

## **Preventing evictions a punishable offence**

According to recent media reports, certain Associations are threatening illegal actions that include physical prevention of evictions. This type of behaviour will not be tolerated.

The agencies of the Property Law Implementation Plan, OHR, OSCE, UNHCR; UNMIBH and CRPC (PLIP) are again taking this opportunity to remind all citizens and Associations within the Federation and Republika Srpska that Criminal Codes stipulate that obstructing an official in execution of his/her official duty are all punishable offences.

The most fundamental characteristic of a civilized society is its members' acceptance, adherence and respect for the rule of law. Without rule of law there will be no basis in this region for long-term political stability or economic growth.

PLIP agencies urge the Ministries of Urban Affairs and Ministries of Interior to push for vigorous and thorough investigation and criminal prosecution of all cases where allegations of criminal offences against housing have been made.

The consistent, fair and impartial application of the property legislation is of critical importance in building the framework for enforcement of the human and legal rights of both claimants and temporary occupants. All local authorities are legally obliged to carry out evictions in order to give homes back to their rightful owners. Anyone who obstructs public officials from carrying out their duties is committing a crime.