OHR BiH TV News Summary, 17 August 1999

News Headlines

- Turkey hit by earthquake
- Reis-ul-ulema Mustafa Efendija Ceric sends telegram on behalf of Islamic Community to Turkey after catastrophic earthquake
- OHR issues 4,000 page corruption report – The New York Times
- Izetbegovic office calls corruption article 'lies'
- New York Times article damaging to BiH – Silajdzic
- Reactions from International Community on New York Times article pending, possibly before end of news broadcast
- Privatization of Tuzla 'Bosna prijevoz' company disrupted by workers dissatisfied with management
- State companies auctioned in Bijeljina for under 45,000 DM
- Security forces issue warning for 19 August demonstrations in Belgrade
- Returns to Kosovska Mitrovica expected while conflicts in Kosovo continue
- UNHCR helps Serbs and Romanies to leave Kosovo
- Demands for Milosevic departure increase, police arrest organizer of demonstrations in Valjevo
- Yugoslav Vice-president Tomislav Nikolic warns opposition that all means necessary will be taken on Belgrade demonstrations
- World news
- Implementation of Annex 7 – 50 Bosniaks return to Nevesinje Municipality seven years after needing further aid
- Ozren villages wait for return of Serbs, some 200 families expected by end of year

- Return of Croats to RS facing obstacles
- Refugee associations demand state-wide law on refugees will write to Stability Pact Special Co-ordinator Bodo Hombach
- IC will not finance Bugojno Croats staying in Livno while they wait for others to rebuild their homes – Travnik regional OHR office
- Serb refugees living in Doboj accuse BiH and Maglaj authorities of disabling their returns in protest letter to SFOR and IC
- OHR worried over incident in Kozarac, Prijedor Municiaplity, where two people killed and two wounded, local authorities responded well – Stiglmayer
- ICTY Forensic team starts exhumation of mass grave in Northeast Bosnia – UN spokesperson Kelly Moore
- OSCE and office of BiH Ombudsmen agree to establish Special Advisor for Media
- CD Coalition entering RS government would escalate conflicts – Independent Social Democrats member Krstan Simic
- CD Coalition initiative to restructure Dodik government sounds bad and will not be fulfilled – SNS President Plavsic
- BiH Syndicate opposes investment fund formation by political parties which would create national factories owned by party
- Sarajevo Architect offered project of building Banja Luka clinic
- SFOR admires high quality of Stability Pact Summit coverage by TV BiH
- Director of EC department for Southeast Europe on New York Times article
- Izetbegovic and Petritsch discuss BiH election law and priorities in Dayton implementation
- Silajdzic discuses implementation of BiH peace plan after Summit with representative of Pakistani Parliament
- Deputy Foreign Minster Husein Zivalj and representative

of Pakistani Parliament discuss economic reforms and political relations in BiH
- Luzanski and Ganic meet with Senior Deputy High Representative for BiH Ralph Johnson to discuss implementation of Brcko arbitration, Farrand also attended
- IMC will continue to cooperate with RS on forming frequency spectrum with special accent on defining public and private broadcasting – joint statement from IMC and RS Information Ministry
- OHR media department says High Representative decision on restructuring public broadcast system in BiH offers Croats in BiH unique legal, cultural and other representation (nothing more reported)

News Summary

OHR issues 4,000-page corruption report – The New York Times

"Millions of dollars stolen, millions lost in BiH banks, the greatest amounts are missing from Tuzla and Sanski Most" reads The New York Times front page, drawing data from a 4,000-page report by the OHR anti-corruption team. Over 1 billion USD are missing from open funds or stolen from international aid projects in frauds implemented by Croat, Serb and Bosniak leaders that keep BiH divided into three ethnic enclaves, concluded an in-depth US led investigation anti-corruption unit, reports The Times. The report mentions several officials connected with leading nationalistic parties having profited from these frauds. Although the OHR has replaced or prevented fifteen officials from holding onto their positions, most have maintained their influence. One influence mentioned in the report talks of ten Embassies or international organisations losing over $20 million deposited in one Bosnian bank. But only the Swiss Embassy publicly admitted their losses. The anti-corruption squad, requesting special measures and not presenting their staff in BiH, is currently investigating 220 corruption and fraud cases. They have documented up-to-date

cases in a 4,000-page file that has not been published. The content of this file has been given to the disposal of The New York Times. Organizations such as the OHR, UN and US AID, all dedicated to the country's restructuring, have lost tens of millions of dollars reads the report. Wide- spread corruption is seen by many as a hard blow in the long lasting and frustrating battle for rebuilding a democratic BiH, a country that has received 5,100 million dollars in international aid since the end of war in 1995. Corruption also played a main role in the rejection by foreign investors, seen as the only way for BiH to be relieved of its dependency on international aid. The missing funds were supposed to be used for rebuilding roads, schools and buildings as well as for offering municipal services across the country.

02:40

Izetbegovic office calls corruption article 'lies'

Before Bosniak Member of the BiH Presidency Alija Izetbegovic comments on the anti-corruption article in The New York Times, his Advisor Mirza Hajric offered these comments. "I claim all of these accusations are lies constructed to undermine the BiH Government and turn friendly countries away from military and financial engagement in BiH. Some lies seem obvious, such as the Tuzla Canton budgets in 1997, 1998 and half of 1999 amounting to DM 612 million, while the author of the article says that $500 million are missing, that is DM 900 million, almost twice as much as the cantonal budget. The 80,000 national flats in Sarajevo mentioned in the article are actually 69,000 and are not under the management of the City Development Institute, nor have they ever been, but are owned by hundreds of state companies and institutions and this is well known. The Development Institute has no connection to these flats, it is an organization for the renewal and rebuilding of the town. Work cannot proceed in this manner, there can be no more of these secret reports, kept secret only to allow irresponsible presentations of lies and make believe.

I demand a public response from the OHR as to whether this article is based on reports by OHR officials, are these allegations true and honest, and if so, they need to be publicly addressed. Will, and in what fashion, can OHR personnel take responsibility if the data are shown to be untrue, Hajric asked. Journalists present at Hajric's conference were especially interested in the fragment of the Times article mentioning Bakir Izetbegovic as one of the richest and most powerful people in BiH, among other things controlling the Sarajevo housing fund and 15% of the Air Bosnia Company. Hajric suggested that they ask the OHR the question.

02:25

New York Times article damaging to BiH – Silajdzic

Council of Ministers Co-chairman Haris Silajdzic has also reacted to the New York Times article, saying it inflicts great damage on BiH at a moment when the country is attempting to earn the trust of international financial organizations and foreign investors. Therefore, the IC needs to publish this secret report without further ado in order to undertake eventual legal measures or deny claims made in the article, says Dr. Silajdzic.

00:33

Return of Croats to RS facing obstacles

Of 1,275 requests for Croat returns to the RS, 15 have been resolved. Brcko Mayor Mijo Anicic says that, "when it comes to requests put before the international committee, the number is 1,887 requests and only 23 certificates have been issued. Pero Zizak of the Association of Refugee Croats in Plasko near Ogulin, Croatia, states that this association has demanded that international organisations and RS Government enable returns to all areas, but the initiative was not welcomed. Zizak states that 1,406 Serbs have returned to Plaski

Municipality. “We demand that the IC and RS abide by the international agreements and the Dayton Agreement by allowing the possibility of a joint Serb and refugee Croat delegation visit to Banja Luka to resolve these problems” Zizak stated.

01:14

OSCE and office of BiH Ombudsmen agree to establish Special Advisor for Media

The OSCE and office of BiH Ombudsmen have agreed to appoint a Special Ombudsmen Advisor for Media to monitor violations of the rights for media freedom of movement and speech, implementation of the Law on BiH Media, work of media houses, Courts and cantonal authorities in relation to the media.

00:18