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Joint Bodies

The 6th meeting of the Joint Interim Commission (JIC) met in Sarajevo on 6 June with the High Representative, Carl Bildt, in the chair and with Prime Ministers Muratovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) and Klickovic of the Republika Srpska (RS) leading their respective delegations. Items on the agenda included the constitution amendments and aligning the constitutions with the Dayton provisions. Also discussed were

the issues of the amnesty law, telecommunications, the water situation in Gorazde, air traffic and the system of payment. It was decided that following the Peace Implementation Review Conference, to be held in Florence on 13-14 June, the JIC would convene weekly.

The previous day, 5 June, the Joint Civilian Commission (JCC) North West met in Banja Luka for the second time. It was chaired by the Principal Deputy High Representative, Michael Steiner, and was attended by representatives of the municipalities of Sanski Most, Kljuc, Drvar, Prijedor, Mrkonjic Grad and Banja Luka. Those present were informed about the results of the International Contact Group meeting in Geneva with particular emphasis on the agreement on the role of the media during the forthcoming elections. The JCC discussed a number of issues including refugees, freedom of movement, economic reconstruction and the reintegration of the electric energy system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The JCC NW also addressed questions relating to return to homes of origin (confidence-building steps, organised assessment visits, freedom of movement, inflammatory media statements, targeted approach to specific areas of return etc.). The JCC heard a report on the first meeting of the regional Working Group on Refugees and Displaced Persons, held also in Banja Luka on 30 May and chaired by UNHCR, and welcomed the establishment of various working groups facilitating arrangements on assessment visits to specific municipalities. The next JCC NW will be held on 5 July.

Human Rights

On 3 June, members of the Human Rights Task Force subcommittee on property met with the Federation Deputy Minister of Justice to raise concerns about existing property laws which infringe upon the right to return and to property. The meeting was part of a continuing effort by key international agencies (OHR,

UNHCR, OSCE, UNMIBH) to address the increasing number of property rights violations throughout BH.

Also on 3 June, the Human Rights Co-ordination Centre led a mission to the Teslic area to investigate recent forced expulsions of remaining ethnic minorities. Key human rights implementing organisations including OSCE, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Civil Affairs, and the UN International Police participated in the mission. The recommendations from the group have been distributed widely and will be used to help develop the international community's response to the Teslic situation and future incidents.

On 4 June, OHR chaired a Human Rights Task Force session to review mid-term progress in implementation of the human rights provisions of the Peace Agreement. The meeting was attended by Heads of Mission of the key international organisations involved in human rights issues, including OSCE, ECMM, UNMIBH, UNHCR, Council of Europe, IPTF, ICRC, and IFOR. In addition to a discussion of problems and areas of progress, the participants debated priorities and strategies to force the Parties to comply with their obligations under the Peace Agreement. In the next few weeks, HRCC staff will follow-up to operationalise the conclusions of the meeting.

Federation

The Federation Assembly met on 3 June in Sarajevo. After two days of deliberation and discussions, the Assembly passed, with a large majority from all sides, 24 amendments to the Federation constitution. Two amendments were not passed and provisions that remain disputed include those to do with the customs administration, the nomination of military officers and head of diplomatic missions, as well as provisions governing the future of Sarajevo. In spite of the limited number of concrete results, the atmosphere in the Assembly was more constructive than in previous sessions.

The Assembly will reconvene on 12 June and deal with the outstanding items, such as the defence law, the disputed constitutional amendments, the flag and coat of arms of the Federation, the draft law on amnesty and a number of important drafts of economic laws scheduled to be passed under emergency procedures.

Economic Reconstruction

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has decided to establish a representative office in Sarajevo to closely follow progress in the work of the Commission on Public Corporations.

Hundreds of school desks and chairs were distributed by the European Commission to a number of primary schools in the areas of Bihac, Travnik and Gorazde.

The EU Commission donation of urgently needed school furniture, covering approximately 500 classrooms, represents the first part of a DM 4 million package of assistance for a program to enable the resumption of schooling for children in the Federation of BH.

The priority areas were established in consultations between the European Commission and the Federation Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports.

The furniture was produced locally helping kick-start the development of the local economy and generating employment.

Elections

A total of 74 Local Election Commissions (LEC) have so far been trained and provided with all the necessary material for voter registration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 61 out of 62 LECs have been appointed in the Republika Srpska so far while 57 out of 70 LECs have been appointed in the Federation. Three

out of ten Cantonal Election Commissions have been named so far.

Media

Over 20 journalists from the Federation and the Republika Srpska met on 5 June in the OSCE Regional Centre in Bihac, a number meeting for the first time in four years. The role of the media in the peace process was discussed as was the scope for professional co-operation and exchange of information especially during the election period. All participants highlighted the need for free access to newspapers and media from both Entities.

Refugee And Humanitarian Affairs

The Working Group on Missing Persons convened for more than nine hours on Tuesday, 4 June, at the Office of the High Representative. Representatives of families with missing relatives from Srebrenica, Banja Luka, Sanski Most, Bijeljina and Mostar were present at the meeting, and appealed to the Working Group members to cooperate with one another and speed up their work in order to relieve them of the uncertainty about the fate of their family members. The most significant outcome of the meeting was that the Working Group adopted the following guidelines on exhumations, the purpose of which is to ensure that these are conducted in accordance with internationally accepted standards and in full co-operation between the parties:

1. The parties agree to give a prior notification to the Working Group of any plan to exhume remains lying in territory they control. The notification shall be transmitted to the Office of the High Representative a reasonable time prior to the start of any exhumation activity. The notification shall specify the date, time and intended purpose of the exhumation. It shall also

specify the intended disposition of identified and unidentified remains.

2. In all circumstances, exhumation of grave sites shall be performed in accordance with internationally recognised standards, including recognition of the right to decent burial for both identified and unidentified remains.
3. Exhumations shall be conducted under the supervision of international experts.
4. Any party shall be free to send expert and appropriate official observers to exhumations conducted by any other party or by any international organisation that itself is willing to permit such observers. A party conducting an exhumation shall take steps to insure that any expert observer attending the exhumation will have free access to the exhumation site and to all technical facilities associated with the exhumation.
5. A party conducting an exhumation will promptly inform the ICRC or Working Group of the identity of any remains examined and identified, as well as particulars of any remains examined but not identified.
6. The parties agree in principle that, if technically feasible and in accord with the wishes of families or representative family groups, it is desirable to preserve and to relocate remains, whether or not previously identified, to geographic locations near to the current residences of individuals who are believed to be the relatives of the dead.
7. Except in situations in which exhumation is urgently required to preserve remains or where there is a very high likelihood of identification, it is highly desirable that exhumations for purposes of identification shall be undertaken only after antemortem data has been collected concerning the remains to be exhumed.

The JCC North East Working Group on Refugees and Displaced Persons held its second meeting in Bijeljina on 6 June. The

Group decided to establish local working groups for Bijeljina and Kalesija, in addition to the ones already functioning throughout the North Eastern region. The meeting was chaired by the UNHCR.

The existing obstacles to the return of refugees and displaced persons will be discussed at the forthcoming Peace Implementation Review Conference in Florence on 14 June. Of special interest will be the efforts to create suitable conditions for the return of refugees and the housing reconstruction effort needed to make return movements possible. A return programme to targeted areas will be presented to the Conference by the UNHCR.

Succession Issues

Sir Arthur Watts, special negotiator on succession issues visited the region form 26 May to 6 June. He continued his consultations on succession issues with the authorities in Ljubljana, Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo.

Looking Ahead

- **12 June:** OSCE deadline for signing of agreement on regional stabilisation.
- **13-14 June:** Peace Implementation Review Conference, Florence
- **18 June:** Joint Interim Commission, Sarajevo
- **21-22 June:** European Council meeting in Florence; Heads of Governments meet to discuss Bosnia and Herzegovina

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

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