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BH MINE ACTION CENTER

Floods Threaten to Expand the Surface of Minefields

After the 2014 floods, it was estimated that 106 square kilometers of surface contaminated with landmines was affected by the natural disaster in 33 municipalities, with potential risk of minefields moving or expanding in case of floods or landslides, BH Mine Action Center (BHMAC) said

A press conference was held in Sarajevo before the workshop on results of a land survey within a regional project "Demining after Floods, Regional Synergy, Development of Technologies and Building Capacity".

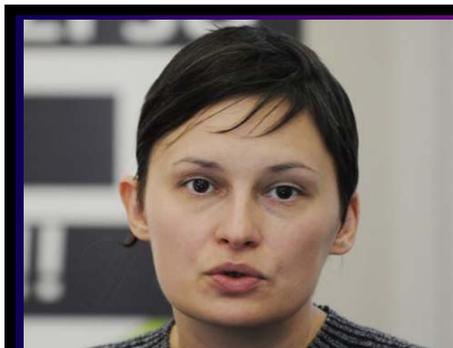
The project was response of the state demining centers from BiH, Croatia and Serbia to floods that hit the region in 2014. Acting Director of BHMAC Milan Rezo, Assistant Director Ahdin Orahovac and Milan Bajic, Manager of the Project, which is implemented with financial support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, spoke about importance of analyzing actual situation when it comes to minefields moving during natural disasters and finding adequate measures and new procedures. It was emphasized that the destructive consequences of floods and landslides could lead to expansion of minefields by about 65 square kilometers and that in the first stage of the project they recorded the surface that was hit by natural disaster. Recording was done with unmanned aerial crafts - RMA system



Unmanned aerial crafts and a helicopter recorded around 90 square kilometers of terrain

(Belgium Royal Military Academy from Brussels) and Georheo (from Zagreb), and a helicopter of BiH Armed Forces "Gazelle", which recorded around 90 square kilometers of terrain, focusing on areas near rivers - Sava (around 140 line minefields), Bosna, Krivaja etc. The footage will be compared to the existing databases and maps, with participation

of experts and academic community, in order to investigate where the landmines "went", that is, to identify proportions of expansion of minefields to determine new borders of suspicious surfaces. According BHMAC, around 140 mines were found and removed during floods in BiH, 1,700 mine-explosive ordnance and around 40,000 pieces of ammunition.



Tijana Cvjeticanin, Zasto ne association: (BiH) has twelve individual education policies that have no points of contact, they don't cooperate, they don't function together



Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE: It is positive that the media community throughout the country has come together to condemn the attack on media freedoms (the police raid of Klix)



Sredoje Novic, minister of civil affairs: A number of people are positioned in the BiH political structures that not only support, but are directly involved in potential terrorist structures

Deliberate Obstruction of Government Formation Is in Nobody's Interest

Any obstruction or intentionally delay of government formation at all levels is not in the interest of any political party, said Denis Zvizdic, a candidate for the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, in an interview with the daily newspaper "Oslobođenje"

Zvizdic said that Bosnia and Herzegovina has excellent natural resources - unpolluted soil and quality pastures to forests covering about 50 percent of the country, rivers, mines, mineral resources.

"We have some of the highest quality wood types and we are eighth in Europe in terms of hydro potential, we have great potential for exploitation of energy from renewable sources, especially biomass, geothermal energy, wind energy and solar energy. In addition, BiH has significant reserves of various types of coal, which will open up new opportunities for investment in new mines and the expansion of existing or construction of new power plants. In general, Bosnia and Herzegovina can and should be a regional leader in the field of energy production," said Zvizdic.

He believes that we must not ignore a very distinctive tradition in the field of industrial and agricultural production, as well as respectable tourism potential and a diverse and well-preserved environment which, with the necessary investments in basic infrastructure, can represent excellent basis for further economic development of BiH. Responding to the question about future members of the state government and that these persons must bring new energy and fresh ideas and how much this coincides



Denis Zvizdic

with the announcement of the deputy president of SDA, Bakir Izetbegovic that SDA for the highest executive posts in the country will take into account regional representation of the party personnel, which has not been the case before, he said that there is no collision between his and Izetbegovic's statement.

"On the contrary, I think they are fully compatible. The cantonal and regional committees of SDA can offer quality personnel, who possess the required knowledge and skills necessary for successful, responsible and innovative work at the state level, the FBiH and the cantons. I expect not only from SDA, but also from all of the coalition partners to select the best people for the job that will and consistently and with expertise run the ministries and institutions entrusted to them," said Zvizdic.

RS Education Ministry Opposed to Single National Syllabus

Republika Srpska Ministry of Education and Culture repeated their position that education is under jurisdiction of entities and that all children in BiH have equal right to education. Commenting on a statement of the U.S. Ambassador to BiH Maureen Cormack on her blog that children in BiH "should attend school together and study according to a single syllabus to get to know one another, and at the same time to acquire skills that are necessary for actual con-

tribution to the future of their country", the entity ministry said that the laws of RS which regulate education state that every child has an equal right and opportunities in education "without discrimination on any grounds".

"Given that the U.S. Ambassador to BiH showed interest in education, we welcome her cooperation, convinced that together we can contribute to a better education process in the RS and the Federation of BiH," stated the Ministry.

DAILY MARKERS

By Amra Zimic
Editor-in-Chief

Fuel to the Fire

The power of words is often stronger than the power of weapons, especially when they come from a high-ranking politician. One of them, in such a way, spoke on the occasion of the tense situation in BiH after the brutal terrorist attack in Paris.

Minister of Civil Affairs in the Council of Ministers, Sredoje Novic, said yesterday that "there is a threat of terrorist attacks in BiH". There are people in political structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina that support terrorism, Novic added. He said that the Director of the Intelligence and Security Agency (OSA) Almir Dzuvo repeated many times that there are 3,000 potential terrorists in BiH. Novic, based on that, concluded that he was "afraid that BiH will soon face very serious problems".

No need to wait for the problems, they are already here. Generated by Novic's remarks, which can not be described as well-intentioned and politically useful.

It is not at all questionable that there are "suspicious persons" in BiH. However, in such a tense situation, a man like Novic should demand a concrete action of state security services, if he knew something. He should have, if the situation was so delicate, requested an emergency session of the Council of Ministers, even the state parliament!

Novic acted very irresponsibly and politically immature. Since he is a very experienced politician and an intelligence officer, it can be concluded that his goal was not to solve the problems he mentioned. His goal is, in fact, raising tensions and political temperature, adding fuel to the fire, rather than initiating a concrete action that BiH should immediately take, if there were as many "suspicious persons" as he said.

Novic's statement multiplied the already existing fears. The public is not at all comfortable with hearing statements from such high-ranking persons, which additionally politicize and magnify the existing problems instead of solving them.

Publicly Admitted Cowardice

Former executive secretary of an interest organization, SNSD-Milorad Dodik, and now I guess just a member, Rajko Vasic, posted a blog entry in which he called on the owner of the party to relinquish ownership. He was supported by former speaker of the RS Assembly and a high-ranking official in the organization, Igor Radojicic, on Twitter

Rajko Vasic writes a lot and about everything. A common thing to all his writings is that he insults people in at least inappropriate way. His latest blog entry, however, was different and decent. He spared the object of his blog from any insult. Everything he wrote in the latest entry was true, but also not new. Anybody who used their brain and eyes since the SNSD took over the control package of stocks in the RS knows that. And that is almost a decade.

The SNSD-Milorad Dodik organization doesn't have supporters. It has members with clear, pragmatic reasons to be loyal to the party. Djuro Cekic, an unemployed father of six, explained them a while ago. He protested because SNSD-MD didn't fulfill a promise given to him before an election. Djuro Cekic was promised a house and a job from the party. The only condition was that he remains an SNSD member and votes for the party. Nobody asked him to get a diploma, to refrain from making babies until his finances are more stable, to read the party's statute and follow it. No. Djuro Cekic was only asked to vote for the party. In the end, he went on a hunger strike and got what he was promised. Other citizens, those who are not SNSD members, must fight for a job with their skills and knowledge. Which is a lot harder, but that was never a concern of SNSD-MD officials and members.

In addition to giving jobs to most of its members and their families, the only success of that party is that it impoverished the entity and plunged it into debt, under the disguise of protection of national interests. At the same time, the party created a small group of extremely wealthy people. A common thing to those multimillionaires is their close ties with Milorad Dodik.

Former closest partners of Milorad Dodik spoke about that on the internet, at the same time and at a characteristic moment, when none of the two have the power and position in the party that they used to have. Both of them are former.

However, both of them knew all those things when they weren't former, and when they had power. They said nothing back then; they were the most loyal accomplices of the boss in everything he did. Rajko Vasic used his

keyboard for years to justify antics of the object of his worship. He printed dozens of publications that glorify the President. In one TV show, he went as far to say that he was created by Milorad Dodik. He defended most of the negative things he now pins to his creator with much more vigor and he didn't refrain from insults.

**By Aleksandar Trifunovic
Buka, Banja Luka**

Igor Radojicic sealed every decision of the SNSD assembly majority with his hammer, without second thoughts or doubts. Most of those decisions pushed Republika Srpska to the edge of economy collapse, and its citizens to the edge of biological existence. Igor Radojicic now agrees with Vasic's positions on tycoons in the party, yet he was blind for the protests against illegal construction works of a convicted SNSD tycoon, just fifty meters from the building of RS Assembly, where he presided for years, flaunting in his Chesterfield chair. He insulted the protesters and accused them of working for the interests of Sarajevo politics.

Rajko Vasic explained the SNSD's defeat in the last local election by saying that the intelligent voters voted for SNSD, and the less intelligent ones voted for other parties. People are stupid, according to the SNSD executive secretary, which is exactly how the party treated people in the RS during its rule.

The truth is crueller than the virtual masturbation of the two. Milorad Dodik ruined everything he could. He never cared what happens when he is gone. That is how things are ever since the current RS president entered politics. His obstinacy is destructive and nobody profits from it, save Emir Kusturica.

The price of such leader's insanity is ultimately paid by his people, as history proved. And it won't be different this time. Those rare individuals who warned about that for years were insulted, labeled and humiliated by today's "voices of reason". Rajko and Igor in particular. It is too late now. Consequences are in motion, and nobody will be spared. The tears of former accomplices are just publicly admitted cowardice. It is not even hindsight, because both of them know that Milorad Dodik will quit SNSD-Milorad Dodik when he decides so. And he will. But, when that happens, there will be no such laments, because SNSD-Milorad Dodik will be no more.

❖ Republika Srpska PM Zeljka Cvijanovic and Head of the Council of Europe Office in BiH Mary Ann Hennessey talked about the current EU initiative for BiH, which focuses on social and economic issues, Government of RS stated. Cvijanovic emphasized that the RS Government actively supports the European integration process with complete compliance with the Dayton Treaty and that RS is open to all constructive suggestions which contribute to economic and social stability and better regional cooperation with clearly defined jurisdictions, obligations and responsibilities in implementation of all reforms.

❖ Chair of the BiH Presidency Mladen Ivanic received Dutch Ambassador Jurriaan Kraak. Ambassador Kraak delivered congratulations of the Dutch King Willem-Alexander to Chair and Members of the BiH Presidency. Chair Ivanic informed Ambassador of Holland about government forming process in BiH and current European initiative for BiH.

❖ Chair of the Council of Ministers of BiH Vjekoslav Bevanda met with Prime Minister of New Zealand John Key and said he is happy that the biggest world organization of people's parties is holding its conference in Sarajevo. He informed him about forming of executive power in BiH after the elections that were held in October last year. On behalf of people of New Zealand, Prime Minister Key thanked for the support of BiH during appointment in the UN Security Council for period 2015-2016, Council of Ministers of BiH stated.

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Editor - in - Chief

AMRA ZIMIC

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POENTA d.o.o.

Sarajevo, 4 Zmaja od Bosne Street

Senior Editor

RASID KRUPALIJA

Editors

DANIJELA SINANOVIC

IBRAHIM AYDOGAN

Office Assistant

MUSTAFA BAHTANOVIC

DTP

BEKIR TVRTKOVIC

Marketing

AJNA NUHANOVIC

GSM: 061 145 464

Phone/Fax: 033 288 032, 033 288 035

Web site: www.bosniadaily.co.ba

E-mail: bdaily@megatel.ba

Croatian Wartime Commander Released from Mostar Prison

Wartime general and former right-wing Croatian politician Glavas was released from prison in Bosnia, where he was serving his sentence, after Zagreb overturned his war crimes conviction, reports BIRN

Glavas was released from prison in Mostar after the Bosnian court ordered that he should be freed until a "new final verdict is delivered by the state responsible", a reference to Croatia. "The long-awaited moment has finally arrived, our hero Branimir Glavas is free after a long time," said a statement on Glavas's Facebook page.

Glavas, a former high-ranking member of the Croatian Democratic Union, HDZ party who served as a member of parliament and as the Osijek-Baranja County mayor, was originally convicted in Croatia of war crimes against Serb civilians in the city of Osijek in 1991-92. But he fled before the verdict to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where a court in December 2010 sentenced him to eight years in prison after a request was sent by Croatia to enforce his sentence.

On January 13 this year, Croatia's constitutional court overturned the ruling that found him guilty of war crimes and ordered new proceedings because both the supreme and county courts had used the wrong legal conventions in the cases against him. This triggered the order for



Branimir Glavas

his release from jail in Bosnia.

But since the first-instance verdict against him is still in force, Croatia has issued a warrant for his arrest, and it appears unlikely that he will return to the country after his release.

During the 1990s war, Glavas was a commander of the Osijek defence force in 1991-92 and attained the rank of general. After he left the HDZ in 2005, he founded his own party, the Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja, HDSSB, putting a strong political grip on the Osijek and Baranja regions.

After his break with the HDZ, the state attorney started investigating war crimes

against Serbs in Osijek.

An indictment was issued and Glavas arrested in October 2006 over the so-called 'Garage' case, in which he was accused of having command responsibility for the torture and killing of a civilian in front of a garage in 1991.

An additional indictment was raised in April 2007 in the 'Duct Tape' case, named because the victims were tied up with duct tape and executed on the Drava riverbank in Osijek in 1991-92.

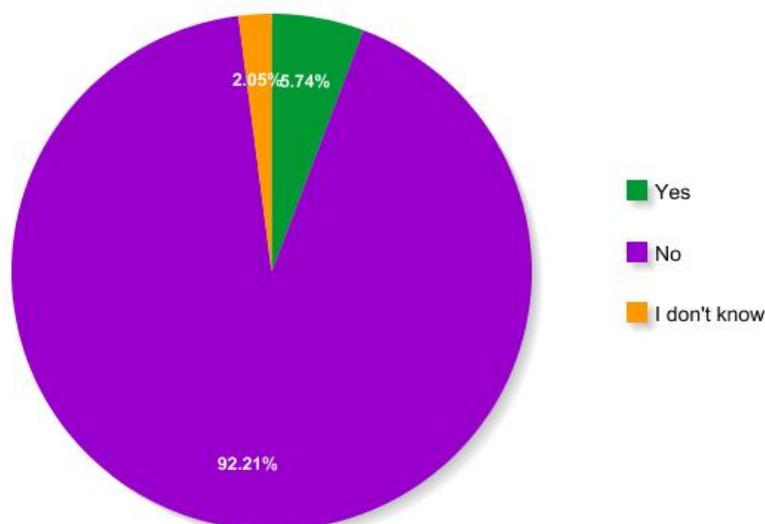
Banking Agency "Hides" Information on Bobar Bank: Transparency Watchdog

Transparency International BiH said that the organization is investigating the actions of Republika Srpska Banking Agency which prevented appointment of a temporary management and consequential revocation of license from Bobar Bank a.d. Bijeljina. They said they sent a request to the RS Banking Agency, demanding information on all data, facts and findings with which the Agency proves it took actions in Bobar Bank case earlier.

"Even though we were informed that such information exists and that they acted in this case earlier, the Agency refused to provide the information stating it is confidential," TI BiH stated.

Given the damage that was caused to the financial system and economy of RS, and justified suspicion that there was abuse and widespread distrust among citizens and users of financial services, the RS Banking Agency has the obligation to present to the public all measures that were taken earlier towards Bobar Bank a.d. Bijeljina, TI BiH stated.

Have the Bosnian authorities learned the lesson from last year's floods?



Source: Dnevni Avaz

Former Slovak Ambassador's Book Promoted



A book by Slovak diplomat Miroslav Mojzita about Bosnia and Herzegovina "Sarajevo, Waiting for the Swallows", illustrated with photographs by Pavol Demes, the first Slovak Foreign Minister and an expert in international politics, was promoted in Sarajevo

Mojzita, the first Slovakian Ambassador to BiH spent eight years in the country, wrote in the introduction to the book that his idea was to write something about contemporary BiH, but all that he was trying to write kept returning him to the past, saying that the reason for this is the "present time in this country associated with the past to the extent not seen anywhere else."

"And we are talking about the recent past, the one that most people remember and that they felt on their own skin. It is a past that is equally tragic for everybody, regardless of the manner in which we approach it," wrote Mojzita.

The host of the promotion was the current Ambassador of the

Slovak Republic to BiH Jan Psenica, which said that the book will be interesting to foreigners because it can help them learn about BiH but it can also be interesting for BiH citizens so that they can see how BiH looks in the eyes of a foreigner.

He stressed that although relations between the two countries are at a good level, there is a possibility for further improvement, adding that Slovakia went through the process of Euro-Atlantic integration and become a member of NATO and the European Union and believes that BiH can achieve the same.

The event was attended by Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Slovakia Danka Savic, who said that Mojzita described the Balkans as a space where life is different, richer, more emotional and more exciting.

This book includes 55 photos by Pavol Demes made in the period from 1996 to 2013. The book was promoted in mid-November 2014 in Bratislava, and after Sarajevo, the plan is to promote it in Prague and Brussels.



EU Delegation Stresses Importance of Government Formation at All Levels

The EU Delegation/EUSR underlined the crucial importance of government formation at all levels as a matter of the utmost urgency.

"The EU calls upon all stakeholders to intensify their efforts and complete all pending procedures in this regard. New governments in place are essential to move forward with the much-needed reforms aimed at addressing people's concerns, in particular the serious economic situation in BiH. Notably, new governments will play a key role, in accordance with their competences, in formulating and implementing the reform agenda related to the new EU initiative," said the Delegation.

"Therefore, the EU urges all relevant political parties to intensify their efforts so that the executive authorities of the Federation of BiH, namely President and Vice Presidents as well as the government, are appointed without any further delay. The EU also urges authorities to complete the procedure of the Council of Ministers appointment as soon as possible."

"Children Should Live with Each Other, Not Next to Each Other"

Before the end of his four-year mandate, the Federation Minister of Education and Science Damir Masic said in an interview with FENA that a lot more will be done to finally remove all anomalies in the education system of BiH, such as discrimination, segregation and "two schools under one roof"

In order to help the competent cantonal ministries of education, where this issue is present, the Federation Ministry made a document back in 2012 named "Model of Unity and Elimination of Parallel Structures in Educational Institutions in FBiH", based on which specific action plans were supposed to be developed for a complete integration of schools in those cantons.

"Unfortunately, due to constitutional position, the Federation Ministry of Education and Science has no mechanisms to affect that process or manage it, but what we can and what we are doing is helping to eliminate this unacceptable practice with maximum advocacy and through finding solutions and proposals," said Masic.

After more than ten years of divisions and separating children, he expects we will finally be able to go back to the system which existed and worked for centuries, which is that "all children live with each other, spend time together, not



Damir Masic

next to each other as it is the case in certain areas today."

"No matter who will have my position for the next four years, I am certain they will continue encouraging more inclusivity in education to realize the right to equality, education and life without discrimination," said Masic.

He said they will also maintain continuity when it comes to support to develop-

ment of science and science-research and research-development activities in the Federation of BiH in order to create pre-conditions for faster integration of BiH in the European Union, committed to building a society based on knowledge and its implementation. He believes it is necessary to put more effort in implementation of commenced educational reform and "find possibilities based on a unique and more harmonized approach to this reform in order to be able to respond more functionally to its demands."

"It is our obligation to create equal conditions and equal opportunities for all children and young people in sense of access and quality of educational services, where no prejudice, political, social, personal or any other views or interests can be an obstacle to the right approach and joint activities, which is essential to secure them with happy childhood, quality education and safe grounds for their future," said the Minister.

Talks on Government Formation in HNC Back to Square One

An agreement regarding the formation of government in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton is back to square one. The canton is not likely to get a government any time soon. Negotiations have stalled because representatives of HDZ BiH, DF and SDA who met again in Mostar could not reach an agreement about the number of ministries at the HNC government.

"We did not agree anything and we went back to the starting position. HDZ BiH came out with some new proposals, negotiating that what we agreed upon last time," said a member of the Presidency of the Democratic Front of BiH Ruzica Buric.

She added that the problem arose when the negotiations returned to the position to eight ministries and that DF should get only one ministry, which is unac-

ceptable for them and what they will not agree upon.

Buric said that the Government of HNC should have 11 ministries, not to create new administrations and new costs, adding that at this time it is not acceptable for DF. President of the Cantonal Board of HDZ BiH, Rafael Gagro, pointed out that the request for two ministries put forward by the DF was too much for them, adding that HDZ BiH cannot satisfy the request. Asked if it was possible that the talks on formation of the cantonal government continue without DF, Gagro said that the talks with DF will continue, and that it is possible to negotiate the formation of future government without anyone, except for HDZ BiH.

As for the SDA he said: "We are old partners and I think we will agree."

He confirmed that the HDZ BiH wants eight ministries.

"We are looking for a solution that would be realistic for all parties (HDZ BiH, DF and SDA)," he stressed.

As for the new prime minister designate, Gagro said that the HDZ BiH has not yet discussed the issue and reiterated their stand that the new prime minister should be Sladjan Bevanda.

"I thought we agreed last time that the number of ministries in the future government is 11, as it was in the past, said the first man of SDA in HNC Salko Sokolovic, adding that they went back to the beginning of the negotiations." According to his words, SDA wants 11 ministries.

The exact date of the next meeting, likely a "marathon negotiations", is not known yet.

Economic Growth in Bosnia 1.5 Percent in 2015

The analysis is based on indicators of high frequency, or the main economic indicators that were available last year, said Sandra Hlivnjak, an economist of the World Bank in BiH

BiH in 2015, according to the estimates of the World Bank, will have economic growth of 1.5 percent.

"According to the analysis we conducted, the growth rate in BiH was 0.4 percent in 2014, while for 2015 we predict that the rate will be slightly higher, i.e. 1.5 percent. The analysis is based on indicators of high frequency, or the main economic indicators that were available last year," said yesterday in Sarajevo Sandra Hlivnjak, an economist of the World Bank in BiH.

She stated that 2014 was marked with a period of stagnation. Available economic indicators show improvement in economic activity in the first quarter, while in the second there were floods and registered decline in economic activity.

The third quarter again showed a slight increase, but not enough to significantly change the prospects for 2015, and the results in 2014. The World Bank, via video link with all the offices of the World Bank in SEE6 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,

Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), presented a full report on economic developments in the countries of Southeast Europe (SEE6). Devastating flooding in some countries brought the economy of South East Europe (SEE6) to a standstill in 2014, with growth of only 0.2 percent, according to the World Bank's latest South East Europe Regular Economic Report (SEE RER) launched in Belgrade.

The report was presented by World Bank Director for Southeast Europe, Ellen Goldstein and leading economist of the World Bank and one of the authors of the report Gallina Vincelette.

As they pointed out, the external demand for exports from SEE6 was a positive driver of economic growth in 2014, despite the poor performance of the euro zone and disappointing global recovery. However, political uncertainty and delay or reduction in investment worsened the effects of the devastating floods that hit the region in 2014. Weak economic performance in the region conceals signifi-

cant differences between SEE6 countries, stated the report. It is estimated that in Serbia in 2013, for the third time a decline occurred since the beginning of the global economic crisis and Bosnia and Herzegovina is stagnating. It is estimated that the rate of economic growth of Kosovo and Montenegro was in decline in 2014, and only Albania and Macedonia show signs of sustainable recovery driven by increased exports.

According to the report, it is expected that the SEE6 region in 2015 shows signs of moderate recovery, with the projected cumulative growth of 1.3 percent. According to the estimate for 2015, the highest economic growth can be expected in Macedonia - 3.5 percent, followed by Montenegro with expected 3.4 percent growth, then Albania with 3 percent, and Serbia will again have negative numbers. Prospects for growth depend on external factors, including the maintenance and recovery of external demand, especially in Europe, and stabilization of international energy prices at or around current levels.

Gray Economy Annually Takes Away 858 Million KM

There are 216,173 people working in the gray market of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the extent of the gray economy is at least 26.3 percent of gross domestic product, which is why the state loses annually 858 million KM, according to the result of research conducted by Professor Milenko Stanic, Dean of the Faculty of Business Economics, University "Sinergija".

Professor Stanic told the business portal "Capital" that 71 million KM of taxes and contributions are paid less on a monthly basis for 216,173 workers in the informal economy, while on an annual basis the amount is 858 million KM. If those funds were collected, Republika Srpska and the FBiH would not have problems with budget deficits, empty health and pension

funds, as well as the enormous foreign borrowing, says Professor Stanic. He estimated underground economy on the basis of indirect method, method of labor supply for 2013.

"The essence of this method is to measure the contribution of workers engaged in the informal sector to GDP growth. The key issue in this approach is the estimate of the number of workers engaged in the gray area," says Professor Stanic.

He recalls that since 2008 BiH has no official estimates of the extent of the underground economy, and that an earlier study of the Central Bank and USAID for the period from 2001 to 2003 showed that the underground economy exceeds even half of GDP in BiH.

The general rule is that the shadow economy grows in conditions of instability. Here, the instability of the political, legal and economic systems is permanently present.





Lagumdžija Meets with UN Secretary General and US, China Permanent Representatives to the UN

Deputy Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Zlatko Lagumdžija met in New York with the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon, Permanent Representative of the United States to the UN, Ambassador Samantha Power and Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the UN Ambassador Liu Jieyi

In separate meetings, Lagumdžija informed Ban Ki-moon and ambassadors with the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in terms of formation of the government after the general elections and current events regarding the accession of BiH to the European Union. He informed them about the initiative for acceleration of European integration process for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, as he assessed, represents a great opportunity for our country and its European path.

Lagumdžija on this occasion pointed out that the special importance of initiative lies in the fact that it puts the focus on the socio-economic reforms in BiH, which will allow economic growth and employment and other positive effects which will directly benefit citizens, as well as focus on the rule of law and functioning of the state.

They also discussed regional coopera-

tion in the Western Balkans, global fight against terrorism, as well as the crisis in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East. The issues were particularly discussed at the meeting with the ambassadors of the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations. Lagumdžija and Ban Ki-moon the current cooperation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations evaluated as successful and expressed readiness for its further strengthening.

On behalf of BiH citizens, Lagumdžija thanked the UN Secretary-General for the overall engagement of the United Nations through its agencies in providing emergency aid for the population in flood-affected areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the efforts being made in order to eliminate the consequences.

Lagumdžija informed the Secretary General of the UN about the new floods

that cause enormous damage, and sought help from the UN in establishing a system of prevention of natural disasters.

At the meeting with Ambassador Samantha Power, the most attention was devoted to the new European initiative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, regional cooperation, and adequate marking of 20 years since the genocide in Srebrenica as an important symbol of a different, secure and prosperous future in the wider region.

"Accelerating European, and especially NATO path of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a key prerequisite for regional stability," said Lagumdžija.

At the meeting with Ambassador Liu Jieyi the support was given to further economic cooperation and the growing presence of China in development projects in the region as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, stated today the Public Relations Office of the MFA of BiH.

Sarajevo Canton Allocated One Million KM for Environmental Protection Projects

Ministry of Zoning and Environmental Protection of Sarajevo Canton allocated 1.193.495 KM for 28 environmental protection projects. The funds of Sarajevo Canton were transferred from the Federation Environmental Protection Fund.

On that occasion, Minister Zlatko Petrovic signed agreements on awarding funds with representatives of projects that were selected after a public call. Muris Dervisagic signed the agreement on behalf of Climbing Association "Centar".

That association applied for a project of environmental protection of the area of Dubravice on Cavljak. The project includes first installation of a biological purifier in Sarajevo Canton. It is a modern septic tank which will release ecologically clean waste in the ground.

Hague Tribunal Faces a Dramatic 2015

Verdicts in the high-profile war crimes trial of Radovan Karadzic and Goran Hadzic are due this year, while the controversy over the release of Vojislav Seselj looks set to continue, reports BIRN

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, ICTY, will hand down two first-instance verdicts in 2015, in the cases against Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic and Croatian Serb leader Hadzic, plus four appeals verdicts, as the UN-backed court faces one of its busiest years since it was established. Former Bosnian Serb Army officials Zdravko Tolimir and Vujadin Popovic, Ljubisa Beara, Drago Nikolic, Radivoje Miletic and Vinko Pandurevic are appealing against jail sentences for crimes in Srebrenica, former Bosnian Serb officials Mico Stanisic and Stojan Zupljanin against sentences for murders in the Krajina region, while an appeal also will rule on the acquittal of former Serbian security officials Jovica Stanisic and Franko Simatovic for crimes in Croatia and Bosnia.

Verdicts All Year Round

Chief ICTY prosecutor Serge Brammertz told BIRN that many people in the former Yugoslavia, and particularly victims and the families of those who died during the 1990s conflicts, are watching keenly to see that justice is done.

"All war crimes prosecutors, whether in The Hague or in the region, face the same challenge in 2015: to continue to strive to meet the public's strong desire for justice and accountability. Many victims, from every community, are still waiting for justice and still waiting to learn what happened to their loved ones," Brammertz said.

Balkans expert Eric Gordy told BIRN that he does not expect any major surprises in the upcoming verdicts, and the most interesting things will be whether Karadzic is found guilty of genocide in seven Bosnian municipalities in 1992 as well as in Srebrenica in 1995, and whether Stanisic and Simatovic will be convicted after being initially acquitted of aiding and abetting wartime crimes in Croatia and Bosnia. But whatever happens, there will be public controversy, Gordy believes.

"Part of the reason for this is not the fault of the Tribunal, but derives instead from the tendency of media and politicians in the region to take an ethnic cheerleading approach to evidence and verdicts," he said. The first verdict of the year will be handed down on January 30, when the appeals chamber will decide whether former high-



ranking Bosnian Serb Army officials Popovic, Beara, Nikolic, Miletic and Pandurevic are guilty of crimes related to the massacre of over 7,000 Bosniak men and boys from Srebrenica in July 1995.

In June 2010, Popovic and Beara were sentenced to life in prison for genocide, Nikolic to 35 years for assisting genocide and Miletic and Pandurevic to 19 and 13 years respectively for aiding the murders and the expulsion of civilians.

In March, another high-profile Srebrenica-related appeals verdict is scheduled, this time for Zdravko Tolimir, former deputy commander of the Bosnian Serb Army's Main Headquarters. Tolimir was sentenced in 2012 to life in prison for genocide.

The appeals chamber will hand down a final verdict in June in the case against former Serbian officials Stanisic and Simatovic. Both were acquitted in 2013 of aiding and abetting the persecution of non-Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia from 1991 to 1995.

Gordy believes that the Stanisic and Simatovic verdict will be interesting from the point of view of establishing the rule of law in international conflicts. He explained that the appeals chamber will have the opportunity to reassess whether the two Belgrade officials should be found guilty despite the fact that their aid to local Serb forces fighting in both countries was not "specifically directed" towards committing crimes.

"In the Stanisic and Simatovic case, the trial chamber applied the controversial new standard of 'specific direction', which has since been strongly contested at other tribunals and also before the ICTY itself. That make

this case very sensitive for the future of international law, and major international powers will pay close attention to the appeal," he said.

The Karadzic Question

The most highly-anticipated verdict of the year, in the case against Karadzic for genocide in Srebrenica in 1995 and other municipalities in 1992, the persecution of Bosniaks and Croats throughout the country, terrorizing the population of Sarajevo and taking UN peacekeepers hostage, is scheduled for October.

The biggest question, said Gordy, is whether the former leader of the Bosnian Serb entity Republika Srpska will be found guilty of genocide in 1992 in the municipalities of Bratunac, Foca, Kljuc, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Vlasenica and Zvornik. This charge was dismissed by judges in 2012 but reinstated the year afterwards, with the court saying that evidence produced by the prosecution "could indicate that Karadzic possessed genocidal intent".

"A finding that genocide existed as a policy and as one of the war aims of RS [Republika Srpska] in the Karadzic case, where the most systematic evidence has been presented on the point, would profoundly alter the Tribunal's record in producing an account of that conflict," Gordy suggested.

"However, this kind of finding would be surprising, not because of the evidence that has been presented but because of the generally cautious and conservative approach of trial chambers, especially in the ICTY's

last period," he said.

A month after Karadzic's verdict, the appeals chamber is set to hand down the final verdict in the case of former Bosnian Serb officials Mico Stanisic and Stojan Zupljanin, who are charged with the murders and expulsions of Bosniaks and Croats from the Krajina region in northern Bosnia. Both men were initially sentenced to 22 years in prison.

Finally, in December, the first-instance verdict in the case against Croatian Serb leader Goran Hadzic will be delivered.

Gordy believes that such a large number of verdicts is bound to present challenges for the outreach office of the Hague Tribunal as it seeks to present the outcomes as just to the general public in former Yugoslav countries, where ethnic divisions remain and biased media often react strongly against court decisions they see as offensive to 'their' communities.

"Little has been done to acquaint the publics in the region with the documentary record and the issues at stake. I am afraid that there is very little that can be hoped for here. There is not time to compensate for the undone work of 20 years, and successful outreach always depended on institutions in the region being involved in the effort, which they have not been," he said.

The director of Al Jazeera Balkans, veteran journalist and editor Goran Milic, told BIRN that all the verdicts are bound to be "a regional media event".

"However, a big problem is the comments on those judicial decisions, because whenever something happens, you have comments and harangues, and that makes the situation worse," Milic said.

The ICTY is also set to decide this year how to proceed with the war crimes case against Serbian Radical Party leader Vojislav Seselj. His verdict was scheduled for October last year but was postponed after one of the judges in the trial was removed for alleged bias, and the new judge is expected to take until at least the end of June to familiarize himself with details of the case, causing yet another delay in the marathon trial. Seselj meanwhile has the potential to create other problems for the ICTY. After being temporarily released for cancer treatment in November last year and arriving in Belgrade to a rapturous welcome from his admirers, the nationalist politician has declared that he will not return to The Hague voluntarily for his verdict, and has challenged the Serbian government to send him back by force.

The way in which the Seselj situation is ultimately resolved, as well as the crucial verdicts, will ensure that the Tribunal remains in the headlines throughout the year.

Movie about Feral Child Fate Exposes Absurdity of War



He could have been a Serb, a Croat, or a Muslim. It didn't really matter. Not until the war broke out

Then the feral child, found by hunters in the Bosnian forests and raised in a social care center in Serbia, was forced to return to Bosnia, where his randomly chosen name would determine his destiny.

"No One's Child," the first feature film by Serbian director Vuk Rsumovic, is based on a true story which unfolded during the Yugoslav ethnic carnage of the 1990s. Exposing the senseless brutality of war through the eyes of a boy of undetermined ethnicity, it has captured the attention of critics at international festivals - from Venice to Palm Springs, where Rsumovic won The New Voices/New Visions award. But it remains to be seen if the film, which opens at cinemas across the Balkans next month, can win the hearts of the home audiences in Serbia and Bosnia - the former foes still reeling from the conflict.

"He can see people killing each other, but he can't tell the difference. They are all the same to him," Rsumovic said of the boy.

"The absurdity of it all becomes clear when you look at the war from his perspective."

The tale of "No One's Child" began when Yugoslavia was still intact in 1988. Authorities in Bosnia - one of the six Yugoslav republics - were unsure what to do with a gnarling, crouching child found in the woods, so they decided to send him to the central authorities in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia located in the Serbian republic. For no particular reason, a local official named the boy Haris, which is a common

AP

Muslim name in Bosnia.

Cleaned and dressed, but still unable to communicate, Haris began his transformation in a center for abandoned children in Belgrade. He started school and made friends, when after more than four years, authorities in his native Bosnia - now an independent country ravaged by war - sought him back for unknown reasons. He returned to the chaos, to be picked up to fight by a group of soldiers declaring that "your name is Haris, so you are one of us." Rsumovic said he first heard about Haris from the boy's former mentor in the child care center. The story differed from other feral children tales because it came to symbolize "generations whose lives fell apart along with their country," Rsumovic said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The Palm Springs jury said they were "deeply impressed by this compelling, multilayered and assured" film about a "personal, intimate tale set in a time of historical turmoil."

The jury also singled out "an astonishing performance by Denis Muric," the Bosnian actor who plays Haris.

"No One's Child" had its Balkan debut at the Zagreb Film Festival in Croatia, where it won the audience award in October.

"It is as if the film tells us that in this region, the only way to survive is to be no one, to be 'wild,'" Croatian film critic Jurica Pavlicic wrote.

Mini Film Fest Named after Murdered Transsexual Will Screen Five Films



A Sarajevo-based non-governmental organization will be organizing and hosting the International Festival of Queer Film Merlinka at the Art Cinema Kriterion in Sarajevo from January 30 to February 1

Five feature documentaries and feature films will be screened within the three-day Festival program, said Sarajevo Open Center. Festival will open on Friday, January 30, with the screening of a documentary Regarding Susan Sontag (2014), directed by Nancy D. Kates. The film intimately portrays the life of a woman who has, thanks to their education, passion and activism, become one of the most influential literary, political and feminist icons of her generation. The film depicts life of Susan Sontag using archival material, experiences of persons close to her, as well as her own words, from her early infatuation with books to the first experience in a gay bar, from an early marriage to her latest lover. Artists who have had the opportunity to work with Susan Sontag in Sarajevo during the war will also share their experiences and memories at the opening.

Merlinka festival was organized for the first time six years ago in Belgrade, with the goal to promote films tackling LGBT topics. The Festival is named after a murdered transsexual Vjeran Miladinovic Merlinka.

Two films will be shown on the second day of the Festival in Sarajevo. A documentary Campaign of Hate: Russia and Gay Propaganda (2014), a co-production of Russia and the United States, will be screened at 5 p.m. The film was made as an attempt to depict the situation in Russia, after the legal ban on so-

called "gay propaganda" was passed by the Russian Parliament in 2013, thus criminalizing any form of public discussion on the rights of LGBT people. German film Two Mothers (2013), directed by Anne Zohra Berached, will be screened at 8 p.m. The film is a story of two women who, like many other lesbian couples in Germany, realize that the path to having a child is a lot tougher than they thought, since most sperm banks do not provide services to lesbian and gay couples for legal reasons. However, when they finally find a doctor who provides them with the expensive treatments of insemination, they are unable to conceive for several months.

On the third day of the Festival, an American documentary The Case against 8 (2014) will be screened at 5 p.m. The film introduces the events behind the scene related to a lawsuit against the State over the same-sex marriage ban in California. The film shows the experience of the plaintiff and two gay couples whose families were in the center of same-sex marriage controversy. The Festival will close at 8 p.m. with an Australian film 52 Tuesdays (2013). The film follows the life of a sixteen year old girl that must rapidly become independent after her mother unveils plans to change her gender which limit the time they spend together only on Tuesday afternoons. The film is an emotional story about desires, responsibilities, adaptation and transformation.

Stricter Hygiene Recommended to Population in Flooded Areas

Teams of the Public Health Institute of Sarajevo Canton took water samples in flooded areas for microbiological and physical-chemical analysis of the city water supply line at 11 locations and two samples of local water supply lines.

"We gave recommendations to the population not to use water from central or local facilities until we have the findings. We should have the findings tomorrow, but we assume that water does not meet the hygienic standards," Dr Alma Bungur from the SC Public Health Institute told FENA.

Citizens in the flooded areas are recommended to boil water or use bottled water.

Civil Servants in Sarajevo Canton on Strike



Civil servants and employees in civil service, judicial bodies and public institutions of Sarajevo Canton went on a seven-day warning strike.

"Government has been ignoring our demands since 2008. Our demands include payment of December salary, but our problems go deeper than that and they concern years of violation of rights of civil servants and employees which are determined by the law and collective contract," said President of Strike Committee Adil Aljic at a press conference in Sarajevo.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Sarajevo

Today: Light rain. High 9C.

Tonight: Low 7C.

Thursday: Partly cloudy. Close to 11C.

Banja Luka

Today: Fog. High 10C.

Tonight: Low 6C.

Thursday: Light rain. Close to 11C.

Tuzla

Today: Light rain. High 10C.

Tonight: Low 6C.

Thursday: Partly cloudy. Close to 12C.

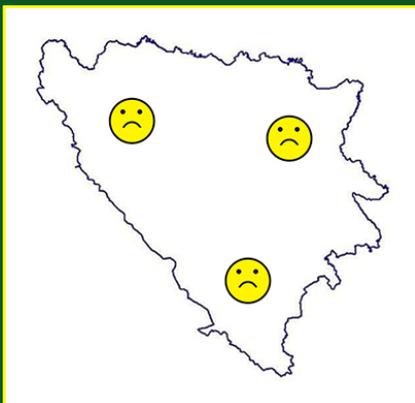
Mostar

Today: Chance of rain. High 13C.

Tonight: Low 10C.

Thursday: Light rain. Close to 12C.

BIO METEO



Air pollution in Sarajevo
MODERATE

UV Index
Low

GLOBE IN PICTURES



A paramilitary policeman releases a wild goose in Linghai, Liaoning province, China. About eight wild geese, which were found injured, were set free after having their wounds treated by a team of paramilitary policemen



Valerie Murzak of Club Swizzle performs her contortion act ahead of their world premiere at Sydney Opera House, Australia



Demonstrators destroy a police car during a protest by relatives of 43 missing students from Ayotzinapa Teacher Training College outside federal court in Chilpancingo in the Mexican state of Guerrero



Firefighters battle a four-alarm fire at a home on Childs Point Road, in Annapolis, Maryland, USA

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