

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 29/8/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Islamic Community – Names of politicians should not be mentioned in mosques

Dnevni Avaz: After complains by the OHR, dangerous Defamation Law withdrawn

Jutarnje Novine: Sarajevo's bid for the host of the 2010 Winter Olympic games rejected

Glas srpski: Former RS Finance Minister challenges the RS Supreme Auditor's annual audit report; Kalinic and Ivanic returned from Kosovo;

Nezavisne novine: Mostar Court announces cessation of investigation into the legal shell caches; RS Chief Auditor's annual audit report: They spent 37 million KM more than foreseen;

Blic: Pejic: "Kremenovic receives orders from the Government"; Kremenovic: "Post Service does not respect the decision of the Government"

Vecernji List: Provisional Administrator Toby Robinson decided: "USAID purchased building of 'Hercegovacka banka' "

Dnevni List: Executive board of IOC decided that Sarajevo is out of run for Winter Olympics 2010: "We will have Winter Olympics 2014 in Sarajevo"

Federation Affairs

Dnevni Avaz (front page) reports that the Federation Prime Minister, **Alija Behmen**, withdrew yesterday from the Parliamentary procedure the proposed Defamation Law, thereby complying with the request of the OHR and the Federation Human Rights Ombudsman, who argued that the proposed law was not in line with European conventions on human rights. The chairman of the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives, **Ismet Briga**, told the daily that the Federation government will re-open discussion on the disputed Law in the coming days.

(**Oslobodjenje**, p. 5, **Federation Radio, Nezavisne Novine, Dnevni List**, and **Slobodna Dalmacija**)

Federation President **Safet Halilovic** asked Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen to urgently re-activate the government's expert team for drafting the **War Veterans Law**. *"It is necessary that this Law is passed before the October election and to fairly regulate and balanced the position of all beneficiaries in the Federation during the mandate of this government,"* said Halilovic, adding that the Federation government will need expert assistance of the OHR, IMF and the World Bank to complete this job. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 9)

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Zoran Kresic) reports, quoting an anonymous USAID official, that the USAID arranged with the Provisional Administrator for the Hercegovacka Banka, **Toby Robinson**, a purchase of the main building of this bank in the center of Mostar for the needs of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Ministry of Finances. The deal is allegedly worth two million KM. VL says that an indirect confirmation of this information also comes from a press release of the HNC Government sent to the American Embassy to BiH and USAID signed by the Cantonal Prime Minister and Deputy PM, **Omer Macic and Miroslav Coric** respectively which reads: *"We thank you on your readiness to finance such an important project for our canton. We hope to continue this successful co-operation in the future too"*.

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by F.Vele) reports that the investigation about the hidden Mostar shells conducted by the Mostar Municipal Court II (MMC II) will not be finished within the legally stipulated deadline of six months due to financial problems facing the court. The daily quotes the President of the MMC II, **Nijaz Djuliman**, as saying that witnesses are increasingly failing to appear in this as well as in other cases because the court cannot pay their expenses. Djuliman added that a strike of employees looks more imminent nowadays and that processes currently being conducted could be stopped.

"Our total claims are around 750.000 KM. We have already sued the responsible ones for the situation but the case is with the Municipal Court I in Sarajevo and it is not finished yet", says Djuliman.

Yesterday and today's issues of **Dnevni List** carry (page 44, by Zoran Vidic), a lengthy article titled "The rise and fall of Croat self-rule -Signing of loyalty under pressure", a neutral story about the failed project of the Croat self-rule in BiH. Vidic notes that the "project" was felt mostly by common people who, during the conflicts associated with the self-rule, lost jobs and several salaries. DL writes that a senior OHR official stated at the time that funds from the Federation budget were being re-routed to the Catholic Church in Herzegovina so as to encourage the priests to aid the HDZ campaign. The same official labeled **Dragan Covic**, the former Federation Deputy Prime Minister, as the main protagonist of these events. Dnevni List concludes that the self-rule project was in fact yet *"another phase in manipulation of BiH Croats staged by the party that has been claiming to have a plebiscite like support of the Croat people."*

Slobodna Dalmacija (page 17, conducted by Miroslav Landeka) carries an interview with **Bozo Misura**, former acting Director of the Federation Pension-Disability Fund dismissed recently by the Federation Government. Asked as to whether he would go to Sarajevo to hand over his duties to his successor, Misura said that it was the High Representative and both chambers of the Federation Parliament that decided that the seat of the Fund was to be moved to Mostar. *"It is the Federation PM, **Alija Behmen**, who wants to change this i.e. move it to Sarajevo at all costs. Since I was dismissed in an impudent and illegal way, I do not want to go to Sarajevo hand over anything to anyone"*.

BiH State-level developments

Associations of professional photographers in the Federation

and the RS protested the decision to place electronic photographs on passports, new identity cards and rivers licenses in BiH, as envisaged by the **CIPS** (Citizens Identity Protection System) project. Representatives of the associations argue that this will significantly reduce their income and create an unfair monopoly, which would put them in a very unfavorable position. **Izet Bijedic** of the BiH Photographers Association said his organization will send a protest note to the OHR and ask the High Representative for urgent help in resolving this matter. *"We are not against the CIPS project, but we just want to lodge our protest, as this decision violates our basic right to work..."* Bijedic said. (**BiH Radio 1**)

Dnevni Avaz (p. 3) reports that the UN is conducting a large investigation of the case of 11,5 million KM which were earmarked for financing the **State Border Service**, but which went missing after allegedly being transferred to the account of the BiH Foreign Ministry. The daily claims that the transfer was conducted by the BiH Minister of Treasury, **Anto Domazet**, and that the funds *"ended up in the accounts of the SDP and will be used to finance the party's election campaign."* *"That is absolutely not true. The EU earlier promised to provide 11,5 million KM for the SBS and we included this into our budget. However, since they did not deliver on their promise, we now have a vacuum in the budget and we are still looking for additional funds for the SBS,"* Domazet told the daily, strongly rejecting the claims that he personally transferred these funds to the accounts of the Foreign Ministry. EC spokesman **Frane Maroevic** on his part denied that the EC ever promised to donate these funds, adding that financing of the SBS is a responsibility of domestic authorities. Avaz concludes that this matter may evolve into one more financial affair that will shake the country.

BiH Foreign Relations/ European integration/Regional Cooperation

Sense agency from Brussels reports that it is expected that the ongoing consultations in the NATO HQ about BiH's joining

the Partnership for Peace program will result in a clearer position of NATO in regards to this issue. An unidentified NATO official told the agency that the Alliance is still collecting the relevant information about the recent decision of the BiH Presidency on the formation of the Standing Committee on Military Matters, and trying to determine whether this body will help BiH meet all the necessary requirements for joining the PfP. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 3, **BiH Radio 1**, **BHTV 1**)

State Commissions for Missing Persons of BiH, Yugoslavia and Croatia failed yesterday to sign a joint Protocol on mutual cooperation, which was earlier agreed upon by the Foreign Ministers of the three countries. **Jasmin Odobasic** of the Federation Commission for Missing Persons told Dnevni Avaz that the Yugoslav side proposed different version of the Protocol, which was not acceptable for the Federation Commission. It is possible that all sides will manage to find a compromise and sign the Protocol during today's session in Belgrade. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 9, **BHTV 1**, **FTV**, **Federation Radio, BH Radio 1**)

RS-related Items

Glas srpski reports on its front page that the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, RS NA Speaker, Dragan Kalinic and RS Minister for Religions, Dusan Antelj were not allowed to travel from the Visoki Decani monastery to the Gracanica monastery in Kosovo because the UNMIK and KFOR refused to escort them. Serb Orthodox Bishop of Raska and Prizren, Artemije told press that anybody could visit Kosovo except the RS representatives and Belgrade authorities. The paper quotes Kalinic as saying that the RS delegation is visiting Kosovo for *"humanitarian and spiritual reasons"* and to visit Serbs who live in this area under extremely difficult circumstances. *"I hope this is an administrative misunderstanding. However, I would not be surprised if someone wanted to prevent us from visiting Gracanica and Kosovska Mitrovica. How is it possible that KFOR waits for us at the Kosovo border and escort us to the Pec Patriarchy first and then to the Visoki Decani monastery and then all of the sudden they realize that something is wrong"*, said Kalinic. Nezavisne novine and

Oslobodjenje carried similar report (p. 3).

*"The RS Police filed charges against six more individuals from Prijedor suspected of participating in the illegal detention of Rev Tomislav Matanovic and his parents in 1995", UNMIBH Spokesperson **Alun Roberts** said at a press conference in Banja Luka held yesterday.*

He reminded that documentation on involvement of 21 Prijedor police officers in the Matanovic case was sent to the Hague Tribunal. (**Blic**, p. 17, **BHTV 1**)

The Executive Director of the RS Post Service, **Milutin Pejic**, confirmed to **Blic** (p. 17) that he sent the request for revision of the decision on payment of pensions through banks to the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic. Pejic added that all activities connected to this issue would be halted until the Government's decision is revised, however, the Director of the PIO Fund, Ostoja Kremenovic, informed the RS Post Service that he had received an explicit request from the RS President to sign the agreement with banks. Kremenovic stressed that pensioners must have the possibility to choose in which way they would like to receive their pensions. (**Blic**, page 17)

International Community

The US Ambassador, **Clifford Bond**, visited yesterday Gorazde canton and held numerous meetings with cantonal officials to discuss the way of improving the economic situation in this smallest and poverty-stricken canton in the Federation. During his visit, Bond stressed that the construction of a highway between Sarajevo and Ustipraca would be of vital importance for this region and would foster the economic recovery of this canton. *"I promise, the next time I come I will bring along USAID experts in order to discuss the possibility of more concrete cooperation,"* Bond said. (**Dnevni Avaz** p.2, **Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **BHTV 1**, **FTV**, **Blic**, **FRY Nacional**)

Terrorism

Ahmed Zuhair, a Saudi citizen known in BiH as Handala, was

arrested three days ago in Pakistan and immediately transferred to the US base in Guantanamo on Cuba. Handala had been accused of planting a car bomb in Mostar several years ago. According to media reports, the Federation Interior Ministry is in the process of checking the reports on Handala's arrest, who was tried in absentia and sentenced to 10 years in jail. He had not been granted Bosnian citizenship and did not possess a Bosnian passport. (FTV prime time news, Croat radio Herceg-Bosna, HTV Mostar, SRNA news agency, Dnevni List p. 2, Vecernji List p. 2, Slobodna Dalmacija (last page)and Vjesnik p. 24)

Pre-election activities

At an extraordinary session held yesterday, the Rijaset of the **Islamic Community** decided that the leaders of religious ceremonies in mosques will no longer be allowed to mention the names of any political party or politician in either negative or positive context during the service. In a statement for the press, Rijaset stressed that the Islamic Community does not support any individual political party, but will continue to closely follow political developments and *"form opinions on issues connected with the preservation of faith, freedom and dignity of Muslims."* (front page of **Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, **Federation Radio**)

The **Democratic National Alliance** (DNS) yesterday forwarded a request to the High Representative for BiH Paddy Ashdown to replace the chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, because of his wartime past, SRNA news agency reports. *"This request stems from the fact that during the war, Belkic held the post of secretary for the people's defence in the municipality of Hrasnica. He is responsible for violating the rules and customs of war, and by imposing a compulsory work order on Serbs, he mistreated them and intentionally placed them in life-threatening situations,"* says a statement by the DNS. The DNS said that the Dimic family has lodged a complaint against Belkic before the Hague tribunal *"because of them living in a ghetto for three years"*. *"The High Representative is obliged to respect the equal status of all peoples in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and by dismissing Belkic he would prove*

his impartiality," the statement says. (**Dnevni List**)

Miscellaneous

At yesterday's session in Lausanne, the Executive Committee of the **International Olympic Committee** (IOC) decide to reject **Sarajevo's** candidacy for the host of the Winter Olympic Games in 2010. The OIC did not elaborate on its decision, however, it encouraged Sarajevo to extend its candidacy for the Games in 2014. (All media in BiH)

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- The first meeting between Commissions for missing persons of BiH, FRY and Croatia, took place in Belgrade today
- Director of Srpske post office announced that post offices would not make next pensions' payments in RS.
- 22 investment projects presented in Izmir
- Sarajevo failed to join Winter Olympic games 2010 list of candidates

FTV

- Ahmed Zuhaira, a convict for setting up the car bomb in Mostar apprehended in Pakistan
- Changes in the body of the text, hindered signing of protocol on cooperation between BiH and FRY commissions for missing persons
- Six ministers asked for resignation of the Ze-Do Canton's Prime Minister
- Sarajevo candidacy for organization of the Winter Olympic Games was denied.