

OHR RRTF Report July 1997 - Annex 1c

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"Trends in return destinations, social pressure in and outside of cluster areas; details"

July 1997

Una Sana (Bihac, Bos. Krupa, Klujc, Sanski Most, Bos. Petrovac)

The main destination of repatriates returning to or taking residence in the Una Sana Canton was Sanski Most (half of the repatriates), followed by Bihac. The peak of the return, so far, was in March 1997 when some 2,000 repatriates arrived in the Una Sana Canton.

The Sanski Most authorities continue to promote re-locations to the municipality, resulting in the occupation of anything which is inhabitable, thereby limiting the return possibilities of original pre-war residents. At the same time, tensions rise between the displaced persons community already living in the area and the new arrivals. Throughout the Canton, repatriates, either returning to their pre-war residences or taking up residence in the Canton, are frustrated with the lack of employment possibilities and the poor living conditions.

Sarajevo/Gorazde (Centar, Ilidza, Gorazde, Hadzici, Ilijas, Novi Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Stari Grad, Trnovo, Vogosca)

During 1997, an increasing number of refugees has been repatriating to the Cantons of Sarajevo and Gorazde. The main destinations were Ilidza, Novi Grad and Novo Sarajevo. The majority of the repatriates are returning from Germany, encompassing not only so-called phase I candidates – single or married with no minor children – but also phase II candidate – families with minors. Many of the repatriates state that their temporary permits in the host countries were to expire in due course and they preferred to return before the others. The number of repatriates who cannot return to their pre-war residences and chose the Sarajevo Canton as new residence has considerably increased in 1997. Factors such as lack of housing, the inability of persons displaced from municipalities now pertaining to the territory of the Republika Srpska to return to their own homes, and the increasing number of repatriates who are unable to go to their places of origin in that Entity and therefore re-locate to Sarajevo City because of the perception that it offers better chances for a new start, add to the pressure faced by the authorities responsible for finding solutions.

Posavina

The majority of repatriates to the Posavina Canton (municipalities of Orasje and Odzak) returned to Odzak. In general, the situation is tight, caused by lack of housing, infrastructure (such as water and electricity) and employment opportunities. Previously the majority of repatriates came

from Croatia; presently mainly from Germany. The latter are perceived by others to being better off. Among the German repatriates, an elite returnee population has been created through the Dren City housing project (the reconstruction costs are up to DM 30,000, whereas the costs of other projects amount only to DM 4,000 or 5,000 per housing unit). This has caused animosity within the community. Pressure cooker atmosphere developed in Odzak town because of the overcrowding of repatriates who anticipated moving into their homes in the Zone of Separation. For example, one repatriate family is living in a Serb-owned house in Odzak with 16 other persons; in addition, the Serb owner and his family have also returned and are now living with the Bosniak displaced persons. They, however, cannot move back to their origin Modricki Lug, closeby in the Republika Srpska, due to personal security concerns. To date, Orasje has absorbed approximately 10,000 returnees. The ensuing overcrowding is now compounded by the demobilisation of local HVO and Bosnian Army soldiers. They were promised a house upon leaving the army. This causes additional pressure as housing and infrastructure are extensively damaged in the Canton. In the Republika Srpska municipalities of Bos. Samac and Modrica, the situation remains the same: lack of housing, but no bigger influx of returnees.

Tuzla-Podrinje Canton

The main destinations of repatriates have been the following municipalities: Gradacac, Brcko (Federation) and Gracanica. Factors such as the lack of housing and the high number of displaced persons have created a rather hostile atmosphere towards repatriates among the residents and the displaced persons population which, to a certain extent, is reflected in the positions of local authorities. Within the Canton, the municipalities of Banovici, Lukavac, Kladanj, Srebrenik, Tuzla and Zivinice have started to limit their access: these municipalities have adopted the practice of only registering newly arrived repatriates if they originate from the municipality concerned and/or had their pre-war address there. The other municipalities – Brcko (Fed), Celic, Doboj East, Gracanica, Gradacac, Kalesija, Sapna and Teocak – have decided to register newly arrived repatriates, regardless of their pre-war municipality, if the person concerned has accommodation available.

Neretva and Middle Bosnian Cantons

The main destinations in these Cantons have been: Mostar East, Capljina, Prozor, Travnik, Kiseljak and Dornji Vakuf. Repatriates returning to so-called majority areas were mainly faced with the lack of employment, experienced by 90% of the repatriates. The return of minority members is close to zero and where such returns occurred, the returnees face a series of problems (harassment, destruction of property, discrimination in terms of distribution of assistance). Through the concept of “Open Cities”, a moderate rate of minority return is being sought. So far, the initiative has been met by positive reactions in Busovaca and, against a repeatedly changing political environment, also Gornji Vakuf.

Western part of the Republika Srpska (“Anvil” area; Sipovo, Ribnik, Mrkonjic Grad)

Repatriates returning or taking up residence in this region have come mainly from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. To date, repatriates have been returning or re-locating to the municipalities of Banja Luka, Bos. Novi (Novi Grad) but not to Sipovo, Ribnik or Mrkonjic Grad. These three municipalities as well as the RS part of Sanski Most were mainly the target areas of returning displaced persons.

Eastern part of the Republika Srpska

The main destinations for repatriates were the municipalities of Cajnice, Ildza (RS) and Rudo. The majority of movements were not returns but relocations.

In some areas of the Republika Srpska, social tensions between repatriates and the local resident population are rising. These tensions are mainly caused by the fact that repatriates are often perceived as traitors and as being better off compared to the people who stayed behind and often suffered throughout the war.

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Office of the High Representative Reconstruction and Return Task Force