

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference in CPIC

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 29 October 2002

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday 29 October 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Mario Brkic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inter agency tax group.• PLIP statistics.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Affairs calls a meeting with representatives of the IC and BiH Ministries.• OSCE expresses concern about a number of security incidents related to returns and property law implementation.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust fund ceremony.• Sale of UNMIBH assets.
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No statement.
e. ICTY	Rafik Hodzic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline of speech made before the General Assembly of the UN by the Tribunals President.
f. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite to COMSFOR press conference.

2. Forty-four members of the media including seven

television crews attended the conference.

A. Ollivier

Col. (FR A),

Chief Operations and Plans

Mario Brkic – OHR

Good day and welcome to the press conference. Two points today from Office of the High Representative.

As we speak, representatives of the International Community, including the World Bank, the IMF, the EC and others, are meeting at the Office of the High Representative. They are discussing the best way of moving ahead on two crucial issues that the High Representative Paddy Ashdown has presented to the incoming authorities in his, six tests of seriousness.

These are the establishment of a state-wide system of Value Added Tax and the reform of the customs system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Entities need to revenue, and adequate supply of revenue exists, the problem is that it is not collected. It is common knowledge that tax evasion in Bosnia and Herzegovina runs into the hundreds of millions of KM. The most efficient way of introducing Value Added Tax is at state level.

Customs reform is another area where urgent steps must be taken in order to rationalise the existing system, which is wasteful and inefficient, so that revenue is collected in the optimal way.

The bottom line is that efficient revenue collection means more money for schools, hospitals, and all other social services. Tax evasion simply cost the Entity and governments hundreds of millions of KM every day. It costs citizens hundreds of millions of KM every year and it has to be brought to an end.

The second point today, the PLIP agencies, OHR, UNHCR, OSCE, CRPC and UNMIBH announce the Property Law Implementation statistics for September 2002. Which, show that the overall implementation ratio reached 62%, in September, up by an average of 3% countrywide from last month, and up by 21% from the end of last year.

In the Federation, 66% of cases have been resolved, which represents a rise of 4% since August. In the Republika Srpska, 56% of properties were repossessed, which represents a rise of 2%. Meanwhile in the Brcko district, there has been an increase of 2%, up to 66%, the same total as the Federation. You can find more detail in the press release outside.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning everyone. Two points from the OSCE today.

Following Sunday's statements by the International Community on the ORAO affair, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Affairs, Dr. Azra Haziamatovic has called a meeting today at 13:00, with representatives of the International Community and Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministries.

In the meeting she intends to lay out the actions that need to be taken urgently and before the first deadline, set by the High Representative, on November 15. OSCE welcomes this swift reaction by the minister, which is urgently needed if Bosnia and Herzegovina are to come to an acceptable solution to the ORAO case and future arms export. As you are hopefully aware, there will be a press opportunity immediately following the meeting, which should be around 14:00.

Secondly, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina expresses its concern about a number of security incidents, related to returns and property law implementation.

Examples of this are recent incidents in Mostar and Ilijas,

directed against housing officials and returnees. It can not be stressed too often that local authorities must take the matter seriously and take necessary action to prevent violence and threats against those implementing the property law and against those repossessing their houses. That is all from thank you.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning. Only two short announcements from UNMIBH.

There will be a ceremony tomorrow the, 30 October at 11:00 at the Sarajevo, General Hospital to be more precise at the intensive care unit.

The ceremony will mark the symbolic hand over of a United Nations Trust Fund donation in the amount of 102,400 KM this money was spent on the medical monitors for the intensive care unit. The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Souren Seraydarian will be at the ceremony to hand over a symbolic check also representatives of General Hospital staff and Sarajevo Canton officials will be there. There will be a separate media advisory sent out later on this afternoon.

The second short announcement concerns the sale of UNMIBH assets, with the mission now coming to a close and with the end of the mandate approaching, the mission will start selling its assets, including containers, vehicles, computers and many other items. Bids can be delivered until, 19 November this year. Several site visits are planned and they will be conducted between, 5 and 8 November. Detailed information including lists of the assets and instructions to bidders are posted on the UNMIBH website. That is all from me today, thank you.

Bakir Jalovcic – UNHCR

Good morning. No statement from UNHCR.

Rafik Hodzic – ICTY

Good morning.

I do not have a statement just to tell you that there was a speech made last night before the General Assembly of the UN by the Tribunals President. In which, he basically outlined the plan for the Tribunals end of mandate by 2004, to complete all investigations and 2008, to complete all first instance trials. He also warned that unless certain things happen like the creation of a War Crimes Chamber to try certain cases the Tribunal, would want to defer to Bosnia and Herzegovina Courts and unless arrests of all fugitives happens that this plan will not be possible to accomplish. The full text of this speech is outside for you at this time in English. We hope to have the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian versions by the end of the day.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No official statement from SFOR this morning, other than to invite you to stay behind at noon, General Ward will be available to take your questions for 15 minutes, on completion of our regular press conference, so if I can ask you to stay behind and reconvene at 12 noon. Thank you.

Mario Brkic – OHR

Any questions? Then thank you very much.