

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 4/10/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Vaccination in the BiH Federation at the edge of disaster; After Biljana Plavsic pleaded guilty in The Hague – Punishment for Milosevic

Dnevni Avaz: Electionsto take place tomorrow – 2.r million voters and 4,106 polling stations registered

Dnevni List: Federation Government session: Return of 5 million-KM to companies; Attempt of assassination on Enis Sijamija

Vecernji List: Zenica prison affair: Convicts make threats with suicide; Mesic's testimony will influence the elections

Slobodna Dalmacija: Leutar case: The bill of indictment is changed – new date of assassination?!; Plavsic is witness against Milosevic

Glas Srpski: BiH Human Rights Ministry representatives visit Zenica Correction Facility – Convict beating convicts; RS NA deputies involved in tax evasion; "Iron Lady" softens

Nezavisne Novine:2,3 million voters registered for elections in BiH; Nova Banjalucka Bank canceled agreement with Nezavisne Novine; Javier Solana sends a message to BiH citizens – Through elections to better life; Carla Del Ponte: Bobetko must go to the Hague

Blic: Nightmare for Serbs and Croats in KPD Zenica; 18 ministers and MPs evaded taxes; Eight Croats and Bosniaks suspected of crimes; Vojka Pavlovic's murderer arrested

Vecernje Novosti: Seselj says boycott

FRY Nacional: Biljana Plavsic's deal with The Hague: Only five years of imprisonment in exchange for evidences against Milosevic; Seselj for boycott

Slobodna Bosna: Ashdown and Silajdzic preparing a Serb-British spy and mafia-man Damir Fazlic to succeed Alija Behmen

BiH General elections

The BiH general (parliamentary and presidential) elections are to take place on Saturday. The BiH Election Commission has confirmed the candidacy of a total of 7,537 candidates, as almost one thousand of candidates have not been allowed to run in the elections. The main reason for their elimination from the candidacy lists was illegal usage of someone else's properties. Addressing journalist ahead of the elections, the Election Commission President, Lidija Korac, on Thursday called on citizens to vote on Saturday not letting anyone else to make such an important decision in place of them. A total of 2,342,075 eligible BiH citizens have been registered for these elections and they are expected to exercise their voting right at one of a total of 4,106 polling stations or through post offices. The election process will be monitored by 6,909 domestic and 514 foreign observers. Preliminary results might be announced late on Sunday, October 6, as the official results should be confirmed and made available to the public from October 20-22. (**Dnevni Avaz**, front page, pages 8-9, **Oslobodjenje**, p 3, **Vecernji List**, p 2, by M. Stankovic, **Dnevni List**, p 5)

Ahead of the forthcoming elections in BiH, High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** addressed BiH citizens through the **FTV 1** (2000, after central evening news) and **RTRS** (second news in the central evening 1930 program). *"... I will tell you frankly that way ahead will not be easy. And I will tell you frankly that it will not be fast either, but there's no another way this country can go but the way of reform. And we'll have to move faster if we don't want to stay on the side. I know we can do it together. But we must start now. Way towards Europe starts with your attendance at the polling stations on Saturday,"* Ashdown emphasized.

European Union's (EU) High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy **Javier Solana** has sent a message to BiH citizens through the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to participate in the elections and vote for forces that are

ready to continue the reforms in order to bring the country closer to European integration. *"You and your country face a crucial choice on October 5. One alternative for BiH is Europe. Some progress in this direction has already been made. There is hard work ahead. But it is building work. It is about creating a better life for all BiH citizens,"* the message read. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 2, **Nezavisne Novine**, front page, p 3)

In an article in **The Times**, John Phillips writes that recent outbreak of violence across the RS *"has promoted fears among Western diplomats that extreme Serb nationalists could win tomorrow's presidential and parliamentary elections."* *"They fear that victory for SDS...could set back the fragile peace process in the Balkan state. Lord Ashdown, ...the High Representative in Bosnia, this week toured Republika Srpska, the Serb-run half of Bosnia, to encourage people from all communities to vote...While not supporting any party, Lord Ashdown has urged Bosnians to support economic reforms and encouraged the judiciary to establish the rule of law. This has been interpreted as a thinly veiled signal to voters to shun the SDS, which is still largely controlled by Dr Karadzic, who is on the run from a United Nations indictment for allegedly masterminding the massacre of 8,000 Muslims at Srebrenica in 1995,"* Phillips writes, concluding, however, that most opinion polls show that the SDS will indeed win at least 30% of the vote in the RS.

BBC News also reports that the vote on Saturday *"will be a major test for a reformist, Western-backed grouping that gained majority in the central parliament after the 2000 elections and a decade of rule by nationalists."* *"They have taken Bosnia into the Council of Europe, and breathed new life into collapsing state institutions, but failed to create badly needed jobs."* BBC notes that the International Community is increasingly concerned that hard-liners may be heading for victory in each community, and urged voters to vote for forces of reform. *"Earlier this week, Mr Ashdown said that unless*

voters ignored the 'hoary old ghosts of the past', the country would be 'crippled by debt, shunned by investors, abandoned by the young, undermined by corruption and condemned to a period of seemingly unending international oversight.'"

In an article in **Slobodna Bosna**, Asim Metiljevic argues that SDA's honorary **president Alija Izetbegovic** and founder of the Party for BiH **Haris Silajdzic** have already agreed on the post-election coalition made up of national parties. According to Metiljevic, the two Bosniak leaders have decided to re-create the so-called **CD coalition** from 1995 by joining forces of Party for BiH and SDA and "*adorn it with small decorative details*" such as Civic Democratic Party and LDS.

On its front page, **Slobodna Bosna's** editor in chief, Senad Avdic writes that **Haris Silajdzic** is planning to bring in **Damir Fazlic**, a Bosnian businessman involved in dodge privatization of Natron in Maglaj, and Tabacco Factories in Mostar and Sarajevo, and secure his appointment to the post of the Federation Prime Minister. Avdic argues that Silajdzic was only encouraged by Ashdown's idea – "*which is close to scone fiction*" – to bring successful businessmen from diaspora to important post in the government in BiH as field experts. "*Now we realize that ...Ashdown created a profile of Damir Fazlic...It could be that Ashdown's sentiment for Fazlic originates in the fact that they are both connected with the work in the same British intelligence servicer. Perhaps, Fazlic was indeed useful for Ashdown's government and his country. If this is so, then Ashdown can take him home: Without Fazlic, BiH has plenty of crooks and criminals!*"

An editorial on **Vecernji List** page 2 by Jozo Pavkovic reads that the IC tried everything to suggest to voters to vote for reform forces saying that nobody from the IC either did not know or did not want to say who the forces were, spending loads of money to disqualify "the non-co-operative ones" in the process.

Under a title *"Unstable BiH leads to instability in region"*, the same paper on page 15 by Dejan Jazvic carries an analysis of the situation and the impact that BiH elections might have on the region. The author notes that Washington and Brussels are considering *"a regional accession of south-east Europe countries into NATO and probably into EU"*. In that context VL says that Europe and US want a stable region and that the tomorrow's election in BiH might tailor the future.

Jutarnji List (page 11, by Snjezana Pavic) carries results of an opinion poll conducted by FIBRO agency from Mostar, that has been accused for inclining towards HDZ BiH, according to which, the Coalition led by HDZ will have **69** percent of Croat votes, NHI **8** percent, HSP BiH and ProENS **5** percent each, and Lijanovic's Economic Bloc and HKDU BiH will have **4** percent of Croat votes each. According to the daily, Dragan Covic has support of **72** % of Croat votes, while Mijo Anic has **10** % and Mladen Ivankovic Lijanovic **7** % of Croat votes. **Vjesnik** (page 15) carries an editorial signed by Alenko Zornija in which he writes: *"Americans, but also other representatives of International Community, don't wish to see nationalists in government again. They called upon voters in BiH to support those forces that will continue process of reforms, what can be understood as 'wind in the sails' to 'Alijansa', i.e. first of all to SDP. (...) However, according to some earlier announcements, Silajdzic's Party for BiH will not make coalition with SDP as long as Zlatko Lagumdzija is leader of that party"*.

War crimes

RS President **Mirko Sarovic** said on Thursday that the case of Biljana Plavsic's admission of her guilt on charges of crimes against humanity before the Hague Tribunal is a classic case of deal and trade in which by admission of guilt on one account other charges against her were dropped. Sarovic said that this has nothing to do with justice and proving guilt before the court. *"We can perhaps expect Biljana Plavsic to be*

*one of the witnesses against Slobodan Milosevic," Sarovic said and added that the former RS President remained true to herself and that this was reminiscent of her moves. The head of the SDS election list in election unit 5, **Dragan Kalinic**, believes that the admission is Biljana Plavsic's personal act. "Since we have politically drifted apart then everyone should be held responsible for their own acts," Kalinic said and added that the SDS appreciated her role in the creation of the Serb Republic while she was a member of the party.*

The RS Prime Minister and chairman of the Party of Democratic Progress (PDP), **Mladen Ivanic**, said on Thursday that the decision of Biljana Plavsic to plead guilty to crimes against humanity before the Hague tribunal was her private decision and that everyone had the right to choose the way they defend themselves in The Hague. *"That is her decision. Individuals and not institutions, entities or states are being tried before the Hague tribunal,"* Ivanic told the PDP news conference. Ivanic said he believed that Plavsic's plea would bear no consequences whatsoever for the RS.

The RS prime minister's adviser for cooperation with The Hague Tribunal, **Sinisa Djordjevic**, told **FoNet** on Thursday the RS government will voice its stand on Biljana Plavsic's decision to plead guilty and revise her previous plea of not guilty before the Hague tribunal only after sentence is passed on 16 December. *"I think this is about a kind of an agreement between her lawyers and the tribunal. They said that there was no agreement and that Biljana Plavsic would not testify against anybody, but only after sentence is passed will one see whether there were any conditions and how all this will reflected on the RS's position,"* he said. *"What is very important at this moment is the fact that genocide charges against her were dropped, but I repeat – only after sentence is passed will we be able to voice our stand. At this moment, I can only say that this is a personal act on the part of Mrs Plavsic, to which she absolutely has the right,"* Djordjevic said.

SRNA news agency, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 5, **Oslobodjenje**, p 6, **Glas Srpski**, p 5, **FRY Nacional**, p 4, **Vecernje Novosti**, p 10, **BH Dani**, **Slobodna Bosna**, **New York Times**, **Jutarnji list**, p 6, by Snjezana Pavic, title "Milosevic's destiny is in Plavsic's hands"; p 12, by Ivan Zvonimir Cicak, title "Nobody will find penitence good enough for redemption", **Dnevni List**, p 6, title "Trial for Biljana Plavsic according to the schedule", **Slobodna Dalmacija**, front and p 15, by M. Labus, title "Plavsic is a witness against Milosevic", carried stories and reactions on Plavsic's plea.

Croatian President **Stjepan Mesic** on Thursday ended his testimony in the trial of former Yugoslav President **Slobodan Milosevic** before the Hague Tribunal. Milosevic used the last 30 minutes of his cross-examination on Thursday morning to again try discredit the Croatian President and prove the role of Croatian authorities in the persecution of Serbs and the destruction of Yugoslavia. (**FRY Nacional** p 4, **Vecernje Novosti** p 10, **Blic** p 11, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 21)

Dragoslav Ognjenovic, Milosevic's defence attorney, said: *"This was a game of a big and a small, and small one was Mesic who in a mumbo-jambo way tried to justify Croatian politics from 90s and his role in it."* Ognjenovic said that Milosevic's cross-examination of Mesic proved that Croatian politics had caused the breakdown of former Yugoslavia. (**FRY Nacional** p 4)

Vecernji List (page 10) carries reactions of prominent persons in BiH, that Radio Free Europe collected, about effects of Croatian President **Mesic's** testimony at **Milosevic's** trial in ICTY. **Milorad Zivanovic**, professor from Banja Luka University, stated that Mesic's appearance and testimony in The Hague started to unveil the truth about war in BiH. President of Forum of Citizens of BiH, **Vehid Sehic**, said that Mesic's testimony could positively influence upcoming elections in BiH. **Sacir Filandra**, professor at Sarajevo University, stated that Milosevic trial will have negative impact on moderate political forces in BiH, because national, right-oriented and

conservative parties will benefit more.

With regards to the Bobetko case, **Vecernji List** (page 8) reads that the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, **Carla del Ponte**, EU High Representative, **Javier Solana**, and the NATO Secretary General, **Lord George Robertson**, have all called on Croatian Government to honour its obligations and extradite general **Janko Bobetko** to the ICTY. Del Ponte said that the ICTY is ready to take into consideration Bobetko's health including a pre-trial release: *"First and foremost general Bobetko has been indicted, he has to go to The Hague, and the judges will decide on the further course of action"*. (also in **Vjesnik** on front page, **Slobodna Dalmacija** on page 5, **Jutarnji List** on front and page 3

HR/OHR-related news

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Thursday visited Travnik where he met with the representatives of the Central Bosnian Canton Youth Initiative to discuss perspectives for young people in BiH. Ashdown also was the guest in the local radio-station program. (Dnevni Avaz, p 2 with a photo, Oslobođenje, p 4)

Dnevni Avaz (p 2) reports that the OHR has denied media speculation according to which the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, might play role of "a judge" if the BiH Presidency at its session scheduled for Friday fails to agree on the appointment of the BiH State Information and Protection Agency heads. *"The stories that we will appoint those people today if this is not done by the Council of Ministers and the Presidency are not correct,"* Julian Braithwaite, the Chief OHR Spokesman, told the newspaper. He added that the OHR was, however, interested in completion of the process as soon as possible since the SIPA was a crucial part of a new structure to fight organized crime in the country and provide safe environment for its citizens.

George Vlachogiannis, the OHR supervisor for Foca/Srbinje

municipality, is expected to leave the duty next week, Dnevni Avaz (p 2) learns. The Greek diplomat is leaving the town following his three and a half years engagement because the officials at the OHR Sarajevo have been more and more dissatisfied with his work in the past period.

Federation affairs

The worst problem in **Zenica prison** is the security of Serb and Croat prisoners who are being subjected to horrendous physical abuse and beatings and psychological torture, a member of the working group of the BiH Ministry of Human Rights, **Drago Kovac**, has said. Following a visit to Zenica prison by a fact-finding mission to investigate the human rights situation in this institution, a news conference in Sarajevo was told that the conditions inside the prison had made prisoner Darko Radinovic try to commit suicide several times, after which his sentence was quashed. *"Others who have been subjected to torture ask to stay in the collection centre upon their arrival or ask to be put in an isolation cell, which is illegal. The prison management has insisted that it has been undertaking all legal measures and punishing persons responsible, but it cannot change significantly the harsh conditions in the prison as incidents usually take place at night,"* Kovac said. The working group urged the relevant BiH authorities to undertake all possible measures (to improve the situation) as a great number of prisoners thought that suicide was their only solution. Both the relevant state authorities and the international community will be informed about this problem. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 4, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 10, **Vecernji List**, front and p 3, by Dejan Jazvic, **Slobodna Dalmacija**, p 17, by Zlatko Tulic, **Dnevni List**, front and p 5, **Fena** report, **Glas Srpski**, front page, **Blic**, p 6)

BiH Federation President **Safet Halilovic** has warned High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** that in its news bulletins RTRS has broadcast maps of BiH which exclusively show Brcko as an integral part of the RS. *"The weather reports and the chronicle Elections 2002 have shown maps of BiH which, intentionally or not, have only two entities designated on them. There are no indications of the existence of Brcko*

District,” Safet Halilovic’s letter to Ashdown said, adding that this is still happening two and a half years after the proclamation of Brcko District. “We see Brcko District as a focal point of our joint interests in the inevitable building and strengthening of inter-entity partnership relations. We also accept the agreed stance that in the overall integration of the modern and self-sustainable state of BiH, towards which we aspire, Brcko District could serve as an institutional model. Considering that our efforts are geared towards this aim, we hope to have your understanding, support and assistance,” the letter of the BiH Federation president said. (Oslobodjenje, p 5, Dnevni List, p 6 – Fena report))

Dnevni List (page 3) reports that Federation Government adopted Report on Implementation of Budget in period January – August 2002, with the fact that 648,295,045 KM of income were collected. That amount is 3,72 % higher than in the same period last year, and represents 47,25 % of planned budget for this year. The article also says that IMF positively assessed the implementation of budget policy based on stand-by arrangement. The article also says that the Government decided to return 5 million KM taken from companies on the ground of custom revenues. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 3, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 4)

Slobodna Dalmacija (page 19, by I. Milesic) reports that Governor of Zenica Dobojski Canton **Mugdim Herceg** sent a letter to **Paddy Ashdown** in which he asks from the High Representative to impose constitutional changes on constituency of all three people in this canton. Eighteen amendments that Herceg proposed to the Cantonal Assembly did not pass due to lack of two-thirds majority, because SDA was against it. “I was convinced that the amendments will be rejected and even before session of Cantonal Assembly I sent a letter to the High Representative and asked him to impose these amendments by his decision“, stated Herceg.

Dnevni List (front and page 5) carries that an explosive device planted in a car of **Enis Sijamija**, a former BiH Army

officer, was revealed. Sijamija is the first person who publicly accused the war political and military top of the Bugojno Municipality for disappearance of 26 Croats from Bugojno. Sijamija himself revealed the explosive device because he has been checking his car before he enters it every day during the last year. DL says that *'although the Ministry of Interior did not confirm this information officially, this terrorist attack on Sijamija is nothing else but a response of the Bugojno dark forces to Sijamija's statement given to a Sarajevo weekly, when Sijamija concluded that 26 Croats from Bugojno were killed for personal interests of some individuals.'* DL says that the investigation on this case is underway.

Developments in the RS

Glas Srpski reports on its **front page** that the RS Bureau for Cooperation with the ICTY, forwarded to the ICTY Office in Banja Luka case files and evidence against Jozo Lovrenovic, Ivica Drazeta, Simun Sarava, Ilija Perko, Marko Lucic, Ante Petrovic, Sakib Zekan and Hari Maslic who are suspected of having committed war crimes against civilian population and prisoners from June 1992 to October 1992 in the Jajce area. (**Blic**, p 7, **Dnevni List**, p 3)

Both Banja Luka dailies, **Glas Srpski** (front page, p 3) and **Nezavisne Novine** (p 6), quote the RS **Tax Administration Chief, Milica Bisic**, as saying that p RS NA deputies, one minister and 8 deputy ministers did pay taxes and therefore, criminal reports will be filed against them. Bisic said that their names would be disclosed after the elections. She said that during this year the RS Tax Administration filed 18 criminal reports against persons who were mostly involved in tax evasion and money laundering. Bisic said that in 90% of cases, money laundering is directly connected to tax evasion. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Blic**, p 6)

Nezavisne Novine carries a follow-up to the story about **Nova Banjalucka Bank**, which appeared in yesterday's edition of

Nezavisne Novine. The paper reports (p 5) that the Nova Banjalucka Bank Steering Board yesterday canceled the agreement on marketing and advertising with "Nezavisne Novine" and "Nes Radio" (both owned by Zeljko Kopanja). The reason for such decision of the Steering Board is that Nezavisne Novine reported in its yesterday's edition that by selling the Banjalucka Bank to Verano Motors from Belgrade, the RS Government did not sell that bank but gave it as a gift.

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Thursday, 1900)

- NATO Secretary General called Croatia to extradite general Bobetko to Den Haag
- Director of RS Tax Administration called Entity officials to pay taxes on income
- Iraq has limited deadline for complying with UN resolutions, said US President
- Pre-election silence begins tomorrow at 7.00 am in BiH

FTV 1 (1930)

- Bomb planted under the car of Enes Sijamija, former lieutenant of the Army of BiH
- Testimony of Croatian President Stjepan Mesic finished in Den Haag
- Hague Tribunal, EU, NATO, requested from Croatia to extradite general Janko Bobetko
- Proposal of the law on mandatory representation of constituent and other nations in BiH public institutions accorded

RTRS (1930)

- 2.3 million citizens registered to vote
- Paddy Ashdown – Elections are the chance for more work and more justice
- Europe is the only alternative for BiH, said Javier Solana.
- Del Ponte and Solana demand from Croatia to extradite Janko Bobetko
- Seselj calls on boycott of the second round of Serbian presidential elections