



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

www.state.gov

November 6, 2009

Dear Ms. Samardzija,

Thank you for your October 29, 2009 letter to the Department of State's Office of South Central European Affairs concerning minority returns to Kosovo. I am writing in response to the questions you raised concerning U.S. assistance.

The United States has consistently worked to achieve the right to voluntary, safe, and dignified return of all those displaced by conflict in the Balkans. To that end, through funds provided to international and non-governmental organizations, we have supported projects that facilitate the return and reintegration of displaced persons to Kosovo, without regard to ethnicity.

While the U.S. Government has not historically tracked funding separately for each community receiving assistance, overall support for regional refugee and humanitarian programs has been robust. Over the past five years, the U.S. has contributed \$48.1 million to UNHCR's regional budget for the Balkans, \$65.3 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross's European Operations, and another \$10.3 million for various NGO-implemented humanitarian projects in the region. These funds support programs to protect refugees, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable individuals through activities such as integration assistance, livelihood support, the facilitation of returns, legal assistance and legislative support, status determination, and the development of asylum centers.

Regrettably, returns from Serbia to Kosovo have slowed and the majority of those displaced from Kosovo into Serbia could elect to stay there. We support the reopening of Kosovo Property Agency offices in Serbia to facilitate the processing of property claims in Kosovo and encourage further returns.

During the last ten years, the United States has helped Kosovo Serbs with a variety of development programs targeting media, religious and cultural heritage sites, infrastructure (such as schools, roads, and hospitals), and education. For example,

the United States contributed \$1 million to UNESCO for the restoration and preservation of four Serbian Orthodox Church sites in Kosovo: the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin in Lipljan, the St. Sava Church in Mitrovica, the Church of the Archangel Michael in Stimlje, and the Budisavci Monastery in Klina. We have supported Kosovo Serb media, through training for journalists and grants to Radio KIM, Radio Gracanica, and the Caglavica Media Center. In addition, the United States helped ensure the status of Serbian as an official language in Kosovo and has worked directly with Kosovo authorities at the central and local levels to protect the property rights of members of the Kosovo Serb community.

In response to your question on tracking, monitoring and reporting on funds, an annual implementation report is prepared by the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia (EUR/ACE), pursuant to Section 704(c) of the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 (Public Law 101-179), as amended. These reports can be found on the State Department internet website (<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rpt/c10247.htm>). Since assistance funds are not granted directly to the Government of Kosovo but rather are implemented through a variety of mechanisms, it is not subject to a formal reporting requirement.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,



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Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia

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