



**Non-governmental Organization Emancipimi Civil Ma Ndryshe
EC MA NDRYSHE**

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PRESS RELEASE

Finally – Investigations on urban crime in Prizren

EC Ma Ndryshe, during July and the first half of August, has continued to oversee the work of Prizren Municipality's executive. During this period, the monitoring spotlight has been set again on the sector of urban planning and on the construction of residential tower blocks in the city of Prizren.

In one of the requests submitted for access to public documents, EC Ma Ndryshe has requested from the municipal executive the construction permits for residential tower blocks dating since 2007, together with the evidences and documentations of these projects to establish whether these works were carried out in accordance with construction permits. As a response to this request, the Directorate of Urban and Spatial Planning produced a notice saying, "[...all the dossiers on the residential tower blocks are found in the Police Institution!]" (The letter of this Directorate attached). Meantime, yesterday, such information was confirmed same by the District Prosecutor's Office in Prizren, which has authorized relevant Kosovo Police investigators to initiate investigations concerning suspicions on irregularities in the construction of residential tower blocks and the excesses of urban plan designs in different areas of the city.

EC Ma Ndryshe welcomes this undertaking of the judicial and law enforcement authorities, which is taking place following the regular reporting of our organisation over the last few months regarding urban irregularities in Prizren. Should this not remain just an attempt, EC Ma Ndryshe calls for coordination of operations by the authorities, so the violators of urban regulatory plans and the laws on cultural heritage and spatial planning are brought to justice.

As an added input to the efforts in bringing urban order in Prizren, EC Ma Ndryshe herein provides new evidences on urban irregularities. In July, the monitors and activists of the organization have evidenced recent overbuilding and non-compliance to urban plans by the constructors of residential tower blocks. Apart from the lack of safety during construction works, segment that is left unmonitored by the municipal executive; these investors also violate regulatory plans adopted by the Municipal Assembly of Prizren. Despite the adoption of regulatory plans, investors of residential tower blocks in "Jeni Mahalla" neighbourhood fail in adhering to the construction requirements. In the first picture (attached to



this press release) is evidenced the excess in the storey-height by respective investor, whereas this construction has recorded overbuilding in construction parcel by non-adhering to any applicable legal provision governing the area of residential tower block construction. In another case (second picture), apart from the usurpation of the public property (namely the cadastral parcel 4784-0) by the investor near the city park (William Walker Street), the construction works on this site continue without a permit from the municipal executive. Apart from these two cases, and until the verification of the documentation and the field monitoring are completed, EC Ma Ndryshe, in the days following, will publicize new cases of irregularities in the area of construction of residential tower blocks in Prizren.

EC Ma Ndryshe considers that the Mayor of Prizren Municipality should bear ultimate responsibility for the construction of residential tower blocks beyond city planning requirements. The mayor's lack of readiness to deal with these constructors leaves room for suspicions about the involvement of municipal executive in the "urban crime" that has gripped Prizren for years. Such tolerance from the municipal executive further deepens the suspicions on the abuse of office and personal benefits of municipal executive officials. Therefore, an investigation currently being conducted by District Prosecutor's Office in Prizren, should shed a light to these and many other doubts, which EC Ma Ndryshe is regularly bringing in factual-based manner.

The project of EC Ma Ndryshe for the transparency oversight of the executive branch shall keep on publicizing the monitoring findings through regular press releases and, starting from July, through the project's website, where the findings shall be posted directly by the monitors. To date, all the findings from the monitoring, including regular press releases and other information relative to local government of Prizren, are published on regular basis on the project's website: www.online-transparency.org.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Hajrulla Çeku, Executive director
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