

Authorities must take swift and decisive action to ensure the safety of all citizens



Every person has the fundamental right to live freely and without fear of discrimination or harm in every corner of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Disturbing incidents targeting and intimidating returnees in various parts of BiH that occurred over the last few days stand in stark contrast to the progress achieved over the past three decades of post-war recovery in BiH.

These regrettable incidents are fueled by increased nationalistic discourse, including surrounding the unconstitutional commemoration of January 9. Such actions not only jeopardize the safety and well-being of returnees, but also pose a serious threat to investments, the EU integration process, and the overall prosperity of the entire country.

The RS should have a day, but it cannot be marked in a way that discriminates against some citizens or otherwise promotes division. Political leaders of this country must always be aware that their words have power. They can easily translate into actions that affect the lives of individuals. Thus, they should refrain from divisive rhetoric and actions that can cause tensions and instead prioritize the well-being of all citizens.

The OHR reiterates that the Republika Srpska as a party to

Annex 7 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace committed to create in its territory the political, economic, and social conditions conducive to the harmonious reintegration of returnees without risk of harassment, intimidation, persecution, or discrimination, particularly on account of their ethnic origin, religious belief, or political opinion.

The RS authorities must take all necessary steps to combat any form of violence, discrimination, or intimidation against any community within their jurisdiction. The OHR calls upon all responsible authorities to take swift and decisive action to ensure the security and protection of all citizens.

Some leaders in this country have demonstrated restraint and kept their focus on crucial reforms needed for BiH to officially launch membership negotiations with the EU this spring. This is a just approach. It is imperative for everyone in BiH to demonstrate a commitment to democracy, human rights, and shared future prosperity in the country.