Transcript of the Press Conference in Mostar

	Spokesperson	Topic
OHR	Avis Benes	O OHR(S) reminds of the obligation to harmonise cantonal constitutions and set of laws with the changes to the Federal Constitution
OSCE	Richard Medic	O Statement on voters' responsibility for the upcoming elections
UNHCR	Sanja Alikalfic	O Stolac garbage disposal site
SFOR	Maj. De Lambert	O Update on Harvest campaign

Avis Benes – OHR

As it is known, on 19 April Wolfgang Petritsch in his capacity as High Representative took a decision amending the Constitution of the Federation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina. In accordance with the changes in the Constitution and existing legislation, all cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are required to amend their own constitutions and laws within nine months from the date that the Federal amendments enter into force.

In that regard, on 26 August 2002, the Office of the High Representative (South) sent letters to bearers of the legislative responsibilities in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and West Herzegovina Canton, namely, President of the Cantonal Assembly of the West Herzegovina Canton, Zoran Vuksic and

President and Deputy President of the Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal Assembly, Ljubo Zovko and Omer Cevra. These letters point out to the legal obligation to proceed with the necessary amendments of respective constitutions and all existing laws within the scope of this matter. Moreover, the Cantonal officials are also reminded that four months have already passed since the Federation amendments entered into force.

OHR expects that legislative authorities of these two cantons will bear in mind the importance of this matter and start working on implementation of these legal obligations on time. Namely, Cantons are encouraged to co-operate with the Cantonal and Federal Ministries of Justice. Also, there is a Working Group of the Federal Government and the OHR for this issue which has already started working in Sarajevo.

One more item. A technical reminder – we have noticed that many journalists and many media outlets are not using e-mail or they are not in our address books for distribution of press releases and media advisories via e-mail. We would like to ask you and encourage you to submit us your e-mail addresses as this is the quickest way to receive information. I would like to ask you to contact our office, individually or on behalf of the media outlet and provide us with this information.

Richard Medic – OSCE

September is the last full month before the 5 October election. Conclusions reached by voters during these weeks will determine in large measure quality of their government until 2006.

There are three basic decisions voters in a democracy must make:

1. Shall I vote?

2. Which candidates/parties offer practical, specific solutions to my problems and those of my municipality?

3. Which candidate do I trust more based on his/her background and record?

OSCE urges all voters to answer “yes” to question # 1 and think carefully when answering to questions # 2 and 3. If answer to question # 1 is “no”, they are personally responsible for the results.

Sanja Alikalfic – UNHCR

Stolac municipality, SFOR and UNHCR had a joint plan of action regarding a garbage disposal site in Njivice village within Stolac municipality. The site was chosen on the basis of the municipal proposal and the Municipal Assembly made an unanimous decision approving the project. OHR issued a waiver confirming that the site could be used for the period of two years for this purpose.

The aim of the project was to bring benefits to all inhabitants of the region and it was envisaged only as a temporary solution for this health-hazardous issue which Stolac municipality is currently facing. However, as Njivice inhabitants deliberately blocked the works on the construction site yesterday and as no agreement was reached, a decision was subsequently made to cancel the project.

On this occasion, we would like to thank Stolac Mayor, Obradovic for all the efforts he made in trying to reach a solution for this problem. In addition, UNHCR also appreciates the efforts and patience of SFOR, Spanish Battle group for their readiness to take part in the project.

UNHCR together with its partners in the international

community regrets the obstructionist attitude of a small number of selfish people who thereby impeded the implementation of the agreed upon solution for the garbage disposal site in Njivice and who might jeopardize future assistance to the area.

Maj. De Lambert – SFOR

You are now accustomed with the new "door to door Harvest campaign". Next week the campaign will be conducted in Mostar north and west, in a time period between the 02nd and 05th of September. I am pleased to announce that we are satisfied with the results we achieved so far. This summer campaign let us believe that it will be a very good one. During the 10 past days, the following ordnance have been collected in our AOR:

– 42 weapons ;

– more than 9.000 different calibre ammunition ;

– 412 hand grenades ;

– 101 rifle grenades ;

– 23 different mines ;

– 10 mortar shells ;

– 3 Kg of explosives ;

– 9 antitank rockets

– more than 69 other items…

O Each weapon or ammunition recovered by SFOR is a taking off threat for all people in BiH. MND-SE Commander, General Sommaire still remains encouraging BiH citizens to continue co-operating in this way for a better future.

AGENDA :

- Monday 02nd September : Vrapcici
- Tuesday 03rd September: Dreznica
- Wednesday 04th September: Potoci and Rastani
- Thursday 05th September: Orlac and Vihovici

Thank you.

Questions

Q: Mirsad Behram (RTV Mostar): I have a question for OHR referring to what you talked about in your statement on constitutional changes. Since you mentioned it today, does this mean that nothing has been done in this Canton for already four months?

A: Avis Benes: We have not been informed that any action in this regard has been undertaken which does not mean that nothing has been done. Simply we have not been informed. Perhaps you could ask representatives of the cantonal authority. Let me clarify this point by saying that this process is still in progress all over BIH Federation. No deadines have been missed. I think that majority of Cantons have not yet sumbitted all materials to the Federation Ministry of Justice. The purpose of this letter was in a way reminder that these are very important and serious issues and the sooner they start working on it the most qualitively it will be prepared.

Q: Pejo Gasparevic (HINA): Question for Maj. De Lambert. Hazardous waste was discovered in Bugojno. The opinion is that this is an ecological threat. My question – do these chemicals present a potential warfare threat since Bugojno was known as

a town with a strong military industry before the war?

A: Maj. De Lambert: I am sorry but I do not know anything about that. It is out of our area of responsibility. I am sorry.

Q: Tina Jelin (Studio 88): Question for OHR on your statement about the constitutional changes. Do you think the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton's special status is partly a reason for the slowness in the resolution of this problem?

A: Avis Benes: I would not like to speculate on the reasons why nothing has been done so far. What is the fact is that certain provisions of the Cantonal Constitutions must be changed as well as a certain number of laws, I think six laws at this moment. I would not like to relate to the reasons for this delay.