

Meeting on Serb Orthodox Church Seminary Postponed



Upon the request of the Holy Synod of the Serb Orthodox Church, the meeting on the return of the Serb Orthodox seminary in Sarajevo to the Serb Orthodox Church has been postponed.

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Raffi Gregorian, expressed deep disappointment with the short notice of this request. The PDHR had invited representatives of the Serb Orthodox Church, Entity, Sarajevo Canton and Stari Grad Municipality authorities and the Economic faculty administration to a meeting on 4 September regarding the voluntary return of the Serb Orthodox Seminary building.

Currently, there is no legislation that requires the restitution of this property. Earlier this year the BiH Parliament failed to enact the draft denationalization law, which would have returned this property and others like it. Despite this setback, the PDHR has been holding discussions on returning the Serb Orthodox Church seminary, based on a good faith commitment of the competent authorities to successfully resolve the matter after more than a decade of deliberation. The aim of the initiative was to build confidence amongst the constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and promote similar voluntary acts of good will in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina until such time as appropriate legislation is enacted.

A discussion of restitution of other properties formerly owned by the Holy Synod and other religious communities was not planned for this meeting because it falls outside the scope of competences of the scheduled participants. A general scheme

of restitution requires the enactment of new legislation, which the PDHR again urges BiH authorities to revive their efforts to introduce a fair and affordable restitution law.

No date has been set for a rescheduled meeting.