

*Special Representative  
of the Secretary-General*

19 May 2020

Dear Mr. Tuncak,

I refer to your letter, dated 26 March 2020, in which you seek an update concerning the Trust Fund in support of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and UNMIK's engagement with the affected communities.

Together with UNHQ, UNMIK continues to support efforts in raising awareness about the importance of committing sustainable funding to the Trust Fund. In the Secretary-General's recent report on UNMIK, he drew attention to the lack of contributions to the Trust Fund and once again urged Member States, other actors and organizations to contribute to it. The Mission and I continue to raise the same in engagements with Member States.

I would like to inform you that, in the meantime, both UNMIK and the United Nations Kosovo Team (UNKT) have increased their engagement with Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, in cooperation with members of civil society organizations and international partners working with these communities.

UNMIK provides assistance to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities through dedicated confidence-building projects and programmatic activities, as well as through projects and activities supporting non-majority communities at large. This support is focused on social inclusion and economic empowerment, health and education, youth, rule of law, human rights, gender and other areas consistent with UNMIK's mandate and reconfiguration, as well as the role of the Kosovo authorities.

More recently, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNMIK is offering protection and specialized integrated services to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian families with children who have no housing. Through a dedicated project, food, hygiene and didactic packages are delivered to the beneficiaries located in the Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje Municipality. This targeted initiative aims to strengthen the child protection system and further the human rights of a group in one of the most vulnerable situations in Kosovo, whose poor living conditions are exacerbated by the health crisis.

Within the same context, UNMIK has expanded support to all families living in the Roma Mahalla (approximately 275 families) and Du Korriku (approximately 55 families) neighbourhoods in South Mitrovica. The Mission has also reviewed ongoing projects and devised new initiatives to deliver the needed food and personal protective equipment to all

communities across Kosovo as part of its contribution to the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

In a similar vein, the UNKT has also extended its support to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the areas of health, education, civil documentation, social inclusion, livelihoods, return and integration. Moreover, the UNKT has been continuously assessing the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in Kosovo on these communities and has provided targeted support in the form of food and non-food items.

Additionally, in the context of Kosovo's efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the UNKT has prioritized support for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities among the most vulnerable groups in Kosovo. As such, these communities are assisted through integrated efforts to address discrimination and ensure the provision of accessible, affordable and quality public services and employment opportunities.

As for possible support to the reunification of members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities with their families in the European Union, this issue has not been raised directly with UNMIK and we have not been formally requested to facilitate such a process. Such a request would have to be referred to United Nations agencies and organizations whose mandates specifically cover the movement of people as they would be best positioned to advise on this matter.

At the same time, these efforts cannot substitute for the Trust Fund as more dedicated resources are needed to have a greater impact. I would be grateful for your personal support in these efforts.

Yours sincerely,



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Head of UNMIK

Mr. Baskut Tuncak  
Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights  
of the environmentally sound management and  
disposal of hazardous substances and waste  
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