

- Above all, what is lacking is the will to carry out the procedures regarding the recovery of property by Serb returnees, and the eviction of Croats currently occupying it. If the will among the local authorities is not present, as appears the case in most instances, the clear message must be coming from the government that the programme really must be implemented. Such will on the part of most members of the government is only grudging, and international pressure should be maintained to ensure that it remains firm.
- Positive action to encourage returns should include the organisation, as provided for in the programme, of visits by refugees to their former home towns and villages. In addition, contact between refugees and Serbs who have either remained in their homes in Croatia, or who have already returned, should be facilitated, as a means of encouraging potential returnees to see return as a possibility. Joint visits by delegations of representatives of local authorities and Serbs from towns to which returns are envisaged, as have taken place in some parts of Bosnia, would be useful, and could be carried out with the assistance of the international agencies.
- As an alternative to obtaining necessary documents to enable return, returnees are registering and presenting applications to return through the UNHCR. This procedure appears to be working relatively effectively, and has resulted in an increase in the numbers being cleared for return and actually returning. The pace needs to be maintained, and the ODPR's aim of processing 500 applications per week needs to be kept up if a more significant organised return is to be possible. There needs to be greater progress in getting more difficult cases of returnees (those whose property is either damaged or occupied) processed. Until now relatively few of the cases approved by the ODPR fall into these categories. The international community should ensure that the more difficult cases too are being dealt with in an effective and timely manner.
- The progress of return applications should be followed through the system to the final return and repossession of property. In general terms, international representatives (i.e. mainly the OSCE) on the ground should monitor closely how things are proceeding in their locality, whether the local housing commission is working in such a way as to facilitate the process rather than to hinder it, and whether the process is leading to final returns. It may also be helpful to select samples of return applicants at the beginning of the process, and to follow their progress through the system closely. It should thus be possible to follow the progress of applicants in differing circumstances: those whose property is vacant; those whose property is occupied; those whose property is damaged; those who do not own property. It should be possible very quickly, even if large numbers are not yet actually returning, to evaluate how the procedures are working, to identify problems and to take measures to correct them -- including where necessary the application of pressure on the appropriate Croatian authority.
- The international community should continue to insist that consideration be given to returnees without their own property, that this category of returnee should not be discouraged from returning. Such returnees need to be offered adequate accommodation, in accordance with the stipulations of the Banja Luka conference and the assurances of Croatian officials to international representatives while the programme was being negotiated. The programme is too weak on this point, and the provision for it to be amended where necessary so as to ensure that all categories of refugees have equal opportunity to return should be used to