



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

Nazim Gafurri 1 (Miladin Popovic)
Pristina
Tel: +381 (0) 38 249-918
Fax: +381 (0) 38 249-919
E-mail: mailbox@kpaonline.org

DECISION

PANEL NO: 1

DECISION NO.: KPCC/D/R/6/2007
DECISION DATE: 19/12/2007

ORDER

(1) *In Claim Nos. 08763, 13114, 27203, 33034 and 38697, the Commission*

decides that

The claimant or the property right holder, as the case may be, has established ownership over the claimed property, or such part thereof as specified in the respective individual decision;

(2) *In Claim No. 25600, the Commission*

decides that

The claimant has established ownership of the deceased property right holder over the claimed property, or such part thereof as specified in the respective individual decision;

(3) *In each of the 6 (six) 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 claimed property;

(b) The respondent and any other person occupying the property 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; and

(4) *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. (See section 3.1 of UNMIK/REG/2006/50, read together with section 9 of Annex III of Administrative Direction No. 2007/5.)

3. The Commission held its fourth session on 10-12 December 2007 in Prishtinë/Pristina. A total of seventeen 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 fourth session, together with supporting documentation, claims processing reports, verification reports, legal memoranda and other relevant information. This decision covers the six claims referred to above in the operative part of the decision; the remaining eleven claims are the subject of another decision (KPCC/D/R/7/2007).

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. In all of these claims the claimants seek the resolution of an ownership claim relating to residential property, namely houses and in one case, an apartment.

6. 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.

7. In Claim Nos. 08763, 13114, 33034 and 38697, the Commission notes that the Claimants have submitted various types of documents in support of their ownership claims, including possession lists, inheritance decisions and in one case, a purchase contract. 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.

8. In Claim No. 08763, 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. The Claimant in Claim No. 08763 is a brother of the property right holder and thus falls within this definition. Accordingly, a decision confirming the property right in favour of the property right holder stands to be granted.

9. In Claim No. 27203, the Claimant was not the property right holder at the date of loss of possession of the claimed property, but has adduced evidence of having subsequently succeeded to the respective ownership right by virtue of inheritance. The Claimant must be considered as having succeeded to all the rights belonging to an owner, including the right to claim for confirmation of ownership and for repossession in the present proceedings. The claim therefore stands to be granted, as set out above.

10. In Claim No. 25600, 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.

11. The various types of documents relied upon by the Claimants in support of the claims referred to in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 above are listed in the relevant column of the attached Schedule.

12. 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.

13. The Commission notes that in some claims the claimed properties have been damaged. While no claims for compensation for damage have been made in the claims covered by the present decision, the Commission notes, for the avoidance of doubt, that under UNMIK/REG/2006/50 it has no jurisdiction to grant compensation for damage occasioned to the properties.

C. Concluding remarks

14. In view of the foregoing, the Commission finds that these claims succeed and an order be made in respect of each claim as set out above.

15. Section 8.8 of Annex III of Administrative Direction No. 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.**

