

OHR comments on resignation of Doboј mayor

The Office of the High Representative has taken note of the announcement by Dr. Nikola Gavric that he has resigned, irrevocably, from the office of Mayor of Doboј. Dr. Gavric acknowledged political responsibility for the Doboј municipality's failure to respect the 27 April 2000 Decision of the High Representative banning the reallocation of State-owned property – including formerly socially-owned land – except where approved by the OHR upon being shown that a proposed allocation is non-discriminatory and in the best public interest. In his letter of resignation, Dr. Gavric acknowledged the municipality's failure to halt construction in Trnovo I and Trnovo II near Kotorsko. This construction violated both the High Representative's Land Decision and a provisional order of the Human Rights Chamber.

The current ownership and status of the land, the conditions under which the allocations were made to individual beneficiaries, the legality of the allocations, and the pre-war ownership and status of the land were all misrepresented in the municipality's application to OHR for a waiver of the ban on construction. These matters are now the subject of proceedings before the Doboј courts. The suspension of construction imposed by the OHR remains in place, pending the outcome of proceedings on this issue in the courts, and pending full resolution of all discrepancies in the original waiver request.

The OHR believes that Dr. Gavric's decision to resign reflects, albeit after a considerable delay, an awareness of the primacy of the Rule of Law and a broadening respect in BiH for property rights. It also reflects a new awareness of the ultimate responsibility of BiH officials at all levels, including the municipal level.

As the responsibilities of the mayor's office have now been transferred to Deputy Mayor Stojcinovic, the OHR expects the latter strictly and unconditionally to comply with the 27 April 2000 Decision on Land Allocation across the Doboj municipality, including the OHR construction ban affecting the Kotorsko area, and the provisional measure issued by the Doboj Court.