Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Mario Brkic
OSCE, Mersiha Causevic-Podzic
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OHR

A Clear Way Out of the Present Impasse

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Raffi Gregorian, will participate tomorrow at a donor coordination forum in Sarajevo organised by the UN Development Programme. Dr Gregorian will brief the principal international financial institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the major donor agencies on the post-election political situation and the prospects for getting back to pragmatic politics and progress along the road to Euro-Atlantic integration.

Among other things, Dr Gregorian will emphasise that the souring of the political atmosphere in recent months, raising fears of a return to zero-sum politics after half a decade of difficult and slow but steady and substantial progress, is intolerable – for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the international community. In this respect, he will

point out, that the PIC's decision to extend the mandate of the OHR means extending the Bonn Powers for another year.

Dr Gregorian will also stress that the way out of the present impasse is clear. Throughout the last six months of mudslinging – even when by their actions political leaders have placed obstacles on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration – no one has suggested for a minute that this is not the road that the vast majority of BiH citizens want to take.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a well-formulated agenda of legislative and administrative reforms for which there is broad popular support. Many of these reforms have been prepared over a period of years and are now ready for enactment and implementation.

What we now have to do is circumvent the obstacles created by political forces that – either through lack of imagination or plain political perversity – are driven by a debilitating preoccupation with the past rather than by a liberating vision of the future.

The conference is not open to media coverage. However, Dr Gregorian's remarks will be available on our website tomorrow afternoon.

OSCE

The OSCE Mission to BiH Welcomes The First Verdict For Trafficking In Human Beings For Forced Begging

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomes the first conviction for the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of forced begging handed down by the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina last Friday, March 16.

This verdict is significant. It demonstrates that the law enforcement authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are

expanding from exclusive attention to trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation to other forms of trafficking, in particular for the purpose of forced labour. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina commends this.

At the same time, the Mission remains concerned that sentences handed down to date in trafficking cases concerning sexual exploitation often fail to recognize the gravity of the offence. Such offences constitute a modern form of slavery and therefore involve serious infringements on the fundamental rights of the victims. It is important that judgements rendered by courts of law in such cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina recognise this fact and take it into account.

ICTY

Good morning on behalf of the Tribunal.

I believe you have all seen the press release we issued yesterday on the three-day visit by the Trial Chamber in the case of Dragomir Milošević to several locations in Sarajevo. We also yesterday distributed via email photographs taken during the visit. I have nothing further to add about the visit, except to emphasize once again that the visit is a part of the proceedings against Dragomir Milošević. This is not an investigation, there will be no collection of evidence, no witness interviews, but the sole purpose of the visit is to provide the Trial Chamber with an opportunity to observe at first hand locations relevant to the case.

I also have two announcements to make.

First, on Monday 2 April, at 15 hrs, the ICTY Appeals Chamber will rendered its judgment in the case of Miroslav Bralo. In July 2005, Bralo plead guilty before the Tribunal to a number of crimes committed in the area of Vitez in April and May 1993

at the time he was a member of the anti-terrorist platoon of the HVO Military Police Battalion known as the "Jokers". Bralo was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment by a first instance judgment on 7 December 2005. The defence appealed against the length of the sentence, claiming that the Trial Chamber did not sufficiently take into account specific mitigating circumstances.

Second, on Tuesday 3 April, at 14 hrs, the ICTY Appeals Chamber will render its judgment in the case against Radoslav Brđanin. On 1 September 2004, Brđanin was sentenced to 32 years' imprisonment by a first instance judgment for persecutions, killing, torture, deportation and other crimes committed against the non-Serb population in 13 municipalities in the Autonomous Region of Krajina between 1 April and 31 December 1992.

The first-instance judgment reads that Brđanin was the leading political figure in ARK and that he aided and abetted the crimes committed and influenced them in several ways, including through decisions issued by the ARK Crisis Staff as its president, as well as participating in a propaganda campaign by the way of making public statements creating fear and hatred.

EUFOR

No statement.

RTQ's:

Daily newspaper «SAN», Admir Mujanović:

I have two questions, one for you Mario and the other if for Mr. Hellmann. Concerning the vetting procedure that is underway for ministerial candidates for the Government of the

Federation of BiH, yesterday you told me that the Office of the High Representative never comments vetting of candidates, however I would just like to know whether the vetting procedure has been completed? So, I am not really asking for a comment. I am actually asking you this mostly because it has been made to appear that the OHR is mainly to blame for the fact that we still, it is already the end of March, do not have a government in the Federation. My question for Mr. Hellmann is to do with the Brđanin case. Correct me if I am wrong, however is it not true that the Prosecutor's Office submitted an appeal and now wants to convict him for genocide as well?

ICTY, Mathias Hellmann:

I will check, but as far as I know that is not true.

Office of the High Representative, Mario Brkić:

That was a short and creative question, however you already know the answer. Regarding the impression some may have that the Office of the High Representative is more to blame than those who have failed to form a government even after all this time, I think it is best if we allow the public to form its own opinion.

FENA, Lejla Alibegović:

Do you have any new information regarding the organization of a meeting between the political leaders on police reform?

Office of the High Representative, Mario Brkić:

At this point we have no specific information. I can only repeat what we have already said, and that is the OHR remains ready and its doors are open for the continuation of talks on police reform. However, it is up to the political leaders, that is, the members of the governing coalition, to work together and find some way to agree and move this reform

forward.

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