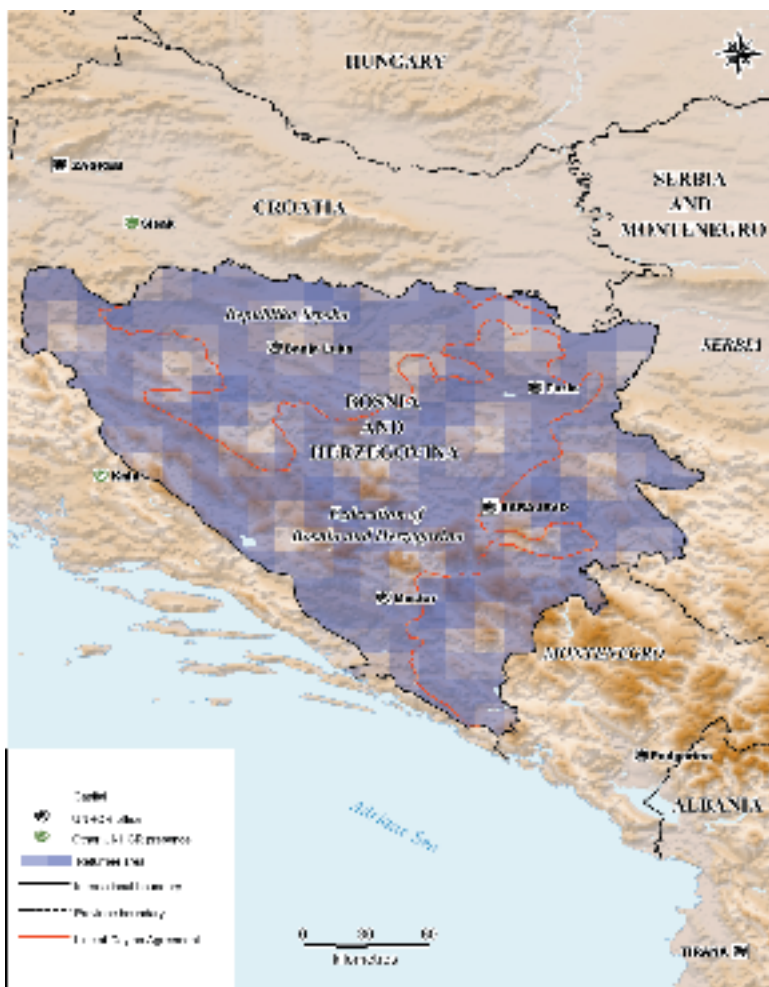


Bosnia and Herzegovina



- Ensure the provision of protection, legal and material assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and facilitate voluntary repatriation whenever appropriate.
- Ensure the further development of a functioning asylum system with national counterparts. This should include guaranteed access to the procedure at borders, legislation compliant with international and European Union standards, and safeguards of the integrity and efficiency of the decision-making process.
- Expand the programme aimed at self-sufficiency for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Main objectives

- Identify durable solutions for the remaining refugees and the most needy internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the end of 2006.
- Through field monitoring, advocacy and support, enhance the capacity of the local authorities to take on their responsibilities for return and reconstruction. Explore all possible means to render returns more sustainable.
- Intensify linkages with other multi- and bilateral bodies in line with UNHCR's "4Rs" strategy for a more seamless transition to development.
- In cooperation with other international agencies, advocate for the establishment of conditions more conducive to the safe and dignified voluntary repatriation of Croatian refugees.

Planning figures		
Population	Jan 2006	Dec 2006
BiH (IDPs)	170,000	150,000
BiH (IDP returnees)	15,000	20,000
Croatia (refugees)	10,000	5,000
BiH (returnees)	2,500	2,500
Serbia and Montenegro (refugees)	1,500	1,300
Various (asylum-seekers)	250	350
Various (refugees)	20	20
Total	199,270	179,170

Total requirements: USD 10,688,257

Working environment

Recent developments

UNHCR continues its efforts to build the capacity of the Government of BiH to manage all aspects of the asylum process in line with national legislation embodying international principles. The handover of responsibility for refugee status determination from UNHCR to local authorities will be complete by the end of 2005. BiH's asylum legislation is continuously being developed through the adoption of complementary legislation on related issues such as a central database for aliens, rights of recognized refugees and reception standards. An in-country consultative process commenced in 2005 to ensure that existing asylum and migration legislation is compatible with the standards on asylum, migration and visa management set by the European Union for potential accession countries.

BiH is struggling to meet its commitments to begin negotiations for its Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union.

In July 2005, BiH commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre. The autumn of 2005 marked a decade of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), the so-called Dayton Peace Agreement, under which UNHCR has been the lead humanitarian agency for the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs.

A re-registration of IDPs and refugees from Croatia was concluded in 2005, with the support of UNHCR. The exercise, which began in 2004, revealed a substantial overall decrease in numbers (many having either returned spontaneously or integrated locally). By mid-2005, approximately 8,000 refugees and 185,000 internally displaced people had applied to be re-registered.

In January 2005, the Sarajevo Declaration of the so-called "3x3" Initiative was signed by the three Ministers for Refugees and Displaced Persons of BiH, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, and three senior representatives of UNHCR, of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union. The

signatories committed themselves to solve the remaining situations of displacement in the region by the end of 2006. The main obstacles to durable solutions for refugees from Croatia continue to be poor economic opportunities, the lack of housing and above all, the cancellation of all tenancy rights of refugees who used to hold long-term leases in socially-owned flats. In August 2005, BiH and Croatia concluded a dual citizenship agreement, which has yet to be ratified.

Constraints

The complex regional political context will continue to affect BiH. Negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union cannot begin until key obstacles are overcome. Slow economic growth is likely to delay coverage of groups with specific needs by the country's social programmes. Furthermore, the sustainability of returns is jeopardised by an uncertain political and economic future.

Strategy

UNHCR will continue to work with national and local authorities alike to complete its activities by the end of 2006 as required by Annex VII of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. The Office is focusing on the need to enhance overall sustainability of return while continuing to cater for protection of and assistance to the most needy individuals.

In 2006, the focus for UNHCR's activities with the Ministry of Security will be quality assurance in the determination of eligibility cases. The Office will also monitor the implementation of rights of recognized refugees from third countries through close cooperation with the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees.

Collaboration with other partners will be of increasing importance as UNHCR further implements its strategy of responsible phase-down in 2006. In its work with local authorities on behalf of returnees, UNHCR will adopt a more prominent advocacy role, particularly on behalf of people most in need.

Protection and solutions

Through its continued presence in national asylum procedures, UNHCR will support the further development of the national asylum system, providing opinions on draft asylum decisions, and general advice on the overall legislative and administrative process. In addition, capacity-building measures are ongoing, including a variety of formal and informal training activities.

Access to rights, whether for asylum-seekers and refugees, or returnees and IDPs, is an important component of the UNHCR mission in BiH. Under the guidance and supervision of UNHCR, the national legal aid network will provide legal assistance and advice to asylum-seekers, returnees and IDPs in their efforts to access rights. The network is already involved in UNHCR's advocacy activities with regard to Annex VII of the GFAP, and over the course of 2006 its members will further increase their functions while broadening their funding base.

UNHCR and the relevant authorities shall jointly endeavour to identify a satisfactory solution for the group of Kosovars whose temporary admission status has been extended to June 2006.

Assistance

UNHCR will continue to strengthen the capacity of the Government institutions directly responsible for asylum and refugee policies in BiH, namely the Ministry of Security and the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees. Advocacy on behalf of asylum-seekers and refugees' access to rights, as well as direct assistance to the neediest persons, will be an important component of the activities throughout 2006. In cooperation with its partners, UNHCR will expand its involvement to include assistance to recognized refugees seeking to integrate into BiH society. UNHCR will also strive to ensure equal access, whenever possible, to basic services and opportunities.

Small-scale community-based interventions, known as Quick Support Funds, will continue to play an important role in assisting the local integration of returnees in the country. Individually

tailored solutions shall be identified for the neediest persons who remain in collective accommodation facilities ten years after the war.

Many of the people still residing in community centres today have specific social or other needs and will require substantial community services support to find sustainable durable solutions. Targeted programmes will strengthen the self-esteem and independence of refugees and asylum-seekers by offering incentives to live in private accommodation and earn a sustainable living. The rudimentary social infrastructure of the country will require UNHCR's continued intervention in health, education and even food provision for particularly needy individuals.

Desired impact

Through field monitoring and intervention activities, UNHCR hopes by the end of 2006 to be in a position to report confidently that its obligations under the Dayton Agreement have for the most part been met. This would mean that most of the people displaced by the war would either have returned or decided to integrate locally in areas of displacement. It would also show that the capacity of specialized institutions of the Government of BiH has been sufficiently strengthened to support this work in the future. It will also require the sustained engagement of larger multi- and bilateral development actors for years to come.

All asylum-related legislation should be in place by the end of 2006. It is hoped that significant achievements will be made in relation to access to rights for recognized refugees in terms of access to documentation, health services and other economic and social rights.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

UNHCR in Bosnia and Herzegovina will function with 85 staff (14 international and 68 national) and three JPOs.



A muslim family which has returned home to a Serb majority area. UNHCR / V. Winter

Coordination

UNHCR is a member of the High Representative's Board of Principals, together with the EU-Police Mission and the EU Military Stabilization Force, the OSCE, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the UN-Resident Coordinator, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

UNHCR participates in the State Commission for Refugees and Displaced Persons, the UN Country Team (UNCT) and its UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as well as the monitoring of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The latter was selected as an example of best practice for the High Commissioner's Convention Plus Forum as it includes IDPs, returnees and refugees into the overall development scheme.

At the same time, UNHCR coordinates closely with the European Commission on asylum and related rights-based matters. The Office cooperates with a number of other UN organizations and other international bodies on matters such as trafficking, HIV/AIDS or, more generally, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Offices

Sarajevo
Banja Luka
Mostar
Tuzla

Partners
Government agencies
Federal Ministry for Displaced Persons and Refugees
Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees
Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons
Ministry of Security
NGOs
Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative
Bosnian Humanitarian Logistics Service
Catholic Relief Services
<i>Hilfswerk</i> (Austria)
<i>Malteser</i> International
Mercy Corps Scotland
<i>Vasa Prava</i> (Your Rights) Legal Aid Network

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	3,382,680
Community services	1,276,162
Domestic needs	524,126
Food	270,168
Health	28,368
Legal assistance	1,195,374
Operational support (to agencies)	458,788
Shelter/other infrastructure	972,794
Transport/logistics	274,221
Total operations	8,382,680
Programme support	2,305,577
Total	10,688,257