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

CPIC/Media Conferences

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 27 August 2002**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday 27 August 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Mario Brkic	• No statement.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• No Statement.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	• Withdrawal of provisional authorisation and disqualification. • Certification and the housing situation.
d. ICTY	Refik Hodzic	• Overview of cases before the ICTY.
e. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	• No statement.

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

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

C. Barraud
Lt. Col. (FR A),

Chief Operations and Plans

Mario Brkic – OHR

Good morning and welcome to today's press conference.

There is no statement from the Office of the High Representative today, but we will be happy to take any questions later. Thank you.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning.

Unfortunately, it's the same from the OSCE.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

It's not the same from the UN. I am going to be talkative.

First of all, a number of withdrawals of provisional authorisation and a disqualification. The IPTF Commissioner Sven Frederikson has withdrawn the provisional authorisation to exercise police powers from three police officers, namely, Mane Djuric, Mladen Kitic and Fikret Beso. Further, Commissioner Frederiksen has disqualified Goran Vasilic to exercise police powers.

Mr. Mane Djuric served in the police force in Vlasenica from January 1991 to April 1994. From April 1992 on, he was the Chief of the Vlasenica Police. An extensive review into Mr. Djuric's wartime background led to the decision of removal of provisional authorisation. Mr. Djuric, who was until recently the Chief of the Zvornik Public Sector, has been identified as having been responsible for sending arrested non-Serbs from Vlasenica Police Station to the Susica detention camp in 1992. This camp was the main detention facility in the Vlasenica area where as many as 8,000 non-Serbs were detained between May and October 1992 and subjected to severe

maltreatment and executions. Based on these findings, the IPTF considers Mr. Djuric unfit to serve in the police forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Mladen Kitic stole a video camera from an IPTF officer during an official function in May 2002. This is not really funny; you do not want to have police officers who steal things from people. That is not exactly the right qualification. Only on presentation of firm evidence against him did he admit to the theft. Mr. Kitic's conduct is very reprehensible and renders him unsuitable to be a police officer.

Mr. Goran Vasilic, who was a police officer in Banja Luka, was disqualified to exercise police powers for his involvement in human trafficking. In November 2001, the Basic Court – Banja Luka sentenced Mr. Vasilic to one year and seven months imprisonment for trafficking in women. Mr. Vasilic has been dismissed from the police service and is currently serving his prison term.

Withdrawal of provisional authorisation and disqualification precludes a person from employment in any law enforcement agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina now or in the future.

I would like to draw your attention to the distinction between withdrawal of provisional authorisation and disqualification. It amounts to the same effect, meaning that this person will not be able to work as police officer again at any time. However, a disqualification is issued when a police officer has already been dismissed by his own police force. So, disqualification basically makes sure that this person will not be able to return to any police force in any capacity, be it as a police officer or an non-authorised person like a clerk. That is just for clarification.

I would like to come back to an issue that I presented last week: certification. I have noted that there was very little

coverage of this issue following my statement last week on the certification of police officers, which led us to believe that the importance of this process has really not come across to you. As I have already said, the certification of a police officer is the final result of a long process of background checking and performance evaluation of every single police officer. Any police officer who does not meet any of the certification criteria will not be able to be a police officer any longer or at any time in the future. So, this is a very important process with very serious implications.

Last week, I presented you with some details on the housing situation, which is one of the criteria that have to be met for final certification by every single police officer. This means every single police officer has to be in legal housing. He or she cannot violate any property law conditions. Let me give you more details to illustrate the situation.

Currently there are about 1,400 police officers in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina that still have to clarify their housing situation, which is 7.7 percent of the entire police force, almost 8 percent. These police officers are either illegal or double occupants, have pending cases concerning their housing situation or have failed to provide any information on their housing situation. All of these officers were given individual deadlines to regularise their housing situation, the last deadline expiring on 10 September 2002. Should they fail to meet those individual deadlines, these officers will not receive certification that means they will loose their jobs. Considering this concerns potentially 1,400 police officers, I find this development rather significant. We can only call again on these police officers to solve their housing situation lest they lose their employment. Again, we have notified the Ministers of Interior in the entire country by letters to take care of this situation and remind the police officers to come forward with the required information. That is all I have for you today, thank you.

Refik Hodzic – ICTY

Hello. I have an overview of cases before the ICTY.

As you probably know, our courtrooms re-opened yesterday. This overview will give you an idea of what cases are currently on trial and what cases will start in the period before the next recess, which starts on 16 December

The Milosevic case re-started yesterday, with the continuation of the prosecution examination in chief for the Kosovo indictment. This will continue until 13 September, as the current scheduling order states and will be followed by a two-week break until 30 September, when the trial will continue with opening statements for the Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Croatia indictments.

Other trials before the Tribunal include the 'Brdjanin and Talic' case and the 'Simic and others' case. What these two cases have in common is that the prosecution examination in chief will continue throughout the next three-and-a-half months until 16 December.

In the case against the former Mayor of Prijedor Milomir Stakic, the prosecution is expected to finish presenting evidence by 19 September. The trial is expected to continue on 30 September, with potential motion hearings and the defence's case to commence on 11 November.

Presentation of the defence case in the trial of Mladen Naletilic and Vinko Martinovic continued yesterday, with testimony of a protected witness via a video link from Zagreb. The presentation of the defence case is expected to conclude by 1 November.

Following the conclusion of the prosecution examination in chief in the case against Stanislav Galic, who is charged with crimes committed during the siege of Sarajevo, the defence is scheduled to begin presenting its evidence on 7 October

Apart from these ongoing cases, an appeal hearing in the case against Tihofil Blaskic is scheduled to be held from 11 to 28 November.

Different status conferences and motion hearings are scheduled in the cases of Krstic, Mrdja, Ljubicic and Krajisnik and Plavsic.

To conclude with some figures, at present there are 45 accused in the UN Detention Centre in Scheveningen. 10 accused have been provisionally released until the start of their trials, and 20 accused are still at large. Thank you, that is all.

Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

Dobar dan from SFOR.

I have no formal statement for you, but I would be happy to answer any questions you have.

Mario Brkic – OHR

Any questions?

Questions and Answers

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje

Scott, any comment on yesterday's decision by the Presidency on the state-level defence structure?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

SFOR and NATO heard yesterday that the Presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina had verbally agreed on the form the state-level defence structure for Bosnia and Herzegovina will take. This is viewed as an encouraging development. At the same time, SFOR and NATO understand the decision is provisional. In other words, it has not been formalised yet and it will only take effect once that formalisation has occurred. This is why we will refrain from further comment on the details of

their decision, as we should have a look at it and examine it in detail before we comment further.

Q: Viola Gienger – Freelance for Cox Newspapers

Kirsten, what is the process for police officers to be hired and how during that process is it verified whether or not they have the proper authorisations? Is there a central agency that monitors and keeps track of authorisations that has to clear each officer or how does it work?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

This is what we have been doing over the last couple of years. All police officers were invited to present all their credentials and to register with the IPTF. That happened more then two years ago. On examination of the documentation that has been delivered to us, the provisional authorisation has been issued to them. As the word in itself says, it has been provisional authorisation pending further checks.

These checks have concerned wartime activities, wartime conduct, criminal records, and criminal background, meaning that all police officers were required to forward a clearance issued by the respective courts. They all had to present evidence that they live in a legal housing situation; that is what I explained today. There is also another issue that I was talking about a month ago – that they had to present valid education credentials. This is also a major issue, that I will come back to later this week or next week, because we have gone further in to that process. All the police officers with provisional authorisation also have to prove they are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have used the time of their provisional authorisation to evaluate their performance and looked at whether they are actually suitable to be a police officer. All these aspects together then lead towards the final certification process and that is where we are heading right now. I will be commenting on the various

aspects of this process during the coming days. Essentially, it was UNMIBH who looked into all the aspects of certification and the suitability of a police officer to be a police officer. These elements lead towards guaranteeing that these officers have a certain level of professional competence and personal integrity that allows them to be a police officer. I often get questions as to whether this will be finished when we leave or if we will finish this process at a certain period in time. It will not. In particular, the very sensitive and important issue of wartime activities, that will of course continue whenever information comes up. Also on the other aspects, if there is any evidence that maybe education certificates may not be proper or valid all these cases can be taken up again after certification. So there will always be a possibility to take police officers to task if they do not meet the criteria.

Q: Viola Gienger – Freelance for Cox Newspapers

Who will handle that after the IPTF turns over to the European Union, will the European Union handle that and then handles it later when they leave?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

That has to be discussed in the months to come. Whether it will be under European Union auspices or whether, at some point, it will be released to the authority of the local law enforcement agencies, maybe under the supervision of the European Union, I do not want to speculate. But there will certainly be a mechanism so that this process can be continued and be looked after.

Q: Julie Pucher-Harbin – IWPR

Kirsten, are there already people from 'Europol' or whatever it is going to be called, coming here to train, so that they will be ready in January?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

There is already a small team present in our headquarters of about 10 or 12 people. I think they are growing these days. As more and more people are arriving, they are taking up the issues of the transition between our mission and theirs. In the coming days, I hope I will be able to present a contact for you. I am finding there are more and more enquiries regarding the EUPM – that is what we call the European Union Police Mission. There are more enquires coming up and somebody should be there as a point of contact. I will notify you accordingly if and when I have a name.

Q: Julie Pucher-Harbin – IWPR

Do you have the numbers yet or is that something they will have?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

That is a bit early. Do you mean the numbers of people here, the numbers of people that will be here, or what numbers are you referring to?

Q: Julie Pucher-Harbin – IWPR

The numbers of the EUPM police officers that will be here.

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

There have been numbers floating around about 460 or 640, I do not know which way around. There will about a quarter of what the IPTF originally was. That would be approximately the number of monitors. They will be drawn for countries that are members of the European Union, plus a few additional countries such as Switzerland, Norway, Turkey, the United States and some countries who are candidates in acquiring membership in the European Union. That will be the additional number of countries that will participate in the mission.