



Reconstruction Implementation Commission
for Serbian Orthodox Religious Sites in Kosovo

PRESS STATEMENT – 2 October 2007

The RIC expresses its concerns about the way in which the activities on the site of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Gjakove/Djakovica have begun without any prior official consultation involving the RIC. The site of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity is on the list of monuments and sites damaged in 2004 for which the RIC is responsible for overseeing the reconstruction process.

The RIC acknowledges the positive initiative taken by the Municipality of Gjakove/Djakovica to remove rubbish from the site which in itself creates a major health hazard to the local population. However, since this initiative did not take into consideration the possible implications for this site - and at the request of UNMIK - the local municipal authorities have stopped all cleaning works until further notice.

The RIC being a management body representing five Institutions, relies upon political decisions for implementing its activities. It is on the fundamental basis of full agreement by all direct stakeholders that the RIC could ensure continued support and success in its reconstruction projects to date. Particularly in relation to sensitive sites such as the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, the RIC encourages the decision makers to find a compromise to allow it to proceed with its responsibilities as swiftly as the RIC mechanism permits.

At its plenary meeting in September 2007, the RIC decided to request UNMIK to organize a meeting to agree a strategy at the political level for the cleaning and securing of this sensitive site. The RIC understands that such a meeting of all stakeholders is being planned on the next steps necessary to move the process forward. In the meantime, the RIC continues its reconstruction activities in several areas of Kosovo and aims to complete works to twelve Serbian Orthodox religious sites by Spring 2008.

