

Ambassadors' Tour of Return Areas

The High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, COMSFOR Lt. Gen. Ronald E. Adams and UNHCR Chief of Mission Werner Blatter have invited Ambassadors of countries represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina to visit by helicopter key areas of return across the country on Thursday, August 31, 2000.

The aim of the tour is to view progress in the return of displaced persons and refugees, including the implementation of property legislation, and to hear first hand from the returnees about their reintegration problems and concerns.

This is the third such visit (previous tours took place in September 1999 and March 2000), designed to allow greater understanding of the return process and the problems facing those returning. This visit will be another opportunity to draw the attention and resources of the International Community to the return of displaced persons and refugees to their homes. A precondition for successful return, in particular to urban areas, is strict and efficient property law implementation.

Ambassadors or representatives of 17 nations will participate in the tour scheduled for August 31. Separated in three groups and accompanied by the High Representative, SFOR Commanders, and UNHCR's Chief of Mission Blatter, as well as staff from the respective agencies, they will visit a total of six return sites: Carsija (Doboj Municipality) and Jablanica (Maglaj Municipality) in MND North, Stari Grad (Prijeedor Municipality) and Vecici (Kotor Varos Municipality) in MND Southwest, and Prenj (Capljina Municipality) and Tjentiste (Foca Municipality) in MND Southeast. Some of the sites have been chosen as a model for increasingly successful return projects, although all of the sites continue to require immediate financial support.

Unfortunately, seats on the helicopters are limited but journalists are encouraged to visit the sites at the time of the visit. For exact timing, locations, and other details, please contact the following:

Carsija: Ms. Sabina Nadzakovic (UNHCR/Tuzla): 035 282 394/5/6

Jablanica: Ms. Gema Redondo (OHR/RRTF Tuzla): 066 156 177 (mobile)

Prenj: Ms. Meriem Ladjabi (OHR/RRTF Mostar): 036 311 098 or 098 390 902

Tjentiste: Ms. Aida Seraget (UNHCR/Sarajevo): 033 290 351

Stari Grad: Ms. Ratka Tomic (OHR/Banja Luka): 051 330 200

Vecici: Ms. Ratka Tomic (OHR/Banja Luka): 051 330 200