

OHR BiH TV News Summary, 4 December 1998

- House of Peoples Constituted
- Peaceful Demonstrations – ‘Justice for Brcko’
- Bugojno Municipal Council session
- SNS on HR authority
- RTV BiH reconstruction

At the constitutive session of the BiH House of Peoples Vladimir Soljic was elected to represent the Croat side as Speaker for eight months. Bosniak Izet Zigic will succeed him, followed by Serb representative Drago Ljubicic. However, there were difficulties over the verification of the mandates of the MPs: Three members of the verification commission agreed with the OHR's recommendation against verifying the mandate of the fifth Croat representative, an HSP member. The OHR insisted that in addition to the HDZ candidates, there should be a candidate from the NHI. The club of the Croat members demanded that an OHR representative should come forward and clarify the OHR's position, but no explanation was forthcoming. Subsequently all parties agreed that the verification of the mandate of the fifth Croat member should be postponed until the second session of the parliament. (The presenter commented sarcastically on the fact that the various ‘pauses’ were lengthier than the session itself.)

2:00

KCD BiH organised peaceful demonstrations in Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla and Bihac ‘enabling the citizens to register their concern over the fate of Brcko’, under the slogan ‘Justice for Brcko’. The coverage was highly sympathetic, with much focusing on various banners – particularly on: ‘Will genocide be rewarded?’ and ‘There used to be 79% of us – what happened?’ TV BiH polled the demonstrators: ‘Do you have any

message for the international community?’ – ‘There has been enough discrimination against Bosniaks,’ was the reply. The demonstration passed in dignity and without incidents, said the presenter. The TV BiH team next paid a visit to various collective centres where former Brckans live. The footage showed primitive conditions, with women drawing water from a communal tap. Weeping DPs told the camera of their desire to return. ‘This was our Brcko.’ TV BiH reported on how Brcko Supervisor Robert Farrand suspended Municipal Councillor of Ravne Brcko Franjo Cancarevic. Farrand simultaneously annulled all decisions passed at the first session of the Municipal Council, as the council was illegally constituted.

5:00

Foreign Bloc: TV BiH reported on the deterioration of FRY – US relations, due to the latest declaration of the FRY parliament which condemned the US for attacking FRY interests. TV BiH covered the start of a two-day seminar organised by the [UNHCR](#) and the Federation Ministry of Refugees, called ‘Strategy of Return for 199

9:00

. ‘As is well known, the year of 1998 was below all expectations, to put it mildly,’ said the presenter. One of the reasons for this has been the existence of associations which encourage DPs to remain in their place of current residence, instead of returning to places of former residence. Serbs who returned to Lusca Palanka and Sanski Most confirmed that such associations used ‘all means’ in the effort to stop their return. Political parties are involved in this obstruction.

2:00

A group of DPs from Bosanski Petrovac have broken into the flats of Drvar DPs. The association of Drvar DPs issued a statement in objection, complaining there are forces which desire to prevent their return.

1:00

The regular session of the Episcopal conference of BiH took place in Sarajevo. A letter was sent to HR Westendorp on behalf of DPs who wish to return. 'We are well aware that there are local and international politicians who don't wish to help them. On the contrary, DPs are frequently obstructed in the realisation of their basic property rights.' The letter asked for support for DPs of all faiths.

1:30

The Bugojno Municipal Council met today. Attention focused on the report of the joint investigation team of the Federation Ombudsmen and the OSCE on illegal distribution of property. Deputy High Representative Hanns Schumacher had recommended that the councillors should pass a decision to suspend all building on these controversial sites, until the courts decide on these cases. Subsequently, Mayor Dzevad Mlaco sent a new report based on 'legal facts', and the OHR responded that the final decision should be made by the responsible municipal organs. The KCD BiH delegates said the issue was the responsibility of the court rather than the Council. 8 Croat delegates opposed the continuation of building, and 19 other delegates were undecided. The HDZ proposed a vote of no confidence in Mlaco but this did not succeed.

2:00

The SDP announced that it supported the platform of the OHR for the Madrid conference.

1:00

The SNS considers the position of the RS in the run-up to Madrid is unsatisfactory, due to the manoeuvres of the SDS and the SRS, in trying to form a government. This situation will result in an extension of the authority of the HR at Madrid, thus reducing the sovereignty of the RS. (It is a novel move for TV BiH to quote RS-based parties.)

1:00

The independent associations Circle 99, SGV, VKBI, and HNV

issued their reaction to the reorganisation of RTV BiH. In a letter sent to the OHR they emphasise that 'Any narrowing-down to entity and cantonal borders is an anachronism'.

1:00