

Collective center closure program in RS expected to provide alternative accommodation

The Agencies involved in the Property Law Implementation Plan (OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, UNMIBH and CRPC) announced that, as of the end of July 2001, 30% of the property claims have been implemented all over BiH. This means that in the Federation 39% of the property claims have been implemented, while in the RS 21% of the property claims have been implemented.

As the planned closure of collective centers continues in the Republika Srpska, it is encouraging to hear from RS officials that they will not waste precious resources on individuals whose housing needs are otherwise met. Under criteria adopted by the RS Government, individuals who have failed to claim their properties, individuals who have repossessed their properties and multiple occupants are not eligible to be allocated apartments. Those who are allocated apartments will receive only six-month temporary contracts to use them and will be denied an extension if they do not remain entitled under the Criteria.

Further, as promised by RS officials, we fully expect all space in vacated collective centers, meeting the necessary standard to be made available as alternative accommodation. In this respect we can expect that with each new apartment allocation, a corresponding number of units of alternative accommodation can be created. We anticipate that the recently announced closure of collective centers around Banja Luka will serve to accelerate the unsatisfactory rate of property law implementation in Republika Srpska's capital.

In addition, the full cooperation of local officials is expected in both the Federation and the Republika Srpska in drafting instructions to the respective laws governing privatisation of apartments in line with recent amendments by the High Representative. The instruction, as mandated under the amendments, will eliminate all confusion surrounding the evidence, which must be provided with the application for privatisation.