

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 30/8/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: State Border Service on every millimeter of border

Dnevni Avaz: Safet Orucevic- I am angry and disappointed with all the allegations

Jutarnje Novine: Dispute in Zenica-Doboj Canton

Dnevni List: Tax Administration closes down betting shops in Mostar

Vecernji List: Tax Administration closes down betting shops in Mostar

Glas srpski: Member of the BiH Anti-terrorist Team says that the fight against terrorism is being halted because of the upcoming elections; Brcko: Cyrillic in the Brcko Assembly;

Nezavisne novine: Interview with Fikret Abdic Babo : When I come in power divisions among Bosniaks will disappear; BiH Federation Tax Administration inspectors are closing down betting shops; Lagumdzija met with Razov – The Dayton can be changed

Blic: Mirko Sarovic: "To improve cooperation between BiH and Russia"; Sejfidin Tokic: "A suspicious capital is coming from Russia"

BH Dani: Zlatko Lagumdzija – to resign or be crashed?

Slobodna Bosna: Lagumdzija –alone against Party for BiH, against political and media underworld

BiH State-level developments

BiH State Border Service assumed control over international border crossings in Gorica and Osoja, thereby taking full control over 97% of national borders of BiH. *"The last remaining unit State Border Service will be deployed in Strmica at the end of September, which will then bring the State Border Service to control the entire land borders of*

Bosnia and Herzegovina," UN spokesperson **Kirsten Haupt** told journalists in Sarajevo. (front page of **Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, one of the top items in **BHTV 1, FTV, Croat Radio Herceg-Bosna, BiH Radio 1, Federation Radio** prime time news)

At yesterday's session, the **BiH Council of Ministers** finally named six candidates for the leading posts in the **BiH Agency for Protection and Information**, thereby complying with the earlier request by the BiH Presidency. Council's Ivica Misic told the press that the selected candidates will take the posts of acting director and deputy director of the Agency and will remain there until the official vacancy process is finalized. The candidates are Zlatko Miletic, Dragan Lukac, Dragan Vikic, Fehim Durakovic, Emir Bjedic, and Sredoje Novic.

At the same session, the Council appointed **Milan Lovric** to the post of the chief of Anti-Terrorist Unit, after its thus far chairman, Ivica Misic, was named the new BiH ambassador to Vatican. (**Oslobodjenje p. 7, Dnevni Avaz, Glas srpski p. 3** and **Nezavisne novine p. 3, BHTV 1, FTV**)

Glas srpski reports (**p. 3**) that the **BiH Deposit Insurance Agency** will start its operations in October this year. The Agency's HQ will be in Banja Luka and it will also have a branch office in Sarajevo. The paper quotes the Head of the GTZ in BiH, **Reiner Muller**, as saying that *"the transfer of authorities from the entity agencies for deposit insurance to the BiH Agency for deposit insurance is a remarkable success. The winners in this whole thing are banks in the RS."*

Dnevni Avaz (p. 5) reports that 65 refugee and DP association from across BiH officially on Thursday formed the **BiH Association of Refugees**, which will be active on the state level. **Mirhunisa Zukic**, the thus far president of the Federation Union of Refugees, was elected the president of the new Association for a 4-year term.

Federation Affairs

In its first major operation after being assigned new powers,

the **Federation Tax Administration** conducted a comprehensive control of work of sports betting shops. Director of Tax Administration, **Midhat Arifovic**, told the press yesterday that the audit revealed that over 30% of these shops have consistently evaded paying the prescribed taxes and currently owe more than 6 million KM. *"Our new powers enable us to close down such shops until they settle their debt"*. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 11, **Vecernji List f.p.**, and **Slobodna Dalmacija** p. 16, **Dnevni List** (f.p.)

Candidate of the New Croat Initiative for the post of the Federation Finance Minister, **Franjo Franjic**, withdrew his candidacy on Thursday, noting the short time frame before the October elections. Franjic also expressed his disappointment that the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives failed numerous times to secure the necessary majority for his timely appointment to the ministerial post. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 6, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, one of the main items in the **Federation Radio, BHTV 1, FTV** prime time news)

SDA caucus in the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives announced yesterday it will initiate the vote of no confidence to the Federation government. SDA deputy in the HoR, **Seada Palavric**, explained that the government failed to secure the necessary majority of votes in this House to pass its report on the implementation of the budget for 2001 and should be dismissed.

The Federation Prime Minister, **Alija Behmen**, said he was not surprised by this move, adding that the *"current government never had the confidence and trust of the SDA."* (**Oslobodjenje** p. 6, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, **FTV**)

In a front page interview with **Dnevni Avaz**, former Mostar mayor **Safet Orucevic** rejected allegations put forth by **Zlatko Lagumdzija** that he has been involved in the dubious sale of BH Telekom and BiH Elektroprivreda and added that he will sue the SDP leader for slander. *"I am angry and disappointed with Lagumdzija's statements, although I know that they are meant to alleviate allegations associated with himself..."*

Dnevni Avaz (p. 10) reports that international officials are expecting that the International Arbitration Tribunal will pass a compromise solution for resolving the Aliminij case in Mostar. An unidentified World Bank source told the daily that the solution will have to please all players involved and will have to be "implementible", but not necessarily legally correct. *"Some structures in the Federation had insisted that the OHR resolves this issue, since some basic human rights are at stake here...However, the OHR transferred this case to the World Bank, and we decided to form this Arbitration Tribunal...Its decisions will naturally be binding for all sides,"* the same source said.

Dnevni List (page 2, by D.L.) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (last page, by Miroslav Landeka) carry respective reports from yesterday's hearing about the case of secret ammunition caches in Mostar. Both dailies report that the OHR's Anti-corruption team has become interested in the investigation which leads the dailies to conclude that the mortar rounds might have been stashed for further sale. In that context, SD reports that representative of the OHR had a long conversation with the investigative judge **Tatjana Kazazic** last week. SD also reports that **Hasan and Halid Cengic** again failed to show up before judge Kazazic yesterday who said that the course of the investigation has not changed after two additional witnesses (**Adnan Handzar and Mustafa Ravkic**) were questioned.

Slobodna Bosna (page 15, by S.A.) reports that according to reliable sources, an investigative judge of Mostar Municipal Court II **Tatjana Kazazic** and a judge conducting the investigation into the secret ammunition caches in Mostar, is seriously thinking to retire not only from this case but from judiciary in general. SB says that her potential decision is a result of everything that has happened in the last two months i.e. constant pressures and threats as well as obstructions coming from the competent state institutions, the Federation Ministry of Interior and Federation Ministry of Defence in

particular. SB sums it up by saying that Kazazic will explain reasons for retirement as “personal and health” ones, similarly like her colleague at the Supreme Court **Jasminka Putica**. “We suspect that not even that will persuade the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, and domestic authorities that judges work under tremendous pressures from mafia and political obstructions.

BH DANI welcome the move of the **Federation Human Rights Ombudsman**, which asked the Federation government to withdraw the proposed **Defamation Law** from the Parliamentary procedure, arguing that it is not in line with the European Convention on protection of human rights. *“This only confirms that the Office of Human Rights Ombudsman is truly needed in this country as a necessary correction of nonsense provisions devised by the legal department and signed by the Prime Minister Behmen and his ministers,”* concludes Dani.

Regional cooperation/Miscellaneous

In order to mark August 30, the **International Day of Missing Persons**, associations of missing persons from BiH, Yugoslavia and Croatia will hold a one day summit in Sarajevo. Throughout the day, regional offices of the ICMP (International Commission for Missing Persons) will work on gathering blood samples of families of missing persons in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka, Sanski Most, Mostar, Pristina and Belgrade. The samples are later to be analyzed by ICMP DNA experts for finding possible matches.

Media also report that associations of missing persons from BiH, Yugoslavia and Croatia failed yesterday to sign the earlier agreed Protocol on mutual cooperation. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 47, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Federation Radio**, **BiH Radio 1**, **BHTV 1**, **FTV**)

Directors of **Customs Administrations** in the Federation, Republika Srpska, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia agreed yesterday in Banja Luka to a better cooperation and coordination in the fight against cross border crime in the

region. This is the first high level meeting of Customs officials of the neighboring countries and it is expected that, at the next meeting in three months, they will be joined by colleagues from Slovenia, Macedonia and Kosovo. *"The meeting was held without mediation of International Community officials. We agreed on all issued on our own,"* **Djuro Bulic** of the RS Customs Administration told the daily. (**Dnevni Avaz, Glas Srpski, Blic, FRY Nacional**)

Vecernji List (page 2, by E. Medunjanin) reports that BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs has never officially received the initiative of High Representative Paddy Ashdown to enable citizens of BiH and Yugoslavia to cross border with identity card only. As the daily says, such initiative was not addressed from Yugoslav authorities either, even though BiH Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications **Svetozar Mihajlovic** announced that initiative talks about this subject would be held in September. According to the daily, some officials from the RS are advocating that crossing border with identity card only should be arranged for all former Yugoslavia.

Foreign Affairs

Nezavisne novine reports (front page, p. 2) on yesterday's meeting between **the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdžija**, and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, **Sergej Razov**. The press release, issued after the meeting, states that the Russian Federation fully supports the preparation of BiH for accession to the EU and that one of the Russia's priorities will be the strengthening of relations with BiH and other former Yugoslav republics. Razov said that the potential of the Dayton Peace Agreement has not been used adequately, adding that Russia advocates its consistent implementation. *"However, the DPA is not a dogma. Life is developing and the situation might change"*, said Razov. **Glas srpski (p. 3)** reported on the same issue, but it paid more attention to the meeting between the RS president, Mirko Sarovic, and Razov.

RS-related Events

Both Banja Luka dailies, **Glas srpski** (p. 5) and **Nezavisne novine** (p. 6), quote the RS National Assembly Speaker, **Dragan Kalinic**, as saying that there were no administrative obstacles to the RS delegation's visit to Kosovo. He said that this whole story is politically motivated and aimed at preventing the RS politicians from contacting the Serbs from the Kosovo region. The RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**, said the RS leadership would adequately respond to this event. Ivanic said that the Serb Orthodox Church (SPC) has already reacted to the event and that the reaction of the Serbian authorities is expected too. Nezavisne also quotes the BiH Ambassador to the FRY, **Zeljko Komsic**, as saying that the RS delegation did not inform the BiH Embassy in Belgrade. *"Had they informed us and had our embassy been involved in the organization of the visit, they would not have been returned"*, said Komsic.

Pre-election Activities

In a lengthy article in **BH DANI** (announced on the front page, Senad Pecanin writes that **Dnevni Avaz** recently revealed a very strong and undeniable connection between the SDP leader, **Zlatko Lagumdzija**, and the Russian Mafia, which will virtually force him to resign before the October elections. Pecanin argues that Lagumdzija's involvement in AM-SPED affair and connections with the dubious Strom Telecom company are undisputed, as is the *"dubious business of his wife's marketing company"*. *"No one in Bosnia is today more dissatisfied with the International Community than Lagumdzija. He realized that the OHR and the US Embassy will do everything to keep the SDP and the Alliance in power...however, he overlooked the fact that the Americans are not ready to forgive Lagumdzija the corruption because of which they toppled Edhem Bicakcic."* Pecanin writes that senior officials in the International Community whom he had a dinner with coincided that *"they are shocked with all the allegations of crime associated with Lagumdzija's name"*. *"It is no longer questionable whether the responsible prosecutor's office and the OHR's Anti-corruption Department will initiate the investigation against Lagumdzija, but when it will reveal the evidence and publish results of this investigation which is ongoing,"* concludes Pecanin.

In his regular column in **BH DANI**, Ivan Lovrenovic writes that the ongoing “media war” between Lagumdzija and Dnevni Avaz is threatening to hijack the pre-election debate in the most degrading possible manner. *“The war between Lagudzija and Avaz is threatening to completely degrade the election race and make it obsolete, for it consumes the whole thing with its deafening cannonade, and because it is taking away from it the character of vigorous and healthy competition between ideas, programs and individuals, in which voters should recognize their choice.”*

In his opening column in **Slobodna Bosna**, Senad Avdic argues that the present conflict between **Lagumdzija** and **Avaz** was caused by the former’s decisive fight against crime and corruption. *“All the indications are that the SDP president and the BiH Foreign Minister first said NO (to crime) and that is when the brotherly mafia gathered around the project Avaz made its wild blow. Perhaps in the history of this region, one has not encountered such a monument to vulgarity and bestiality, and bloody primordial primitivism, as is this media-mafia bastard...One should be aware that this war between Lagumdzija and Avaz is no pre-election party bickering...[The destiny of this country] will depend on whether we see this as a personal conflict between two sides, or as a holy war between the principles of good and evil, truth and justice, law and crime. I don’t claim that Lagumdzija is the best chosen person to oppose to this, however, at this time, I can’t see a viable alternative,”* concludes Avdic.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Startup of action on closure of 40 sport betting shops in FBiH
- State border Service DGS at Grude and Posušje borders
- Names of the candidates for acting positions in state agency for information were revealed
- Iraq: Kofi Anan promotes a diplomatic solution

FTV

- Action aiming at control over the sports betting shops in FBiH started today
- Council of Ministers in session
- The UN Mission found out that 355 policemen in BiH have falsified certificates

RTRS

- BiH, Croatian and Yugoslavian Customs to act together against smuggling.
- Milan Lovric appointed chief of Anti-Terrorist Team.
- 4 civilians killed in the Israeli tank assault.
- World Basketball Championship opened in Indianapolis.