



26 June 2006

Dear Ms. Budde,

As you may know, UNHCR recently updated its Position Paper on the Continued International Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo. While noting that the security situation in Kosovo is progressively improving for minorities, UNHCR continues to conclude that the return of Kosovo Serbs, Roma and Albanians in a minority situation, should only take place on a strictly voluntary basis. UNHCR also recommends that the repatriation of Ashkali and Egyptians be considered in a phased manner.

After carefully studying the UNHCR Position Paper, UNMIK will continue its past practice of following UNHCR recommendations on the repatriation of persons originating from Kosovo. Accordingly, UNMIK will not accept the repatriation of Kosovo Serbs, Roma and Albanians in a minority situation, and UNMIK will continue to conduct individual screenings of members of the Ashkali and Egyptian communities pursuant to agreements reached with host countries.

In keeping with its 1951 Refugee Convention mandate, UNHCR has refrained from addressing humanitarian categories at length and removed previous medical-based restrictions for those being deported. UNMIK is prepared to accept UNHCR's position on this change too. This should not, however, be understood to mean that limitations in the treatment of serious illnesses have been overcome in Kosovo. UNMIK still requests to be informed of persons proposed for deportation that are suffering from serious medical conditions and we urge the authorities of host countries to ensure that their return to Kosovo does not undermine their health situation. In this regard, it would be helpful, if the host government could agree to provide the person in question with a sufficient supply of medication and make individual arrangements for the person to actually continue treatment in Kosovo.

I look forward to further discuss this with you and – most importantly – to discuss plans to transfer this competency to the Kosovo institutions. In the meantime, please advise the relevant authorities your countries of these updates in UNMIK policies. For easy reference, I have included an updated note outlining our current policy on repatriation.

I look forward to our continued cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Mitchell, Director
Office of Communities, Returns and Minority Affairs
Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Ms. Birgit Budde
Migration Liaison Officer
German Liaison Office