

29 July 2017

Dear United States VP and Second Lady Michael and Karen Pence,

On the occasion of your visit to Montenegro on 2 August, this letter is to inform you that many US citizens are still denied the return of Communist looted property in Montenegro despite the existence of a restitution law.

This fact is confirmed by the US Human Rights report on Montenegro of April 2016
Property restitution *"A large number of restitution claims for private and religious properties confiscated during the communist era remained unresolved."*

Communist property plundering should not be justified by its ideology but should be treated likewise the Nazi pillage, hence property is to be irrevocably restored to its owners. Nazi stolen properties were recovered also thanks to the United States. There were US teams charged with chasing down millions of cultural treasures plundered by the Nazis, the so-called Monument Men and Women, who literally tracked the spoils of war and performed an outstanding rescue. In the Western world respect of property is a moral duty, a fundamental right and it is harshly punished when infringed.

If the Jewish were refunded or returned their properties there is no reason why the Zuber should not be granted the same right. Moreover one of the Zuber claimants is from the US. The properties seized by the Communist consisted mostly of lands, buildings, ships and work of arts.

Montenegro despite becoming a NATO member has not fulfilled its restitution obligations; conversely it has operated hectic privatizations, in recent years, selling the claimed properties to third parties without sharing the relevant incomes with the claimants.

You see, the concept of property right is yet to be firmly established in this country. Restoration is at hand and could be carried out effectively without postponements, but it's neglected. There are hundreds of forgotten restitution claims in Montenegro, many of which could be easily resolved through the physical return of properties.

We believe restitution is not an option but a duty for Montenegro who has committed itself to our standards.

The facts outlined here are closely followed by US Madame Ambassador Margaret Ann Uyehara and her staff in Podgorica, to whom we are extremely grateful for their assistance.

Your support to restitution of stolen property can make the final change.
Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Vice President.

Yours sincerely,
Ambra Declich Grandi

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