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PRESS RELEASE

Municipality of Prizren Should Prove its (In)ability to Implement the Law

Forumi Transparenca in Prizren held the debate within the series called “Ballafaqim” (on the topic of “Demolitions – a proof of power (lessness)”). This debate was focused on the most recent demolitions in the city of Prizren that raised a number of dilemmas amongst the citizens.

One of the biggest concerns raised by the community, which was also supported by the representatives of opposition parties during the debate of civil and media activists, was the selective approach by the municipal authorities on the urban planning irregularities in the city, showing decisiveness to implement the law only in cases considered to be “easy ones”.

The Panel members for this debate, municipal Director of Urban Planning, Nijazi Kryeziu, and Director of Inspectorates, Bedri Bytyqi, pointed out that municipal authorities do not employ selective approach and that they will be committed to implement the law and restore the urban planning order. Concerning the developments at the Historical Centre of Prizren, they indicated that MESP Task Force is responsible, and that this Task Force did not work due to the six-month blockade at the central level. Municipal authorities confirmed that they will be merciless for illegal occupiers of the public property and those who misused the construction permits.

On the other hand, the representatives of the community from the “Wesley Clark” street, initially complained for the use of force by the state authorities during the demolition action of the facilities with no construction permit, and they expressed their concern for arbitrary approach of the Municipality towards the residents of this street. According to them, the same approach is not applied for business groups, especially to those from construction sector.

On this note, the representatives of opposition parties LDK, VV and BD also raised accusations against municipal authorities about the selective approach on demolitions, since, according to them, the municipal authorities do not engage the “construction mafia”, or the Historical Centre, but only the households, thus jeopardizing their existence, while “no one can touch the millionaires”.

Civil society and the media in Prizren have reminded for years now about the concerns related to urban planning degradation of the city, especially those related to Historical Centre of Prizren, and about the local government not showing same commitment in law implementation when dealing with business groups by forgiving them for exceeding the planned external dimensions or flooring.

It was even reminded that the Municipality of Prizren itself began a construction in “Dardania” neighborhood in contradiction to legal provisions, and that if it wants to convey the message of rule of law, it should be the first one to start with the implementation of the Constitutional Court decision on this case.

The members of the Forumi Transparenca also called the municipal government to be more transparent and to timely distribute the relevant information to the public on the general plan for setting the urban planning order on a right track.

Forumi Transparenca is an informal body composed of civil society activists and journalists from Prizren, who are active in the field of democratic governance, and its mission it to coordinate the efforts of these actors with the aim of increasing the level of transparenca and accountability of the local authorities in Prizren.

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