

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 26/8/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Prijedor Municipality financed an apartment for an indicted war criminal – Momor Stakic; Jumps from the Mostar bridge

Dnevni Avaz: New responsibilities of the Federation Tax Administration – Inspectors to from now on search apartments; Jumps from the Mostar bridge

Jutarnje Novine: Ravnogorski Chetnik Movement providing shelter to Karadzic

Nezavisne Novine: Jumps from the Old Bridge in Mostar; Dragan Cavic: Privatization of some banks in the RS to be annulled

Glas Srpski: London: Sloba is a hero; RS budget: Courts spending funds in advance

Blic: Mladen Ivanic: “Improvement in payments of pensions from October 1st”; Deficit is 113 million KM;

Vecernji List: We are consuming food which expired years ago; Jumps from the Mostar bridge

Dnevni List: Mostar bridge jumps

Ljiljan: SFOR new about Mostar weapons cache in 1997

Affairs

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that the Prijedor Municipality recently financed the purchase or the reconstruction of a number of apartments in this town which were later given to former and present municipal officials. According to the daily, one of the beneficiaries is the indicted war criminal currently in The Hague, **Momir Stakic**, and his wife.

Dnevni List's (front and page 5) Ilija Sagolj accuses the Party for BiH (SBiH) of dubious privatization games in Jablanica, “Granit” Company in particular. Sagolj argues that

parallelism, despite the IC's efforts to abolish it, is still well and alive in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. *"When it comes to the privatization of public companies, the HDZ, the SDA and the SBiH still stick together."*

Nezavisne novine (p. 3) reports on irregularities in the privatization of Razvojna banka, Banjalucka banka, Kristal banka and some other banks in the RS. According to the daily, the RS Government i.e., the former RS Finance Minister, Milenko Vracar, first wrote off the debts to these banks so that the potential buyers are no longer obliged to pay debts once the banks are privatized. (FRY **Nacional** and **Blic**)

Nezavisne novine also reports **(p. 3)** on the RS Supreme Auditor's annual audit report, which states that the consolidated financial report at the RS budget level was not carried out in accordance with the RS Law on Budget, but on the basis of evidence stated in the main book on the budget, which does not satisfy the principle of accuracy. The annual audit report also shows that the budget income and expenditures have not been presented accurately. (also FRY **Nacional** and **Blic**)

In an interview with **Nezavisne novine (f.p., p. 5)**, the RS Vice-president and SDS's candidate for RS president, Dragan Cavic commented on the RS Supreme Auditor's annual audit report and the bank privatization process in the RS. Cavic said that first he heard about the report from Nezavisne novine and it seems to him that the most interesting part of the report is the one dealing with the RS Finance Ministry. When asked to comment on the debt write off before the privatization of some banks in the RS was carried out (Note: That story appeared in the weekend edition of Nezavisne novine. Please see yesterday's RS press preview.) Cavic said that the RS Supreme Auditor obviously thinks that the bank privatization process was not carried out in accordance with the law. *"If the process was not carried out with the law, then I see no reason for anyone to be relieved of*

responsibility. In the final procedure it will be established whether there have been any irregularities in the privatization process and that is why the whole privatization or some parts of that process have to be suspended or annulled", said Cavic.

Ljiljan (pages 21 and 22, by Enes Ratkusic) carries an article in which the weekly defends the former Federation Deputy Minister of Defence, **Hasan Cengic**, who is said to be connected with illegal storing of the weapons cache in Mostar. Ljiljan claims that some three thousand shells were transported from Mostar to Vogosca (escorted by SFOR) in 1997 (eight months after Cengic was removed) and that official documents in the Federation Ministry of Defence show that 9.000 "spectacularly found" shells were left back in Mostar.

Other Federation-related News

Dnevni Avaz (front page) reports that the new **Law on Tax Administration** in the Federation will assign new authorities to this institution, whose inspectors will, in the future, be allowed to enter and search apartments of those suspected of tax evasion. **Midhat Arifovic**, the Director of the TA, said that the new regulations are restrictive only for those who fail to pay taxes, while they are "very stimulate" for the timely payers.

International Community/ BiH Foreign Relations

Dnevni Avaz (p. 2) reports that the BiH will have to make a decision as to the signing of a bilateral agreement with the US over the exemption of US personnel from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. In a statement for the daily, the chairman of the BiH Presidency, **Beriz Belkic**, said that the most important thing is that the US Administration has not set any deadline for the conclusion of this agreement, which gives BiH authorities enough time to consider all factors involved. "We will try to find the best possible solution for BiH and wait for the EU to issue its opinion on this. It is important that the US did not set any deadline, which gives us enough time to make the best possible decision

for all of us.”

State-level developments

Vecernji List (page 2, by E. Medunjanin) reports that the name ‘Bosnia and Herzegovina’ will be protected by the special law. According to statements of the BiH Parliament leadership, the draft law should get a green light at the next session of the House of Peoples, which will force hundreds of institutions and associations to give up on the right to use this name. Apart from the institutions and legal entities established by the BiH Council of Ministers, BiH Parliamentary Assembly or the BiH Presidency, other institutions and associations will be able to use name BiH only if their statutes and inaugural documents contain a provision about their acting on the entire BiH territory. VL noted that *“it is interesting that politicians from the RS also supported adoption of this law.”*

Dnevni List (page 5) reports that according to the estimates by the Sector for Emigration of the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, between 1,2 and 1,5 million BiH pre-war citizens people have left the country in the last ten years. According to the data processed so far, most of the people who left BiH are in the age between 10 and 29.

Pre-election Campaign

According to an election poll conducted by Fibro Agency and published in **Vecernji List** (front and page 3), the best chances for winning the Craot seat in the BiH Presidency has the HDZ-CCD-HNZ candidate **Dragan Covic** (57%) of votes, while **Mijo Anic** of NHI (16%) and **Mladen Ivankovic Lijanovic** (9%) come second and third respectively. The same poll conducted in Sarajevo indicated that SDA’s **Sulejman Tihic** would win 37% of votes, and is closely followed by SBiH’s **Haris Silajdzic** (35%) and **Alija Behmen** of SDP (13%).

In his editorial, in **Dnevni List** (page 4), Ivica Glibusic says that within two months elections in Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and BiH will be held. *“International community, through lobbies, is trying to install its people, i.e. people who are capable of leading Southeast Europe to new future. (...) If trend of involvement of international representatives into*

election process continues, BiH will need long period of time before it creates its own economic, interior and foreign policy. The question raises, why do we need elections after all, if rights of voters, i.e. their opinions, would not be respected," the author wrote.