

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 1130 hours on Thursday 6 June 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Oleg Milisic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Inaugural Session of the Court of BiH· AM Sped Affair· IJC Recommends Reform of Court Administration
b. OSCE	Henning Philipp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Booklet being compiled for demob. soldiers
c. UNMIBH	Stefo Lehmann	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Success of State Border Service in combating illegal immigration through SIA· Removal of authorisations from two police officers
d. UNHCR	Aida Feraget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Refugee day will be celebrated in Trnovo· Stats package
e. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Operation Harvest reaps success in May 2002

2. Twenty-six members of the media and two television crews attended the conference.

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

C Minck

Col (FR A),

Chief Media Operations and Plans

Oleg Milisic – OHR

I have three points for you today, so we will kick off with the inaugural session of The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be officially inaugurated today at 1600 hours at the Joint Institutions Building. The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will address the inaugural session.

Also attending will be the members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, members of the Council of Ministers, representatives of the Bosnia and Herzegovina State Parliament, the Presidents of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Commission and the Constitutional Court, together with other dignitaries.

Certainly members of the press are invited to attend.

The High Representative will emphasise that the various divisions of the Bosnia and Herzegovina State Court are part of the institutional machinery whose purpose is to protect the rights of Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens. The State Court is there to serve. The seven judges who will take their oath of office this afternoon will form the division charged with securing the protection of citizens' electoral rights. The Division is competent to hear appeals from Decisions of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Commission and the Election Complaints and Appeals Council. Significantly, today's ceremony will reflect the process, evident in all areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina life, of international institutions

being replaced by national ones. A point to note that tomorrow the High Representative will also visit the sites where the Bosnia and Herzegovina Court will be located. There will be details of this later on today.

Secondly, a few words with regard to the AM-SPED affair, which is something, that has been in the news a lot recently. The High Representative has made it clear that corruption in any form and in any place is unacceptable and has been equally clear that the domestic authorities must show that corruption is unacceptable for them.

In this respect, the High Representative welcomes the statement made yesterday by a member of the SDP Presidency Dzevad Haznadar, who said that any members of his own party implicated in the AM-SPED affair will be asked to resign. The party – and the Alliance – does not want to be associated in any way with corruption. This should, of course, apply to all parties.

And finally, a note on a recent IJC report. On behalf of the IJC I would just like to draw your attention to a report on court administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The report finds that courts are under-funded, that they lack direction and that the court system makes inefficient use of Judges' working time. The report, entitled "Justice in Due Time", was sent last week by the Director of the IJC, Rakel Surlien, to courts and Justice Ministries across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The project team of international and domestic experts has been working since January this year, the team has conducted an extensive series of interviews with court and Justice Ministry officials and examined case files from five target courts in both Bosnia and Herzegovina Entities.

The report concluded that the courts place too much emphasis on internal rules and procedures and insufficient emphasis on providing the public with quality service and resolving cases

promptly. Statistical reporting in the court system needs serious revision in order to shift focus more to resolving outstanding cases.

The report also found that the Canton-based administrative structure of the Federation courts to be inherently inefficient, and calls for better funding of courts overall, with more discretion for the courts in their use of funds. Nonetheless, the report suggests that many of the solutions to operational problems are already within the capability of court and ministry officials, and calls on them to assess and address the inefficiencies within their own courts. Many improvements could be made immediately.

You will find copies of the press release on the tables outside, and the report itself is available on the IJC Web Page, which is www.ohr.int/ijc.

Henning Philipp – OSCE

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in close co-operation with the Federation Ministry of Defence and with SFOR, is preparing a booklet containing valuable information for demobilised soldiers. The booklet serves as a guide to point people in the right direction for finding employment, vocational training or loans for establishing small businesses. It will be about 200 pages long and carries information and contact addresses along with descriptions of the programmes offered by various national and international agencies. The guide will be available by the end of this month and the Ministry of Defence will ensure its distribution to all former soldiers concerned.

A copy of the cover page of the booklet is available outside in the lobby.

Stefo Lehmann – UNMIBH

We have three points for you today.

As you may know, today – June 6 – is being recognised as the State Border Service Day, as it marks the second anniversary of the first State Border Service deployment to the Sarajevo International Airport. As we can all agree, during these last two years the State Border Service has become one of the most successful and effective law enforcement agencies in the country and indeed in the entire Balkan region. As the only State-level law enforcement agency, the State Border Service now deploys almost 1,700 officers, covering approximately 88% of the country's land borders, including all operating international airports. It is on track to complete its deployment, as scheduled, by September of this year.

The UN Mission is proud to have co-ordinated its creation in partnership with the local authorities and we would like to use the occasion of this second anniversary to thank all the countries which have contributed, financially or otherwise, to this successful project.

A clear example of the success of the State Border Service can be seen in the dramatic reduction in the number of illegal migrants using Bosnia and Herzegovina as the back door into Europe. Although this phenomenon still exists and remains a serious problem, the State Border Service has had a positive impact. For example, between 1 January and 31 May 2001, 7,221 individuals had entered Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Sarajevo International Airport and had remained unaccounted for. Now, in the same period this year, from January to the end of May, the number of unaccounted passengers has dropped to 203. So we are talking about a 97% reduction from last year. It is safe, however, to assume that human trafficking rings are finding alternate routes, but Bosnia and Herzegovina is no longer their preferred transit point and that is important.

We remain confident that this trend will continue and the UN Mission here would like to again commend the professionalism and dedication demonstrated during the past two years by the

men and women of the State Border Service.

Our second point, after conducting a comprehensive review of the acts and omissions of various police officers serving in the police forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former IPTF Commissioner, Vincent Coeurderoy, decided to withdraw on 27 May, before his departure, the provisional authorisation to exercise police powers from two additional police officers.

Zajim Smajic, police officer, in Visoko, and Boze Cerkez, former Chief of Police, Posusje, Canton 8 West Hercegovina.

Provisional authorisation was removed from Mr. Smajic after determining that he engaged in various types of misconduct, including neglect of duty, violating public peace and order, attempting to provide false visas and other serious violations of the Book of Rules.

Mr. Cerkez has had his authorisation removed for neglect of duty while serving as the Chief of Police in Posusje during the April 6 2001 audit of Hercegovacka Banka in Posusje. He is directly responsible for failing to take appropriate measures to protect individuals from violence, including death threats.

He also violated the police Code of Conduct by assaulting another officer from Ljubuski while under the influence of alcohol on 21 March 2001.

The Commissioner's decision is effective immediately, as you know, and prevents these officers from participating in any aspect of police work anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, either now or in the future.

Finally, we would like to commend the work of various police administrations. Very briefly, as you may know, the Tuzla Cantonal Minister of Interior Support Unit arrested an individual suspected of throwing a device, which injured five individuals four days ago. They arrested Mladen Ivic, that

was reported on Tuzla Cantonal TV, and we would definitely commend their quick reaction in this operation.

We would also like to commend the Public Security Centre (PSC) of Serb Sarajevo. They informed the IPTF that they had arrested two suspected two days ago in the 3 June robbery of the Bobar Bank, which occurred in Serb Novo Sarajevo.

Finally, we would like to commend the initiative by the Serb Sarajevo PSC and the Canton 9, Sarajevo Cantonal Police in creating a joint specialised unit to combat car theft. The most effective way to disrupt the activities of these car thieves is to, in fact, enhance inter-entity, and inter-cantonal, police co-operation. So that is a very good initiative and we commend that.

Aida Feraget – UNHCR

Just three short announcement for you today.

Early this afternoon we will release the latest statistics package with the latest return figures, I have to say they are impressive. So keep some space in your media for the package.

The second thing is that World Refugee Day on 20th June. This year in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be marked under the theme 'Celebrating Returns'. The ceremony will be held on 22nd June in Trnovo near Sarajevo on the Inter Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) because that location was known and still is as very co-operative, in spite of the fact that the Municipality was divided by the IEBL. Returns started fairly early to that area and returnees there are really well off. We will, of course, send out invitations in a couple of days but this is not only something for the media or VIP's, the whole of Sarajevo is invited to attend.

Finally, today is my last press conference in the capacity of UNHCR's spokesperson. I am moving on to another duty. I want

to thank you all for your co-operation that I had in the last five and a half years that I spent with UNHCR. I will not cry, I promised my husband. There are drinks available outside, no statistics package but drinks. I would love to share a farewell drink with all of you. I am not leaving the country, I am not leaving a PR job so I will keep harassing most of you in two or three weeks. (Clapping)

Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

I cannot top that. I have two points for you today.

May was another very successful month for Operation HARVEST. The results clearly show that the citizens, community leaders, local police and Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina are working closely with the International Police Task Force and SFOR to collect and destroy large quantities of illegally held weapons, munitions, mines, explosives and other war-making devices. The results for May 2002 are as follows:

- 1,000 small arms were collected of various calibre's;
- 300,000 rounds of ammunition – calibre 20 mm or smaller;
- 5,000 hand grenades;
- 800 mines both anti-personnel and anti-tank;
- 3,000 kilograms of explosives; and
- 14,000 other war-making devices.

I should add that these figures are consolidated SFOR figures and include the regional results compiled by Multinational Divisions, north, south-east and south-west.

The Operation HARVEST results for the first five months of 2002 are equally impressive, and indicate that the programme remains as relevant and effective as ever. The following

items were collected from 1 January to 31 May 2002:

- almost 4,300 small arms of various calibres;
- more than 900,000 rounds of ammunition – calibre 20 mm or smaller;
- nearly 14,000 hand grenades;
- 2,400 mines;
- almost 6,000 kilograms of explosives; and
- more than 34,000 other war-making items.

While these results are very encouraging, those of us involved in Operation HARVEST know that we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. SFOR once again urges the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue turning in their illegally held weapons, ammunition, mines and other war-making devices during Operation HARVEST so that this country can become a safer place for everyone.

And now, my second point. SFOR would like to set the record straight concerning a false report based on some very unreliable sources.

The published rumour that the Chairman of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Tri-Presidency, Mr. Belkic, was informed by SFOR in advance of its discovery of the illegal munition caches in Mostar but did nothing about it is completely false. He has also denied this.

SFOR has no obligation to inform any public officials of such operations in advance, and it did not do so in this case. SFOR's task with respect to the illegal munition caches was to do something about them, and we did just that. We seized them and destroyed the whole inventory, thus removing a potentially lethal danger to the citizens of Mostar.

Now it is up to the local and entity police to investigate the origin and circumstances surrounding these illegal munitions, and establish who hid them under factories and why. An official police investigation has been underway for more than three weeks now, and some arrests have been made as a result. SFOR understands court proceedings are also underway at this time.

SFOR will continue to follow the on-going investigation and court proceedings closely, along with the public, the media and the rest of the International Community.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

Okay before we go to questions there are a couple of things I do want to say. Firstly, to thank Aida for the great friendship and co-operation on behalf of all of us up here. And secondly, to say that apparently she is still not happy and that she has more to say.

Aida Feraget – UNHCR

I apologise I forgot to introduce my colleague, Majda Prljaca. As of Monday she will be in charge of the Press Office and she will be responsible in meeting all your requirements and that will be until further notice. So Majda please (she stood up and clapping.) Be good to her please.

Questions and Answers

Q **Nedim Dervisbegovic / Reuters** – My first goes to the UN but I feel other agencies might have something to say about the subject. The US published a report yesterday about human trafficking and put Bosnia along with 18 other countries on the list who are not doing enough to stop this problem. This is the second year running that Bosnia is on this list and if it appears on this list next year it might face sanctions for not doing enough. You said that numbers of

people trying to enter Bosnia illegally had dropped significantly but what about the other problems such as prostitution are authorities doing enough to prosecute people who are basically running the show when it comes to prostitution and human trafficking?

A **UNMIBH** – The numbers that I gave, first of all are for the number of entries into the Sarajevo Airport, they do not include possible entries from land borders. It is impossible to get those numbers. It is a matter of concern that Bosnia was included in the report and we are currently in communication with the US Embassy here in Sarajevo to determine what criteria was used to include Bosnia. So before we get that information it is difficult for me to give an answer to your question. As far as prostitution, certainly the numbers indicate that the S.T.O.P. teams that were established by the IPTF in partnership with the local police have had a serious impact. Prior to the establishment of these teams there had not been a single criminal charge pressed against someone for trafficking or a related crime. There are currently, I believe, approximately 50 cases ongoing which involved criminal charges pressed against people of trafficking. We have identified about 216 establishments suspects of being involved in prostitution, of those 113 have been closed. Now that is not to say that there are only 100 establishments remaining open, some may have re-opened; new ones may have been established that we do not know about. But never the less the fact is that over 100 of these establishments have in fact been forced to close down. So the numbers certainly indicate that the issue is being addressed effectively.

A **OHR** – I would just add to that there has been a marked drop certainly of people entering through Sarajevo Airport and I think that is a real indication that the State Border Service is working, that the police are tackling these problems more seriously. It is essential now though in the

next step to actually get the judicial system up and running. So you can see these things are in place, they are starting to work and it is essential for the domestic institutions to focus further on the development on these institutions so again it is not a problem in the future or this problem is seriously addressed in the future.

Q **Nedim Dervisbegovic / Reuters** – Some of the countries in the region that were mentioned in the same context as Bosnia over the past couple of years have now been promoted to a group of countries that did do something to tackle this problem such as Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania. There has been a lot of regional co-operation on this and other issues over the past 12 or 18 months. So what has Bosnia not done that they managed to do? What do you want the authorities to do to stop this?

A **UNMIBH** – That is a good question and that is why it is important to clarify what criteria was used by the US Embassy here in Bosnia to provide that information.

Q **Nedim Dervisbegovic / Reuters** – Regardless of the report what do you want the authorities to do? What are the authorities not doing that you want them to do?

A **UNMIBH** – I think the authorities are certainly becoming effective in both illegal immigration and in controlling the numbers of trafficked women coming in. Certainly there is no doubt about that.

Q **Nedim Dervisbegovic / Reuters** – There appears to be increased helicopter activity in Sarajevo and the Pale areas. Is there something unusual going on?

A **SFOR** – As I have explained to you before and many others in the room, SFOR has still a large helicopter fleet. We operate on a daily basis and we do fly quite frequently across the Sarajevo valley. So that would not concern me, we are conducting regular operations at this time.