OHR BiH Media Round-up, 2/9/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Teachers in the Central Bosnian canton are going on general strike as of today

Dnevni Avaz: Beriz Belkic, the Chairman of the BiH Presidency – We do not have to support a Council of Minister's list (of candidates for the heads of the BiH Information and Protection Agency)

Jutarnje Novine: At the construction site of the first BiH highway – Bridges have already been constructed, the highway construction to be completed on time

Dnevni List: Messages of hatred which cause fear and panic – Anti-American, anti-Christian and anti-Semitic graffiti appear in Sarajevo

Vecernji List: BiH Federation inspectors shutting down thousands of casinos and slot-machine clubs

Glas Srpski: In spite of a large investment by the international organizations – Croats do not want to return to Derventa

Nezavisne Novine: Tieri Ribo, the Head of the ICRC Department for Missing Persons – The authorities in BiH know where are the mass graves but they are keeping silent

Blic: Mladen Ivanic: "Budgetary deficit has not occurred because of the banks"; The employees of "Prijedorska Banka" have chained the door

Ljiljan: Who stands behind Bosnian tobacco mafia?

Protests, affairs in the BiH Federation

Approximately 3,200 educational workers in the Central Bosnian Canton are going on general strike as of Monday, in spite of a fact the cantonal government has fulfilled a part of their demands including the payment of the two backlog salaries from the last year. (**Oslobodjenje**, front page, pages 4-5)

In light of a new school year that starts today, **Vecernji List** (page 5, by Ivan Kaleb) carries an article that renders the issue of schooling in BiH. The author reminds of a difficult situation in the education sector and says that it is a reflection of overall situation in BiH. When it comes to the Federation of BiH, Kaleb notes that it is only the Posavina Canton where there is not an announcement of possible strikes whilst the rest of the Federation is either on strike already (Central Bosnia and part of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton) or ready to organise one. According to Kaleb, every canton (apart from Posavina Canton) has its own problems, mostly related to lack of money. When it comes to the RS and no announcements of strikes, Kaleb labels the situation as a "sham peace".

Dnevni List (front and page 3, by Sven Brucic) carries that anti-American, anti-Christian and anti-Semitic graffiti appeared on the front façade of hotel "Hercegovina" at Ilidza near Sarajevo. *"Messages of hatred which cause fear and panic among many passers-by and which have not been removed for days despite their irritating and chauvinistic intentions",* says DL. BTW, the graffiti literally depicts a (Christian) cross, USA and the David's star = Swastika, which leads the daily to heavily criticise the competent persons of the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Interior for not taking proper measures. The daily also reminds that the Sarajevo special police were arresting people at Otes (mostly populated by Croats) when posters of Tihomir Blaskic (an ICTY indictee) appeared in it.

Dnevni List (front and page 3)and **Vecernji List** (page 2) carry articles with statistics regarding work of Federation Tax Administration. The dailies read that in the past seven months 6,207 controls were done, inspectors have found 182,8 million KM of unpaid taxes and other obligations. However, on order of the inspectors, 43 million KM were collected, 113 criminal charges were filed for tax evasion and it was confiscated goods worth 4 million KM. Federation inspectors discovered 704 phantom companies that are not registered with the Tax

Administration, and sealed 882 business objects because of irregularities and illegal work.

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Zdenko Jurilj) claims to be in possession of a report made by the **Federation Ministry of Interior** that has been sent the Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen** and according to which there will be a large operation of closing down of all casinos and similar facilities in the Federation of BiH that do not meet requirements stipulated in the Federation Law on Fortune Games or that have not paid tax duties. According to VL, the operation will be executed this week and according to the daily's unofficial information, there are around one thousand facilities that end up shut down. A separate article reminds of the new Law on Fortune Games according to which fortune games could be organised by a company that has a "safety deposit" of at least one million KMs.

Dnevni List (front and page 3) carries article about loans that the Federation Ministry of Finances took from Invest-Commercial Bank from Zenica in 1993 and 1994 worth 4,058 million KM. After the loans were not returned the case went to court, and the Supreme Court issued writ in favour of the bank. Ministry treats the debt as public debt, but the bank does not accept this because they already have 5 million KM of public debt and they announce that OHR should be involved in this case.

Vecernji List (page 3, by Zoran Kresic) reads that trial to **Munib Zahiragic**, former bodyguard of **Alija Izetbegovic**, Bosnian double agent, who was working for Bosniak intelligence AID but also co-operating with islamic terrorist circles, should start before September 11. According to the daily, police found hundreds of document which should prove connection of Al'Qaida and "Bosnian Ideal Future", where Zahiragic used to work before. Zahiragic is charged for taking out several hundreds top secret documents about islamic fighters who remained to live in BiH after the war. The author

says that as result of information leaking, several most wanted islamic terrorists have left the country before police was able to arrest them. The indictment mentions only two names, **Abu Ma'ali** and **Mamdouh Salim**. Ma'ali, who was commander of El Mujaheed unit that committed war crimes over Croats in Central Bosnia, is believed to be hiding somewhere together with **Osama bin Laden**. Salim was arrested in 1999 in Germany when he tried to smuggle nuclear weapons for Al'Qaida.

Vecernji List (page 5, by D. Ravic) reads that Federation BiH Army completed extremely difficult training of 74 rangers, a special unit that is trained for combat operations, patrolling and airborne operations and operations on water. Training of the rangers will continue next month in Rajlovac, Igman, Bjelasnica and Jablanicko Lake. The rangers should act in case of possible terrorist attacks, but also in finding and arrest of war criminals or drug smugglers.

Return of Croats to their pre-war homes in BiH

Dnevni List (page 5, by Zoran Vidic) carries an article in which the author renders the issue of return of Croats to their pre-war residences, how it was before and how it is now. In relation to the issue of return of Croats to east Mostar (mostly populated by Bosniaks), Vidic says that just mentioning of return to east Mostar was a taboo among the Croat refugees living in west Mostar (with Croat majority) a few years ago and goes on to say that the situation has changed recently when the Croats realised that they are better off if they returned because they will not be able to hold on to their current accommodation indefinitely. In this context, DL says that some HDZ people, including Tudjman's official Zagreb, did everything to make sure that Croats have a two-thirds majority in municipal authorities in (west) Mostar's municipalities South, South-east, West even resorting to giving false promises to Croats from east Mostar that they would be able to keep their flats and houses. DL stresses the removal of a former Head of Municipality South-east, **Stipe Maric,** and arrival of "moderate" **Neven Tomic,** the current Deputy Mayor of Mostar, as positive steps in the process. DL

also criticises the Head of Association of Croats DPs, **Stefo Masatovic,** for convincing displaced Croats from central Bosnia to rather stay in Herzegovina than to return to their homes, securing a privileged status for himself in the process. Finally, Vidic says that it is encouraging that the people realise that it is their fatherland they should return to and adds that the Federation Government promised aid for reconstruction of 180 houses, mostly for east Mostar Croats. *"The aid never reached Mostar, we should hope that the federation authorities finally distribute the aid to Mostar returnees".*

Glas Srpski reports on its **front page** that the international organizations, involved in reconstruction of Croat houses in Posavina, are very close to a decision to give up on further investing in this area, because recently they visited the houses they reconstructed and realized that no one lives there. The paper reports that the representatives of these international organizations told the BiH Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Kresimir Zubak, about this during their meeting in Derventa. Minister Zubak blames the former Croatian authorities for this situation, because they did not want to support the return of Croats in Posavina. He said that instead of supporting return, the former Croatian authorities invested a lot of money in construction of houses for BiH Croats in Croatia.

Pre-election commentary: Party match at Kosevo stadium

Feral Tribune (pages 32 and 33, by Ivan Lovrenovic) carries an editorial in which the author renders the issue of election campaign in BiH. Lovrenovic says that that Communication Regulatory Agency's activities i.e. implementation of its rules have resulted in a politically correct battle between political parties in the electronic media which in turn resulted in the situation that all the hostilities have transferred to the print media. Lovrenovic goes on to remind about the situation during and particularly after the football friendly between BiH and Yugoslavia when SDP's **Zlatko Lagumdzija** and SDA's **Seada Palavric** used the issue for their

pre-election purposes i.e. accusations between the two.

RS-related news

The President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, **Vojislav Kostunica**, met RS President **Mirko Sarovic** and RS NA Speaker **Dragan Kalinic** in Belgrade on Saturday, **Glas Srpski** reports (p 3). Kostunica said that the FRY was in the process of redefining relations between Serbia and Montenegro but that it remained committed to all of its international obligations, including the obligations that it took on as a signatory of the Dayton accords and the Agreement on Special and Parallel Ties With the RS. The participants in the meeting agreed that, ever since their mutual recognition, political relations between BiH and Yugoslavia had been improving. The guests from the RS particularly expressed their wish that every citizen of BiH should be able to cross the interstate border unhindered, regardless of which of the two entities they come from, the statement said. Sarovic said that the meeting was one in a series of regular meetings and that both sides had briefed each other about the current events in Yugoslavia and BiH, particularly about the reorganization of the Yugoslav federation and events in BiH following constitutional changes. "*As President Kostunica is leaving for South Africa tomorrow, this was a good opportunity to inform him about our situation*," Sarovic said. According to him, everyone agreed that relations between Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, including the Serb Republic, should be developed further next year. "*It was confirmed that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will continue to adhere to the principles of the Dayton Agreement as one of its guarantors and that the future Serbian-Montenegrin union will also adhere to them*", Sarovic said. (**FENA**, **Oslobodjenje**, p 3, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 2, **Dnevni List**, p 9, and **Blic**, p 3 also report on the meeting)

Nezavisne Novine (p 5) carries statements of various political parties' representatives (SNSD, DNS, SPRS and SRS) who said that the RS delegation visit to the FRY is nothing but pre-election campaign. SDS was the only party for whom this visit was not electioneering. PDP also issued a statement, in which they also mentioned pre-election campaign

as one of the reasons of the visit, but the PDP was not as blunt as other political party in condemnation of the RS delegation's visit.

Glas Srpski quotes (p 3) the **RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic**, as saying in an interview for the Bijeljina-based BN Television that the deficit in the RS budget is not a consequence of the mismanagement and that it is not true that the RS Government wrote off the debts to some commercial banks in the RS. (**Blic**, p 3, **Vecernje Novosti**, p 13, **Oslobodjenje**, p 8, **Dnevni List**, p 9)

On Sunday, former employees of "**Prijedorska Banka**" chained the entrance doors of the bank, by which they have effectuated their threat to react because of their unsolved status.

The President of the Bank's Trade Union, Gordana Baltic, says they have decided to take this radical step after the RS Bank Agency, which has started the liquidation process for "Prijedorska Banka" at the beginning of this year, has not met none of the employees' demands as guaranteed by the Labor Law. (**Blic,** p 11)

"The Republika Srpska has been building its fictive statehood on the military and police. Giving up these means giving up the statehood. It is difficult but unavoidable," **SENSE** news agency quotes the Chairman of the BiH Presidency, **Beriz Belkic**, as commenting on the RS opposition to the establishment of a common BiH defense ministry. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 3)

The trial of 16 persons indicted for the attack on the citizens (Muslim believers), who, on may 7 last year, participated in a ceremony of Banja Luka's Ferhadija mosque cornerstone laying out, is expected to start before the Banja Luka First Instance Court on Monday. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 3, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 5, announced on the front page)

Ljiljan weekly (2-9. September edition, pages 34-35) carries article about Bosniak culture monument '**Begova Kuca'** that was burned down in 1992. After that, reminds the weekly, six thousand Bosniaks from **Trebinje** were expelled to Montenegro and other 60 countries of the world. Over the place where 'Begova kuca' was, promenade was built and then construction of basketball playground started. The financier of the playground is famous basketball player from FRY **Dejan Bodiroga**. The weekly says that before the war 'Begova kuca' was ethnographic museum and it was marked as one of 777 monuments of national cultures in Bosnia and Herzegovina. SDA member **Omer Brankovic** raised this issue on session of National Assembly of Republika Srpska, and another SDA member **Tarik Sadovic** addressed to many institutions but without answer. "*Nothing helped because constructions were continued and in several days, when the playground is done, we will have domestic institutions reacting. All we had in this case was reaction from OHR, although it was late, just like in case of tragic construction of fifty houses that Serbs made in Kotorsko near Doboj*", Sadovic said. The article says that it is obvious that there is no construction permit for this object, and that only urban permit exists. The author also says that international mediator **Christian Schwartz-Schilling** is visiting Trebinje and reminds that Schwartz-Schilling with 12 Trebinje officials signed agreement on 13. July 2001, which refers also to religious and cultural monuments. The author finishes the article by saying that construction of the basketball playground is almost finished, and "*that is the fact that shows incapacity of international community*".

War crimes

The Hague Tribunal's Chief Prosecutor, **Carla Del Ponte**, told Dutch media she wanted her mandate to be extended until the end of former FRY President **Slobodan Milosevic's** trial. *"My mandate expires in September 2003. I expect my contract to be extended so that I could stay in the office until the end of Milosevic's trial,"* Del Ponte said. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 3,

announced on the front page, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 9, announced on the front page, **BHTV 1**, **RTRS, Dnevni List**, p 5)
"Be assure that SFOR is doing its best in order to bring persons like Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic before justice," SFOR Spokesman **Scott Lundy** told **Dnevni Avaz** (p 2, announced on the front page) commenting on the **Amnesty International's** remark that, following a number of military exercises, the time had come for a real action on the most wanted war crime indictees arrest.

Glas Srpski carries a letter **(front page)**, which the **RS Chief Rabbi, Jozef Atijas**, sent to the **Sanski Most Mayor, Mesud Sabic**, in which the Rabbi expresses his dissatisfaction with the way in which the Sanski Most municipality authorities treat Serb and Jewish cemeteries and WWII monuments. "It is pointless and also impossible to discuss facts with people for whom the fact have no meaning. Everyone, including me, knows that in 1941. Croats and back then Muslims, (currently Bosniaks) were fascists-ustashi and that Serb and Jews were the victims of their ideology. I know that you do not like this fact, but that is not the reason why you should ignore it. That is the truth. As long as each of our peoples here refuses to face the truth, there will not be possible to make any progress", said the Rabbi in his letter. He also said that he also had in mind the truth about sufferings of Bosniaks during this war, adding that these victims also deserve tears, attention and religious ceremony. Responding to Sabic's decision to prevent the commemoration ceremony in Susnjar from taking place, the Rabbi said that he had the list of 5,500 victims, who were killed in Sanski Most in 1941 and that it would be inappropriate for Sabic to try to convince the Rabbi that, when it comes to these particular victims, there were victims of all ethnic backgrounds, because "even if there was a Bosniak or a Croat I think he/she deserves to buried properly".

BiH Presidency to discuss proposed list of the candidates for the Protection and Information Agency's heads at its next session

At its next session, the BiH Presidency is expected to discuss a harmonized list of candidates for acting head and deputy head of the BiH Agency for Information and Protection. According to **Dnevni Avaz's** front-page story (continued on p 3), the Presidency Chairman, **Beriz Belkic**, will before the session hold necessary consultations with the Council of Ministers' Chairman, **Dragan Mikerevic**.

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Sunday, 1900)

- The EU position on International Criminal Court will not be revealed until the end of September
- Carla del Ponte wishes extension of her mandate until the end of Milosevic's trial
- Former employees of Prijedorska Bank put the chains at the entrance of the bank building

FTV 1 (1930)

- The Hague Tribunal Chief Prosecutor asks for extension of her mandate until the end of Milošević's trial
- BiH looses million KM due to lack of state- level office of legal representative
- Federation Ministry of Finance is in 5 million KM debt to Investment – Commercial Bank in Zenica

RTRS (1930)

- Participants at the World's Summit in Johannesburg are getting closer to the compromise
- Del Ponte seeks for mandate extension until the end of Milosevic's proceeding
- Prijedor Bank chained from today