The Responsibility Of The Cantonal Auhtorities For The Emergency Accommodation

OHR, OSCE and UNHCR call upon the Cantonal ministries to investigate ways in which they can provide emergency accommodation to the families in need through payment of rentals, or other means and thereby meet the growing demand for emergency accommodation. In accordance with the Law on DPs and Refugees, each Canton is responsible for providing emergency accommodation to displaced persons who are evicted from premises they are found to be illegally occupying. Under the law, these provisions relate to a person who is a displaced person, who has been illegally occupying property, is now being evicted and where he cannot provide for himself.

In Canton 7 despite repeated requests from the international community, little action has been taken so far by either the Cantonal Ministry of Construction, Urban Planning and Environment or the Cantonal Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs. After a year of negotiations, the Cantonal budget for 2001 that was accepted last month, finally included 200,000 KM listed for 'alternative accommodation/reconstruction' under the Ministry of Construction, Urban Planning and Environment, and 732,000 KM allocated to the 'care of refugees and displaced persons' under the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs.

However, neither Ministry is able to provide plans describing how this money will be used before the end of the year to meet emergency housing needs.

The international community has called upon Cantonal authorities numerous times to get them to meet their obligations to provide emergency accommodation. However, no

activities were shown. The law must be respected; evictions must take place; so the question is what is the Canton 7 government going to do to provide a place to live for people who have a right to emergency accommodation.

OHR, OSCE and UNHCR suggest that those displaced, illegal occupants who are facing eviction, should now be asking the Cantonal Government how it intends to spend the money that is in the budget in order to meet their housing needs. These international organizations expect the Cantonal authorities to fulfill their obligations under the law.