

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Coneference at CPIC

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 10 December 2002

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday 10 December 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Oleg Milisic	• HR at ID Card Ceremony. • OHR VAT meeting in Banja Luka. • SDHR Schrombgens to visit Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje and Travnik. • HR's visit to Moscow.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• The OSCE is focusing on the youth by visiting over twenty schools to promote and discuss human rights today. • OSCE welcomes the new draft law by the ministry of foreign trade and economic affairs on export and import of weapons and military equipment. • OSCE's conference on local governance.

c. UNMIBH	Alun Roberts	• Secretary General's, Message Human Rights Day. • Human Rights Watch Report. • UNMIBH's responsibility on the process of accrediting police and law enforcement institutions in BiH. • Secretary General to the Security Council in respect of UNMIBH.
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	• UNHCR calls on respect of the rights of returnees.
e. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	• No statement.

2. Thirty-four members of the media including four television crews attended the conference.

3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

A. Ollivier
Col. (FR A),
Chief Operations and Plans

Oleg Milisic- OHR

Good morning. I have four items for you today.

Firstly, the High Representative Paddy Ashdown is joining other Bosnia and Herzegovina and international dignitaries at the ceremony to mark the issuing of the first ID card, which is going on as we speak. The High Representative will note that it is appropriate that a neutral ID card, free of ethnic or national connotation is being introduced on International Human Rights Day.

The High Representative will say that a single ID card system for the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a fundamental foundation for the rule of law in this country. The work that has gone into this project demonstrates that Bosnia and Herzegovina is capable moving forward. The issuing of the ID card is the first of many steps needed to restructure Bosnia and Herzegovina for modern European economic life, where all Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens have equal and fair opportunity to participate in the systematic restructuring of society.

Secondly, this afternoon in Banja Luka, the Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays, will chair a meeting of tax experts and politicians on the subject of VAT. The point of this meeting is to separate fact from fiction. VAT has been a subject of myth, confusion and misinformation.

Today's meeting will clarify and explain. The position of the International Community is clear, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs a VAT system and it needs it quickly, it needs a European standard single VAT system. European Union countries do not have separate VAT systems in their own countries. There is no economic rationale for having competing VAT systems. Further, this is not about setting up three separate tax administrations to collect VAT, this is about creating one more efficient administration, whereas until now there has been three sales tax systems all vulnerable to fraud.

It will take 18 months to 24 months to introduce VAT, so the process should begin as soon as possible. The reason for the urgency is that Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens are being deprived of hundreds of millions of KM every year, because of sales-tax evasion. That is hundreds of millions of KM that are not being spent on hospitals, schools or pensions.

The problem is serious in the Federation and even more serious in the Republika Srpska, where sales tax revenue is barely 20 percent of the Federation figure, because thieves are

siphoning off funds that should be going to Entity budgets.

Under the sales tax system, revenue goes to the Entities, cantons and municipalities. Under VAT, revenue will go to the Entities, cantons and municipalities. The only difference is that the revenue will increase, because VAT is harder to evade than sales tax. It is fairer because, everyone pays and VAT could reduce the tax bill, because when everyone pays, it is not just honest taxpayers who carry the burden.

Thirdly, Senior Deputy High Representative Gerhard Enver Schrombgens is visiting Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje and Travnik, today to meet with local officials, businessmen and returnees. During his tour he will visit three factories and a business association.

The Senior Deputy High Representative, will be explaining to businessmen the work of the Bulldozer Committee, formed to promote a business friendly environment across Bosnia and Herzegovina, and inviting them to participate. He will be saying to them that, "Bosnia and Herzegovina needs a system for regulating businesses designed with the help of businessmen themselves." You should have all received a media advisory on this, but just in case I have brought along copies, which are on the tables outside.

Finally, the High Representative is travelling to Moscow this afternoon. Tomorrow he will have a meeting with Foreign Minister Ivanov, and after that he will address the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Duma.

The High Representative is in Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Government and he will brief government and parliamentary leaders on the status of peace implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the prospects for the future.

The High Representative will emphasise the increasingly coherent consensus that now exists in the International Community, on how to move the peace implementation process

forward. Russia is an indispensable part of that consensus. The Russians have played a valuable role in the current push to provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with functioning and durable economic and political institutions, the Council of Ministers reform, countrywide VAT and countrywide customs.

The High Representative will be expressing his appreciation of this when he meets the Russian leadership, and he will seek continued Russian engagement and support. We will be issuing a press release giving details of this visit tomorrow afternoon. That is all I have for today, thank you.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning.

The OSCE Mission is focusing on the youth by visiting over twenty schools to promote and discuss human rights today, on International Human Rights Day. In Sarajevo Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, Head of the OSCE mission, will visit law students here in Sarajevo. He intends to focus on the right to education as a human right, but also the important role that the law students, as future guardians of human rights, play.

Ambassador Beecroft will meet with the students at 13:00 today at the Sarajevo University's rectorate, Obala Kulina Bana 7. Immediately following his address, students from the Law Faculty will stage a mock trial, which will demonstrate fundamental human rights issues in action. From there on, we move to the First Bosniak Gymnasium also in Sarajevo, at 14:00. Zlatan Burzic, of the rock band PUNKT, will discuss human rights with the students in an unconventional but guaranteed entertaining way. This will be repeated in high and secondary schools all around Bosnia and Herzegovina today. You may have attended last years, wigland role-play, which we are going to repeat in over 20 schools all over Bosnia and Herzegovina today. We will be issuing a press release about Human Rights Day, following those events.

Secondly, the OSCE mission welcomes the new draft law by the ministry of foreign trade and economic affairs, on export and import of weapons and military equipment, which the Council of Ministers adopted yesterday. The OSCE sees this as an important step in the right direction of controlling arms export and import and encourages the drafts serious consideration at the earliest possible convenience.

Thirdly, the OSCE's conference on local governance, which started yesterday, continues at the Holiday Inn. Its focus today, is on public image of municipalities, on improving communication with citizens and to encourage public participation in municipal politics. As you maybe aware OSCE launched an initiative earlier this year with over 20 municipalities, providing them with expert advice on public information issues. Several municipalities have already built on this advice and developed public information plans. Our Deputy Head of Mission Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani will award those 20 municipalities, with a certificate starting at 17:00. Media are most welcome to attend the ceremony as well as other parts of the conference, which is attended by well over one hundred mayors and municipal assembly speakers. That is all from me today.

Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

Good morning from UNMIBH. I am standing in for Kirsten; I am Alun Roberts Regional Bihac Spokesperson.

As has been said already, today 10 December is United Nations Human Rights Day. I would like just to take a few extracts from the Message of the UN Secretary General in commemorating Human Rights Day.

The Secretary General observes that one of the most outstanding legacies of the past century has been the development of international law, especially of humanitarian, refugee, criminal and human rights law, which when taken

together serve to protect the individual from injustice. The Secretary General, emphasises, however, that too often these international laws are not honoured, but often subverted to provide a cloak of legitimacy for breaches of human rights or infringements on civil liberties.

On the occasion of human rights day the Secretary General Kofi Anan, appeals to all Governments, communities and individuals to commit themselves to the universal application to the rule of Law. The message underlines, that application of the rule of law is the duty of States both large and small. The Secretary General stresses that the rule of law is the most effective tool in the fight on criminality and terrorism, and the best guarantee of security and freedom for all. Copies of the Secretary General's, Message on today Human Rights Day are available outside.

In observing that today, is Human Rights Day, UNMIBH also notes what is the very thorough, recent report of Human Rights Watch on Trafficking in Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the wider region. The report released in November is entitled, Hopes Betrayed – Trafficking of Women and Girls in Post Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina for Forced Prostitution.

The report of Human Rights Watch and its two years of research must be welcomed. Any effort, any report and any initiative to address this serious crime issue of the most-gross exploitation of women and girls must be seen as a step towards fighting this endemic problem.

UNMIBH notes, however that the major focus of the Human Rights Watch Report is on the past, beginning with 1999, rather than the present. For example it contains little information or observations on UNMIBH led activities to confront the trafficking. For UNMIBH we would just underline again the initiative in July 2001, of establishing UNMIBH's Special Trafficking Operations Programme, STOP.

The initiative came out of recognising not only that a substantive effort was needed to confront the issue of trafficking in women, but also to confront the organised crime connection with the trade in women.

Noting that the responsibility confronting organised crime on trafficking lies with the police and law enforcement agencies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, so far UNMIBH's STOP initiative is the most comprehensive programme in the fight against trafficking. STOP not only monitors raids and inspections of night bars and other places involved in forced prostitution and trafficking, but also provides first hand assistance to women, most recently of assisting a 14 year old girl who was being physically detained.

Page 5 of the Human Rights Watch Report, suggests that the STOP assisted raids only push the trafficking issue underground. This appears to be a misleading assessment. Under such rationale police should therefore not pursue criminals, because they will only develop more sophisticated methods of avoiding detection and arrest.

For its own side, UNMIBH's position over allegations against the IPTF officers remains the same. UNMIBH maintains a strict zero tolerance policy with regard to sexual or other misconduct by IPTF officers. UNMIBH further, has no evidence that substantiates or directly implicates IPTF officers in the trade of trafficking. Neither has any individual or organisation come forward with evidence to substantiate allegations of IPTF involvement in trafficking.

While welcoming the Human Rights Report in further exposing this serious form of crime activity, UNMIBH would just emphasise that the majority of the clients visiting night bar sex trade establishments are nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In one recent case that involved local police, UNMIBH dismissed 26 local police officers in Canton 6 for such offences. The involvement of the 26 police officers was

revealed as a result of a STOP team assisted raid made by police on a night bar in Canton 6.

Recent figures for STOP are that since its establishment in 2001. It has assisted 800 raids of night-bars, identified 240 places suspected of being involved in trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of these 152 have been closed. And via the UN International Organisation for Migration 264 victims of trafficking have been repatriated out of Bosnia and Herzegovina to their home countries.

On a totally separate issue namely, UNMIBH's responsibility on the process of accrediting police and law enforcement institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNMIBH welcomes the decision of the High Representative to impose legislation that will facilitate the accreditation process in nine of the 10 Cantons of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation.

IPTF Human Rights unit, which is overseeing the accreditation process of police and law enforcement institutions, was encouraged by the general goodwill and co-operation shown by all nine Cantons in developing standards and practices necessary for accreditation's.

However, even with the best efforts of the respective Ministries of Interior of these Cantons, the elections of October occurred. As a result, no Cantonal governing authorities have, as yet, been established. Therefore no legislative authority in the Cantons existed to move forward in giving legal effect to the new standards and practices being accepted by their respective police institutions.

With the recent decision of the High Representative the UNMIBH's accreditation process for the remaining nine Cantons will move ahead quite quickly. The first accreditation ceremony is to take place this week, on 12 December. The Canton 4, Zenica-Doboj Canton Ministry of Interior will receive UNMIBH accreditation. Dates are being finalised for

the accreditation ceremonies of the remaining Canton Ministries of Interior.

Finally, as press should know the UN Secretary General has responsibility to provide regular reports to the Security Council on the progress of each UN Peacekeeping Mission. The last report of the Secretary General on UNMIBH was on 5 June. The most recent report, of 2 December, is the final report of the Secretary General to the Security Council in respect of UNMIBH. After 7 years of work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Mission is soon to an end.

A few of the main extracts from the Secretary General's report make clear how busy the past six months has been for UNMIBH. It notes that in its effort to minimise political interference in police, that UNMIBH's project to establish independent police commissioners is now complete.

Police Commissioner's, are now appointed and working in all 10 Cantons, while Directors of police have been appointed at the Republika Srpska and Federation Ministries of Interior.

For the first time in Bosnia and Herzegovina senior police officers, nominated by independent selection boards are now in charge of police matters, not Ministers of Interior, who are political appointments

The report notes that via UNMIBH the State Border Service has been completed. State Border Service now controls all land borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina with neighbouring countries. It also recalls that the State Information and Protection Service, SIPA, has been established and its directors have been appointed.

Towards reform of the judiciary, the Secretary General's report notes that a 3 year project of UNMIBH to train, equip and establish a Court Police, to serve in providing security in all 174 Courts, in the Federation, as well as protection to members of the judiciary, has been completed.

The report gives special attention to the tasks that UNMIBH set itself in 2000, by adopting a Mandate Implementation Plan of 6 core programmes, on police reform, on restructuring police institutions, on its project to assess and identify weaknesses in the Judiciary, of building co-operation between entity police forces, of its campaigns to increase public trust in police and of helping Bosnia and Herzegovina police and military to participate in UN peacekeeping.

In its Observations the Report notes that under UNMIBH's mandate of police reform, Bosnia and Herzegovina now has all the mechanism and institutions to participate fully in the regional, as well as international fight against organised crime and against terrorism. The State Border Service has dramatically reduced the flow of illegal immigrants, has helped deter narcotics and trafficking and reduce smuggling.

For those interested, copies of the Secretary General's final report to the UN Security Council on UNMIBH are outside for attention.

Bakir Jalovcic – UNHCR

Good morning.

UNHCR recorded 5,898 so-called minority returns in October 2002, and a total of 86,609 from the beginning of the year. The number of returnees in 2002, remains higher with this latest report, than in previous years. Since 1996, a total of 914,209 refugees and displaced persons have thus returned to their homes. Return is taking place everywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, the number of recorded security incidents against returnees continues to concern UNHCR. At least 80 incidents were reported in 2002, resulting in damage to property, including houses, shops and cars, for example in Bijeljina, Foca, Mostar and Sarajevo municipalities. Another 70 incidents consisted of physical threats and violence against

returnees, as well as group violence reported, for example in Bijeljina, Bratunac, Travnik and Zavidovici municipalities. In addition, 70 incidents were reported in 2002, resulting in damages to religious edifices and desecration of religious or memorial sites, in particular in Mostar and Prijedor municipalities. In at least 90 of the total incidents reported in 2002, explosive devices, hand guns or knives have been used by the perpetrators. These incidents caused injuries in at least 18 cases. While the municipalities cited above are those where a high number of such incidents have occurred, similar incidents against returnees are reported from elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well.

International Human Rights Day is the occasion to remind the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina of their duty to ensure that the rule of law is respected in all parts of the country, and to secure the rights of refugees and displaced persons to return in dignity to their homes of origin in line with the provisions set in Annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities at all levels of government are responsible for taking appropriate measures to prevent such incidents. The police must immediately and properly investigate incidents, and perpetrators must be prosecuted. UNHCR calls on the competent authorities to condemn these incidents and take any other measures appropriate to prevent their re-occurrence, in order to maintain the return momentum and the sustainability of return.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Nothing from SFOR this morning.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

We have a question.

Questions and Answers

Q: Julie Poucher Harbin – IWPR

Alun, are you confident the EUPM is prepared to carry on the STOP programme or do you have any reason to believe they will not be as good?

A: Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

That is for the EUPM to comment on in due course. As you know, EUPM take over on 1 January, it is for them to say at that time what their response is going to be in regard to the issue of trafficking.

Q: Julie Poucher Harbin – IWPR

Have you been speaking to the EUPM about sharing knowledge and about the STOP trafficking programme?

A: Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

Information has certainly been passed on, in terms of the STOP team raids, the whereabouts and locations of night bars and the fact that this is a very-very serious issue of organised crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina in regard to trafficking and the night bars.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Alun, on the same issue is there a timetable for the hand-over and are there any special events scheduled in the next 20 days?

A: Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

I do not think there are any special events, as far as, UNMIBH is concerned in regard to significantly noting the hand-over. It will be a process that goes on during the remaining weeks of this month, and the commencement of EUPM will begin on 1 January. I think, maybe later in December there maybe

something from the EUPM in terms of their programme of events including media during the course of January and February.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

On a separate issue of return related incidents, if I am right there have been about 150 incidents this year, how many of them have actually been properly investigated and how many perpetrators were found and prosecuted?

A: Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

I cannot give you exact figures, it varies. Certainly we would say, that issues that are of concern to UNMIBH and the IPTF, such as the recent explosion at the residence of the local Imam in Prijedor, which is the second time that this has occurred at the same residence. In some cases people are not identified and nobody is detained, which is not a good message or sense of reassurance for the returnee community. However, some of these incidences when they do occur are not necessarily seen by the police nor the IPTF monitoring investigations, as being a deliberate orchestrated effort to destabilise returnees, but maybe as an isolated incident. It is somewhat worrying that there are quite a large number of these incidents that do occur, where people have not actually been found and even when they have, again the judiciary arises that insufficient sentences are perhaps put on those. Again, the question of what is available in the law to the persons in the courts to impose those sentences.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

It appears the number of incidents has risen over the past several weeks or maybe the last couple of months is there a pattern and is it because of Ramadan or something else. The returnee season is pretty much over not a lot of people are returning now?

A: Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

We note that these incidents go on in various parts of the country that are marked by UNMIBH, the IPTF and the International Community as being sensitive areas. I am not sure a marked increase has taken place. But yes, we have noted that there has gradually been more numbers recently than we might like to see.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

What is your position on the trial of the 18 in Banja Luka?

A: Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

The 18 police officers from Prijedor, the investigative process began at the district court, yesterday and it is being monitored by UNMIBH Criminal Justice Advice Unit, who have taken a strong focus on this whole issue. I will just clarify what I saw in some of the press this morning saying, the 18 were accused of evidence for the war crimes of the murderer of Father Matanovic and his parents, back in late 1995. This is the second case aspect of the war crimes investigation of the Republika Srpska Ministry of Interior, focusing on the 18 and of there being sufficient evidence being passed back by ICTY. To suggest that they should stand trial for war crimes relating to the destruction of cultural property and religious objects, that is the focus of the trial in regard to these 18 and is being monitored closely and has been throughout this whole process.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

The overall the handling of the Matanovic case are you happy with it and what is your position?

A: Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

We have said at the Banja Luka press briefing several times, that most recently we have meet with the Republika Srpska Ministry of Interior, the CID Chiefs of the Ministry of

Interior and with the investigators of the Matanovic war crimes case, both the IPFT Human Rights and Criminal Justice Advise Units. The investigation team of the Ministry is proceeding, but we noted that in regard to Phase III of the investigation, which is identifying those responsible for abducting the Father and his parents, on the last time at the scene of the murder. That part of the investigation seems to be moving very slowly, so in that regard, no, we are not satisfied that it is taking concrete efforts as might be the case and should be the case.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Yves, any news on Fijuljanin?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

What I can tell you today, is that over the weekend he saw his lawyer again this time for about an hour, he is still being detained at Eagle base while our investigation continues and that is all I can bring to you today, as far as information is concerned.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Did you get any firm evidence that he is indeed linked to Al Qaeda?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

Any further evidence?

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Any firm evidence?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

We have information and we have passed it to the Federation Ministry of Interior, We do have information that he has links to Al Qaeda.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

But, no further evidence apart from what you have already got?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

I do not know what has been discovered since our last update, but the evidence that we have is strong. We would not have gone out with this information unless we were positively sure that he is linked to Al Qaeda.

Q: Ankica Posavljak – HRT

Yves, have you received any information that last night drunken SF0R soldiers damaged a wall in Zagreb, we call it the Wall of Mourning, which was built as a memorial for the victims of Vukovar?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

Yes, I am aware of a news report that this act of vandalism took place. But, it is a matter for the Croatian police to investigate, if they need the assistance of SF0R they can always come forward and ask for our assistance, at this time we have not yet been approached.

Q: Ankica Posavljak – HRT

If those were your soldiers then it is probably within your jurisdiction to take action and not the Croatian police?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

Before you say that the incident was caused by an SF0R soldier bring us the proof, right now there is no proof that SF0R personnel were involved. If the local police force have proof they can always come to SF0R and we will certainly co-operate with them, but until such proof is given to SF0R we are not involved.

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje

There have been some reports that Gotovina, is frequently seen in Western Herzegovina, do you have any comment on that and what is the procedure if SFOR come across an indicted war criminal who is indicted from another country?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I am aware of the news report; I also read it in the newspapers. We do not disclose our intelligence sources. But, what I would say is that if Gotovina, ever happens to be in Bosnia and Herzegovina and SFOR troops come across him, he will be detained and he will be transferred to the ICTY. Having said that, I would just like to add that is also the responsibility of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfil their engagement and to also apprehend these PIFWC's and also return them to the ICTY.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Yves, what does a link mean, is it a passive link, an active link or a hypothetical link, these guys presumably do not drink maybe they have a cup of coffee or something he knows someone, who knows someone, who knows someone. What does the link mean, how strong, it is pretty weak a link?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

What are we talking about here?

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

About Fijuljanin?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I cannot disclose any information with regards to the information that links him to Al Qaeda. That is something we have and we are not going to discuss it in the press.

Q: Aida Cerkez-Robinson – AP

I did not get it from the answer before, are you talking about information or evidence of a connection with Al Qaeda?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Of Fijuljanin again?

Q: Aida Cerkez-Robinson – AP

Do you have information about him being linked to the Al Qaeda or evidence of him being linked?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

We have information that leads us to believe 100% that he has a link to Al Qaeda.

Q: Aida Cerkez-Robinson – AP

That is not evidence that is circumstantial, but that it is still information not evidence?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

We have information that leads us to believe he is linked to Al Qaeda.

Q: Aida Cerkez-Robinson – AP

No evidence?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Information.

Q: Nick Hawton – BBC

What is SFOR's assessment of how much of a threat Al Qaeda are in Bosnia at the moment?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Can you repeat your question?

Q: Nick Hawton – BBC

What is SFOR's assessment as to the threat from Al Qaeda in Bosnia at the moment, are they a big threat, a small threat or a medium threat?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

That is a question I cannot really answer at this time. Because, once again you are talking about intelligence matters and we do not disclose those matters.

Q: Nick Hawton – BBC

Obviously this is of relevance to the safe and secure environment in Bosnia for internationals and for local people, can SFOR not offer some advice as to whether there are bunches of Al Qaeda groups wondering around Bosnia at the moment?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

We have said many times in the past that we would be foolish to think there are no terrorists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they are everywhere, to think they are not here would be foolish. As far as what level of threat that they pose to Bosnia and Herzegovina, that is something I cannot discuss publicly, that is part of intelligence and I cannot discuss that.

Q: Nick Hawton – BBC

Do you think Fijuljanin is an isolated case or one of many?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I cannot go into these details with Fijuljanin. Our investigation continues SFOR is doing an investigation along with the Ministry of Interior. We are going to take the time we need to get all of the information, because we still believe that he poses a threat.

Q: Aida Cerkez-Robinson – AP

Lets say information about the link leads to evidence, what is going to happen then, is he going to be handed over to the local authorities and is this going to be handled by the courts or is there any chance that he is extradited. That is what I really would like to know, in the end if he really is Al Qaeda, then what?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I would only be speculating, if I were to say the way ahead. I just do not know, what will happen in the future. If you had asked me five weeks ago would we still be detaining him now, I probably would have said, no. Now we are in the fifth week and we are still detaining him, our investigation continues and to speculate as to what the end state will be with Fijuljanin, I cannot even guess, I just do not know.

Q: Aida Cerkez-Robinson – AP

I was wondering whether you would trust the local judicial system to handle such cases. Eventually there has got to be a trial and I am just wondering where that is going to be?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Only time will tell. We have had some very good co-operation so far from the Federation Ministry of Interior; they are working along side us to get to the bottom of the situation. We are moving ahead, I know that it has been five weeks and I do not know for how long we will detain him, but maintaining a safe and secure environment is our primary goal.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic – AFP

It is pretty much the same question. But, you cannot rule out that Fijuljanin could be extradited to the United States for example?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I do not know what will happen in the future.

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP

But, you cannot rule it out at this point?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I cannot rule out anything. I do not know what the future holds with regards to Fijuljanin.

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP

That end depends on what material evidence you may find in the course of the investigation, right?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Definitely the end state with Mr. Fijuljanin, will depend on what we find between now and the time that we are prepared to make the decision as to his disposition. I just do not know what will happen, you are asking what will happen in the future, I do not have a crystal ball and I cannot tell what is going to happen.

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP

Obviously he is not handed over to the local authorities, is that because the issue is too serious?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No, it is because we need to detain him to further our own investigation. That is the reason he is still in our detention, SFOR is doing its own investigation, we are still speaking with him and that is why he is still being detained by SFOR.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Yves, did you just say that there is terrorism in Bosnia, just like in any other country in the world?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier SF0R

Terrorism is everywhere.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Could you give me one example of a person detained in Bosnia that was found guilty of terrorism by a court, just one in the last 12 months?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

When we say...

Interrupted by – Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Excuse me, when you say terrorism do you mean global terrorism linked to Al Qaeda, Islamic terrorism?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

Yes, that is what I mean; we have proof that he is linked to a terrorist organisation.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

You have a link?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SF0R

Yes, Fijuljanin is linked to Al Qaeda. We have said that repeatedly over the last week. We have information that leads us to believe that we know he is linked to Al Qaeda and that is a terrorist organisation.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Apart from that case, we had a case of Algerians, a number of other people who were detained, a number of other people who

were suspected of terrorism, but not a single case of terrorism has been proved before a court of justice, is that right?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I do not know. It would be foolish to think there are not terrorists.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

You can say there is terrorism until proved in the court, you cannot say this is terrorism you are not a judicial body, do you have that kind of authority?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No, I do not. But, what I can tell you is that from what we see around the globe today, terrorism is present. To think that terrorism is not present in Bosnia and Herzegovina would be foolish. To think this country is immune to terrorism, because we do not have actual evidence or proof would be foolish, you have to think that this is possible, that we do have someone here who is linked to Al Qaeda. To think that Bosnia and Herzegovina is immune to terrorism or terrorists is foolish they are present everywhere and there has been plenty of evidence of terrorist acts in the past, of terrorist activities and of presence in various countries.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Lets speak about those countries later on, but right now we are talking about Bosnia and a safe and secure environment in Bosnia. Can you recall at least one case where there was firm evidence that someone was a member of or linked to an international terrorist network?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Not personally, but the case in point is that Mr. Fijuljanin

is linked to Al Qaeda. We have evidence and information that leads to that fact.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Information is not confirmed by the court he has not been sentenced for terrorism, do you not think you are rushing a bit maybe he will be found innocent in the end, maybe you will just release him and say you made a mistake?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I do not have a crystal ball to you what will happen in the future. Just that our investigation continues.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

Excuse me this is just going around and around, I do not know if realise, maybe you can talk about this later.

Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

These press conferences are scheduled for things like that.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

By all means continue, I am just saying you are posing the same questions and getting the same answers, I do not think there is a question that has not been answered.

Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Maybe you should draw up a list of questions that we can ask in the future.

Unknown speaker

Comments off microphone.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

Before you go my colleague from OSCE has something to mention.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

OK, carry on.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

I have an announcement on behalf of myself, Oleg and everybody else at OSCE and the OHR. We hope to see you all tonight at Fis, where we can continue to discuss our favourite subject, I am sure this will be one of them, I will certainly talk about local government and Oleg about VAT. Kevin has developed a party advisory that I hope you have all received, if not it is at Fis, at 19:00, I hope to see all of you and your colleagues. Thank you.