

FOLLOWING THE ZVORNIK ATTACK

Republika Srpska Police Raids Alarm Bosniaks



The mayor of Srebrenica accused Republika Srpska authorities of using the pretext of investigating Islamic extremists to harass Bosniaks who have returned to the town

Camil Durakovic, a Bosniak, said that the RS police have been storming the homes of returnees and arresting people without explanation. He called the police activity a "form of repression."

The police raided a few dozen locations on May 6 and detained about 30 people, including two people in Srebrenica, on suspicion of having links with Islamic extremists.

Vice President of Party of Democratic Action, SDA, and member of the BiH Parliament, Sadik Ahmetovic, condemned the

actions of RS police and called the entity authorities to stop with the persecution of Bosniak returnees.

"We, Bosniaks who returned to Republika Srpska after ethnic cleansing, genocide, mass murders, are being treated as terrorists. Yesterday's operation, the searches of 32 homes, returnee homes, cannot be justified. Bosniaks live in fear and feel like it is 1992. We do not support terrorists and we also want all three sides to distance themselves from radical movements in BiH," said Ahmetovic in an

open letter sent to the RS institutions.

He emphasized he condemned the attack on police station in Zvornik on several occasions, but "if there are suspicions that someone is involved in terrorism, let the authorities do their job".

"However, this approach, searching houses of people who have never entered a mosque, arresting them, does not bring any good to anyone. We feel like a war is going to break out. We feel like we are being persecuted again," said Ahmetovic.



Dennis Gratz, Nasa Stranka: The fact is that the Republika Srpska Interior Ministry treated kindergartens and religious objects as legitimate search targets, and the way arrests were made had the effect of intimidation of minority returnee communities



Ramiz Salkic, RS vice president: Bosniaks don't trust the RS police. There are almost no Bosniaks in the police. Persons who participated in the Srebrenica genocide, according to official reports, can be policemen, but not Bosniaks and Croats



Dragan Lukac, RS interior minister: There were no indiscriminate arrests and all arrested persons who are cleared of suspicion of involvement (in terrorism activities) will be released today. All citizens, no matter ethnicity, have no reason to be upset

Croat Ministers Ignore Government Session

Croat ministers did not attend the Thursday session of the FBiH Government because they didn't agree with the agenda, said Federation's president

Ministers from HDZ BiH decided they will not participate in a session where the agenda is not result of an agreement, but it is an attempt to deceive a partner in the FBiH Government, said President of the Federation of BiH Marinko Cavara.

Explaining the reasons of Croat ministers, Cavara said it is unacceptable for HDZ BiH that the partnership relations in the Federation are not respected.

"We in HDZ have always stated that if we

form a government together we need to make decisions together and take responsibility for what we do. It is unacceptable that someone makes decisions on their own, and that we all take responsibility for it. No matter the consequences, we cannot agree to that. Those who want the Federation to function that way did not step away from the platform that was used in the previous four years, and we know the consequences of such relations and treatment of Croat representatives," said Cavara.

RS Police Will Not Do the Politicians' Job: Chief

Republika Srpska police chief Gojko Vasic called for peace, tolerance and mutual respect, commenting on a statement made by Mayor of Doboje, Obren Petrovic, who said that "someone will end up dead if nobody reacts to everyday threats".

Petrovic claimed that the security situation in that town is at a very poor level

and that Bosniak and Croat citizens in that area live in fear.

Vasic said at a press conference in Banja Luka that the police cannot solve the problems that are the responsibility of the politicians. The police will investigate any form of ethnic intolerance and hate speech, but nothing more than that, Vasic said.

Assistant Minister Arrested While Taking Bribe

Assistant minister in the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining in the Tuzla Canton Government was arrested in the moment when he was receiving a bribe. Bahir Imamovic was arrested by members of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), within the action of the BiH Prosecutor's Office against corruption.

He was arrested in the moment when he was receiving 10,000 KM from a representative of the Tuzla-kvarc company. He agreed to take 30,000 KM in total, in exchange for using his position to provide concession for this company for exploitation of quartz sand in the area of Tuzla Canton.

Guitar-Playing Critic of Dodik's Government Arrested on Suspicion of Terrorism

Republika Srpska police arrested a Banja Luka's guitar player in one of this week's anti-terror raids. In early April this year, Adis Kusumic wrote on his Facebook wall that the RS president Milorad Dodik and the police should understand they do not have the capacity to arrest every person on Facebook. His post was

a response to the entity's new law on public order, which includes social networks in the definition of a public space. Kusumic was interviewed by the police, but no charges were raised. He was detained yesterday in an anti-terrorist raid, the police said, but he will not be kept in detention for now.

DAILY MARKERS

By Vlastimir Mijovic
Senior Editor

Action and Reaction

The facts and the arguments are the last thing on our politicians' mind. They prove it on the occasion of the police action carried out on the territory of Republika Srpska, during which 31 people were detained on suspicion that they were preparing for terrorist activities.

Custody was requested for 11 people, because "there is evidence that they were acquiring certain means with the intention to, at a certain point, carry out terrorist activities against the RS institutions" it was said in Banja Luka. The items seized in raids were presented, and the Head of Department for Investigation and Security in the RS Special Prosecutor's Office Darko Ilic claimed that the detained people didn't have permits for seized weapons.

If accurate, this information justifies the said police action.

However, Bosniak politicians immediately claimed that it was a needless action which, in their opinion, was carried out in order to intimidate returnees to Republika Srpska.

"An atmosphere of fear and mistrust was created," said Mayor of Srebrenica Camil Durakovic.

He claimed that he personally knew several arrested persons and that they could not be linked with the Wahhabi movement, let alone terrorism. SDA leader, Bakir Izetbegovic, convey yesterday to the public the decision of his party to hire lawyers for the arrested people. The Democratic Front also strongly condemned the RS police action, calling it "persecution of returnees".

So we get a new major political conflict. Everybody verbally agrees that there are terrorist potentials in BiH, that they should be located and eliminated. But, the first significant action turned into a political scandal and fueling of nationalist sentiments. When the investigating authorities in the RS come out with more concrete information on the arrested persons, we will know who was hasty: Dodik's police, or those who protect incriminated persons in advance while not having yet complete information.

From Croatia, with Love

Kozo called me one night at 2 am to tell a joke. He does that sometimes, calling from the bar in the middle of night to tell a joke

And so, Fata bought a new closet, and she decided to put it together by herself, to save money, before Mujo comes home from work. She did it somehow, but a tram drove by under the apartment's window, and the tremble opened the closet door. Fata couldn't fix it, so she called a handyman from the furniture store. He came by, but he also couldn't make the door stay closed when a tram drives by.

"I know, I'll go inside the closet and wait for a tram to see what the problem is," the guy said.

Fata closed the closet door when he stepped in, but, of course, Mujo comes home from work at that moment. Happy to see the new closet, he opened its door and saw a guy in it.

"What are you doing in there?" angry Mujo asked, and the handyman said: "I know you won't believe me, but I am waiting for a tram."

There are situations in life when man can't believe himself explaining them. Like

the one when Mujo was milking his cow, but the cow kicked the bucket, so he tied its rear legs. The cow then slapped him with the tail, so he used his belt to tie the tail to a ceiling beam. But, his trousers fell off without the belt holding them. Fata walked in the stable at that moment and saw the tied cow and her man standing on a bench behind the cow, pants down, trying to tie the tail to a beam.

"What in God's name are you doing?" Fata asked in shock.

"I am having sex with the cow," Mujo said. I mean, what else could he say?

Or perhaps, the latest situation with Niko Lozancic. A postman rang at the door of the former Federation's president 15 years ago, and gave him 1,400 KM. Niko asked who sent the money, and the postman pointed at the envelope: "It reads, from the Republic of Croatia."

Niko was touched - his Croatia didn't forget that he fought in the HVO ranks for the survival of Croats in BiH. The nice gesture of Croatian government thrilled him, and he was even more thrilled when the postman came the next month with money from Croatia. And the next month, and when Niko was the Federation's president, and when he was the speaker of BiH House of Representatives - in short, Niko Lozancic was getting 1,400 KM every month from 2000 to 2009, until one month the postman gave him a subpoena.

It turned out that the money from Croatia was a military pension. The charges against him said he earned it as a member of Croatian Army and a disabled war veteran who was wounded at Dubrovnik. Since he was collecting the pension while he was in office in BiH, he damaged the Croatia's budget in the amount of nearly 100,000 Euros.

Quite understandably, Lozancic didn't show up at the trial. Instead, former Federation's president wrote a "you wouldn't believe" letter in 2009, which recently leaked to the public.

"I was never a member of any formation of the Croatian Army; I was exclusively a member of the HVO. I had no idea that I had the status of a Croat defender from the Homeland War in Croatia. This whole time, I believed that the pension I received was an expression of care and support for Croats in BiH. I never worked in Croatia, so I never understood the pension I received as



By **Boris Dezulovic**
Oslobodjenje, Sarajevo

a 'classic pension'; I thought it was a form of care designed and implemented by the Croatian government," Niko Lozancic wrote to a Zagreb court, not believing his own words, and continued.

"I and many other Croats from BiH were given all sorts of rights and benefits by Croatia in last 20 years, often under very vague circumstances. We were given Croatian citizenships en mass, we were awarded empty Serb houses... in colorful parts of Croatia, so we didn't have to think about returning in God forsaken places across BiH. Any form of help was welcome after the war, and we accepted it to survive here. That is how we understood the pensions. We didn't doubt the good intentions of those who gave us unconditionally so many rights and benefits, although we didn't know what we did to deserve it. Now, there are attempts... to say that we, or I, defrauded Croatia... We were just objects to the immense love and care of the Republic of Croatia."

Now, tell me, would you believe yourself if something like that happened to you? The immense love and care of Croatia, the abundance of right and benefits, often given under very vague circumstances, turned out to be Niko defrauding the Croatia's budget.

"What are you doing, mister Lozancic?" Croatia's state prosecutor was shocked when he caught him, and Niko said: "I am milking Croatia."

What else could he say?

❖ Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina Dragan Mektic said after a meeting in Sarajevo with Ambassador of the United States to BiH Maureen Cormack that the country definitely has to use new methods and capacities in the fight against terrorism that would give concrete answers to this problem. "We need to give answers to the ideology that advocates violent extremism as well as the fight against people who incite and finance terrorism in BiH," said Mektic. He noted that in this regard they plan to enable the capacities of the BiH Prosecutor's Office and police agencies, and that this must be coordinated and joint activity. "Also, we shall establish operational support from our police structures in BiH to provide specialized service to the Prosecution in the fight against terrorism," added Mektic. Cormack said that terrorism is a global problem which affects the United States, most of the European countries, as well as the Middle East. "I talked with the colleagues from the Department of Justice and the FBI about the practical aspects of cooperation that we have with BiH in connection to this problem, as well as the ways in which we can improve that cooperation," said Cormack.

❖ European Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, will visit Bosnia and Herzegovina today. During the visit the Commissioner will meet leaders of BiH institutions to discuss reforms and the EU integration process of the country.

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New EBRD Program of Support to SMEs in BiH to Be Presented

The official launch Conference of the "Support to SME competitiveness in BiH" program will take place today at Hotel Bristol in Sarajevo

The two-year program is implemented by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development through their Small Business Support Program. It builds on the previous EBRD activities with aim to increase the competitiveness of SMEs in BiH, at domestic, regional,

and international markets.

The total value of the program is €2,656 million, of which the EU is funding €2 million from IPA 2013.

The program will foster development of SMEs through the transfer of best EU practice in implementation of the Small

Business Act for Europe, the guiding strategy for SME development in the European Union.

The Conference will be opened with welcome remarks by the Head of the EU Delegation to BiH and EU Special Representative, Ambassador Lars-Gunnar Wigemark, and BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mirko Sarovic, followed by presentation of the program by the Head of the EBRD Office in Sarajevo, Ian Brown.

Federation's President Receives Swiss Ambassador



Heinrich Maurer and Marinko Cavara

President of BiH Federation, Marinko Cavara, met with Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Heinrich Maurer, says the statement of the Office of the FBiH President. On this occasion, Ambassador Maurer pointed out that Switzerland contributes to the development and economic stability of the FBiH through various programs.

"Switzerland is a country with a complex state structure, but it functions on the basis of willingness to compromise, the system of subsidiarity and good cooperation of lower with higher levels of government. FBiH has similar federal structure to Switzerland. Our experi-

ence in the organization of local governments, municipal services and cooperation of all levels of government can contribute to a better and more stable situation in BiH", said Ambassador Maurer. FBiH President thanked for the efforts made so far, expressed readiness for cooperation and asked for support in the implementation of joint actions and projects that will contribute to improving the socio-economic situation in the Federation.

They also discussed the importance of establishing a coordination mechanism, the implementation of socio-economic reforms and strengthening the constitutional- legal and security system in the FBiH, says the statement.

Embassy Announces the First Japanese Language Proficiency Test

The JLPT - Japanese-Language Proficiency Test - will be held for the first time in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Veterinary Faculty, University of Sarajevo on December 6, 2015. The JLPT is a test for non-native speakers of Japanese language which evaluates and certifies their Japanese-language proficiency. In 2014, approximately 600,000 people took the test in 67 countries and areas worldwide. It is the largest Japanese-language test in the world.

The JLPT will be conducted by the Japan Foundation in the form of co-sponsorship with the Test Administrative Committee in BiH. The Test Administrative Committee has been established recently by the University of Sarajevo and the Embassy of Japan in BiH. It consists of a University representative, Embassy representative, Japanese language experts and other members to administer this test in Sarajevo.

The Embassy of Japan in BiH said it hoped that the test will encourage people in BiH to study Japanese language and it will help to further promote bilateral relations between Japan and BiH in various fields such as education, culture, etc.

Saudi Embassy Donates Aid Packages to Locals in Topcic-Polje

Humanitarian packages donated by the Embassy of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were distributed to residents of Topcic-Polje who were affected by last-year's floods. The distribution was attended by

representatives of the Embassy, the Red Cross of the Federation of BiH and the Red Cross in Zenica.

Topcic-Polje belongs to the Zenica municipality.

Council of Ministers Discusses Amendments to the Criminal Code

BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Mirko Karovic told reporters that the Council of Ministers discussed the draft law on amendments to the Criminal Code

"Out of let's say three issues or three changes that we were requested to introduced in the legislation or the Criminal Code, two have been practically agreed with the entity governments," said Sarovic.

According to him, there is only one article of the law left to be harmonized and the Minister of Justice will hold a meeting today with the entity ministers of justice "and try to find a good solution for the article that would satisfy the MONEYVAL."

"It is an article that defines the amount, conditionally speaking, of laundered money that is considered a serious criminal offense to be treated as such by the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and those that are less serious would be treated in the criminal legislation and the courts of the entities. We must find a precise formula and try to agree on it tomorrow," said Minister Sarovic.

On 13 May, the amendments should be discussed in the House of Representatives, and probably immediately after that in the



CoM session

House of Peoples of the BiH Parliament.

"18 May is a kind of a critical date and if everything is completed we could inform MONEYVAL that we have harmonized everything," said Sarovic.

Federation's Prime Minister Announces Big Cleanup

"We see development of the Federation of BiH in the next four years primarily as stopping the negative trends and fulfilling conditions for economic growth and partially achieving it. That is a big cleanup in the Federation," said the Prime Minister of FBiH Fadil Novalic in the TV show on BHT1.

Current parameters, said the Prime Minister, are not only bad but they are contaminated, they are not even realistic. The number of employed or unemployed is not realistic.

"There are officially 445,000 employed persons, but the number of taxpayers is completely different, and realistically a taxpayer is employed, because the persons who don't pay taxes probably don't receive a salary. Information that 832 KM is the average salary is also not correct, because there is a game with hot meal allowances. First we need to make sure that data is measured in accordance with standards," said Novalic.

When it comes to foreign investments, the Prime Minister said that "labor legislation needs to be consistent, and we do not have it".

"So we cannot credibly present ourselves to foreign investors, because they cannot understand our taxation system, they cannot understand laws, they cannot understand anything. Second part is what we see as business environment: registration permits, etc. Registration is the least problem, problem is the permit, problem is deformation of grey labor market, problem is para-fiscal levies imposed by municipalities and cantons and not controlled, all of that needs to be harmonized. We cannot offer money, Serbia offers 5-10 thousand Euros depending on a project. We can offer exemption from all commitments, tax to salary and everything except VAT, income tax, we can do that for strategic investors," said the Prime Minister.



Unfortunately, People Live in Collective Centers 20 Years after the War: Minister

BiH Minister of Human Rights and Refugees Semiha Borovac said in an interview with FENA that about half of the refugees and displaced persons - a million people still internally displaced or forced to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war - are yet to solve their housing problem

"We are working on now on large-scale projects through the Regional Housing Program - the closure of collective centers and regular reconstruction through the Return Fund, which is underway. Our priority is the start of activities on closing the collective centers, starting construction, and in the next four years, to complete the large-scale regional housing program," said Borovac.

When it comes to the Regional Housing Program, she said that BiH has been given the possibility through this program to address the issue of housing for 5,400 families, or 14,000 people.

"The problem is that 25,000 people applied for this project," Borovac said, adding that they had surprisingly strong interest in the return.

She stressed that the verification of end-users, "does not only depend on us but also on neighboring countries, primarily Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, which are also participants of this program."

Borovac pointed out that the problem occurred with large administrative pro-



Semiha Borovac

cedures required by the Development Bank of the Council of Europe, which was given the role of implementer of donor funds. The construction of 1,870 housing units will begin, according to some official estimates of the Ministry of Human Rights, in the autumn this year.

Minister Borovac notes that they will start with the repair and reconstruction of 1,380 housing units and the construction of about 438 apartments. As for the collective centers, she points out that, unfortunately, "20 years after the war we still have 121 collective centers".

"The very term 'collective center' says that is not a good housing solution,

because facilities that accommodate refugees and displaced persons are practically in very poor condition. This is a difficult issue that BiH faces. The way to solve this problem is, above all, to take loans from the Development Bank of the Council of Europe in the amount of about 120 million KM. The overall project, which completes the construction of new housing and housing recovery, is 208 million KM, which is the amount necessary to close the collective centers," said Minister Borovac.

The loan provided 120 million KM, and the rest will be provided by local governments of the entities, cantons and local communities where the integration of these refugees and displaced persons in local communities is carried out.

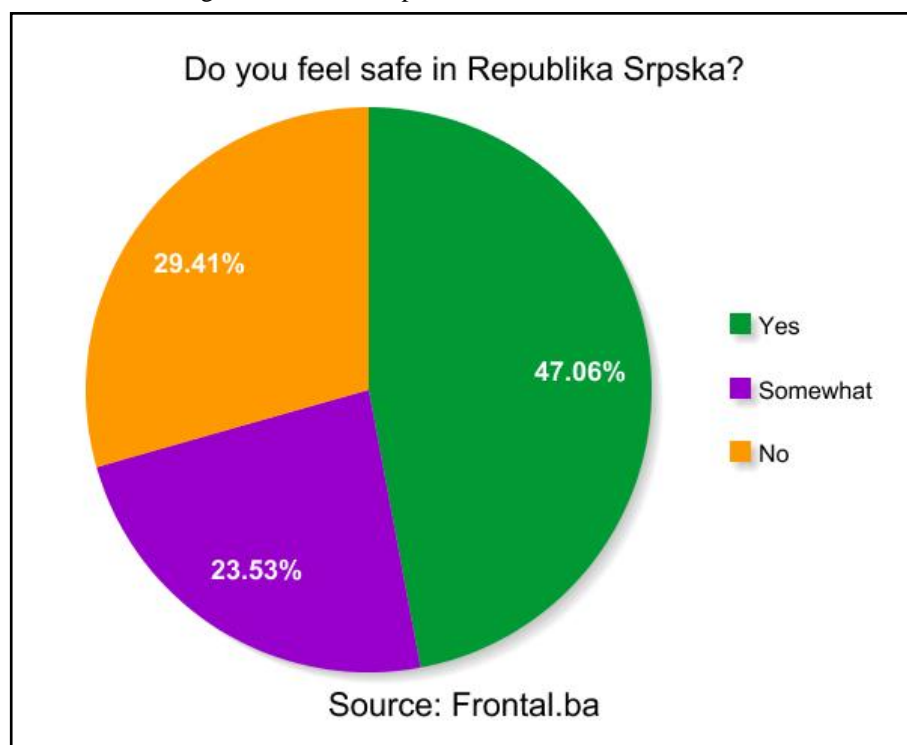
She pointed out that the collective centers still house about 7,247 people. These are mostly socially vulnerable families, not only in terms of housing but also social, economic and difficult living conditions. It is necessary to build 2,600 housing units for their accommodation.

BiH is currently presiding over the Decade of Roma, and Minister Borovac spoke about the activities in this area.

"Given the fact that BiH has been a member of the Decade of Roma since 2008, it has pledged to improve the status of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina," said Borovac.

The Action Plan for Roma covers the segment of housing, employment and health care, and BiH is working intensively on these three issues. She said that three million are allocated annually from the BiH budget for the Roma, of which two million KM goes for housing and one million for employment.

"When it comes to housing construction, we are proud of the fact that we have built around 600 housing units for Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a number of municipalities. Funds provided by BiH are joined with donor funds meaning that so far we have spent about 16.5 million KM on housing construction for Roma population," said Borovac.



SBF to Host Political and Business Leaders of Region and the World

This-year's forum will promote the vision of the region as the European center for production of healthy food, center of information technologies, education center for foreign students and tourism development

Many delegations of political and business leaders from the region and the entire world announced their participation at 6th Sarajevo Business Forum (SBF), an international investment conference which will be held in Sarajevo on May 13-14. Prime Minister of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic has confirmed his attendance at SBF.

Participation at SBF has also been announced by Turkish Deputy Prime Minister for Economy Ali Babacan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of India

Vijay Kumar Singh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sudan Ali Ahmed Karti, former president of Croatia Stjepan Mesic, a senior delegation of Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and many others. This-year's forum will be held under slogan "One Region, One Economy", promoting the vision of the region as the European center for production of healthy food, center of information technologies, education center for foreign students and tourism development.

On the first day, May 13, potential of the

region and possibilities of unity of market will be discussed at a plenary session, which will be held in the BiH Parliament building.

On the second day of the Forum, May 14, experts from the world and the region will present ideas and propose platforms for building a future strategy of joint activities in area of entrepreneurship, development of technology parks and educational entrepreneurship at a session in hotel Terme at Ilidža.

Organizers announced that production of healthy food for Europe and potential of the region in development of tourism will be discussed at the forum and that domestic and regional companies will hold bilateral business meetings with potential investors from the entire world.

Arabs Eye Land in Abandoned Bosnian Villages

Arabs from the United Arab Emirates want to buy 12,000 acre of land in Bosnia and Herzegovina and they are very interested in Herzegovina, as confirmed by the director of the Real Estate Agency AB-DOM, Vedina Delki, who searches the land in BiH in behalf of Arab partners, Dnevni List daily reported. As she said, her partners will come to BiH these days, in order to visit some of potential locations that the agency has found for them. It would suit them the most if the land is located in abandoned villages, so Arabs could buy large area on one place.

"My partners are from Emirates, and they have their own factories in Dubai and 400 employees. They want to buy land in Herzegovina for food production. It is

about Al-Shourafa Group, and they have a registered company in Sarajevo - Tasali Group. They want to buy 12,000 acres of land in BiH. It is a large area," stated Delki and emphasized that it is about serious customers and not about tricksters.

"Now we were seeking for land in Herzegovina. We found some in Capljina and Ljubuski, but that land's price is 3- 6 KM per square meter and they are now ready to pay 1.5 BAM per square meter," revealed Delki. She added that she found land in Bihac at these prices. It is about abandoned land that is not being cultivated. According to her, Serbs sold to Italians large areas of abandoned land for 1 euro per square meter. So she seeks for land in abandoned villages that could be offered to Arabs.

Lukavac Hosts International Tourism Fair

An international tourism fair "List" opened today in the northeastern BiH town of Lukavac, hosting some 130 exhibitors from ten countries. This is the 13th edition of the fair, which will last until May 9. As earlier years, the fair's organizer is Nuhanovic company, with Lukavac Municipality as the co-organizer and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Federation BiH as general patron. As the organizers say, "List" is one of major fair

events in BiH, which each year sees rise in the number of participants. The fair is taking place on 3,000 square meters of indoor and outdoor space. The event will feature the Festival of Food and Beverages, showcasing some 20 associations from entire BiH which will prepare traditional meals. The organizers will also prepare several educational gatherings and lectures, with the main topics focusing on cultural and eco tourism as the driving force of local development.

BiH Has 512 Millionaires

Relevant banking institutions have reported strong growth of saving by BiH citizens who currently have over 9.5 billion KM on accounts, Slobodna Bosna weekly reported. BiH currently has 512 millionaires. They jointly have 630 million KM, which means that some of them have over one million KM on their accounts.

At end of April this year, BiH citizens' savings exceeded 9.5 billion KM and one can expect the saving to be over ten billion KM by the end of the year. During the past several years, citizens' savings are growing rapidly by extremely high rate of ten percent on annual level, which is five times more than real GDP growth. Bankers agree that citizens are attracted by liberal tax system and high interest on fixed-term saving, which are up to 50 percent higher than European average. Comparing to majority of other European countries, BiH has no tax on capital gain, hence a saver does not pay tax on earnings made from interests.

FBiH Express Budget in 6 Months after Elections

The FBiH budget for 2015 was adopted in an emergency procedure only 2 hours and 45 minutes after the Parliament of the Federation elected the new government

This fact, and the unique experience, for sure leaves room for questions about the legality of such procedure. In one day the newly elected Government of the Federation immediately held its first emergency session at which they proposed the budget, and sent it to the Parliament, and both chambers accepted

By Dalio Sijah

it. All this was carried out from 19:00 to 23:00 on the last day of March. FBiH Government consisting of the SDA, HDZ and DF was confirmed by the Federal Parliament on 31st of March

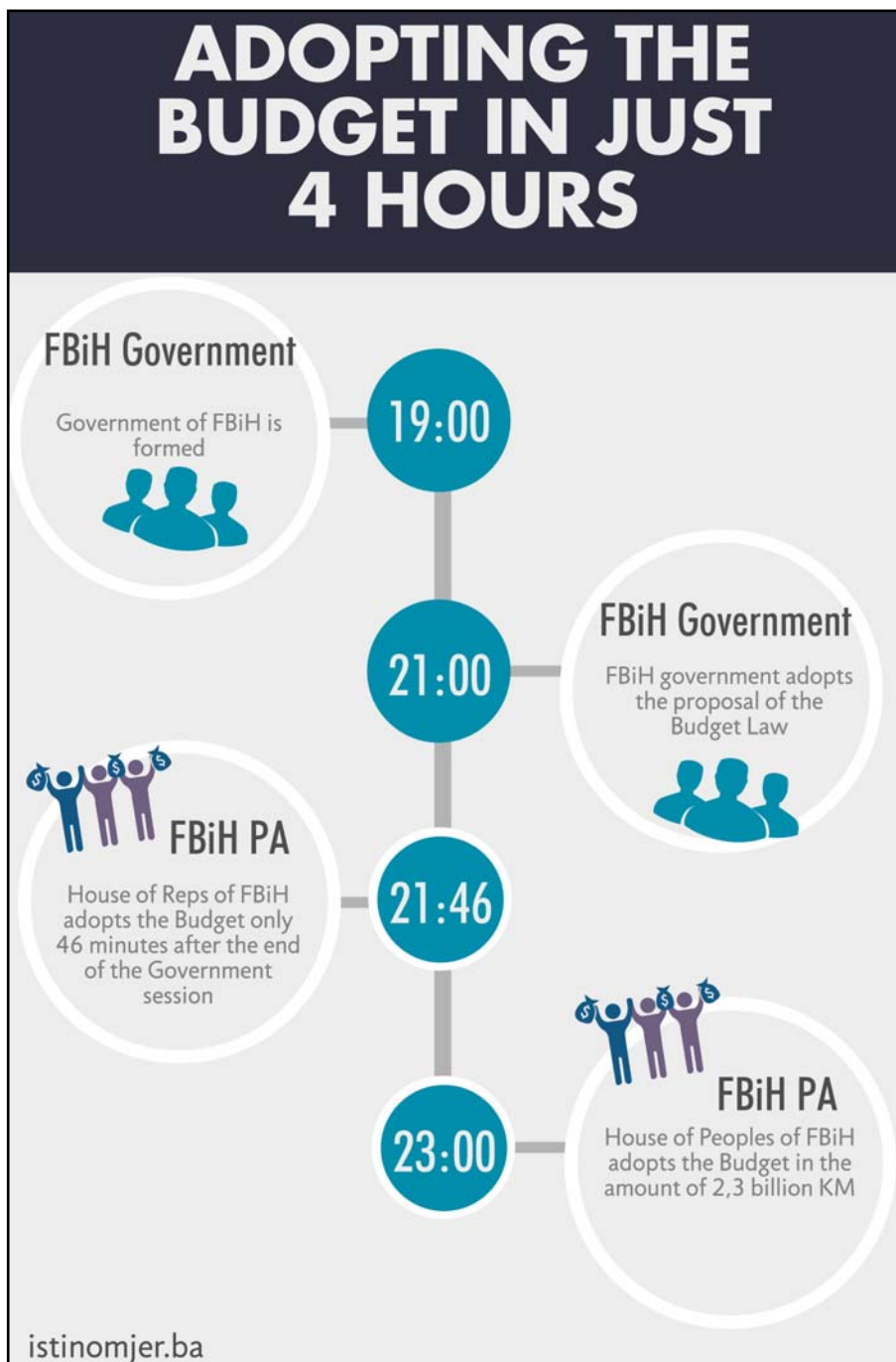
at 19:00 and immediately after held an emergency session between 19:00 and 21:00 adopting the Proposal of the Budget Law for 2015.

Then at 21: 46h, with 54 votes in favor, 5 against and 14 abstentions, the House of Representatives adopted the FBiH budget for 2015 in the amount of 2.3 billion euro. Thus, the adoption of the budget was saved by five SDP votes, despite them being in the opposition. The budget was supported by deputies from the SDA, HDZ BiH, and DF. Deputies from Nasa Stranka were against, and deputies from the SBB, HDZ 1990, and SBiH abstained from voting. After that, the House of Peoples supported the proposal by a majority vote at 23:00. Similarly it was supported by the parliamentary majority of the SDA, HDZ BiH, and DF, as well by SDP delegates. 42 delegates voted in favor, five against and four abstained.

It is clear that the government was under pressure because of blocking funding for FBiH, given that the Decision on temporary financing expired, but in any case it is very interesting to see how the newly formed government and Parliament operate, and that they were able to implement this very complicated procedure in the record time. It's even more interesting if we see that the newly formed Government because of disagreements and inter-party tensions postponed two sessions that were scheduled for the end of April.

The budget adopted for 2015 is slightly smaller comparing the last year's one, because of numerous savings in public spending proposed by the representatives of the parties that formed the Government, but with the evident increase in, among other things, expenditures on wages and salaries.

The 2014 FBiH budget proposal amounted to 2,475,579,841 KM, and this year's one amounts to 2,334,147,169 KM, which is less by 141 432 672 KM or by 6%. It is interesting that despite the general reduction, some



specific budget line items increased. Thus, for example, gross salaries and employee benefits plans amounts to 223 487 714 KM, and comparing to 2014, there is an increase of 4,769,657 KM or 2.1%. Also expenditures for material, small inventory and services increased from 76,505,558 KM to even 90,382,839 KM, which makes it 18%. Current transfer funds for other levels of government are reduced to 47,104,279 KM, which is a decrease of 5%.

If, on the other hand, we look at the legislative procedure of adopting the budget, we can ask whether the FBiH Parliament skipped a sequence of actions or has only been proceeding with an unprecedented speed.

According to the Rules of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament there is a much more complicated procedure foreseen in order to be able to pass the law in an emergency procedure. Its Article 194 states: "When the Chairman of the House of Representatives receives the proposal of the law to be passed in emergency procedure, he submits it to the competent body to consider the bill and submit a report to the House of Representatives."

Therefore, the House of Representatives in little more than an hour managed to get an explanation why the Budget Law submitted by the Government should be sent in the urgent procedure (Article 193), received the report of the competent working body (Article 194), adopted it, and ultimately sent it to the House of Peoples. All this was done without the additional amendments to the Draft Law on Budget of the Federation.

Certainly the transparency of the whole process is questionable, because the budget was adopted in a way in which there was simply no time to present it to the public and ask for comments for its pre-draft version.

Thus, without challenging the necessity of the urgency of the adoption of the budget, we can conclude that the entire procedure regarding this document of a vital importance is at the very least questionable, and there is no sense in discussing its transparency. As a result, the newly formed Government in its first task has already showed symptoms of irresponsibility that have been typical for previous assemblies of the FBiH Government.

A FIRST FOR BOSNIAN LAWMAKERS

Members of Parliaments Discuss LGBT Rights



A three-day seminar on LGBT rights in the context of European integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina is being closed today. The goal of the seminar, organized by the Sarajevo Open Center with the support of the Norwegian Embassy, was to inform representatives of human rights and gender equality institutions and bodies about the problems and needs of Bosnian LGBT community

The organizers said that the seminar should bring about an increased level of involvement of institutions when it comes to the protection of LGBT rights and the inclusion of LGBT people in the BiH society.

This is the first seminar on LGBT topics in BiH history with the participation of MPs. Their participation is a clear announcement of a more intensive approach related to LGBT rights in the 2015-2018 mandate. A variety of international mechanisms and human rights reports, such as the EU Progress Report for 2013 and 2014, have requested a stronger involvement of BiH institutions. Mirsad Isakovic, Chair of the Gender Equality Committee of the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives; Diana Zelenika, Deputy-Chair of the Gender Equality Committee of the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives; Maja Gasal-Vrazalica, a member of the Gender Equality Committee; and Damir Arnaut, a member of the Joint Human Rights Committee of BiH Parliament's both Houses participated in the seminar. Representatives of the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, Ombudsman Institution, Gender Equality Agency, Gender Centers of FBiH and RS,

Human Rights Committee of the Parliament of the Federation BiH and the Ministry of Interior of Republika Srpska were also present at the seminar.

During the three-day program, leading experts from BiH, Croatia and Serbia have discussed problems, know-how and best practice from institutions in the region, hoping that it will lead to a stronger involvement of BiH institutions. On the first day of the seminar, the participants discussed stereotypes and prejudice related to LGBT rights, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, regional and international frameworks for the protection of LGBT rights, and the experience of the Ombudsman Institution in this area.

The second day started with a presentation on the same-sex partnerships and strategies for the prevention and protection against discrimination. Hate crime incidents and acts, as a strong destabilizing factor in any society, were the topic of the afternoon session, together with transgender rights.

Today, on the last day of the conference, concrete guidelines and what needs to be implemented related to LGBT rights in the upcoming period will be presented.



The Bloodiest Peak of All

Krvavac (bos. "krv" - blood) is the second highest peak of Mt. Bjelasnica, towering 2,062 meters above sea level. In order to reach Krvavac, one is confronted with many obstacles - from dragons and bears to the deep gorges and steep slopes which characterize this vast and wild part of Bjelasnica

The journey starts in small settlement of Umoljani.

"Hello householder, how can I reach the dragon?" a friend of mine asked a local villager while he was collecting hay.

"How do you mean dragon?" the villager replied.

"Well, you know, the one from the rock above the village," my friend explained through his cars open window.

"It's not a dragon," snapped the villager, continuing to collect his hay.

"Then what is it?" my friend asked with dis-parage.

"Well, a lizard," said the villager, not even looking at my friend.

"Oh, yeah, and what's the difference between a dragon and your 'lizard', please?" he nervously replied.

"What do you mean 'what's the difference?'"

While skillfully handling the hayfork, he suddenly turned to my friend and shouted, "Dragons fly, lizards crawl, my poor friend!" He continued collecting his hay, leaving my friend's jaws open down to the floor.

The village is a 40 minute drive away from Sarajevo. The road leads you past Marsal Hotel on Mt. Bjelasnica, passing by Bijele Vode, the mountain lodge owned and operated by the Mountaineering Club Zeljeznicar, and carrying on through Sabici village on Mt. Bjelasnica before heading uphill at the head of the Rakitnica Canyon, one of Europe's least explored gems.

The story about the "dragon" (or is it a lizard?) and Umoljani is well-known

amongst the locals: a monster came from the Rakitnica Canyon terrorizing the local people. They managed to escape, the legend goes, and ran to a nearby hill, praying to the skies for protection. The dragon was then petrified in the rock forever. Legend aside, one can honestly see a dragon figure in the rock. Rural legends do no harm for tourism either. Judging by the increasing number of B&B's and restaurants opening in Umoljani over the past few years, it is obvious that visitors are coming. In this small place, you can find one of the oldest mosques in Bosnia, and this mountain village also hides a beautiful Stecci (medieval tombstones) necropolis. Umoljani is a true witness to history and a guardian of highland traditions, perched in high and isolated place, which is also a starting point for a hike and climb up to Krvavac Peak.

Above Umoljani is the Gradina summer pasture - our next stop and crossroad: on the left one can go to Studen Potok, a fascinating place which looks just like the Windows wallpaper. It even caught the eye of NatGEO who published a short story and a photo of this place. To the right one can go towards Crveni Klanac (Red Gorge), Dugo Polje (Long Field) and Krvavac, or even further on towards Lukomir, a magical village on the ridge above the Rakitnica Canyon. On Gradina, we were accompanied by two dogs - a small goofy one, who like to put his nose where it doesn't belong and a huge tomjak shepherd dog, who was our guardian to and from the peak.

We took a rest on Dugo Polje, the genuine desert of Mt. Bjelasnica, and prepared ourselves for the next climb, which leads to Greda, and making our way through the snow for the older members of our small group, who decided to join us despite being 60+ years old. They said it's better to do this hike than to read black chronicle or feed already fat Sarajevo pigeons. After successfully climbing Greda, we reach the final ascent. The snow is 2 meters deep, the juniper is well covered beneath us, but the snow's crust is surprisingly solid, not letting us slip through it.

Krvavac.

It was extremely windy and cold on the peak. But when you crouch behind a drift, it's comfy enough to even take off your jacket. I was sorry that weather was so bad - dark and gloomy - but it was glamorous anyway. We could not enjoy the beautiful views that Krvavac offers when the sun is shining but the cold united our little group. We had a quick coffee and brunch and then decided to go back to Umoljani - the place where it all started.

The described tour is around four hours long in winter conditions. It is also located on the White Trail of the Via Dinarica. It is recommended for more experienced hikers and mountaineers in good condition because of the high ascents. It's better to not even ponder to wander Bjelasnica's outback without experienced mountain guides! Read more at www.viadinarica.com and www.steffaround.com



Nearly Eighty Five Thousand Still Internally Displaced in Bosnia



There are currently still 84,500 internally displaced people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 8,600 of whom are accommodated in 154 collective centers country-wide

A record-breaking 38 million people have been displaced within their own country by conflict or violence. This is the equivalent of the total populations of London, New York and Beijing combined.

"These are the worst figures for forced displacement in a generation, signaling our complete failure to protect innocent civilians" said Jan Egeland, secretary general at the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, part of NRC, launched its Global Overview 2015: People internally displaced by conflict and violence at the United Nations in Geneva. With internal displacement figures reaching a record high for the third year in a row, the report also documents that 11 million people were newly displaced by violent events throughout 2014.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are currently still 84,500 internally displaced people, 8,600 of whom are accommodated in 154 collective centers country-wide.

"Global diplomats, UN resolutions, peace talks and ceasefire agreements have lost the battle against ruthless armed men who are driven by political or religious interests rather than human imperatives," said Egeland.

"This report should be a tremendous wake-up call. We must break this trend where millions of men, women and chil-

dren are becoming trapped in conflict zones around the world."

Volker Turk, UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, said that the staggering number of internally displaced people because of conflict and violence is a harbinger of movements to come.

"We know that more and more internally displaced have been forced to move within their country multiple times. The longer a conflict lasts, the more insecure they feel and when hopelessness sets in, many will cross borders and become refugees," he said.

"As we have seen in the recent past, for example in the Mediterranean, despair drives people to take their chances and even risk dangerous boat journeys. The obvious solution lies in an all-out effort to bring about peace in war-ravaged countries," Turk added.

The report also highlights how long-lasting, or protracted displacement, contributes to this alarmingly high global total. In 2014, there were people living in displacement for ten years or more in nearly 90% of the 60 countries and territories IDMC monitored.

The IDMC report also describes how displacement often reveals underlying structural challenges within a country, and how it can be prolonged by a government's deliberate politicization of the issue or its refusal to enter into a formal resolution of a crisis.

MACEDONIA Protesters Return to Streets after Clashes



"Son, come home early. All kinds of policemen roam the streets"

Several thousand mostly young people rallied in Skopje for a second consecutive day against alleged police brutality, demanding the resignation of Interior Minister Gordana Jankuloska, reports BIRN. The protesters gathered in front of the Macedonian parliament after clashes with riot police the previous day, amid simmering political tensions between the government and opposition sparked by the release of a series of wiretapped recordings allegedly implicating top officials in serious wrongdoings. There was a heavy security presence after Tuesday's clashes, during which police said 38 police officers and one protester were injured and 30 people arrested. Police blocked all the streets near the government building, where the rally was initially meant to be held. The protesters, mainly aged between 20 and 30, called for the resignation of Interior Minister Gordana Jankuloska, who they consider responsible for trying to cover up the authorities' responsibility for murder of a young man, Martin Neskoski, who was killed by a policeman on June 6, 2011.

"We are gathered here in large numbers, we will get together again tomorrow and every day until we see command responsibility for the killing of Martin," said the dead man's brother, Aleksandar Neskoski.

Some of the protesters brought flowers and tried to give them to police officers, while shouting slogans like "You should protect us", "Put your shields down", and "No justice, no peace".

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Sarajevo

Today: Partly cloudy. High 26C.
Tonight: Low 10C.
Saturday: Chance of rain. Close to 21C.

Banja Luka

Today: Sunny. High 26C.
Tonight: Low 12C.
Saturday: Light rain. Close to 19C.

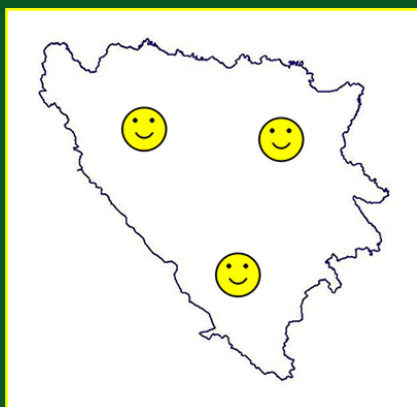
Tuzla

Today: Sunny. High 24C.
Tonight: Low 11C.
Saturday: Partly cloudy. Close to 23C.

Mostar

Today: Sunny. High 29C.
Tonight: Low 17C.
Saturday: Partly cloudy. Close to 28C.

BIO METEO



Air pollution in Sarajevo
MODERATE

UV Index
High

GLOBE IN PICTURES



Six-year-old boy performs acrobatics by bending his body and keeping balance with his mouth gripping a tripod during the opening ceremony of a festival in Bozhou city, China



A new Vatican Swiss Guard receives a kiss from a woman prior to a swearing-in ceremony in Vatican City



A member of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent reacts as other members carry a colleague after shelling by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, near the Syrian Arab Red Crescent center in the Douma neighborhood of Damascus



A composite image of people working on Downing Street ahead of the opening of polling stations for the General Election, in London

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AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON 3D

HOT PURSUIT