

OHR Local News Issues, 4 March 1997

An explosive device placed at the back of St. Joseph's church in Sarajevo caused material damage when it exploded around 1:27 hrs last night. Some windows of the church and neighboring buildings broke, and cars parked in front of the church were damaged. The Federal Minister for Interior Affairs said that although there is no evidence that the attack was directed against the catholic church, it is disturbing, especially since it happened just before the Pope's visit to Sarajevo. According to the Canton Sarajevo Law, an act of suspension has been introduced for four policemen who were in charge of safeguarding this object.

1'30"

Don Luka Brkovic, a parish priest and witness of the incident in St. Joseph's Church said that he first saw smoke and then fire. There were no casualties. Police arrived at the scene.

0'30"

BiH political parties condemned the act of placing explosives near the Church. The Editorial Board of the magazine DANI invited citizens of Sarajevo for 10 minutes of calm demonstrations in front of St. Joseph's church on Saturday, 8 March entitled let us reconstruct mosques and preserve churches.

0'30"

The enemies of BiH unfortunately led a special war lately with the aim of destroying the peace process and harming the Bosniak people who were already a victim of aggression, dr Grbo, SDA Spokesman said relating to the incident near the church. Who ever does this is an enemy of the Bosniaks.

0'30"

Croats demand that the International Community and its high level officials in BiH show more attention to, and interest for, Sarajevo for this town is a key of common relations in the Federation and the whole country, reads a HDZ Town Council of Sarajevo Statement issued at a Press Conference held on the occasion of the St. Joseph's church incident. The Statement concludes that in the last ten days three churches have been mined, priests have been beaten up and houses owned by the Croats have been attacked.

1'00"

Safet Orucevic, Deputy Mostar Mayor, held separate talks with several representatives of international organizations behind closed doors. He suggested concrete solutions for overcoming the situation in Mostar. Although ten days have passed since the IPTF report on the 10 February incident in Mostar became public, not much has been done in carrying out its conclusions.

2'30"

A Press Conference held in the Regional OHR in Mostar focused on the realization of the IPTF Report on 10 February incident. Sir Martin Garrod informed that a new report is being prepared which will include incidents that occurred prior to and following 10 February. The report will be done by the representatives of IPTF, the Co-ordination Group for Human Rights and the OHR.

1'00"

Ramiz Leto, Deputy President of the Neretva-Hercegovina Canton sent a letter to Mijo Brajkovic, Cantonal Prime Minister, in which he refuses to carry out Brajkovic's suggestion to replace Sefkija Djiho, Deputy Interior Minister, stating his accusations as unfounded.

2'00"

Ambassador Michael Steiner, Carl Bildt's Principal Deputy, held talks with Biljana Plavsic, RS entity President in Banja

Luka. The talks focused on establishing mechanisms for immediate responses between the Entities and the violence in Gajevi. I am encouraged by the talks and the co-operation of Mrs. Plavsic. I will go to B.Luka again for it is a part of BiH and I wish to talk with the opposition, religion representatives and media, Steiner said.

Today's Press Conference in Sarajevo focused on the situation in Mostar, Gajevi, Brcko and Sarajevo. Colum Murphy, OHR Spokesman announced dates for two events: the CoM session on Thursday, 6 March and a Conference on Brcko in Vienna on Friday, 7 March which will be attended by Carl Bildt, first time in public after spending a week in the hospital

Summary SRT News

Banja Luka – RS President Plavsic met Federation President Zubak, and discussed many essential issues related to the Serb and Croat nation in the Dayton BiH. They signed an Agreement on mutual co-operation with regard to urgent release of all POWs and mass grave exhumations. Plavsic said that they also talked about some economic issues, such as opening of traffic communication for the purpose of connecting west parts of the RS with Croatia. Zubak had consulted the Croatian authorities who gave their blessings regarding the renewal of contacts with the RS. He used this opportunity to inform himself about the status of the Croat minority in the RS. He also commented on the Agreement signed between the RS and FRY, saying that such relations are in accordance with the DPA.

3:00

Pale – Member of the BiH Presidency, Krajisnik, met HR Deputy, Steiner this evening. The meeting was held behind closed doors. They talked about several issues which will be discussed at the next Presidency session. They agreed that the BiH Presidency and monetary experts should discuss the issues of the Central Bank, joint currency, and payment operations. They emphasised that those issues should be solved

as soon as possible in view of holding the donors conference in April this year. Krajisnik and RS National Bank Governor Coric talked with the Central Bank Governor Serge Robert. President Krajisnik expressed the RS position with regard to the Central Bank organisation, emphasising that it is in RS interests to have it established as soon as possible.

3:00

More reactions with regard to the Agreement between the RS and FRY: Almost everybody concluded that the Agreement is in accordance with the DPA and it fully supports stabilisation of peace in the region. However, Muslim representatives condemned the Agreement which, unfortunately, proves they are still not ready to accept the existence of RS. RS deputy Defence Minister, Kapetina, said that item 9 of the RS-FRY Agreement [military co-operation and assistance] is in full accordance with the DPA. The FRY will in particular help the RS army to destroy all surplus arms. Negative reactions of Muslim representatives and part of the international community [who are already known as enemies of the Serb nation] show best that the Agreement is a historical document of all Serb people. Therefore, Silajdzic thinks that the RS cannot make agreements on its own on crossing borders, foreign debt and citizenship, not to mention military co-operation. Izetbegovic thinks that the Agreement helps nothing except destabilisation of the peace in BH. The Muslim Bosniak Organisation thinks that the USA and the Security Council have an obligation to annul the Agreement. The OHR spokesman, Colum Murphy, thinks that the Belgrade document is not valid until it is adopted by the BH Parliament, whereas HR Bildt himself thinks that the Agreement is an incident. 'How many incidents have the Croat and Muslim sides made so far. Is the Federation agreement with Croatia an incident? And what about all those agreements with Iran, Malaysia, Turkey and Pakistan?' SRT journalist asked Mr. Bildt, and ironically concluded that the OHR did not give any comments regarding these agreements. Commenting on the article in a Muslim magazine 'Svijet', SRT journalist said that Muslim

authorities should at least allow Serbs to trust their motherland, the FRY, and their 'brothers' there.

6:00

Ministry of Information issued a press release saying that a group of 16 armed Muslim men broke into a Mirosavci village (Lopare municipality) on Feb. 28. They kidnapped three Serbs, took them to Celic and physically harassed them. According to the RS police information those three people were taken as hostages with an aim to be exchanged for a Muslim man who was arrested by the RS police for illegal carrying of arms on Feb. 26. Inhabitants of Mirosavci and other villages organised a peaceful protest because of this incident on March 2. Furious about this incident, they burnt down 11 Muslim houses in Gajevi. The RS Ministry noted that IPTF does not patrol the area regularly, whereas the RS police are not allowed to patrol without the IPTF. None of them patrol the area at night for safety reasons.

4:00

Pale – CoM minister of Civilian Issues and Telecommunication, Albijanic, met UN Special Envoy Beaumont and talked about the CoM work. Albijanic warned Beaumont that some unauthorised institutions from the Federation are obstructing the CoM work.

2:00

Pale – RS Minister of Refugees and Displaced Persons Vladusic talked with UN High Commissioner Special Envoy, Carrol Faubert and the head of UNHCR in BiH about the forthcoming donors conference in Brussels. They also agreed to carry out a new census because of bad experiences from the last elections. 66,000 refugees have returned to the RS so far, according to Valdusic's information. They also discussed the programme of refugee return and settlement.

2:00