

OHR RRTF Report July 1997

RRTF: Report July 1997

Update

“Reconstruction and Return Task Force”

July 1997

5. Regional Reconstruction and Return Task Forces

Regional Reconstruction and Return Task Forces (RegRRTFs) are intended as steering instruments in order to make RRTF recommendations more effective on the ground. They include field office representatives of international organisations and major donors. Central level representatives and local authorities are also brought into the RegRRTFs, chaired by the regional offices of the OHR. The RegRRTFs are designed to provide a link between reconstruction decisions and repatriation/return, to analyse local opportunities and devise mechanisms to apply conditionality to sector-specific reconstruction efforts at the local level. They also engage local authorities, advise on prioritisation of reconstruction investment and provide regional recommendations to the central RRTF.

5.1. Posavina/Brcko RegRRTF

With a strong presence of representatives of RRTF member organisations from the Sarajevo level, the Posavina/Brcko RegRRTF was kicked off at a meeting held at the Brcko Office of the High Representative on 22 May 1997. The April RRTF report was presented to regional officials of the respective

refugee ministries. Their reactions have, so far, remained unsatisfactory. Apart from Brcko where a special return procedure is in place under the arbitration award, issues of minority return are of particular interest in two municipalities of this cluster area: minorities in Odzak, from where recent incidents were reported, and a possible auto-declaration of Modrica as an "Open City". The specific developments in these municipalities and the behaviour of local authorities will determine further action by the RegRRTF. The Posavina/Brcko RegRRTF was the first to be established, due to the paramount importance of the reconstruction and return effort under the arbitration award for Brcko.

5.2. RegRRTF Northwest

On 17 June 1997, the RegRRTF Northwest was established at a meeting in Banja Luka. Prime attention will be paid by this task force to the reconstruction and return efforts in the Una-Sana and Anvil areas. Building on existing co-ordination structures between international organisations and local authorities in the Northwest, the RegRRTF set out a work plan dividing strategic and operational tasks related to the needs of reconstruction, repatriation, the return of displaced persons – particularly across the IEBL and to minority situations – and the application of conditionality to projects in the region. The RegRRTF Northwest will meet next on 22 July and address reconstruction and return issues in the Una-Sana cluster area, followed by a meeting on the so-called Anvil area.

5.3. RegRRTF Sarajevo/Gorazde

Given the importance of the return of original inhabitants to the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the next RegRRTF will be set up for the Sarajevo/Gorazde area.

5.4. RegRRTF for the Doboј hub

The Doboј hub region remains the most sensitive of all cluster areas identified in the April RRTF report. Statistical data available to the RRTF indicates a potential for so-called majority returns to this area. The willingness of local authorities to accept so-called minority return of original inhabitants presently remains in doubt, however. Recently, the municipalities of Maglaj and Tesanj have been included in a list of potential “Open Cities”, ready to accept the return of Serb and other inhabitants. The sincerity of this proposal is currently being scrutinised by UNHCR. Details of the situation in the various municipalities of the Doboј hub cluster area are described separately ([Annex 8](#)). In Doboј/RS the return of inhabitants already approved by the International Housing Commission established under the Procedure on Return and Reconstruction in the Zone of Separation, is still being blocked. Reconstruction in the Derвента municipality is an essential condition for return. Given the need for a comprehensive approach to the sensitive situation in the Doboј area, the RegRRTF is to be established in the course of a planned high-level meeting (“Doboј Summit”) with a structured follow-up. Thus, steps to create the RegRRTF are currently on hold. The Doboј area can potentially revitalise itself by profiting from its location as an industrialised communication link between the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Drawing up projects and applying conditionality in implementing them will become tools of local intervention in this area, focusing on the return of original inhabitants.

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**Office of the High Representative
Reconstruction and Return Task Force**