

Banja Luka and Donji Vakuf last municipalities in Bosnia to complete property repossession

The Property Law Implementation agencies, which include Office of the High Representative (OHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina , note that only Banja Luka and Donji Vakuf are left to enforce decisions for repossession of property.

While Donji Vakuf has one more outstanding case to implement, Banja Luka has been postponing repeatedly a small number of evictions, and it has yet to solve a number of property cases before being able to set the cut-off date.

Even though the Property Law Implementation Substantial Completion final checks have been conducted in Kotor Varos, Mrkonjic Grad and Prnjavor, the agencies found there have been several unresolved cases, which have been reported as closed. This situation was caused by the bad performance of the previous Heads of Municipal Offices for Refugees and these cases are now being processed in accordance with the law.

“Until now, we have verified 90 out of 130 municipalities, which includes all the municipalities in Herzegovina ,” the agencies say.

“Another 38 municipalities have completed their caseload of claims, issued all decisions for submitted claims, and supervised implementation so that people have been able to repossess their homes. These municipalities are now preparing final reports, which will be reviewed once submitted.” The Agencies would like to urge these municipalities to prepare reports as soon as possible considering that unnecessary delays in preparation of reports were already noted.

The Property Law Implementation Plan was due to be completed on 1 January 2004. Statistics show that the overall ratio of the property law implementation is running at 93 per cent in the country.

The three organizations highlighted the fact that individuals entitled to alternative accommodation, who receive contributions to pay the rent from housing bodies, were facing a

problem, especially in the Republika Srpska, where shortfalls in the budget and the late filling of the Ministry for Displaced Persons and Refugees' budget created considerable uncertainty for several hundred families.

At the same time, the international agencies commended the new mayor of Donji Vakuf, "who has made sure that his municipality has drawn up – and has until now respected – a plan for completion of the property law implementation process."