

OHR SRT News Summary, 11 January 1999

Headlines

- Poplasen letter to SFOR protesting against the murder of Dragan Gagovic
- Political parties' protests against the murder of Gagovic continue today
- Radisic and Gelbard meet in Sarajevo
- Milosevic met with the OSCE Chairman, Vollebaek
- American air-force bomb Iraq's air defence

The RS President, Nikola Poplasen, today addressed an open protest letter describing the murder of Dragan Gagovic as a brutal act and as being in violation of the [SFOR](#) mandate. The way in which the action was organised and carried out indicates that this was originally planned to be a deliberate liquidation of another Serb who will not have a chance to prove his innocence, rather than an arrest attempt.

1:10

Following the murder of Gagovic, President Poplasen also addressed a protest letter to the [SFOR](#) Commander, General Meigs. "Circumstances in which the murder was carried out make me conclude that the action was carried out in serious violation of the [SFOR](#) mandate...What is especially concerning us is the fact that the lives of several children were endangered during the action which should not have happened...Gagovic is killed and his guilt has never been proved...Gagovic was not armed and offered no resistance at the time of his murder which makes me conclude that [SFOR](#) troops overstepped their mandate and thus led to tragic consequences... I insist that any such similar actions should stop, or, otherwise, nobody will be able to assume responsibility for possible reactions by upset and dissatisfied citizens".

2:10

Citizens of Srbinje still remain strongly upset at the murder of Dragan Gagovic. Parents of children who were with him at the time of his murder have, today, announced that they will complain with international organisations to seek that the rights of the five children whose lives were directly endangered will be protected. The circumstances in which the murder took place clearly show that this was a prepared and organised action. The family of murdered Gagovic was today visited by the RS Vice – President, Mirko Sarovic, who extended deep condolences on behalf of the top RS leadership and on his own behalf.

3:14

The leadership of the Gorazde municipality, local political parties, the local organisation of fighters as well as citizens of the town today condemned the murder of Dragan Gagovic which took place in the territory of this municipality. SRNA has quoted a statement by the local Mayor saying that the embitterment of the local public was even stronger because of the fact that Gagovic had been murdered in the presence of five children who luckily avoided a tragedy themselves.

0:54

The Spokesperson for [SFOR](#), Sheena Thompson, told SRNA that the [SFOR](#) action in which Gagovic had been murdered was fully in line with the [SFOR](#) mandate and that the responsibility for the murder lied exclusively with Gagovic himself. According to Thompson, after an autopsy had been carried out by [SFOR](#) forensics, Gagovic's dead body was this morning taken to Srbinje and would be delivered to the family in the course of today. Thompson claimed that the intention of [SFOR](#) troops was to arrest Gagovic in a peaceful way, but that he unfortunately had chosen to ignore an [SFOR](#) check-point and failed to stop and thus brought his own life, lives of [SFOR](#) troops and his passengers into jeopardy.

0:57

Dragan Cavic, the Deputy President of the SDS Presidency, at a press conference today, expressed SDS's shock at the brutal way in which Gagovic had been murdered by [SFOR](#) troops and amazement over the fact that [SFOR](#) had also endangered the lives of children. SDS called on international humanitarian organisations to appeal to [SFOR](#) to make sure that lives of innocent people should not be jeopardised in future similar actions. On the issue of the new RS PM designate, Cavic said that Brane Miljus had overstepped his mandate and that the SDS was going to support any PM designate who would be able to ensure unity amongst the Serbs. Cavic went on to announced that the SDS was planning to meet with Miljus in the near future to discuss their possible support for his cabinet. "The SDS will only move to support Miljus provided that he corrects some of his views". Today's press conference again voiced certain objections regarding the work of SRT. Cavic reacted to the commentary aired in last night's SRT evening news and described it as a pamphlet. Cavic went on to request that the name of its author should be made public, that he/she should be sued and that the SRT leadership should resign. Cavic was also critical of SRT reporting on the murder of Dragan Gagovic. "The murder of Gagovic was a headline on TV and radio stations all over the world with the exception of SRT". SRT wishes to remind that they were the first to air the report on Gagovic's murder and film the scene of the tragedy in its news programmes.

3:39

The Serb Radical Party of the RS, in a public statement released today, described the murder of Gagovic as an organised and brutal action. The Party expressed concerns about possible consequences and reactions that might arise as a result of such actions by [SFOR](#).

0:56

The Serb Coalition for the RS, at a press conference in BL

today, condemned the murder of Gagovic in the sharpest terms possible. The Coalition requested that the so-called sealed indictments should be provided to RS top level political bodies in order to make it possible for those involved to defend themselves and prove that they are innocent. On the RS PM designate, the Coalition stressed that they did not support Miljus whose ideas were suicidal for the RS. Members of the Coalition Co-ordinating Board confirmed that Miljus had never held any consultations with Coalition representatives which indicates that Miljus is gambling with RS interests. Brdjaninn, who is the President of the RS People's Party, described the nomination of Miljus as irresponsible and added that he would, in the future, work to ensure that all RS institutions should be accountable to the RS NA and Government for their work.

2:10

The new RS PM designate, Brane Miljus, today stated that the new RS Government should be comprised of two blocks, ministers from the RS and those from the Federation, and should be the first multi-ethnic Government in the history of the RS. In an interview given to Reuters, Miljus stated that his Government would not include hard-liners and added that the RS NA would be presented with his plan for the work of the Government in the course of this week. Miljus expressed the belief that he was going to obtain the necessary majority support for the composition of his cabinet.

01:02

The Sloga Coalition today addressed an open letter to President Poplasen stressing that the nomination of Miljus and his subsequent statements had been designed to create a perception in the public that the PM mandate had actually been given to the Sloga Coalition. The detrimental behaviour of the new RS PM designate makes the President fully responsible now. The Coalition proposed that Poplasen hold a joint meeting in the next two days to check respective positions through a

dialogue.

1:58

The President of the Executive Board of the Serb Radical Party, Mirko Blagojevic, in a statement to SRNA, assessed that the new RS PM designate, Brane Miljus, would obtain a majority within the RS NA, and stressed that Miljus would be supported by the Radicals.

0:33

A public statement has just arrived from the RS Presidential Cabinet saying that, at the request of the Chairperson of the Sloga Coalition, Biljana Plavsic, the RS President has scheduled a consultative meeting with representatives of the Coalition for 13th January in BL.

0:17

The President of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, met with the U.S. Special Envoy for the Balkans, Robert Gelbard, in Sarajevo today, on the implementation of conclusions made by the recently held Madrid conference. After the meeting, Radisic told the press that apart from the implementation of the Madrid conclusions, they had also discussed some new initiatives of importance for BiH including the creation of conditions for BiH to join the World Trade Organisation and thus contribute to the stabilisation of its domestic economy. Gelbard, on his part, said that the U.S. supported the idea of BiH becoming a member of this organisation.

2:11

The President of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, also met with the Greek Ambassador in BiH, Prokopios Mantzouranis, in Lukavica today, on co-operation between the two countries. The meeting was an opportunity for the Greek Ambassador to invite Radisic to visit Greece as soon as possible.

0:26

Zivko Radisic, the President of the BiH Presidency, met with

the French Ambassador in BiH, Yves Gaudeul, in Sarajevo today. The meeting discussed the murder of Dragan Gagovic, the implementation of conclusions from the Madrid conference and the current situation in Kosovo. On the murder of Gagovic, Radisic said that the way in which it had been carried out taught us a lesson for our future work. Gaudeul stressed that it was in the interest of the Serb people to either extradite war criminals or to make them surrender to the Hague themselves.

0:54

Radisic also met the Mayor of Serb Sarajevo and the respective Heads of Serb municipalities in the area in Pale today on problems faced by the population of the Sarajevo-Romanija region. The meeting jointly concluded that the building of Serb Sarajevo was a priority not only for the region, but, also, for the entire RS.

1:27

The identification of bodies recently exhumed from the mass grave in Sanski most commenced in BL today. 13 bodies have, so far, been identified, mainly of civilians, with the identity of several more likely to be determined later on today.

2:14

The BiH Parliamentary Assembly House of Peoples, at its session in Sarajevo today, unanimously adopted the Law on Changes to the Law on BiH Passports prolonging the deadline for the expiration of old passports until 30th January 1999. The session also unanimously elected 7 commissions of this body, comprised of 6 members each.

1:30

Kosovo-related news

5:10

BiH Federation news

2:53