

NATIONS UNIES
HAUT COMMISSARIAT
POUR LES REFUGIES

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UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES

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24 June 1998

Re: [REDACTED]

Ms Mette S.Lassen:

Reference is made to the case of Mr [REDACTED] who previously was granted temporary protection in Denmark.

According to its decision dated 18 May 1998, the Danish Immigration Service considers that [REDACTED] is no longer in need of protection, as he is an ethnic Serb and can return to his home town Novo Sarajevo, which is Serbian dominated (...afslag på forlængelse af opholdstilladelseunder henvisning til, at De som etnisk serber kunne vende tilbage til Deres hjemby Novo Sarajevo, der er serbisk domineret.)

According to the information given to UNHCR, [REDACTED] is of Serb ethnic origin and originates from the municipality of Novo Sarajevo. The municipality is now divided by the Inter Entity Boundary Line, one part is located in RS and the other in the Federation. [REDACTED] home was in Dzemala Bijedica. UNHCR can confirm that the street is located in the part of Novo Sarajevo that is now controlled by the Federation. If returned to his home, [REDACTED] will accordingly fall within the current minority population in the area of his pre-conflict residence.

UNHCR's position is that [REDACTED] being of Serb origin and originating from the part of Novo Sarajevo that is controlled by the Federation, belongs to one of the categories of persons who are still in need of international protection. He should therefore not be forcibly returned to Bosnia Herzegovina.

The lifting of temporary protection in respect of this category can only be recommended once the changes to the legal, administrative and social framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina are sufficiently substantial to allow for safe, dignified and sustainable return. In the absence of these changes, repatriation to a minority area should only take place if the individual has made a free and informed choice as to her or his return.

Given the various constraints regarding return to minority areas, there may be pressures on

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persons in this category to return, but to a majority area. The result of such return is very often that groups of people are placed into housing belonging to other national groups, which functions to secure ethnically-based control over territory and thus preventing minority return. UNHCR is thus gravely preoccupied that the return and peace-consolidation processes are seriously undermined by induced return to an area which is not the pre-conflict place of residence but where the returnee will be part of the majority.

UNHCR's position on the continued need of international protection of [REDACTED] is based on documents published at meetings of the Humanitarian Issues Working Group (HIWG), the latest document prepared for the HIWG meeting on 26 June 1998. A summary of the last document is attached.

Yours sincerely



Brita Helleland

Liaison Officer for former Yugoslavia