

PROPERTY RIGHTS MONITOR

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OSCE) works with Kosovo institutions to support the implementation of the policy and legal framework for the protection of property and housing rights of members of vulnerable communities. To assist these efforts, the OSCE regularly monitors and reports on developments, and advises institutions on adherence to relevant legislation, international standards, and best practices. The Property Rights Monitor is a bi-annual publication that contains observations of OSCE field monitors in the following five regions: Gjilan/Gnjilane (GN); Mitrovicë/Mitrovica (MI); Pejë/Peć (PE); Prishtinë/Priština (PR) and Prizren (PZ). This publication aims to provide an overview of the situation in the field of property and housing rights for non-majority communities' members, displaced persons (DPs), and majority community members living in areas where they are in a numerical minority. It aims to assist responsible institutions in addressing issues of concern in terms of implementation of legislation and enforcement of decisions and acts as a mechanism to track progress achieved and to close any identified gaps. The information presented below was collected by the OSCE's field teams and covers only cases where the field teams had access to information in the period from January to June 2023.

EDITION 8: JANUARY 2023 - JUNE 2023

THEMES

Expropriation represents a legally authorized act of authorities in removing the ownership rights from an owner of a public or private property for achieving certain public interest. It is subject to conditions provided by law, envisaging compensation for the affected owners. This edition of the Monitor presents the number of expropriations affecting properties of vulnerable groups, with a focus on non-majority communities and DPs.

Illegal occupation of immovable property is a criminal offence according to Article 320 of the Criminal Code. Properties of vulnerable groups, especially non-majority communities and DPs have frequently been subject to illegal occupation. This edition of the Monitor reflects the number of illegal property occupations that occurred within the reporting period.

Social housing is an obligation of the authorities to address the housing needs of individuals and families that cannot afford an appropriate standard of living. This edition of the Monitor presents the number of cases of vulnerable groups, such as women, youth and non-majority communities that have benefited from social housing.

Legalization is a process led by authorities to legalize unpermitted constructions. This edition includes the number of applications and certificates of legalization issued for unpermitted constructions.

Spatial planning is the policy of authorities to regulate public space at all levels. Participation in the process of drafting spatial planning documents is crucial not only for assessing and voicing the needs of communities, but also to ensure protection of individual property rights. This edition reflects the number of spatial planning processes in which the needs of vulnerable groups, non-majority communities, women and/or youth were noted.

Municipal land allocation for returns-related projects is a procedure/initiative of authorities exercised with the purpose of achieving certain public interest and/or policy. This edition presents the number of cases where municipalities have allocated municipal land for returns-related projects and/or for members of non-majority communities within the reporting period.

Immovable property tax is a compulsory charge envisaged and applied by authorities for the ownership/right to use of residential, agricultural and commercial properties. However, there are cases when properties of non-majority communities' members were/are illegally occupied and the owner continues to carry tax liabilities despite not being physically in possession of such property. This edition shows the number of non-majority communities' members exempted from payment of the immovable property tax due to their properties being illegally occupied.

PROPERTY RIGHTS-RELATED CASES AFFECTING NON-MAJORITY COMMUNITIES KOSOVO-WIDE

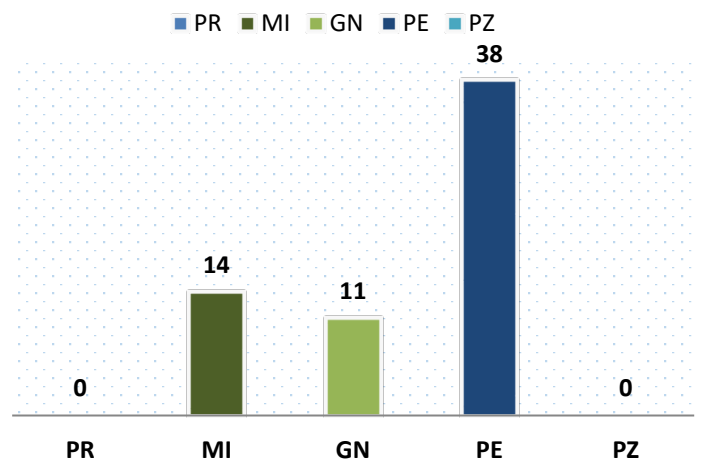
EXPROPRIATION	63
ILLEGAL OCCUPATION	2
SOCIAL HOUSING	10
LEGALIZATION OF UNPERMITTED CONSTRUCTIONS	4497
SPATIAL PLANNING	10
LAND ALLOCATION FOR DPs RELATED PROJECTS	0
IMMOVABLE PROPERTY TAX	0

DEVELOPMENTS

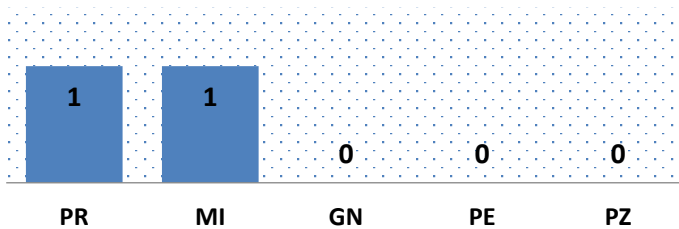
Expropriation

During the reporting period, **63** private properties (parcels) belonging to members of the Kosovo Serb community were affected by planned expropriations initiated in Prishtinë/Priština, Pejë/Peć and Gjilan/Gnjilane regions.

EXPROPRIATION CASES PER REGION



ILLEGAL OCCUPATION CASES PER REGION



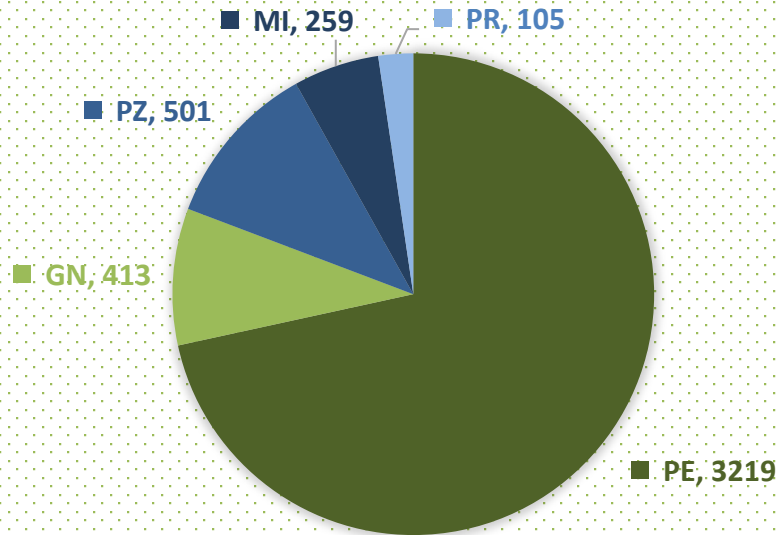
Illegal occupation

Illegal occupation of properties of non-majority communities' members and DPs continues to affect the property rights of these vulnerable groups. In the reporting period, **two** illegal occupations of property, belonging to Kosovo Serbs were reported in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Prishtinë/Priština regions. In the meantime, the property illegally occupied in Prishtinë/Priština was returned to its owner.

Social housing

During the reporting period, 10 social housing apartments were allocated in Prishtinë/Priština region to socially vulnerable families, including three women.

LEGALIZATION CASES PER REGION



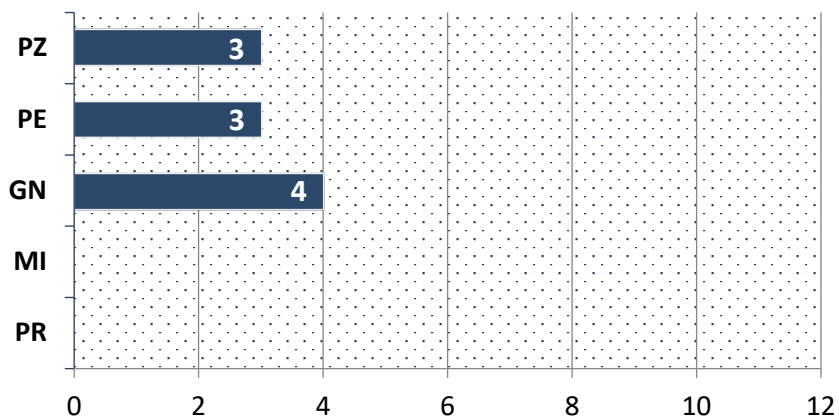
Legalization

According to current legislation, an object constructed on another party's land parcel cannot be legalized until the ownership or the right to use the land parcel has been ascertained. The legislation aims to protect vulnerable groups such as non-majority communities and/or DPs from cases of illegal occupation of their land parcel.

During the reporting period, 1,765 applications for the legalization of constructions without permits were filed Kosovo-wide. The municipal authorities have issued 2,732 legalization certificates, 26 of which were for properties belonging to non-majority communities (22 Kosovo Ashkali, 4 Kosovo Serb). However, no case of unlawful construction over illegally occupied land parcels of non-majority communities and/or DPs was recorded. While this fact is important to be noted, regular monitoring is still needed to ensure that no such construction is legalized, particularly considering the fact that the illegal construction continues.

Of note: The majority of municipalities in Kosovo do not keep community disaggregated data for the applicants in the legalization process.

PARTICIPATION OF NON-MAJORITY COMMUNITIES IN SPATIAL PLANNING PROCESSES PER REGION



Spatial Planning

During the reporting period, members of non-majority communities, women and/or youth participated in 10 **spatial planning processes** – in Prizren, Pejë/Peć and Gjilan/Gnjilane regions.

Land allocation

No cases of municipal land allocation for DPs' return-related projects or non-majority communities' members took place during the reporting period.

Immovable Property Tax

On 1 October 2018, the Law No. 06/L-005 on Immovable Property Tax (Law) entered into force. According to Article 39 of this Law, persons whose property has been or is illegally occupied are released from tax liabilities based on the final decision issued by a competent public authority in reviewing illegal occupation cases in Kosovo.

During the reporting period, no member of non-majority communities and/or DPs was exempted from payment of the immovable property tax.