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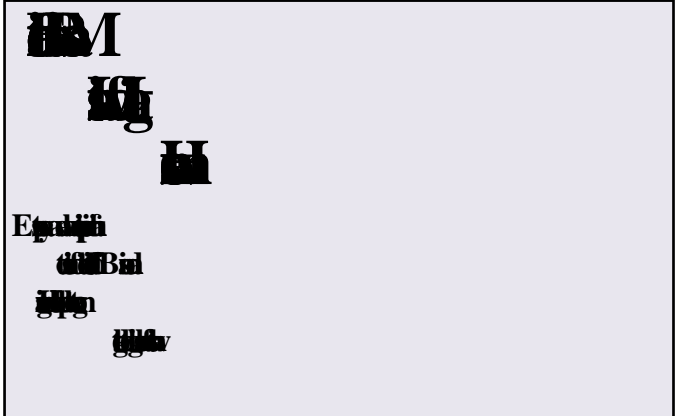


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The episode began with a policy decision by Suljagic to discontinue the counting of children's grades in primary school religion classes as part of their annual average grade, it was intensified by criticism and protest from leaders of the Muslim community, including Grand Mufti Mustafa Cerić's charge that Suljagic's decision would terminate religious education for Muslims, and ended with the minister's resignation. On the face of it, the crux of the dispute seemed simple enough: fairness versus a perceived right by the Muslim community for "their own" religious education. However, there was more to it as there usually is in matters pertaining to religion in Bosnia.



The law which the FBiH Parliament's House of Representatives passed last month allows the owners of illegally built buildings along Corridor 5C and the highways of Tuzla-Brcko-Orasje and Tuzla-Zepce, to seek remuneration if their buildings are knocked down. The remuneration is to be paid respective to the cost of construction. Other citizens of FBiH would not be able to claim that right. The remuneration is to go only for buildings put up illegally prior to Dec. 31, 2010. The owners of business facilities cannot count on it. The law also said that this right will be granted to home owners who have reported the address along one of these routes as their official residence. The FBiH government's rationale is that many refugees and displaced persons have built buildings along this line during and after the war. The government also reiterated how there was no efficient response from the authorities at the time which is why they made an exception and decided to remunerate those persons.

Goran Brkic, the deputy director of the Federal Administration for Geodetic and Real Property Affairs, who took part in developing the technical side of the law told the Center for Investigative Reporting in Sarajevo, that the government tried addressing this problem so that it could proceed with the highway construction. However, he said that the resulting law has been criticized because owners of other illegally built buildings across the FBiH can complain that they have been discriminated against.

Director of the Public Corporation of FBiH Highways Ensad Karic, proposed payment in order to speed up construction. The corporation has taken out loans from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and for the European Investment Bank totaling € 255 million. Karic said that at the time of signing the loan contracts, the government pledged to pay remuneration to home owners whose houses were slated for demolition, even though no law allowed for the remuneration at the time.

"We lost four years because everyone said that it could not be done," said Karic.

He added that he was shocked when he realized that loan proceeds have gone unused since 2008. However, experts do not support this way of solving problems. Adil Lozo, a lawyer specializing in property law and a Member of FBiH Parliament, voted against the ideal. He said every citizen who sued could win and the state budget would suffer if the law gets off the ground. Besim Mehmedic, a member of the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly and the former FBiH Minister of Traffic and Communication, told CNN that the law was counter-productive because it helped one group of citizens, not the whole population.

The current Minister Enver Bijedic was not available for comment. The law awaits signature by the FBiH Parliament speaker Denis Zvizdic and publication in the Official Gazette to be entered into force.