

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 5/8/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: BiH insurance companies owe 1.5 million KM to drivers; Protest of warning – Plots owners block “Arizona”

Dnevni Avaz: Inadmissible tyrannical regime-like tendencies – Lagumdžija threatens with “the fourth method”

Jutarnje Novine: Interview with Alija Behmen, the SDP candidate for the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency – I will defeat both Tihic and Silajdzic; Protest of the land owners at the Tuzla-Orasje highway – “Arizona” – robbery of the century

Dnevni List: Interview with Slavo Kukic, the President of the HPT Mostar Steering Board – I have joker cards against Toby Robinson

Glas Srpski: Reconstructed houses in the Derventa area waiting for the returnees

Nezavisne Novine: Football players from the entire BiH on a single play ground

Ljiljan: Pre-election “painting” of voters in the Sarajevo Canton – 35 million from the Budget for the pre-election “making-up” the fronts (of the buildings)

Financial affairs

According to Oslobodjenje front-page story (continued on p 7), in spite of the annual income of 300 million KM, the insurance companies in BiH only in the first three months of this year failed to pay requested compensation for damages of 1.5 million KM to 159 drivers. The newspaper claims that the insurance companies are paying money to their clients only when they are forced to do so, meaning after long legal proceedings before the authorized courts.

Under a title “I have trump cards against Toby Robinson”, **Dnevni List** (front and pages 6 and 7) carries an interview with the Chair of HPT Mostar’s Steering Board **Slavo Kukic** in which he talks about the situation in the HPT Mostar,

especially about the situation regarding the Eronet case. Kukic: *"Based on experiences with Eronet and communications with the Provisional Administrator for the Hercegovacka Bank of Mostar, **Toby Robinson**, I am ready to prove that a part of officials from the Office of the High Representative are taking part in an organised crime. Therefore, I call on **Paddy Ashdown** to, as he has announced, combat the corruption and organised crime"*, says Kukic and goes on to reiterate previous reports/stories about the Provisional Administrator (PA) offering Eronet stocks to HPT Mostar when PA, according to Kukic tried to trick HPT Mostar. Regarding the future of Eronet and HPT Mostar, Kukic says that HPT Mostar decided to be active on two fields: to fight and regain the ownership share in Eronet and secondly, to request a licence to HPT Mostar. In that context, Kukic says that HPT Mostar requested the BiH Council of Ministers to grant the licence: *"Since we submitted the request two months ago and still there is no answer, I do not rule out a possibility of political games within the Council of Ministers (...) We will not allow possible games because we in HPT Mostar have "reserve trump cards". I will not reveal them as yet, but if I am dragged until the elections, I will reveal them before (the elections)"*. Talking about two meetings with the former High Representative **Wolfgang Petritsch** , Kukic says: *"Based on meetings that were instigated by Petritsch, I realised that I was being lured into a compromise, the price of which would be paid by HPT. I did not agree to that. I am convinced that the whole operation has been motivated with a need to save the reputation of the Hercegovacka Bank. That was the initial motive"*, says Kukic and adds that Robinson's intention changed throughout the course of time. *"She is just a branch of big international capital through which the public capital is being invalidated. With her moves, she is assaulting the economic interests of BiH justifying it with the economic interest of the Hercegovacka Bank. I do not believe her honest intentions because if she cared for the Hercegovacka Bank, she would have solved the case already"*.

Protests, disputes

The owners of the land and facilities at the Arizona market on Sunday blocked the Tuzla-Orasje road for 15 minutes to express their dissatisfaction with the Brcko District Assembly and Government's decisions related to the announced expropriation of the private property in the market area. (Oslobodjenje, p 3, Dnevni Avaz, p 2, Jutarnje Novine, p 8)

Dnevni Avaz (p 3) reports that the four Bosniak members of the RS National Assembly's Constitutional Commission (Sulejman Tihic, Remzija Kardic, Senija Bubic and Halid Kulenovic) have proposed the abolishment of the entire procedure of the election of the two BiH Constitutional Court Judges from the RS (Miodrag Simovic and Radomir Lukic). In a letter sent to the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and the RS Constitutional Commission President, Miroslav Mikes, they claim that the legal procedure and the High Representative's decision of January 11, 2001, were violated during the process of Simovic and Lukic's nomination and election because the proposal had not been sent to the Constitutional Commission for prior consultations.

Pre-election news

In its latest report on BiH of August 2, the International Crisis Group (ICG) turns attention to a great significance of the upcoming elections in BiH suggesting that now the time has come for a debate to be opened on the most important economic and political problems in the country. (Dnevni Avaz, p 2, Oslobodjenje, p 3, Jutarnje Novine, p 3, Dnevni List, p 3)

Dnevni list (p. 4) carries an article about visit of Zlatko Lagumdžija, SDP BiH President, to Mostar on Saturday, where he met with members of SDP Mostar and talked with them about financial problems in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. Lagumdžija also explained state-level positions regarding economic reforms stating that the IMF has promised to help BiH in next 15 months with 220 million US dollars, and in next week 26 million dollars should be spent for social needs in budgets. Explaining to journalists why the Federation

Parliament did not confirm/appoint a new Minister of Finances, Lagumdžija said: *"I would pose the same question as to what the Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen asked the president of HDZ caucus – why didn't they vote for mister Franjic? Everywhere else in the world, in such situation, a support is given to election of minister or government, regardless of the fact that certain structures are not forming majority in the parliament."*

In the front-page article (continued on the p 8), Dnevni Avaz Editorial Staff (signed by Fahrudin Djapo and Mladen Dakic fiercely criticizes the BiH SDP leader and BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija saying that a number of affairs and his interview for Saturday's Oslobođenje prove the assessment made by a famous foreign ambassador who said that "one should not have illusions Lagumdžija is more honest and democratic politician than Edhem Bicakcic (former BiH Federation Prime Minister and senior SDA official)." According to the newspaper, in the interview, Lagumdžija openly threatened to those criticizing him in a so far not seen manner thereby totally ignoring the freedom of expression as a democratic standard.

Alija Behmen, the BiH Federation Prime Minister and the SDP's candidate for the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, said in an interview with Jutarnje Novine (p 4, announced on the front page) he would defeat both SDA's Sulejman Tihic and Party for BiH's Haris Silajdzic. *"The advantage of my counter-candidates is they have not permanent professional engagement as I have, neither they are facing every day problems as I am. But, my advantage is I will have an opportunity to proudly present what this government has achieved in the past 15-16 months,"* Behmen emphasized.

Dnevni List (p. 2) carries a greeting of **Croat Party of Rights of BiH** (HSP BiH) to 'Aluminij' company of Mostar because of record production that the company managed in July. In the same time HSP stated that they are worried about destiny of

'Aluminij' because of decision of Federation Government that approved new international arbitration for this company, which was initiated by Party for BiH, i.e. its leader **Haris Silajdzic**. HSP adds that since 1993, Silajdzic has proven his negative attitude towards Croats several times, and says that the final goal of Silajdzic is economic weakening of Croats, which would lead to a point when the Croats would be forced to leave BiH. That would, in HSP's opinion, fulfil Silajdzic's political goals of complete islamisation of Federation BiH.

Dnevni List (page 3, by Lj. Petricevic) carries an editorial which renders the issue of the future of NHI and the position of the Croats in the Alliance of changes. Petricevic says that the removal of **Nikola Grabovac** shows how equal the Croats really are in the Alliance and that the failure to appoint Grabovac's successor substantiates the claim. *"Does the NHI have an interest to stay in the Alliance when it has been brought into such a position that it cannot rely on its partners but asks for help from the High Representative"*, asks Petricevic.

Branislav Lolic, president of the SNS and a candidate for RS President, said that the SNS would run independently for the elections, and possible coalitions would be considered after 5th October. (**FRY Nacional** p 11)

BiH CoM members-related news

The BiH CoM Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, **Kresimir Zubak**, appealed to Croats whose houses are being reconstructed in the settlement of Bunar (Derвента region) within the joint project of the Governments of Croatia, RS and BiH Federation, to return to those houses (**Glas Srpski**, cover page). However, Zubak's appeal was just waste of time, due to the fact that the Croats do not return to their reconstructed houses, as is the case in the villages of Poljari and Susnjari, where more than 50 houses were reconstructed but are still empty. One of the Croats whose house was reconstructed, **Nikola Jukic**, stated that the Croats from this region have always wanted to cross

the river Sava and move to Croatia. *"Now when they have done so, it is unlikely that they will return."* – said Jukic. Assistant to the Minister for Refugees and DPs, **Mato Majstorovic**, says that Croats are trying to sell the houses after they are reconstructed. Thanks to the efforts of Derventa OMI, there are some 300 apartments in Derventa that are vacated and waiting to be repossessed. On the other hand, the number of those who have no place to settle is much bigger. Serbs who have found temporary accommodation in Derventa are now leaving the town and the battle is ongoing for the return of Bosniaks and Croats.

In an interview for Jutarnje Novine (p 2), the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Dragan Mikerevic, said that, in his opinion, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic were not the main problems in the country having in mind such the economic situation and the level of poverty. *"No one can say Karadzic and Mladic are culprits for such the economic situation,"* emphasized Mikerevic.

International relations

Dnevni List (page 5, by D.Raguz) carries a reaction/editorial to the visit of the American Ambassador to BiH **Clifford Bond** to Stolac when he stated that he in principle did not meet with HDZ officials. Raguz says that the statement again labels HDZ as the party of dangerous intentions and reminds of positive developments in the Stolac area, the witness of which was the former High Representative **Wolfgang Petritsch** who took a decision to abrogate the two-thirds quorum (in the municipal Statute), which was, in Raguz's opinion, a powerful tool of obstruction and blockade of work of municipal institutions of the Bosniaks. The daily goes on to say that there is an evident improvement to the implementation of property related laws in the area and that the figures are above the Federation average and that the issue of schooling of the Bosniak children has been solved. Raguz recommends that Stolac should be viewed in a broader context, and not be singled out, stating the affairs with the hidden ammunition and construction of an Islamic centre on a usurped land in Bugojno. Regarding the reconstruction of houses in Stolac, the author says that the donations enabled the reconstruction of

only 8 Croat houses in the last two years, whilst the number of Bosniak houses that got reconstructed in 2001 alone is 200. Finally, Raguz says that Ambassador Bond's moves are everything but an act of good will and objective comprehension of the situation.

Nezavisne Novine (p 5) reports that the Serbian Prime Minister, **Zoran Djindjic**, stated for **Radio Free Europe** that BiH is a protectorate of the international community and that there are many opened questions in BiH. The daily quotes Djindjic as saying: *"If a foreigner can change the Constitution and dismiss legally elected officials, then it cannot be anything else but a protectorate."* Djindjic's statement caused strong reactions by BiH politicians.

In an interview to Berlin's *Welt Am Sonntag* Yugoslav President **Vojislav Kostunica** said he did not know about **Ratko Mladic's** whereabouts, and that during recent visit to Belgrade ICTY Chief Prosecutor **Carla Del Ponte** had not brought Mladic's address. *"In order to arrest Madic we have to know where he is. But, despite all hints, we don't know that. Carla Del Ponte had allegedly brought his address during her last visit to Belgrade. But nothing has come out of it,"* Kostunica said. He also denied the claims that Mladic is protected by Yugoslav army. (**Nacional** p2, **Vecernje Novosti** p3, **Blic** p3)

Croatia celebrating Day of Victory and Homeland Gratitude, Serbs mourning the victims

"Croatian citizens are today celebrating the Day of Victory and Homeland Gratitude in memory of August 5, 1995 when the Croatian military and police forces celebrated the occupied Knin in the operation "Storm" which was from the early 90s a centre of Serb rebellion in Croatia. Starting this year, the holiday is being celebrated as the Day of Victory too after the Croatian Sabor (Parliament) adopted changes to the Laws on holidays in November last year. Although it was originally planned to celebrate the holiday as the day of Victory only, because of the respect for the Croatian Army that won the Homeland war, the name of the holiday carries the name of Day

of Homeland Gratitude as a token of gratitude to all victims", **Dnevni List** carries a HINA report.

A memorial service was held yesterday in Banja Luka for all killed Krajina Serbs in the exodus of the Serb population, seven years ago, during the "Storm" operation of the Croatian Army and police (**Glas Srpski**, p 3). It is assumed that some 6 000 people were killed in the operation and more than 2 800 are still missing. The Director of the Documentation – Informative Center, **Savo Strbac**, stated: *"I believe that one day, we will return to Krajina and bury our dead according to the Orthodox customs. The Jews waited 2000 years to return to Jerusalem and I hope that we will not wait that long."*

In a statement for **BBC**, carried by **Nezavisne Novine** (p 13), the President of the Serb People's Council, **Milorad Pupovac**, stated that efforts for return of Serbs to Croatia have lost the momentum, in spite of the pressure of the international community on Croatian authorities. Pupovac stated: *"Even though the areas where Serbs should return are declared as areas of special state interest, these are still areas that are neglected in various ways."* According to Pupovac, property issues in Croatia are still unresolved, Serb houses are not reconstructed and economy recovery of the areas that used to be populated by Serbs is not happening.

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Sunday, 1900)

- Short road blockade on Arizona market protesting over decision of Brcko District authorities to expropriate 15 hectares of private land
- Rule of law before democratic structures – Paddy Ashdown in Salzburg
- Association of displaced Bosniaks from Sarajevo organize visit of a group of some 300 persons to cemeteries in Visegrad

FTV 1 (1930)

- Road blockade on Arizona market protesting over decision of Brcko District authorities to expropriate 15 hectares of private land
- BiH Federation Parliament to have a summer break
- Office of Revision performed inspection of 26 Federation ministries and institutions
- ICG analyzed results of the Alliance

RTRS (1930)

- Establishment of the rule of law is biggest priority in SEE, international officials agreed in Salzburg. High Representative Paddy Ashdown favors cooperation in the region. (2,0)
- RS Minister of Refugees and DPs Mico Micic presents ten packages of construction materials to returnees in Raskosnica, Tuzla Canton. The value of these packages is around 100,000 KM. (2,0)
- Hundreds of Croatian Serb refugees today commemorated the 1995 Croatian army offensive "Storm" that claimed hundreds of lives and forced some 250,000 Serbs to flee after the collapse of their breakaway republic. (3.0)