OHR Local News Issues, 31 January 1997

Stolac – 9 Bosniak families who should have returned to this town today were prevented from doing so because 'the people have happened' again. Federal Minister of Refugees and Displaced Persons Kadic said he received unconfirmed information that a group of nine or ten Croat families, refugees from central BiH, moved in the houses in Stolac, but he could not say for sure if those were the same houses Bosniak families should have returned to. Since the refugees did not succeed to return to place of their origin again, Mostar Canton Governor and Minister Kadic addressed the press in Mostar. Minister Kadic said that he was very disappointed with the reception in Stolac, adding that the incident that happened there presented a very bad sign either for BiH and Federation or for those who organised the demonstrations. He said that it is a paradox that the Bosniaks are able to return to the ZOS between the two entities but not to go back to their homes within the Federation. Both of them agreed that the international community should support replacement of the local Croat officials who push the breaks on implementation of the Federation.
4:00

Co-chairman of the CoM Silajdzic commented the Stolac incident, new local elections regulations, and the possibility of holding the local elections in Mostar.
He said it is obvious that Croat authorities either do not have the power to do something about the situation in Stolac or their actions do not match their words. In his opinion, the extremist groups hold power in that region and openly show that they do not intend to implement the DPA. He thinks that the P2 form still exists, although it is now disguised in the procedure. On the other hand, Silajdzic asks why we should

have the elections at all if the conditions (freedom of movement, return of refugees, etc.) have not been met yet.
As far as new Mostar elections are concerned, he said that the first elections were confirmed by OSCE and there is no need to hold elections there for forever.
3:00

SDA party, deputy mayor of Mostar Orucevic, and president of the Mostar City Assembly Jahic sent a letter to Ambassador Frowick in relation to the possibility of holding the local elections in Mostar. They think that OSCE has took this issue into consideration because of HDZ pressure, therefore the policy of obstruction has been rewarded. It is unacceptable to hold the elections since the joint institutions have not been implemented yet and ethnic cleansing and expulsions continue.
2:00

Mostar mayor Prskalo said to Onasa that the new Mostar local elections should not be called into question because the Croat people and political parties were damaged at the last elections. The results of the local elections would give better chances for the future in that region.

OSCE spokesman Verheiden said that one of the conditions for holding the local elections in Mostar is implementation of the joint institutions.

Brcko – Member of the BiH Presidency Zubak said to Vecernji List that there are several solutions for the Brcko problem, but only one was not acceptable: Brcko under control of the Serb Entity and especially enlarging of the Posavina corridor. He said that Brcko should logically go under the Federation control, but compromise is possible too. BiH TV focused once more on the importance of Brcko road communications and its harbour.
Tuzla mayor Beslagic and President of the City Assembly Simic sent a letter to the international Arbitration Tribunal pointing out that the unfair solution of the Brcko problem

would present the end of the DPA.
3:00

Summary SRT News

The RS delegation returned from Strasbourg today where they have participated in the work of the Council of Europe. At the plenary session, a resolution describing the state of democracy in the Union and neighboring countries was adopted. The RS delegation was led by Dragan Kalinic who gave us the following statement upon arrival in Belgrade: “Among the issues we particularly argue about is the issue of bounding the economic aid for the reconstruction of RS with the level of democratization inside RS. Namely, if someone wants to slow down the process of democratization, we can be shorten or deprived of economic aid. We believe this is not in the interest of democratization of political relations in RS, specially because series of laws opened wide range of possibilities to have open market economy in RS and to develop economic and human freedom.”
4 min
The minister for communications and civil affairs in the CoM of BIH, Spasoje Albijanic met with Ian Forbes, representative of the OHR for civilian control of the air traffic. Albijanic said that the International representatives admitted Banja Luka airport is the most adjusted airport for introducing civilian traffic in BIH. “But the problem is the traffic control, or better to say, problem of common organization on the level of BIH.”

Members of the contact group for RS and the Federation discussed the implementation of the Dayton agreement in Rome today. Special attention was devoted to the arbitration process in Brcko area. The Italian ministry of foreign affairs announced that participants will also exchange views on the situation in the Serb region of Slavonija, Baranja and Zapadni Srem and on the Yugoslav crisis. International mediators, Carl Bildt, John Kornblum and Roberts Owen are present as well.

1,5 min

The vice-premier of the RS Government, Velibor Ostojic, and RS minister of culture and education Stevan Stevic, visited the Serb Military Graveyard in Salonica, Greece. The RS delegation had a series of meetings with ministers of culture of several countries.
2 min

Norwegian Kai Ede is a new special envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Dayton BIH. Ede was up to now acting as a special advisor for Balkan issues at the Norwegian ministry of foreign affairs.
30 sec

In 1996, the economic assistance to RS was based only on promises or irrational conditionalities . The mistake was recognized and 1997 is being declared as a year of equal dispersal of the international economic aid to RS and the Federation. The European Union made a first step and marked, we believe, a new period in relation of the International community towards the crisis in our area. Valuable donation by the European Union, 5 buses, trucks an other useful vehicles, was acclaimed today by the RS minister for traffic Nedeljko Laic.
3 min

World news: Croats prevented again a group of Muslims to return to Stolac. The return of 22 families to Stolac was organized by the UNHCR.