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Florence

The Peace Implementation Conference (PIC) held its mid-term review of the Peace Agreements on 13-14 June in Florence. More than sixty governments and international organisations were represented. The Italian Foreign Minister, Lamberto Dini, issued Chairman’s Conclusions at the end of the conference, which reaffirmed the determination of the PIC to bring about a unified, stable, democratic and prosperous Bosnia.

The conclusions stressed the importance of the forthcoming elections as a turning point opening the door to the establishment of democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH). In his keynote speech at the start of the conference, the High Representative, Carl Bildt, said that he saw elections not as an end unto themselves, but as a means towards the end of setting up common institutions of BH including the common Presidency, the common Council of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Constitutional Court and the Central Bank. *"The longer this is delayed"*, he said, *"the more difficult it will be, and the greater the risk that partition could not be overcome and the Peace Agreement left unfulfilled"*.

The PIC agreed in the Chairman's conclusions that it was essential to adhere strictly to the implementation timetable set out in the Peace Agreement, and recommended to the Chairman in Office of the OSCE, charged with supervising the elections, that the elections should take place on 14 September. The Chairman in Office, Federal Councillor Cotti of Switzerland, would in conjunction with the High Representative keep progress under review in the vital areas of freedom of movement and freedom of expression. He would give his decision on certification of the conditions for elections later in June after discussion in the OSCE Permanent Council.

Concerns were expressed by most speakers at the conference about the need for the parties to comply fully with the demands of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to arrest those indicted for war crimes. The conclusions noted that in Republika Srpska (RS) action had begun to remove Mr Karadzic from the exercise of authority. Mr. Bildt stressed in his speech that the overall co-operation of the RS with the ICTY was still grossly deficient.

In the course of the Florence conference, the RS nominated its arbiter for Brcko under the Peace agreement. This will be Dr. Vitomir Popovic. The Federation has already appointed Dr.

Cazim Sadikovic as its arbiter. The PIC requested the arbiters to agree on a third arbiter as soon as possible.

Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control: This agreement, on which negotiations began last January under the auspices of OSCE, was signed in Florence on 14 June 1996.

The agreement limits the Parties, the FRY, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, to specific numbers of battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery pieces, combat aircraft and attack helicopters.

The agreed ratio of armaments is consistent with the levels of armaments envisaged at Dayton, at 5 (FRY): 2 (Croatia): 2 (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the latter being split in the ratio 2 (Federation): 1 (Republika Srpska). This means an overall reduction of armaments in the region. The agreement has robust verification and inspection procedures.

Human Rights

The High Representative presented at the PIC a report on human rights prepared by the OHR's Human Rights Co-ordination Centre. Introducing the report, he stressed that the Parties had failed to take certain concrete steps which are fundamental to the peace process and which could be accomplished immediately with sufficient political will. These included adopting comprehensive amnesty laws consistent with the peace agreement; bringing property legislation into compliance with the right to return; permitting freedom of movement and releasing persons who are arbitrarily detained.

Essential points contained in the 24-page report, which can be obtained in full from the Office of the High Representative include:

- The security situation for vulnerable populations remains precarious in many parts of the country: human

rights monitors report a high number of incidents involving overt discrimination and violence based on ethnicity.
- Fundamental impediments to freedom of movement remain, including violent disruption of approved visits to pre-war places of residence and arrests on vague suspicions of war crimes;
- Administrative and technical barriers to the expansion of independent media remain in place, and the program content of state-run electronic media is still heavily skewed in favour of the ruling parties;
- Police continue to arbitrarily arrest and detain individuals, sometimes with the stated purpose of having someone to "exchange".

The report also contains a number of specific steps which the Parties must take on an urgent basis in order to improve the human rights situation and to comply with the human rights provisions of the peace agreement.

Economic Reconstruction

UNHCR has signed a new supplementary agreement with UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief) bringing UNHCR's commitment to US $ 30 million for self-help repair of dwellings in 1996. UNHCR has also finalised a DM 6.8 million sub-agreement with the City Development Institute for the rehabilitation of 1.300 apartments to promote return to the Sarajevo suburbs.

Highlights of IFOR's Civilian Military Co-operation (CIMIC) units activities over the last week include:

- French engineers have started garbage removal in the Mt. Igman area near Sarajevo. So far, 1.500 cubic meters have been cleared.
- The Turkish Brigade Engineering Unit continues repair of the primary music school and the Skender Kulenovic

School in Zenica.

Mine Clearance

OHR chaired a meeting of the Mine Clearance Policy Group on 11 June at the National Mine Clearance School at Bruz. An initial course to train RS mine clearers has been completed and a second, for the Federation side, will commence on 17 June, in the face of continuing security concerns for the students.

The Sarajevo airport will be sufficiently clear of mines to allow civilian air traffic from 15 July 1996.

The Norwegian People's Aid NGO will commence demining in Gradacac (in the Tuzla canton) on 1 August using locally trained personnel.

The Mine Action Centre (MAC) has opened a regional office in Banja Luka on 12 June while the MAC offices in Tuzla and Mostar are due to open 8 July and 3 August, respectively.

A US Division Engineering Team gave mine awareness training to approximately 500 students at schools in Osmaci.

Refugee And Humanitarian Affairs

UNHCR is producing and distributing 10,000 local language versions of its Repatriation Information Reports throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to these, a further 1000 copies in English will also be distributed. The reports are being sent to collective centres, NGOs, local and national governments and international organisations. The reports are also being made available on the internet.

The most recently noted cases of organised refugee return movements took place between 6 June and 13 June when more than 350 refugees, mainly displaced from Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar and

Kakanj returned from Turkey, initially to the area of Sarajevo. Another 3 refugees from the Slivovica camp in the FRY have now returned to Tuzla, via Greece.

The tenuous implementation of the Stolac Pilot Return Project continues. The daily transport of people to Stolac continues with two bus loads of displaced persons cleaning and repairing their houses each day. Approximately 15 of the original 100 houses are now being worked on and are near completion. The local Croat police continue to stop the bus upon entering the Stolac municipality and conduct a routine 5 minute ID check in light of UNHCR's insistence that they should not have to provide lists of names. Restrictions on freedom of movement still exist with the Bosniac returnees only allowed to move freely on the single street designated for returns.

Commission for Real Property Claims of DPs and Refugees

The Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees met in Rome on June 7-11 to complete the preparatory phase of its work. The Commission is responsible for deciding the claims of those parties – mostly refugees, displaced persons and victims of ethnic cleansing – who lost their homes and property in the war in BH.

The nine Commissioners – six from Bosnia and Herzegovina and three from Western Europe under the Chairmanship of Prof. Maria Rita Saulle of the University of Rome – were joined at their meeting by the President of the European Court of Human Rights, Judge Rolf Ryssdal.

Policy decision reached at the meeting included:

- Refugees, displaced persons and others who have an inherent right to property under the laws of BH, including their heirs and successors, may submit a claim to the Commission.

- Claimants will have the right to submit their claims directly to the Commission.
- While counting on full co-operation from authorities at all levels, the Commission also looks forward to the assistance of international bodies and organisations as well as non-government organisations in the completion of its tasks.

In addition to these policy decisions, the Commissioners devoted considerable time and attention at the Rome meeting to the development of a claim form to identify claimants and their exact relationship to the property or tenancy. A draft model form will be tried out with test groups in BH and distributed through humanitarian and refugee channels in BH and in all countries where refugees from BH are to be found.

Freedom of Movement

There is increased interest in the UNHCR-sponsored cross-entity buses with more requests for space on the Banja Luka-Zenica route. More than 100 people have been transported in mini-buses (soon to be replaced with large buses) since this service resumed on 5 June. The Mostar-Nevesinje service recommenced operation on 12 June with an international driver. Obstructions from the RS side appear to have ceased for the time being. In Sarajevo, the UNHCR-sponsored inter-entity bus continues to transport over 500 passengers every day between Sarajevo and Lukavica. The number of trips per day is being increased as of 17 June, enabling some 1,000 passengers to use this service daily.

Looking Ahead

- **22 June:** European Council, Florence.
  Mr. Carl Bildt will attend the meeting of EU heads of government.

- **25 June:** Joint Interim Commission, Sarajevo
- **27 June:** G7/G8 summit in Lyon, France. Mr. Carl Bildt will attend.

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. Callers from outside BH dial via Brussels switchboard: Tel. (32-2) 737 7000 & Fax (32-2) 737 7901