

OHR Bulletin 23 – October 31, 1996

No. 23, issued October 31, 1996

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Presidency Meeting

- At the Presidency meeting at the Electro-technical

Faculty in Lukavica on 25 October, further measures concerning the setting up of common institutions of BH were discussed. The meeting was hailed by the High Representative, Mr. Carl Bildt, as another positive step along the way to making the joint institutions a reality. A joint statement released at the conclusion of the meeting confirmed that the key offices of BH would be distributed according to the principle of equality between the Federation and the Republika Srpska (RS) and between the three constituent peoples in BH. Discussions regarding the structure and composition of the Council of Ministers, the candidacy for the Central Bank of BH and the Constitutional Court were also held and views were exchanged on issues such as the Rules of Procedure of the Presidency, establishment of various Joint Working Groups. The implementation of the 30 September decision concerning the release of prisoners was also discussed and the Presidency members appointed their Personal Representatives, Messrs. Jusuf Pusina, Martin Raguz and Nenad Radovic, who are entrusted with full authority to act in their names on these issues.

- The fourth meeting (third working session) of the Presidency was held on 29 October at the National Museum in Sarajevo. Discussions continued on the formation of the common institutions, notably the Council of Ministers.

The Presidency appointed Hasan Muratovic, Martin Raguz and Nenad Radovic as members of the Working Group who are instructed to make a proposal on organisation of the Council of Ministers and the technical services of the Presidency and the Council of Ministers. The first Working Group meeting took place at the OHR on 31 October.

Other points agreed by the Presidency at this session included the following:

- The Presidency approved the Provisional Rules of

Procedures of the Presidency, which will remain in force until the Presidency adopts Permanent Rules of Procedure.

- Following its discussions on 25 October, the Presidency welcomed the appointment of Mr. Serge Robert as Governor of the Central Bank. Members of the Governing Board were also appointed: Mr. Kasim Omicevic and Mr. Jure Pelivan from the Federation, and Mr. Manoljlo Coric from RS. The Governing Board was asked to finalise preparations for the Central Bank Law for presentation to the Council of Ministers before 1 December.
- The Presidency heard a report from caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jadranko Prlic in which special emphasis was given to preparations for the forthcoming Peace Implementation Council meetings in Paris and London. A Working Group, to be chaired by Mr. Prlic, which will prepare the further decisions of the Presidency on these issues, was appointed: Mr. Martin Raguz, Mr. Mihovil Malbasic, Mr. Hasan Dervisbegovic and Mr. Mirza Hajric from the Federation, and Mr. Momir Brajic and Mr. Manojlo Coric from the RS.
- The Presidency also confirmed that all persons elected to public office on 14 September enjoy total immunity and underlined the responsibility of the authorities of the Federation and the RS for the complete safety and security of all those elected across the territory of BH.
- The Presidency decided that at its next session it would appoint a Working Group to prepare the budget for 1997.

The Presidency agreed to meet every Tuesday and Friday, until 14 November, during the period when the common institutions are set up.

Federation Forum

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina received added

impetus following the Federation Special Group meetings held on the 23 and 25 October in Sarajevo. Participants in the Special Group included BH Presidency members Izetbegovic and Zubak, the latter also in his function as Federation President, Federation Vice President Ganic, Federation Prime Minister Kapetanovic, Federation Deputy Prime Minister Bilandzija, Bosnian Prime Minister Muratovic, Bosnian Foreign Minister Prlic and other senior Federation officials, and representatives of the OHR and the US. The Special Group, which was chaired by Principal Deputy High Representative (HR), Ambassador Michael Steiner, underscored the importance of urgently completing the establishment of all Federation Institutions following the 14 September elections, in support of ongoing efforts to establish the new joint institutions of BH.

Included in the Agreed Measures were the following:

1. The Federation partners accepted the basic principles concerning the future organisation of Sarajevo in the Protocol on the Organisation of Sarajevo. These principles provide that Sarajevo shall, in the future, be organised in three layers: an overarching Canton with its nine Municipalities, a City consisting of the four urban core Municipalities, and a State District under the authority of BH, subject to agreement by the other Entity, around those buildings that are essential for the functioning of BH as a whole. On this basis, there will be full participation of the Federation partners in all organs of the Canton of Sarajevo.
2. The Federation partners reached agreement on the design of a Federation flag and coat of arms. After adoption by the Federation Assembly, they shall be displayed on all appropriate Federation documents, functions and institutions.
3. The Federation partners issued a Joint Instruction to the Federation Minister of Internal Affairs and his

Deputy to immediately merge the forces and resources of the existing two separate ministries into a single Federation Ministry of Internal Affairs with Bosniak and Croat members sharing appropriately in Ministry positions. The merger is to be accomplished with the greatest urgency, and not later than 1 December 1996.

Participants also welcomed the formation of most cantonal assemblies, the election of cantonal officers and the designation by most cantons of representatives to the Federation House of Peoples. The Federation partners reaffirmed their commitment to transfer all authorities from the legally dissolved Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna to appropriate ministries of the Federation or to the appropriate cantonal ministries as soon as they are established, along with the appropriate functions of BH, in accordance with the [Dayton Peace Agreement](#), related annexes, and the Constitutions of BH and the Federation of BH.

As well as issues related to the drafting of police laws and a draft law for the Sarajevo canton, the Special Group agreed on transitional supervisory measures for policing of the Neretva Canton, as well as the consolidation of a single operational Federation Customs Administration, in close cooperation with the International Customs Observer Mission (IOCM).

The Principal Deputy HR, Ambassador Michael Steiner said after the meeting: *"I think that these were very constructive and fruitful discussions between the Federal partners which will enable the Federal institutions to be implemented very quickly. Also, I hope that from now on the cooperation between the Federal partners in the Sarajevo canton will function, because they have a lot of work to do".*

Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly

The Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly met on 30 October with participation of 37 of the 45 recently elected

representatives. At the session, in which the last few members for the Federation House of Peoples were elected, it was accepted that, on the basis of the Protocol on the Organisation of Sarajevo (agreed on 25 October), an initiative for changing the Cantonal Constitution would begin. Ambassador Steiner who addressed the Assembly, said *"Some may express doubts, but we are, in Sarajevo, in a special situation and we believe that we are in a transitional period on the road to a peaceful democracy. I think that it is in your hands to give the signal that you believe in a multi-ethnic BH, that the people of Sarajevo, the capital city, understand that it is their home, and that the refugees and DPs, despite differing ideologies, return"*.

Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs

- The continued destruction and mining of uninhabited property of minorities, particularly in the RS, has been denounced at the highest levels by senior officials, including the Principal Deputy HR, Ambassador Michael Steiner and IFOR Commander Admiral T. Joseph Lopez. In order to draw attention to the recent destruction of homes near Prijedor and Drvar, Steiner travelled to both areas on 27 October where over 90 houses have been destroyed recently, to underscore that such activities are criminal acts that must be halted by the responsible authorities, especially given that they appear calculated to undermine the right of displaced persons and refugees to return. Admiral Lopez wrote to the three Members of the BH Presidency on 28 October calling upon the authorities to work together to bring and end to the campaign of destruction, which Lopez said represented a *"severe and unequivocal threat to the stability and security of the country"*.
- In response to the growing number of incidents aimed against the return of refugees and DPs to their homes, representatives of associations of DPs and refugees from

Bosanski Brod, Brcko, Capljina, Derventa, Drvar, Glamoc, Gradacac, Grahovo, Jajce, Modrica, Mostar, Prijedor, Samac, Sarajevo, Sanski Most, Stolac, Tuzla from BH, Croatia and the FRY met on 30 October with the Principal Deputy HR, Ambassador Michael Steiner at the OHR to discuss plans to form a Coalition for Return. In a statement released after the meeting, the participants condemned all acts of destruction aimed at depriving DPs and refugees of their rights to property, the trial and punishment of perpetrators, and the replacement of authorities who do not fulfill their obligations under Annex 7. The Coalition will undertake measures to promote the safe and voluntary return of all refugees and DPs to their homes, including the establishment of a fact-finding team to investigate the conditions for return in particular areas, and the formation of a strategy planning group to liaise with international organisations and relevant authorities.

In a press conference following the meeting, Ambassador Steiner said that the Associations understand that the only chance they have of returning is by working together, hence the formation of the Coalition. *"It is very important that people realise and translate into reality that the burning issue of return is not just something of issue to one ethnicity. All Bosnians, be they Serb, or Bosniak, or Croat, have interests of concern and if they join together, they're much stronger than they were in the past"*, he said.

- On 30 October, the Principal Deputy HR, Ambassador Michael Steiner chaired the first meeting of the three Personal Representatives, appointed by Members of the Presidency of BH on 25 October, to address detention issues. After confirming their commitment to the principle of prisoner releases agreed by the Presidency Members on 30 September, the Personal Representatives discussed operational measures to address war crimes

arrests and arrests on common crimes in cases in which there is the possibility of discrimination on ethnic grounds. With the exception of one clause, the representatives agreed to the proposals put forth by the OHR and will meet again on 4 November to finalise the texts.

- Increased tensions in Mostar prompted EU Special Envoy, Sir Martin Garrod, to write to Federation President Zubak on 29 October, expressing his grave concern about the continued pattern of forced expulsions of Bosniaks from their homes in West Mostar, the destruction of houses and other property on both sides of the city, and the obstruction of minority returns by local authorities and residents in the area.

Freedom Of Movement

- On 28 October IFOR announced the reopening of the Bosansko Petrovo Selo rail bridge which crosses the Inter-Entity Boundary Line in BH, connecting Tuzla and Dobož. This provides the final rail link between Zagreb and Belgrade completing the East-West railway line across BH for the first time since the beginning of the war. The bridge which according to the [IFOR statement](#) *"provides a powerful function in the political completion of the Peace Agreement, crosses the IEBL twice and provides a useful and powerful tool for a civil and commercial opening up of the country"* represents a multi-national effort with IFOR engineers and international civilian contractors. It is part of a 3.32 million DEM contract with the RS Rail Directorate.
- The BH Government decided on 28 October to suspend the 2 week old Sarajevo-Belgrade bus line due to border crossing problems. BH authorities say that certain demands by FRY contravene an agreement signed between the foreign ministers in July, and again recently in Paris between Presidents Milosevic and Izetbegovic.

Economic Issues

- As part of an ongoing series of meetings between businessmen from the Federation and the RS, the OHR chaired a meeting in Trebinje in the Southern Hercegovina region, on 24 October. In addition to the almost 60 businessmen who attended the meeting, representatives from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and USAID also participated to offer their business advisory services. The meeting was positive and conducted in a good atmosphere. These meetings which are held independently, though under the aegis of the Regional Joint Civil Commissions, aim to assist with the re-establishment of contacts and opening of new links between businessmen throughout BH.
- Travel time between Sarajevo and Mostar will be reduced by some 40 minutes with the completion of the rebuilding of two major bridges which were destroyed during the war and which cross tributaries of the Neretva River, bisecting the main Sarajevo-Mostar highway. The Bijela and Jasen bridges were restored at a cost of 2.2 million US\$ provided by the World Bank and formally opened on 30 October. They were among 21 high priority bridges identified by the international community for early reconstruction and included in the first Emergency Transport Reconstruction project. World Bank Resident Director, Mr. Rory O'Sullivan described the reconstruction as *"an excellent example of collaboration between the donor community, the Government of BH and very capable local civil engineering firms and construction companies"*.

Looking Ahead

1 November:

Session of the Joint Presidency. National Museum, Sarajevo.

7 November:

Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board Meeting,
Brussels

14 November:

PIC Steering Board Meeting at the Ministerial level, Paris.

4 – 5 December:

Full Meeting of the PIC, London

See our [Chronology](#) for a full list of activities

The OHR Bulletin is produced by the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo and aims to give an overview of what is happening on the ground in the civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement. Suggestions and contributions are welcome and should be addressed to the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo (387-71) 447 275 ext. 562, Fax (387-71) 447 420. Callers from outside BH dial via Brussels switchboard: Tel. (32-2) 737 7500 & Fax (32-2) 737 7501