OHR BiH Media Round-up, 27/9/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Srebrenica women preparing 10,000 charges

Dnevni Avaz: Alija Izetbegovic – Police state stands no chance; Ashdown and Solana in Klas

Vecernji List: Milosevic trial – main culprit in criminal act

Dnevni List: Who is to blame for unpaid saleries to education workers?

Nezavisne Novine: Javier Solana's message to BiH citizens from Sarajevo: Through elections to Europe; The Hague Tribunal: beginning of the trial to Slobodan Milosevic for BiH and Croatia

Glas Srpski: Following the murder of Zeljko Markovic: The police is working in silence; Banja Luka: Tuzla leads to The Hague

Blic: Lagumdzija – Agreement on dual citizenship postponed

Solana visit/OHR activities

BiH Minister of Foreign Affairs **Zlatko Lagumdzija** and EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy **Javier Solana** on Thursday stressed the importance of the October 5 elections in BiH and BiH's integration in the European institutions. Lagumdzija, Solana and High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** met to discuss implementation of reforms defined at the last two meetings of the PIC Steering Board. *"These agreements can simply be put into two words – work and justice. What is obvious is that BiH has become a country that does not have to worry about some dilemmas that have come up lately. This will be a multi-ethnic, European, democratic country and it should turn towards work and justice,"* Lagumdzija told a news briefing after the meeting. *"It is time for BiH to move on a course that will lead the country to Europe. That course has been set. The speed of travelling will*

depend on us, citizens of this country who are the only ones entitled to elect their leaders. They will decide about this speed at the elections," Lagumdzija said. Solana said that the October election were very important and that a lot has been done in the past few years and BiH is getting closer to European institutions in accordance with the EU Road Map. *"I have been here many times now, but this time around, I am here because you are facing an important decision on October 5. My short message to the people in this country whom I consider as friends is: …turn out at the elections and give your vote to those who will continue with reforms."* (**Dnevni Avaz** front page "BIH lost 600 million KM due to corruption", **Nezavisne Novine** front page splash "To Europe via Elections", **Oslobodjenje** front page "Solana – EU will not abolish visas for BiH citizens", **Blic** front page "BiH – without interference from Belgrade and Zagreb", **Slobodna Dalmacija** last page "Solana: People who trust in reforms should be supported", **Vecernji List** p. 8 "Solana calls on citizens to vote: International community in pre-election campaign", **Dnevni List** front page "Meeting between Lagumdzija, Solana and Ashdown in Sarajevo: EUPM an additional encouragement to efforts in BiH", **Vjesnik** p. 2 "Solana calls on BiH citizens to vote", **Glas Srpski**, p.3 "Solana and Ashdown from Sarajevo: A vote for reforms". Leading item in **BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS, OBN, Hrvatski Radio Herceg-Bosna, Federation Radio, BiH Radio 1. AFP, Reuters** also reported on the visit)

In an interview with **BHTV 1, Javier Solana** said that the time when the destiny of BiH was tailored in Belgrade and Zagreb is over. *"BiH is a country with internationally recognized borederes and no one can create new ones, including Belgrade and Zagreb. There is a need to create a country which will be closer to Europe."* (also **Blic** front page)

During his visit to Sarajevo, **Javier Solana** also visited returnees in the city's neighborhood of Butmir and the Klas factory. (front page in **Dnevni Avaz; BHTV 1, FTV**)

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, sent a **personal letter** to 1,4 million addresses across BIH, urging voters to turn out at the October elections and vote for political parties which

promise to continue with reforms. (front page splash in **Slobodna Dalmacija** "Ashdown addresses voters in an unusual way", **Glas Srpski** p. 2, prominently reported in **RTRS, Hrvatski Radio Herceg-Bosna, FTV** prime time news)

In an Op-Ed piece for **Slobodna Dalmacija**, Blanka Magas notes that **Paddy Ashdown** sent letters to 1,4 million BiH voters urging them to vote for parties which could provide future for them and their kids and continue implementing reform. In that context, Magas writes Ashdown evidently perceives the Lijanovics as a force of reform of the Croat people. She also claims that there are indications that the International Community has provided funds for the Lijanovics election campaign.

Blic (front page) reports on Wednesday's visit of **Paddy Ashdown** to **Prijedor** – "Past is not coming back, Next four years will determine your future"

In **Slobodna Dalmacija**, Josko Celan criticizes **Paddy Ashdown's** recent interview with this daily. Colan calls the High Representative *"an administrator"* and argues that Ashdown's statement about Croats being *"engine of BiH development"* should be taken with a grain of salt because of the *"practice in which Croat money is being sucked away from them".* He writesthat Croat will never forget, *"the tank democracy* (referring to Hercegovacka bank), *trials without evidence, threats of arrest of a bishop, forcible removals and everything else in post-Dayton BiH".* Celan accuses Ashdown of visiting Banja Luka during 1992 and his subsequent address before the British Parliament in which he asked for protection of *"endangered Serb children…"*He also argues that *"Ashdown is favoring the Serbs and Bosniaks and is acting as Kostunica's lawyer free of charge"* referring to Ashdown's comments on Kostunica's latest statements about BiH.

PDHR Donald Hays met yesterday with the chairman of the BiH Presidency, **Beriz Belkic**, to discuss the present security

situation in BiH. *"The present security situation in the country represents an open insult to citizens' security and the rule of law. State officials must clearly demonstrate their commitment to the common aim – the establishment of a functional economic and prosperous state, in which security of citizens and progress are prime political goals,"* said Presidency in a statement. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Nezavisne Novine** p. 3)

Commenting on the pre-election campaign, the PDHR, **Donald Hays**, said in an interview with this week's **Slobodna Bosna** that he was concerned since it the campaign is not focused on the interests of ordinary citizens in BiH. *"There is far more tactic of bringing in fears, expressing of an alleged concern for collective ethnic issues, and discussion on whether the RS will continue to exist (of course it will since it is about a constitutional category, and I do not see any reason why one should talks about that at all). But, all this is well attached to the emotions of some people in this country, so that old fears are being born again and citizens are forgetting their real problems and interests. If you privately and in peace talk to the people in BiH, regardless of if they are Bosniaks, Croats or Serbs, they are speaking about the same interests. They are concerned about the things such as how to cerate conditions for their children to stay living here, how to get good job for them and their children, how to create conditions that this country is developing in the direction of a stable and safe community, with full employment, with good social and health-care system, and with the highly-sophisticated educational institutions. However, I do not see that the political parties and candidates are offering answers on these crucial issues,"* Hays said.

In reaction to a part of **Hays'** interview for **Slobodna Bosna** in which he said that the act of destruction of a mosque near Gacko had not necessarily an act of terrorism, the magazine's Editor-in-Chief, Senad Avdic, writes with a doze of irony that

"perhaps some ten kilos of explosive set under the foundations of the mosque was just about an irresponsible pyrotechnic game by irresponsible villagers."

BiH State-level issues/Foreign Relations

BiH Foreign Minister **Zlatko Lagumdzija** said in Sarajevo on Thursday that he did not reach the decision on postponing the signing of an **agreement on dual citizenship** between BiH and the FRY on his own, but in consultations with his Yugoslav colleague **Goran Svilanovic**. *"Why sign an agreement which will not be in the spirit of the revised BiH Law on Citizenship,"* asked Lagumdzija at a press conference, in response to Wednesday's open letter by Council of Ministers chairman **Dragan Mikerevic**, who accused him of making the decision on his own, without consulting BiH Deputy Foreign Minister Milovan Blagojevic.

Lagumdzija called on political parties in BiH and the leadership of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to pass amendments to the **Law on Citizenship** as soon possible, and thus extend the deadline for reaching an agreement on dual citizenship with interested countries for 10 years. (**Blic** front page, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, **Oslobodjenje** p. 2, **SRNA, BHTV 1**)

Federation Affairs

Oslobodjenje (f.p.) reports that the State Parliamentary commission for investigation of illegally **stored weapons in Mostar** completed its report on this case. In response to the report, which has not been revealed yet in the public, the BiH Presidency says that the stored weapons belong to the Federation Defense Ministry.

Election Activities

In an exclusive interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (front page splash "BIH will not become a police state"), the honorary president of the SDA, **Alija Izetbegovic**, said that all the indications are that the national parties will win the upcoming elections. *"It has been said that economic concerns will prevail at the elections. I believe they will not. Perhaps they will in some*

other time when BiH resolves its national question, the question of human and civic rights. God willing, this will happen soon. Until it does, the national question will be the dominant question." Izetbogovic also argues that the SDP will lose significant support at the upcoming elections. *"Failure of the SDP is predictable…Integration of BiH in a SDP manner proved impossible, because BIH is multiethnic, not non-ethnic, anational state. You can't be 'nothing' in Bosnia."*
Commenting on **Pogorelica case**, Izetbegovic said that he expects that the suspects will be released. *"…What one could gather from the thus far investigation and the hearings, Pogorelica was not a terrorist-training camp, not were the suspects terrorists. Everything else is a bunch of nonsense."*

The SDS candidate for a member of the BiH Presidency, **Mirko Sarovic** said last night that there was no and there would be no supreme [military] command at the state level in BiH. He also rejected speculation about the abolishment of the RS Supreme Defense Council and the Ministry of Defense. "*Such claims have no basis. A condition for BiH's admission into the Partnership for Peace, as set by NATO, is stronger coordination, which has been achieved by the establishment of the Standing Committee for Military Matters and the decision to appoint a secretary-general for military issues who will have two deputies from the other two ethnic groups,"* Sarovic said in an interview for the Bijeljina-based **BN TV**. According to Sarovic, as far as BiH's admission into the PfP is concerned, some circles in Sarajevo have been more demanding in terms of conditions than NATO. *"The Federation views the centralization of BiH's institutions as more important than its integration in Europe,"* Sarovic said.

In the opening editorial in this week's **BH Dani**, Ivan Lovrenovic writes that **Nijaz Durakovic**, who had brought his own political identity into question by leading candidates' list of the Party for BiH while allegedly maintaining his social-democratic orientation, was presenting his new beloved party as the only one having a pro-Bosnian, patriotic program

for a single, democratic, internationally-recognized and sovereign BiH. What are the others parties then, Lovrenovic wonders? *"And it is a really serious question: What in terms of concrete political substance the phrase: 'pro-Bosnian patriotic program' exactly means? Nothing else but that we are still living in a pre-political era, in which it is still possible to sell political fog and get votes and mandates on that basis, instead of initiating concrete, serious and well-articulated political programs,"* Lovrenovic concludes.

Dnevni List (page 5) carries an open letter by the British Foreign Minister **Jack Straw** to the BiH public about the coming elections. *"Your voice and your choice will determine whether or not BiH will come closer to the European institutions, and whether key economic reforms needed for the increased investments and new jobs for you and your families will be adopted and implemented. This is your chance to say in what kind of country you would like to live. (…) The situation is clear: you vote for politicians or political parties, and they, in return, represent your interests. Without your support, without your voices, they are worth nothing. Make them work for your interests!*", Straw wrote in his message.

War Crimes

Slobodan Milosevic insisted Thursday he had worked for peace in the Balkans as prosecutors opened their genocide case against him in Europe's biggest war crimes trial since World War II, reports AFP. Prosecutors at the ICTY said the former Yugoslav president was the leading figure behind the bloodshed as his trial moved on after seven months from Kosovo to deal with the wars in Bosnia and Croatia. Facing the most serious charge of genocide, Milosevic again rejected the accusations and painted himself as a man who worked to stop the violence, which left at least 225,000 people dead. "I personally invested all my powers in achieving peace," said Milosevic, (front pages of all Croat and Croatian dailies, **Oslobodjenje, Jutarnje Novine** and one of the leading items in all electronic media)

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that for over a year now, **Mothers of Srebrenica and Podrinje** have been collecting data on the basis of which they will press charges against all those who were responsible for their suffering. The daily notes that this may be single greatest trial ever conducted on the Balkans and in Europe, as some 10,000 charges are being prepared. Associations of Srebrenica survivors say they will ask for appropriate compensation for all their suffering in the 1995 tragedy.

The **RS Government's Bureau for Cooperation with the ICTY** forwarded to the ICTY Office in Banja Luka the case files against Selim Beslagic, Sead Avdic, Jasmin Imamovic, Enver Delibegovic, Zeljko Knez, Mehmed Zilic alleges "Zila", Mehmed Bajric, Muhamed Brkic and Faruk Prcic. According to a press release, issued by the Bureau, these persons are suspected of committing genocide, war crimes against civilian population and prisoners of war and violation of customs of war. The press release reads that some of these persons planned and attacked the unarmed JNA soldiers who were pulling out from Tuzla on May 15th 1992. *"During the attack, 200 persons were killed, while 140 were captured. Some of these persons were also involved in expelling Serb civilians from the Tuzla region as well as in setting up private prisons in which Serb civilians were tortured and killed."*The Bureau also forwarded to the ICTY Office in Banja Luka case files against 6 Serb civilians from Prijedor – Kesic, Gojko, Banovic Zoran, Zec Miroslav, Jelcic Djordje, Milojica Zoran and Muzgonja Slobodan – who are suspected of having committed war crimes against civilians in Prijedor.

Judicial Reform

In an interview **BH Dani**, **Jan Erik Oja**, the President of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils, said that the most urgent issue in this sector was a need to establish an independent judiciary. *"The influence (on judicial bodies) may come both from domestic and the international officials, but*

when a judge makes decision on a particular subject, he should be fully independent. The independence of judges is one of the most important things in a country in which the Rule of Law is being established. Given that the trials should be public, not a single judge should feel pressure just if someone visits him during the proceedings, of course if these visitors are not pressing on him or giving any specific instructions. The judge must accept that in courtroom may also come people who may criticize him," Oja said.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Opening of Milošević's trial for genocide in BiH and Croatia
- The forthcoming elections represent a key of the door toward Europe, stated Javier Solana
- Tonight, at midnight, an election silence starts in Serbia
- Israeli has not suspended siege of Arafat's HQ

FTV

- A trial to Slobodan Milošević re: indictment for genocide in BiH , war crimes against humanity, a violation of war regulations and serious violations of Geneva Convention in Croatia, started this morning.
- Solana sent a message to BiH citizens: It is your responsibility to vote and to elect politicians who are ready for reforms.
- House of people adopted amendments to the Constitution but also draft law on rights of war veterans

RTRS

- Solana invited BiH citizens to vote for those who support the reforms
- Milošević's trial for genocide in BiH and for crimes against humanity in Croatia continues.
- RS delivered to the Hague a crime file on those who are responsible for attack on vehicle line in Tuzla
- Russian- Chechnya conflict 10 soldiers and 70 extremists were killed
- RTRS signed contract with Serb post offices on collection of subscription fees.