



Kosovo Property Claims Commission
Komisioni i Kërkesave Pronësore të Kosovës
Komisija Kosovske Agencije za Imovinu

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DECISION

PANEL NO: 1

DECISION NO.: KPCC/D/R/12/2008
DECISION DATE: 22/02/2008

ORDER

(1) In each of the 23 (twenty three) claims identified in parts A and B of the attached Schedule, the Commission

decides that

As at the date of the destruction of the residential property, the claimant or the property right holder, as the case may be, satisfied the requirements for establishing ownership over the claimed property and the underlying land parcel, or such part thereof as specified in the respective individual decision;

(2) In each of the 5 (five) claims identified in part C of the attached Schedule, the Commission

decides that

As at the date of the destruction of the residential property, the claimant satisfied the requirements for establishing ownership of the deceased property right holder over the claimed property and the underlying land parcel, or such part thereof as specified in the respective individual decision;

(3) In each of the 28 (twenty eight) claims referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2) above, the Commission

orders that

(a) The claimant or the property right holder, as the case may be, be given possession of the underlying land parcel on which the residential property stood;

(b) The respondent and any other person occupying the underlying land parcel vacate the same within 30 (thirty) days of the delivery of this order; and

- (c) Should the respondent or any other person occupying the property fail to comply with the order to vacate within the time stated, they be evicted from the property;*
- (4) In Claim Nos. 10111, 15496, 24140, 24516, 47584, 47585 and 40599 the Commission additionally decides that the claims be dismissed insofar as the Claimants seek compensation for destruction of the claimed property; and*
- (5) In cases in which there is more than one owner, the above decisions and order do not affect the rights of any respective co-owners.*

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. A claimant is entitled to an order from the Commission for repossession of the property, if the claimant proves:

- (a) ownership of private immovable property, including agricultural and commercial property; or
- (b) a use right in respect of private immovable property, including agricultural and commercial property,

where the claimant is not now able to exercise such property rights, and where the claim involves circumstances directly related to or resulting from the armed conflict that occurred in Kosovo between 27 February 1998 and 20 June 1999. (See section 3.1 of UNMIK/REG/2006/50.)

2. Where the claimant makes an ownership claim pursuant to section 3.1(a) of UNMIK/REG/2006/50, the Commission must resolve the issue of ownership and, if ownership is proven to the satisfaction of the Commission, make an order for repossession in favour of the claimant. Where the claimant makes a claim for a property use right pursuant to section 3.1(b) of UNMIK/REG/2006/50, the Commission may consider the claim in a summary procedure and make an order for recovery of possession. (See section 3.1 of UNMIK/REG/2006/50, read together with section 9 of Annex III of UNMIK/DIR/2007/5.)

3. The Commission held its fifth session on 19-22 February 2008 in Prishtinë/Pristina. A total of 50 residential property claims were submitted by the Executive Secretariat of the Kosovo Property Agency (the “Executive Secretariat” and “KPA,” respectively) to the Commission at its fifth session, together with supporting documentation, claims processing reports, verification reports, legal memoranda and other relevant information.

4. At the Commission’s session, the Executive Secretariat presented the claims to the Commission and reported on the processing of and the legal and evidentiary issues raised by the claims. At the Commission’s request, the Executive Secretariat provided additional information and explanations, as required.

A. *Ownership claims*

5. Based on its review of the claims and of the supporting documentation, and of the information provided and the verification conducted by the Executive Secretariat, a total of four claims were referred by the Commission back to the Executive Secretariat for additional review and verification, or were withdrawn by the Executive Secretariat. These claims, which are listed in part D of the attached Schedule, will be considered by the Commission in due course. The present decision applies to the 28 claims referred to in the operative part of the decision; the remaining eighteen claims are the subject of another decision (KPCC/D/R/11/2008).

6. In all of the claims covered by this decision the claimants seek the resolution of an ownership claim, and all of them relate to destroyed residential property, namely houses. In each of these claims the residential property in respect of which the claim has been filed was destroyed after the claimant lost possession of the property and the land parcel is now vacant.

7. The Commission notes that all of the claims are uncontested in the sense that at the time the claimed properties were notified there was no evidence of illegal occupation or use of these properties by any person or, even if there was such evidence, no party has contested the validity of the claim within the 30-day period prescribed in section 10.2 of UNMIK/REG/2006/50. Based on the information provided by the Executive Secretariat, the Commission is satisfied that the Executive Secretariat has made reasonable efforts to notify the claimed properties, the persons who may be currently occupying the properties, and any other persons who may have a legal interest in such properties, as required by section 10.1 of UNMIK/REG/2006/50. Accordingly these claims must be considered uncontested.

8. In the claims identified in part A, B and C of the attached Schedule, the Commission notes that the claimants have submitted various types of documents in support of their ownership claims, including possession lists, purchase contracts, contracts on gift and in one case, an inheritance decision. The Commission is satisfied that these documents indeed constitute proof of ownership. All of these documents have been verified as being valid by the Executive Secretariat.

9. In the seventeen claims identified in part A of the attached Scheduled, the claimant has filed the claim in the capacity of a property right holder. In light of the Commission's finding in paragraph 8 above, all of these claims stand to be granted. In Claim No. 13131 the Claimant died after filing the claim. The Commission considers that the Claimant's death during the proceedings cannot affect the validity of the claim. Accordingly a decision confirming the property right in favour of the deceased property right holder therefore stands to be granted, as set out above. This decision is without prejudice to the determination by the competent court as to how the heirs will succeed to the property right of the deceased Claimant.

10. In the six claims identified in part B of the attached Schedule, the claimant has filed the claim in the capacity of a family household member of the property right holder pursuant to section 1.2 of Annex II of UNMIK/DIR/2007/5. Section 1 of the Administrative Direction defines "Member of Family Household" to include "the spouse, children (born in and out of wedlock or adopted) and other persons whom the

property right holder is obliged to support in accordance with the applicable law, or the persons who are obliged to support the property right holder in accordance with the applicable law, regardless of whether or not that person resided in the property together with the property right holder.” The Commission has determined that, under the applicable law, this definition covers, in addition to spouses and children, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents and grandchildren of the property right holder. All the claimants in the claims identified in Part B of the attached Schedule fall within this definition and accordingly in each of these claims a decision confirming the property right in favour of the property right holder stands to be granted, as set out above.

11. In the five claims identified in Part C of the attached Schedule, the claimant was not the property right holder at the date of loss of possession of the claimed property, but asserts to having succeeded to the property. No valid inheritance decision or other documentary evidence has been submitted by the claimant that would establish the claimant as being an heir to the claimed property, nor has the Executive Secretariat been able to locate any such documents. The Commission has no jurisdiction to resolve issues relating to inheritance. A decision confirming the property right in favour of the deceased property right holder therefore stands to be granted, as set out above. This decision is without prejudice to the determination by the competent court as to how the heirs will succeed to the property right of the deceased property right holder.

12. The various types of documents relied upon by the claimants in support of the claims referred to in paragraphs 8, 9, 10 and 11 above are listed in the relevant column of the attached Schedule.

13. In view of the foregoing, the Commission is satisfied, based on the evidence before it, that:

- (a) the claimant or the property right holder, as the case may be, had an ownership right in respect of the claimed property, or such part thereof as specified in the respective individual decision;
- (b) each claim is uncontested in that no person has contested the validity of the claim;
- (c) the claimant in each case is not now able to exercise his or her ownership right; and
- (d) the claim in each case involves circumstances directly related to or resulting from the armed conflict that occurred in Kosovo between 27 February 1998 and 20 June 1999.

14. Accordingly, the claimants or the property right holders, as the case may be, have shown that they satisfied the requirements for an order establishing ownership over the claimed property and the underlying land parcel as at the date of the destruction of the commercial property. The fact that the property has been destroyed does not affect the claimants’ right to obtain a declaratory decision from the Commission, confirming, as at the date of the destruction of the property, ownership over the land parcel on which the property stood.

B. Claims for compensation

15. In Claim Nos. 10111, 15496, 24140, 24516, 47585, 47584 and 40599, the Claimants also seek, in addition to ownership, compensation for physical damage to, or for loss of use of, the claimed property. Under UNMIK/REG/2006/50 the Commission has no jurisdiction over such claims. Accordingly these claims must be dismissed.

C. Concluding remarks

16. In view of the foregoing, the Commission finds that the claims listed in parts A, B and C of the attached Schedule succeed and an order be made in respect of each claim as set out above.

17. In cases where more than one claim relates to the same property, but where nonetheless each of such competing claims stands to be granted, the Commission has directed the Executive Secretariat to consolidate these claims and issue one individual decision for each such consolidated claim.

18. Section 8.8 of Annex III of UNMIK/ADM/DIR/2007/5 allows the Chairperson of the Commission to sign a cover decision approving all individual claims identified in the cover decision, if the number of claims decided in a session is high. The Commission considers that this is appropriate in the present case.



Chairperson

APPEALS

UNMIK/REG/2006/50 provides that:

12.1 Within thirty (30) days of the notification to the parties by the Kosovo Property Agency of a decision of the Commission on a claim, a party may submit through the Executive Secretariat of the Kosovo Property Agency to the Supreme Court of Kosovo an appeal against such decision.

12.3 The appeal may be filed on the grounds that:

- (a) The decision involves a fundamental error or serious misapplication of the applicable material or procedural law; or
- (b) The decision rests upon an erroneous or incomplete determination of the facts.

*** The English version is the official of all Property Claims Commission decisions. In case of conflict between the English language version and the Albanian or Serbian language version, then the meaning in the English language shall prevail.**