

High Representative prioritises return of properties to police officers

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today issued a Decision prioritising the return of residential properties to returnee police officers in both Entities. Housing bodies, which under the property laws are obliged to resolve claims on the repossession of private and socially owned properties in the chronological order in which they were received, are now legally requested, as an exception, to treat claims by returning police officers as priorities.

The High Representative has issued this Decision in order to promote the return of so called minority police officers in accordance with the Framework Agreement on Police Restructuring, Reform and Democratisation in Republika Srpska and the Agreement on Restructuring the Police in the Federation, as well as the recent amendments to the Entity Constitutions under which the ethnic composition of the public administration at all levels must reflect the 1991 census. An accelerated return of minority police officers is important for the overall return process as most minority returnees point to the presence of minority police officers on the local police forces as a guarantee of their safety in their pre-war municipalities.

Police officers who ask for their claims to be treated as a priority must present the following evidence to the competent housing body:

1. A certificate issued by the United Nations Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina stating that the holder of the certificate is returning to serve as a police officer in his or her place of residence of 30 April 1991.
2. Evidence that the claim for the repossession of the home was filed prior to the date of the issuance of this Decision, in accordance with the property laws.
3. Evidence of the current place of residence of the police officer, as well as his or her parents, children, spouse and all members of the household registered as such on, or since, 30 April 1991.
4. Where the claim was not filed by the police officer in person, evidence that he or she resided in the claimed property on 30 April 1991, or a statement certifying this signed by at least two witnesses and verified by a competent court under full financial and criminal responsibility.

This Decision by the High Representative is effective as of today, and shall remain in force until 31 December 2002. It shall be published without delay in the Official Gazettes of the RS and the Federation.