

OHR Bulletin 9 – July 5, 1996

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Republika Srpska

The High Representative (HR), Carl Bildt, received the text of a statement from Radovan Karadzic confirming that Vice – President Plavsic would be replacing him in the exercise of his functions, according to the provisions of the constitution

of Republika Srpska (RS). A statement from his spokesman, Jovan Zametica, on 1 July, confirmed that Mr Karadzic had handed over his powers, and Mrs Plavsic had now replaced him.

Mr Bildt said in a statement on 30 June that Mr Karadzic's replacement was an important step towards the cleansing of the RS from association with the crimes for which Mr Karadzic and others had been indicted by the international tribunal. But it was by no means the final step. All states and entities had an obligation under the Peace Agreement to co-operate fully with the International Tribunal by taking action to arrest indicted persons.

Mr Bildt added that he would closely monitor developments, take appropriate action himself, and recommend as necessary further measures to the international community in accordance with what had been decided at the Lyon Summit by the G8 countries on 29 June.

In light of mixed signals and confusing statements from both Mrs Plavsic and Mr Karadzic, Mr Bildt met Mrs Plavsic on 3 July to clarify the situation.

Mrs Plavsic maintained that she would not be taking instructions from Mr Karadzic in the exercise of her duties. Mr Bildt said he would be watching closely to see that Mr Karadzic was not exercising power. It would be illegal for any public official or any institutions of the RS to accept decisions or instructions from Mr Karadzic or persons acting on his behalf.

Mr Bildt also made clear that Mr Karadzic leaving public office was only the first stage in the process, which would also involve vacating all party offices, leaving political life altogether, and going to the Hague to answer the charges of war crimes levelled against him.

Mostar

The first post-war elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) took place in Mostar on 30 June and were without doubt a success for the Mostaris and the European Union (EU) Administration of the city. The astonishingly high turnout of almost 60 percent of the 100.000 electorate provided substantial proof that people want elections, thus sending a strong positive signal for the general elections in September. The atmosphere was peaceful, sometimes even festive. Some 20.000 displaced persons and refugees, among them 150 Serbs now living in Belgrade, including former Mostar Mayor Braco Andric, used the opportunity to visit their city again.

Voters travelled freely between East and West Mostar while the local and international police, supported by IFOR, worked well together and provided the necessary level of security.

Although not yet officially announced, the results of the elections, however, sent mixed signals. Most people chose to vote along ethnic lines with the SDA-led List of Citizens receiving over 48 and the HDZ almost 46 percent of the vote. The opposition share was practically reduced to zero and will not be represented in the new city and municipal institutions.

A protest against the validity of the voting in Bonn, Germany, where 26 more ballots than registered voters were counted, is still pending. It will now be up to the EU Administration Ombudsman to decide how to address this issue. As this irregularity is rather minor and does not in any way influence the overall outcome, it is to be expected that the Ombudsman will reject the protest.

Elections

The order of political parties and independent candidates on the ballots for the September elections was determined by lottery on 26 June at the OSCE premises in Sarajevo. For three

independent candidates it was not necessary to draw lots, since they were single independent candidates at the respective levels: Mr. Vladimir Srebrov for the Parliament of the Federation, Mr. Rasim Maslic for the Cantonal elections in Canton Central Bosnia and Mr. Fadlija Bambur for the Cantonal elections in Sarajevo.

A public swearing-in ceremony for the four judges of the Election Appeals Sub-Commission took place on 2 July at the Faculty of Law of the University of Sarajevo, where the Sub-Commission will be based until the elections in September. The ceremony was presided over by Ambassador Robert Frowick. The Sub-Commission is currently looking into two cases referred to it by the Provisional Election Commission (PEC), one concerning a complaint by a political party regarding a violent incident during a party rally and the other concerning name similarity between two parties.

Around 60 other complaints have been received so far, most regarding decisions of the Local Election Commissions on issues related to voter registration.

Joint Bodies

The third meeting of the (JCC) NE took place in Bijeljina on 4 July, chaired by the Principal Deputy HR Michael Steiner. Those attending included representatives from Tuzla, Odzak, Orasje, Bijeljina, Brcko, Zenica and Doboje as well as the director of the World Bank Mission for BH Rory O'Sullivan, representatives of the OSCE and UNHCR.

On the elections, it was emphasised that one of the most important preconditions was to ensure that all citizens check whether their names are on the voter lists since the deadline for rectifying any mistakes is 19 July.

In order to bolster the process of economic reconstruction, a decision to form regional funds for reconstruction was made.

This was done at the suggestion of the OHR and the World Bank in order to cut through the bureaucracy and enable the expedient and direct disbursement of funds to specific regions for specific projects.

Speaking after the meeting, Ambassador Steiner warned of the rising discontent of refugees and displaced persons who see no resolution in sight for their troubles. *"In the future we will aim to include representatives of refugee associations in our meetings in order to speed up the work of the authorities on both sides which has so far been very slow"*, he said following the meeting. On the across-Entity co-operation of police forces, Steiner said the aim was to *"develop close co-operation between the police forces of the two Entities so that we don't have a situation where criminals from the two Entities are working together while the police are not"*.

Economy

Representatives of the Federation and the Republika Srpska signed an agreement on linking the two payment systems on June 26, in Sarajevo. The agreement enables payment transfers in German Marks between the Entities. The agreement paves way i.a. for facilitation of trade relations between the Entities. The payment link is scheduled to become operational at the beginning of July.

Human Rights

On 24-25 June, the Human Rights Co-ordination Centre deployed a mission to Bihac to assess the pre-election political environment. Mission members met with a range of representatives of international organisations, political opposition figures (including supporters of Fikret Abdic), and local officials. The team made several recommendations to international human rights implementing organisations to improve the overall climate in the region.

Refugee And Humanitarian Affairs

Following the agreement in Banja Luka on 25 June to take concrete steps to address the issues of detention, missing persons and exhumations, the principal Deputy High Representative, together with the Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights, invited the Parties to convene again on 28 June to establish specific procedures concerning outstanding detention issues, to set priority sites and timetables for exhumation and clearing of unburied mortal remains, and to nominate representatives to a Joint Expert Commission on Exhumation.

This meeting was further followed by a session on 1 July during which the Parties agreed on a concept for the reburial of mortal remains that will respect the wishes of relatives concerning the burial site and ceremony.

UNHCR's inter-entity bus services continue to transport up a thousand people a day despite renewed bureaucratic harassment by the Republika Srpska authorities. More bus lines are expected to open soon.

RS authorities have so far failed to reinstate some 51 Muslims recently evicted from their homes in the Banja Luka suburb of Vrbanja, despite promises to do so. There is also growing concern about continued harassment of Serbs remaining in formerly RS-held areas of Sarajevo.

Economic Reconstruction

Economic reconstruction in BH was extensively discussed at the **G-7 Summit** in Lyon (June 27-29). The prevailing message was that without active support from the Parties in BH in realising the Peace Agreement, no significant reconstruction efforts may be expected. Among other things it was agreed that:

- All donors countries should undertake to pay out until

Dec. 1996 at least 50% and until June 1997 100 % of the promised funds at the two donors conferences.

- Projects, which are beneficial to co-operation and reconciliation will be supported. All parties are urged to develop a joint economic policy (Central Bank, joint custom and tax system, new currency and a appropriate distribution of income between the state, cantons and municipalities).
- During the week 24th – 30th June, the European Commission (EC) delivered a variety of urgently needed goods and works, as part of the PHARE Essential Aid Programme:
- School Furniture – The delivery of school furniture from the local manufacturer, Konjuh, continued to primary schools in Sarajevo, Bihac, Tuzla and Zenica. The value of these deliveries was in excess of DM 200.000.
- Transformers – Transport was arranged and paid for by the EC for donation of 40 transformers (125 tons) from UK and 2 cement silos (24 tons) from France.

The cost of the transport was 30.000 Pound Sterling and 25200 FFR respectively.

The civil repair works at the Power Station at Stup Sarajevo was completed this week by a local company Thermoteling Sarajevo. The value of the civil works was DM 51,842,00. Work will now start on the preparation of the electrical works for the installation of transformers. This work is also to be undertaken by a local company, Unimont.

Looking Ahead

- **10 July:** Joint Civilian Commission, Sarajevo
- **12 July:** Joint Interim Commission, Sarajevo
- **17 July:** Joint Civilian Commission South, place to be determined.

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