

OHR RTRS News Summary, 3 February 2000

News Headlines

- Sarovic to act in capacity of RS vice-president until next elections
- Ferguson holds press conference
- [OSCE](#) and OHR issue joint press release
- New draft election law does not include election of members of BiH Presidency and BiH House of Representatives, which omits 50% of the law's content – House of Representatives member Spiric
- BiH House of Peoples adopts 2000 budget of BiH common institutions
- Sloga Coalition gives up on solution to RS crisis by giving up on its request for Sarovic assume presidential function – SDS
- SPRS still opposes dismissals of Gligoric and Ilic
- SRS calls on all Serb parties to respect RS National Assembly conclusions of 7 March 1999
- If opposing political blocs do not show high-level of accord at 8 February RS National Assembly session, RS will sink into deeper crisis – RS Party for Democratic Progress President Mirjanic
- RS Association of Soldiers will not act as political arbiter in Gligoric dismissal
- Banja Luka-based Cajavec Company workers end strike
- European Investment Bank grants DM 120 million in aid for BiH infrastructure
- Mihajlovic, Tomic and US Construction Company Brown and Ruth discuss US investments in BiH companies
- IC must still assist BiH to join European integration – Klein
- International organizations hold press conference in

Sarajevo

- International organizations and financial institutions in BiH request BiH Federation Government to accelerate privatization process
- BiH Federation House of Peoples hold session – ONASA
- SDA dissatisfied with election of new Una-Sana Canton Governor
- BiH Federation Ombudsman Jovanovic raises charges against Sarajevo Canton Administrator for Housing Issues
- Neretva Power Plant Director denies that BiH Elektroprivreda paid compensation to Mostar citizens whose property was destroyed in 1999 flooding
- Two persons die in armed attack on [UNHCR](#) bus in Kosovo – [UN](#) police
- Reinhardt and [UN](#) Northern Kosovo Administrator visit site of attack on [UNHCR](#) bus
- [UNHCR](#) representative McNamara expresses shock over bus attack
- Albright calls on Albanian leaders in Kosovo to condemn cowardly attack on [UNHCR](#) bus
- Russia expresses shock over attack on [UNHCR](#) bus in Kosovo
- Kouchner hopes that local elections in Kosovo will be held in September or October 2000
- Problems in Kosovo can be resolved by application of firm-hand principle – Dientsbier
- [UNHCR](#) shocked by bus attack
- Heavy weapons, supposedly confiscated from KLA, used in [UNHCR](#) bus attack – SP0
- Attack on [UNHCR](#) bus represents continuation of attacks on Serbs – Serbian Democratic Center
- KFOR cannot protect Serbs, but democratic authorities in Yugoslavia can – Alliance for Change
- Hombach rejects allegations of slow realization of project to make changes in Balkans
- [ICTY](#) rejects Talic request for release
- Montenegrin Prime minister Vujanovic accuses Milosevic

of attempting to destabilize Montenegro

- World News
- International Advisory Group issues announcement on monetary transactions in BiH
- RS Justice Minister Trbojevic and RS Privatization Agency discuss legal and technical problems slowing down privatization process
- Banja Luka Assembly adopts 2000 budget
- Sports
- Weather
- Petritsch and [SFOR](#) participated 2 February Neum seminar on methods of controlling BiH entity armed forces
- OHR and Bijeljina Municipal discuss issue of permanent accommodation of 15,000 persons living in Janja
- Adams and Ganic discuss possibility of intensifying [SFOR](#) presence in eastern, south-eastern and northern BiH during refugee returns in March
- Serb Orthodox Church Synod welcomes RS Religion Ministry decision introducing bishops into RS Army units
- KFOR intervenes between fighting Albanians in Kamenica
- Number of criminal acts decreases in Kosovo – [UN](#) police
- Eurocorps will deploy in Kosovo between April and July – French Defense Ministry
- Belgrade [UNHCR](#) office holds press conference on status of refugees from BiH and Croatia now living in Yugoslavia

News Summary

Sarovic to act in capacity of RS vice-president until next elections

RS Vice-president Mirko Sarovic stated that he would only act in the capacity of vice-RS president until the next election in BiH. He added that he did not want to contribute to the destabilization of RS. He said that he wanted to assume presidential duties to enable the de-blocking of the RS presidential institution, but only if all RS political factors

and the High Representative were accordant. According to Sarovic, "it is clear that there is no such accord, especially after the Sloga Coalition statement of 2 February. Sarovic concluded that one dilemma has been resolved, that is – the resolutions of key issues in the RS do not depend on the vice president of this BiH entity.

00:57

Ferguson holds press conference

OHR spokesman James Ferguson held a press conference in Banja Luka at which he stated that the fundamental obstacle to RS Vice-president Mirko Sarovic's assumption of presidential duties is the RS Constitution. Former High Representative Carlos Westendorp's request for Sarovic to take over presidential duties in 1999 was not in accordance with the RS Constitution even then, but the political climate was appropriate, said Ferguson. He added that, in case Sarovic had taken over the duties then, the High Representative would have used Article 10 of the [Dayton Agreement](#) to justify the move. Ferguson avoided answering why Biljana Plavsic was allowed to take over presidential duties from Radovan Karadzic when he was forbidden to appear in public. Commenting on BiH Council of Ministers Haris Silajdzic request for [Dayton Agreement](#) revision, Ferguson said that western countries and the OHR do not intend to rewrite the [Dayton Agreement](#). In his opinion, the [Dayton Agreement](#) can only be changed if all the parties in BiH agree to change it. Ferguson stated that Silajdzic should first have presented his idea to the BiH Council of Ministers and BiH Parliamentary Assembly. He added that the IC does not dismiss those who criticize the [Dayton Agreement](#) but those who obstruct it. Commenting on a statement of BiH Presidency member Alija Izetbegovic, who said he would sooner be thrown out of the Presidency than allow any Bosniak to be evicted in Sarajevo, Ferguson said that the OHR had requested an explanation from Izetbegovic on this issue. The OHR spokesman expressed his concern over the fact that the RS Government did

not adopt a memorandum on harmonizing taxation with the BiH Federation. He welcomed the resolution of the crisis in the Sloga Coalition.

02:06

OSCE and OHR issue joint press release

High Representative [Wolfgang Petritsch](#) and [OSCE](#) Head of Mission Robert Barry met with BiH parliamentary caucus leaders to discuss the BiH election law. The [OSCE](#) and OHR issued a joint release, stating that Petritsch and Barry invited all BiH parliamentary parties to give their position on democratic processes and reach a compromise that would lead to the adoption of the election law. Two years ago, the OHR and [OSCE](#) initiated a process with the aim of providing a modern and progressive election law in BiH. The first draft, signed by a group of domestic and foreign experts, was presented to the BiH Parliament in October 1999 and was considered in December. However, the parliament had then voted against considering amendments. The OHR and [OSCE](#) said they welcomed the effort of the SDP BiH, which offered a draft election law for discussion. With the aim of supporting the election law, the OHR and [OSCE](#) amended the first draft version by deleting the most controversial chapter. The imperative is for BiH to adopt the election law so that it can join the Council of Europe. The Council has set a 15 February deadline so that elections can be held in October using the new election law, said the joint OSCE/OHR release.

01:18