OHR SRT News Summary, 29 July 1998

Headlines

- The election campaign starts, media presentation rules still unclear
- The RS Government confirms the legality of the decision removing directors and editors of 16 local radio and TV stations
- Dual-citizenship for BiH citizens – only after bilateral agreements have been signed with the FRY and Croatia

The SRT transmitters at Kozara and Duge Njive which broke down three days ago have been repaired. SRT signal is now covering the entire territory of the RS again.
0:23

Election campaign officially started in BiH today, 45 days before the elections. At the initiative of SRT, a meeting took place between OSCE representatives and directors of press and media in Banja Luka today, which confirmed that there are still unclear things in regards to media-related rules and regulations. However, a two-hour meeting did not manage to resolve any of the dilemmas of its participants. A number of editors assessed that such an unclear situation would, eventually, lead to a number of misunderstandings in media presentation of political parties. The order of appearance of political parties and independent candidates on SRT will be known in few days.
2:01

The RS Government held a five-hour meeting today. Amongst other issues, including that of the work of regular courts and prosecutors' offices in the RS, the Government reaffirmed its earlier decision on the removal of editors and directors of 16

local radio and TV stations in the RS. According to Rajko Vasic, Minister of Information, the session described the decision as legal and as being aimed to ensure professional and objective reporting. Vasic went on to say that the Secretary- General of the RS Parliament had been tasked to investigate the misuse of a statement by Mirko Sarovic, the Head of the Legislative and Legal Commission, related to the recent decision by the RS Government.
2:28

The SDS Presidency have released a statement this evening appealing to the OSCE and the High Representative to condemn recent removals and ensure the reinstatement of removed directors and editors, there where municipal authorities feel that there are no legal grounds for such measures.
1:00

A member of the SP RS Executive Board, Dusko Bajic, at a press conference today, appealed to citizens of the RS to vote in the forthcoming elections and choose one of the two possible options: the one advocated by the "Sloga" Coalition and the second one advocated by "the SDS system", which is the option of political and economic isolation. On the recent media-related decision by the RS Government, Bajic said that the SP RS expected additional explanations by the Ministry of Information, adding that the decision should have been made before.
1:37

Tihomir Gligoric, the Deputy Prime Minister, also held a press conference today, where he spoke about measures that had been taken by the Government to improve the situation of families of fallen soldiers, war invalids and de-mobilized troops.
0:29

According to representatives of the Serb Coalition for the RS, four political parties in the Coalition were not surprised at the decision of the RS Government removing directors of 16

local electronic media. They believed that this decision had put an end to the democracy here, and would make it possible for the ruling party to win the September elections easily. Lazarevic appealed to the IC to make sure that the information on financial support to RS political parties for their election campaigns should be made public. The Coalition appealed to the citizens in municipalities affected by the recent decision of the RS Government to resist and oppose the implementation of the decision.
1:19

The Spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, James Rubin, stated that the U.S. was now considering reports on the removal of directors and editors of local radio and TV stations in the RS, and that the reports indicated that some RS MPs had described this decision as being in violation of the RS Constitution.
0:46

SRNA reports that the RS Trade Union of Information and Graphic Business have described strikes of warning in some RS media which have started in reaction to the recent decision by the RS Government as unjustified, since personnel policy should not be the responsibility of the Trade Union.
0:26

President Plavsic met with representatives of RS invalids of war in Banja Luka today.
2:04

President Plavsic also met with representatives of SRNA news agency. Plavsic praised the professional work of the agency, and said that it was the backbone of the RS information system. Plavsic agreed that the agency should permanently be based in Serb Sarajevo, and that ways should be worked out to provide financial support for its work.
0:35

The Chief of the RS Army General-Staff, General Momir Talic, met with accredited military representatives in BiH in Bijeljina today. The meeting discussed the development of modern militaries and the possibility of cooperation between different armies.
1:58

The EU HR, Carlos Westendorp, has stated that citizens of BiH will have the right to dual citizenship, provided that bilateral agreements have been signed with the second country on matter, in line with the BH Constitution and the BH Law on Citizenship. A statement released by the HR, reminded that no such agreement had so far been signed, but that BH have now five years to do so, i.e. until 2003.
0:57

(Kosovo-related news)
4:13

The Banja Luka-Bijeljina road, which was blocked by several hundred Serbs at its portion running through the Brcko suburb of Klanac earlier today, as a sign of protest against the continuation of marking of houses for Muslim resettlements, was de-blocked at about 17:00 hrs this afternoon.
0:35