

OHR 4th Federation Meeting on the Central Bosnia Canton, 2 Dec. 1997

Fourth Federation Meeting on the Central Bosnia Canton

On 2 December, Federation President Soljic, Vice-President Ganic, Deputy Prime Minister Bilandzija, Minister for Refugees Kadic and his Deputy Ljubic, Minister of Interior Zilic and his Deputy Leutar met with the Governor of the Central Bosnia Canton Saric, his Deputy Terzic and other Canton officials to discuss the return of displaced persons and refugees, as well as progress made in the establishment of the joint Canton police and implementation of election results. The meeting was chaired by the Senior Deputy High Representative Ambassador Schumacher and attended by UNHCR Chief of Mission Pirlot, Deputy COSSFOR Struccio, OSCE Deputy Head of Mission Jenness, Head of UN Civil Affairs Harland and IPTF Deputy Commissioners Schumm and Kroker. The participants decided the following:

1. Recalling the agreements of the previous Federation Meetings on the Central Bosnia Canton on 5 and 27 August and 14 October, the participants agreed that the immediate return of displaced persons and refugees could take place to the villages defined in the list of identified return areas ([Annex](#)).
2. The participants welcomed the fact that all of the municipalities in the Central Bosnia Canton had now submitted plans for immediate return to uninhabited houses. Based on the final submissions, the Canton Co-ordinating Body had completed an operational plan for the first villages in the first phase of returns which had been adopted by the Canton Government. The participants endorsed this plan and recommended that donors focus reconstruction and demining efforts in the Canton.
3. The realisation of the plan will be supported in the Federation and Canton budgets to the maximum extent possible.
4. The participants emphasised the need to better inform pre-war inhabitants about opportunities to return, and called on the Canton Co-ordinating Body to urgently disseminate the principles of the Canton Return Programme and the above-mentioned list of return areas through the media, as well as through all associations of displaced persons and refugees in Federation and Republika Srpska territory. The Federation President and Vice-President proposed to visit the villages identified for immediate returns jointly with the Senior Deputy High Representative and a senior representative of UNHCR to further publicise the return plan and to encourage people to commence return without delay.
5. The Canton Co-ordinating Body will present its role as the focal point for efforts to promote returns within the Canton to international organisations and donors in a meeting to be convened by the OHR on 5 December. The participants tasked the Canton Co-ordinating Body speedily to identify specific reconstruction and other community-based projects facilitating returns and establish principles for the prioritisation of such projects within the operational plan in order to give more detailed guidance to donors.
6. As the main criteria for funding of projects will be actual or expected returns, the participants urged municipalities to begin identifying returnees at once under expedited procedures. As an interim measure until all municipalities have set up information and registration centres, UNHCR has also agreed to receive applications to return at its liaison office in Travnik. All applications will be passed to the Canton Co-ordinating Body. Municipalities throughout the Canton will co-ordinate announcements of planned returns in order to ensure that temporary housing used by returnees will be vacated and made available for the return of original inhabitants.
7. The Canton Ministry for Social Welfare, Displaced Persons and Refugees will begin developing

the further phases of the overall return plan.

8. The participants noted that the developments in Central Bosnia Canton could serve as a starting point for activating inter-Canton and inter-Entity returns to neighbouring regions, such as the Sarajevo and Herzegovina-Neretva Cantons and Western Republika Srpska. They encouraged contacts between municipalities of both Entities, such as the recent visits from Gradiska to Donji Vakuf, and called on local authorities and international actors to facilitate further dialogue.
9. The participants commended the successful establishment of the joint Canton police in all eleven municipalities. They urged the joint Canton Police to actively recruit officers to fill the remaining positions within the police force to reflect the 1991 census, particularly filling slots intended for others than those of the constituent peoples of the Federation on an expedited basis. Police officers assigned to serve in a municipality should be given priority in the allocation of housing, in order to ensure their permanent presence in the community.
10. The participants called on the Canton Interior Ministry to draw up security plans for all return areas to prevent incidents directed against the person and property of returnees. These plans should incorporate joint police patrols which include police representatives of the returning ethnic groups. The plans shall be shared with UN IPTF.
11. The Canton Interior Ministry gave an interim report to the Federation leadership on the investigations to resolve the killings in the Travnik area which occurred in August and October. The participants strongly urged the Interior Ministry to continue joint investigative efforts until these were solved. Authorities carrying out investigations will make all necessary efforts to apprehend those responsible without delay.
12. The participants warmly welcomed the establishment of a joint judicial system in the Canton.
13. The participants reiterated their full support to the OSCE and the National Election Results Implementation Committee in their efforts to assist in the implementation of the municipal election results. The participants noted with satisfaction that eight of the eleven municipalities in the Central Bosnia Canton have established their Municipal Assemblies after the elections.
14. The participants expressed deep concern, however, that Assemblies have not been established in Bugojno, Gornji Vakuf and Travnik. The participants expect all municipalities to meet the 31 December 1997 deadline for final certification, and noted the authority of the OHR and OSCE to impose appropriate sanctions for failing to meet this deadline. They also carefully noted that Rule 141(b) of the PEC Rules and Regulations allows for the prompt removal from office of those elected councilors who obstruct the process of election implementation. They strongly urged the elected councilors from Bugojno, Gornji Vakuf and Travnik to convene their first sessions by the end of the week.
15. Concerning the municipality of Bugojno, the participants urged the local parties to reach an agreement immediately within the framework of negotiations supervised by the OSCE.
16. Concerning Travnik, the participants reiterated their support for the efforts to resolve the killings in the Travnik area, as noted above, and urged the HDZ councilors to immediately end their boycott of the municipal assembly sessions.
17. The participants particularly considered the disputed issues that have prevented implementation of the municipal election results in the Gornji Vakuf municipality. They noted with disappointment the failure of the HDZ councilors to attend the assembly session on 1 December 1997.

Regarding the name of the municipality of Gornji Vakuf, they agreed with party representatives from the said municipality that, pending any revision of the Law on Names of Federal Units of 30 June 1996 by the competent Federation institutions, the legal name of the said municipality must be used in official documents. The Participants decided that the name question would be considered in the next meeting of the Federation Forum. They took note of the decision laid down in the arbitration on Prozor-Rama in the Federation Arbitrator's Opinion No:1, dated 21 July 1995.

18. The participants decided to review progress in January 1998.