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# Press Release

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# UNMIK



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## Comprehensive Framework to Manage Forced Returns in Kosovo

PRISTINA – In a major step to create a comprehensive repatriation related policy and operational framework, UNMIK's Office of Communities, Returns and Minority Affairs (OCRM) together with PISG formulated draft readmission policy, including the operational procedures, and the reintegration strategy to manage and support forced returnees or persons repatriated to Kosovo from the host countries.

The draft Readmission Policy promotes a sound and operational framework for the future readmission management in Kosovo and bilateral agreements with host countries. The Policy, developed by the Repatriation Working Group led by Deputy Minister of Local Government Administration (MLGA) and UNMIK/OCRM, was endorsed by the Kosovo Government on 31 October 2007 and will become effective after SRSG's approval.

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for readmission of persons proposed for repatriation were also finalized, providing a detailed working framework for the Readmission Policy. This Policy and Procedures will facilitate smooth handover of readmission functions from UNMIK to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA).

In another significant initiative to facilitate reintegration of the repatriated individuals into Kosovo society, the Kosovo Government had earlier approved, on 10 October, the Reintegration Strategy for Persons repatriated to Kosovo from the host countries, providing immediate assistance upon arrival of repatriated persons.

The Strategy was developed in light of numerous problems faced by repatriated Kosovars, especially minority communities, upon readmission, particularly in accessing social assistance and civil registration. Few, if any municipalities include costs associated with reintegration of the repatriated and voluntary returns in their budgets, preferring instead to seek separate funding for such activities.

The Strategy was drafted by the inter-ministerial Steering Board that was co-chaired by PISG/MIA and UNMIK/OCRM and comprised of the representatives of Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, MLGA, MIA, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and of the international organizations (UNMIK, UNHCR, IOM, OSCE, and EUPT), and other experts.

To test the newly proposed readmission procedures, UNMIK/OCRM has been forwarding to Department of Border and Boundary Management, Asylum and Migration (DBAM), MIA, a sample of cases of persons belonging to different ethnicities from different regions involving at least 7-10 municipalities, and will continue to forward more test cases to DBAM in the coming weeks.

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