

OHR Local News Issues, 26 February 1997

After being delayed twice, the IPTF Investigation Report on the bloody, tragic event in Mostar on 10 February was finally made public. The report not only condemns the fact that Croat police used power against Bosniak civilians, but due to an attempt to conceal evidence, it demands the urgent replacement of Marko Radic, Police Chief in west Mostar, as well as the arrest and punishment of the two policemen who shot into the backs of the group of withdrawing Bosniaks. A deadline for fulfilling of these measures is 26 February. (Follows a detailed report of the IPTF document).

3'30

Robert Wasserman, IPTF Commissioner in BiH, made officially public the Report on the incident against Bosniaks on Bajram, 10 February in Mostar. The Investigation results were authenticated by a large number of photos.

1'30

Ambassador Michael Steiner, HR's Principal Deputy, informed journalists late in the afternoon of the measures, which deriving from the IPTF Report, have been meanwhile undertaken. I am encouraged that 20 persons have been arrested in Mostar, were his first words. Although he did not discover the names of those arrested, his expression we talk about the important persons from the Mafia scene, said enough. He said further that it must be insisted that all those who in any way were involved in the incident, be arrested and punished according to the legal procedures. Steiner also pointed out the conditions which must be fulfilled by both Federation partners.

2'30

One of the arrested from the Mafia scene in Mostar is Mladen

Naletilic – Tuta, reports an ONASA correspondent from Split quoting a Statement from the Croatian Ministry for Public Relations. Tuta was a HVO General during the conflicts between BiH Army and HVO '93 and '94. He was a Commander of the Convict Brigade with which many dark moments of the war in BiH, and later criminal acts, are associated.

2'00

Ambassdor Steiner sent a letter to Alija Izetbegovic and Kresimir Zubak explaining to them the findings of the IPTF Report. Among other things he says: I will not hesitate to ask for intervention from you as well as from the EU Government concerning travel limitations for any politician from Hercegovina-Neretva Canton who goes on with pouring oil on the fire.(Follows complete letter with comments on some parts of it).

3'00

Kresimir Zubak's Cabinet issued a Statement saying that the Croatian side estimates the IPTF findings as incomplete for they relate only to the time of clashes around 14:00 hours which is not in accordance with point 1 of the Mostar decision stipulated in Sarajevo on 12 February. According to this decision, the Report should have stated relevant facts and responsible persons for events which occurred before and after the incident.

1'30

Following the IPTF announcement of the Investigation Report, a Press Conference was held in the Regional OHR in Mostar. Robert Wasserman, Sir Martin Garrod and Alex Ivanko addressed journalists explaining the findings. In this context a Statement from Ivan Prskalo, Town Mayor, was shown saying that he didn't accept the Report and Safet Orucevic, his Deputy, who said that such findings were expected. A seeming peace secured by an increased SFOR presence is ruling in Mostar.

1'30

An expanded BiH Parliament House of Reps Board was held in Sarajevo attended by Parliamentary Parties, reads a Federation House of Reps Cabinet Statement. The talks focused on the establishing of conditions for further work of the House of Reps.

1'00

The Cantonal police have been promoted in Sarajevo, presenting a step forward in the implementation of Federation. Passing of the new Federal documents is also expected: Amendments on the Federal and Cantonal Constitution of Sarajevo, constituting of the City Council and appointing of a new Mayor. Although invited, Kresimir Zubak and Ambassador Steiner did not attend the ceremony.

1'30

Summary SRT News

Pale – Member of the BiH Presidency, Krajisnik met Indian Ambassador to the Muslim-Croat Federation and RS, Singh, and talked about developing mutual friendship and relations. The Ambassador conveyed the Indian Government and people's greetings, saying that they always supported former Yugoslavia previously, and support the FRY and RS now. They also discussed implementation of the DPA, the Brcko Arbitration Decision, refugee return, and relations between the FRY and RS.

2:00

Pale – Government session – Government representatives focused on refugee return and settlement, proposing the final plan for inhabiting border areas of the RS, since they are 'empty' compared with the Banja Luka, Pale or Zvornik region. Parliament speaker Kalinic and other representatives also discussed refugee settlement issue which will be one of the priorities at the next parliament session.

3:00

RS Foreign Minister, Buha, said that Serbian President Milosevic is not authorised to negotiate on behalf of the RS after the DPA, therefore, he shouldn't have left the Brcko destiny in Arbiter Owen's hands. Milosevic sent a letter to Owen in August last year, allowing Owen to make his own decision for the destiny of Brcko destiny. Vitomir Popovic, the RS arbiter for the Brcko arbitration, said that the international community had made three mistakes: International Arbiter Owen could not make the decision for Brcko on his own, the decision could not be conditioned, but only final, it is not in Arbiter Owen's jurisdiction to extend his mandate and postpone the dead-line for the final decision. Popovic said that he saw Milosevic's letter addressed to Mr. Owen on Feb. 12, at the third arbitration session in Washington for the first time. He denied Milosevic's influence to decide on behalf of the RS any more.

3:00

Hodzic village near Dobojski – after 100 Muslim civilians attacked SFOR, IPTF and the RS police while they were marking the international ZOS line, threatening with sticks and shouting that Serbs are not welcome in the village any more, the Serb inhabitants are even more afraid for their future. They are aware that Muslims are playing a new game or new war when trying to settle their refugees in the RS territory, which is only an excuse for digging into the RS territory and taking it away piece by piece. International factors look down on it with approval.

3:00

Pale – CoM Co-chair Bosic and Minister Bozanic received Chief Administrator to the Greek Embassy, and discussed implementation of the DPA, joint institutions etc., and strengthening of co-operation between Greece and the RS. Bosic also met Chief Administration of the Macedonian Embassy to BiH, Nikola Naskovski, which was the first meeting of the RS and Macedonian representatives. 3:00

Pale – RS Foreign Minister, Buha and Col. Tolimir met OSCE military mission. They discussed the implementation of article 4 of the DPA. Buha expressed his concern regarding the Equip and Train Programme, and arming of the Federation. The RS requested checking and controlling of all weapons in BiH before SFOR leaves. This should prove whether the parties, primarily the Federation, possess an equal number of weapons or more.

2:00

World News: Mostar – Croat police raised charges against 11 Muslims (among them Mostar deputy mayor Orucevic and SDA Mostar leader Jahic), accusing them for making disorder and provoking Croats for Bajram. OHR Spokesman Murphy announced that the Croat policemen who were found guilty for Mostar incident should be arrested during the day.

2:00