commented that unlike pensioners, the RS NA members didn't have to protest in the streets in order to get a pay raise. He also commented that despite of this decision in favour of RS NA members, RS Government still doesn't have the support of RS NA majority.

Cavic doesn't expect budget to be adopted	**RTRS** By Nada Arlov – Reporter stated that only 42 votes are needed for approval of budget for 2006 but it is hard to expect to get those votes due to difficult situation in the Government. Reporter stated that id budget is adopted the government remains in their seats if not than Government will be dismissed. RS President **Dragan Cavic** stated that he doesn't see the outcome of the situation and that he doesn't expect the approval of the proposal. Cavic also doubts the possibility of approving the situation of temporary financing if the budget is not approved. Regarding the issue of dismissing the Government, Cavic stated that he will not dismiss the Government but he expects that PDP, being that they should behave "*as men*" does that job. RS Prime Minister **Pero Bukejlovic**, on the other hand, promised better salaries to teachers and pensions to retirees. "*I don't see why it shouldn't be adopted. Budget should not be tied for the political situation because citizens will be directly hit if not adopted*" said Bukejlovic. Reporter added that new budget proposal plans 1 million Km for financing the return process. SDA member in RS NA **Tarik Sadovic** stated that RS Government seeks out for SDA support now when they have lost support of PDP. "*That's really naive and we won't fall on it*" added Sadovic. Reporter claims that certain delegates signed the petition for removing the Government if SNSD gets the votes needed for voting on no trust to Government. RS NA Speaker **Dusan Stojicic** stated that it wouldn't be so bad id current Government is dismissed. "*But the real question is forming the new Government*" added Stojicic. Voting on budget is scheduled for Wednesday. **Nezavsine Novine** pg 3 '48 deputies for removal of the Government' – According to the daily the majority of deputies to RSNA will not support the 2006 Budget and will vote for removal of the RS Government.

RSNA Speaker Stojicic says he has not received any official initiative for removal of the Government	**Oslobodjenje** pg 4 'I have not received initiative for removal of RS Government', **FENA** – The RS National Assembly Speaker, **Dusan Stojicic**, confirmed on Friday that he has not yet received an official initiative for removing the RS Government from the Alliance of Independent Social-Democrats (SNSD) Caucus. *"These are nothing but speculations to me, until I have officially received an initiative from a caucus or in some other way, which would then be forwarded to the RS President and Prime Minister",* said Stojicic. In this case, the National Assembly would have to consider this matter in the period of 10 days. *"It is important to adopt the RS Budget and to prevent the budget from being a subject of political calculations for bringing down the Government",* said Stojicic. *"Perhaps it would not be a problem to launch a vote of confidence to the government, but this opens the matter of forming the new government and this is a challenge that requires great energy and time",* said Stojicic. He said that the matter of adopting the RS budget is important because of the fact that VAT would be introduced on January 1, and that without the budget, there will be no social programme and that the failure to pass the budget would be a poor message from RS in the moment when BiH is launching the negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement. The Entity Parliament Speaker said that the RS proposal budget is part of the budgetary network harmonized by the FBiH Fiscal Council and that another government could not be able to propose a different budget.

SDP; SDA, SNSD, PDP, Party for BiH sign initiative on dismissal of the RS Govt	**Hayat** – BiH SDP representative **Slobodan Popovic** confirmed that he had signed initiative on dismissal of the RS Government. Popovic says that he has no idea why SNSD stopped its activities in terms of the initiative. He added that all SDP and NHI representatives signed the initiative and said that they were not going to support proposal on budget for 2006. The Chair of SDA Caucus in the RS National Assembly **Tarik Sadovic** said that SDA had signed the initiative. SDA has not been supporting the Government from the beginning since it declared as the Government with Serbs as majority. Sadovic added that besides SDA, the initiative was signed by SNSD, Party for BiH and PDP. SNSD representative in the RS Assembly, **Igor Radojicic** said that no initiative in written form whatsoever had been issued.
Round table entitled 'BiH and RS on the EU integration path' held in BL	**Pink** Dragica Tojagic – On Friday, the RS National Assembly, RS NA European Integration Board, International Relations Centre and Fridrich-Hebert Foundation organized round table entitled 'BiH and RS on the EU integration path', in Banja Luka. The RS National Assembly Speaker **Dusan Stojicic** said that such dialogues were necessary in order for BiH Public to be introduced to the issue. Stojicic said that he hoped that consensus would be reached by BiH politicians. "*We have reached consensus in terms of several extremely important issues, such as defence reform, police reform*", said Stojicic. Participants of the round table agreed that some kind of a board should be established consisted out of parliamentarians from all parts of BiH. "*We have to do this due to the fact that state and entity Parliaments will have to ratify certain agreements*", said the Chair of the RS NA European Integration Board **Vitomir Tomic**. The Chief BiH Negotiator in Stabilization and Association Agreement talks **Igor Davidovic** did not attend the round table but earlier on he said that the first round of talks should be held in period of January 15-20, 2006.

NN interview with Sulejman Tihic: Abolishment of Entities not subject to discussion at the moment	**Nezavsine Novine** pg 4 'Abolishment of Entities not subject to discussion' – In an interview for the daily, Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency and SDA leader Sulejman Tihic said that the abolishment of the entities was not being discussed in this phase of talks on constitutional reform. Tihic reiterated SDA positions on the issue including the proposal for BiH having a President and not thee-memebr Presidency.

	Economic/Social Issues

Croatia, BiH sign accord on war victims' rights	**Pink, BHT, FTV, Oslobodjenje** pg 2 'Taking care of families of HVO members', **Dnevni List** cover page, pg 3 'Five million euros to families of killed HVO soldiers', **Vecernji List** pg 3, mentioned on cover '40 million kunas to HVO members' – Croatian Deputy Prime Minister **Jadranka Kosor** and her Bosnian counterpart **Barisa Colak** signed in Zagreb on Friday an agreement regulating the rights of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) members – victims of the war and their families in BiH. The signing ceremony was also attended by Croatian Prime Minister **Ivo Sanader**, who said that the Croatian government had the obligation to help and care for the Croats in BiH. Deputy PM Kosor said the agreement would be implemented in three stages over the next three years. Next year, 40m kuna will be allocated to some 800 families of HVO soldiers who were killed, went missing or were imprisoned during the war, Kosor said, adding that the rights of disabled HVO members would be regulated in 2007 and 2008. The two countries' parliaments are expected to ratify the agreement, Kosor said, adding that she expected the Croatian parliament to discuss and endorse the agreement at its first session after the winter recess. The agreement regulates status issues and disability and family pension allowances for disabled war veterans, members of the HVO, and the families of HVO members who were killed, went missing or were imprisoned during the war. As of next year the BiH government will drastically restrict those rights and the Croatian government has decided to pay the difference in their pensions so that they could be in line with Croatia's law regulating the rights of Homeland War veterans and their families. BiH's Deputy PM Colak thanked the Croatian government for their help and cooperation, and invited Kosor to visit BiH, which she accepted.

Croatia could not accept any changes in agreement on property-legal relations with BiH, says Sanader	**Hayat, Dnevni Avaz** pg 8 'Issue of real-estates in Cavlat should not be discussed at the state level' – Croatian Prime Minister **Ivo Sanader** said for SRNA that Croatia could not accept changes in agreement on property-legal relations with BiH. While commenting the recent BiH Council of Ministers Chair **Adnan Terzic's** letter, in which it asked the Croatian Government not to allow purchase of several BiH's properties in Cavtat, Sanader said that the issue should be discussed al lower levels of authority.