

Bosnia and Herzegovina

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Promote the sustainable return of minorities and seek the removal of obstacles to the voluntary return of Bosnian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); identify the local integration needs of refugees and IDPs who return to their former homes or decide to settle elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina; assist Croatian Serb refugees in the Republika Srpska to identify an appropriate lasting solution (most probably voluntary repatriation to Croatia); support the voluntary repatriation of refugees to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but also continue to provide protection and assistance for those who cannot return in the foreseeable future; help to develop and increase the capacity of the authorities and the national legal framework with respect to asylum.

Impact

- In the year 2000, 67,445 minority returnees were registered throughout the country (64 per cent more than in 1999).
- A catalogue of priority bilateral projects for the return of minority refugees was endorsed by the Government and prepared for consideration under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. As the number of returnees continued to outstrip the volume of serviceable housing, UNHCR intervened with an accelerated programme of repair and improvement of houses to withstand severe winter conditions.
- In its fifth year, the Bosnian Women's Initiative continued to help women's groups and associations through several projects with a gender perspective. Over the years, some 60,000 Bosnian women have benefited from activities under this initiative.
- IDPs were as a matter of principle allowed the freedom to choose whether or not to return to their places of origin. Although there was only limited support for local integration, UNHCR maintained that local



Main Refugee Origin/Type of Population	Persons of Concern			
	Total in Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Bosnia and Herzegovina (IDPs)	518,300	-	-	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Returned IDPs)	59,300	-	-	-
Croatia (Refugees)	24,900	-	-	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Returnees)	18,700	1,700	-	-
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Refugees)	13,300	1,700	47	49

Revised Budget	Income and Expenditure (USD)			
	Annual Programme Budget			
	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
34,217,361	15,625,552	16,091,523	31,717,075	31,717,075 ¹

¹Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

²Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

integration should be an option for those extremely vulnerable individuals who do not have a viable prospect of returning to their places of origin.

- UNHCR supported a re-registration exercise in 2000, whereby all IDPs had to reapply for registration of their status. As a result, just over half a million people

were re-registered as IDPs (down from the previous total of about 800,000). The exercise also confirmed the status of nearly 25,000 Croatian Serb refugees.

- UNHCR started the first cross-border bus services between Banja Luka and Daruvar (Croatia) to facilitate go-and-see visits and to make the local population, and the authorities inside Croatia, better aware of the aspirations of the Croatian Serb refugees. By the end of 2000, more than 1,500 of them had returned to Croatia with UNHCR's support.
- As the Law on Immigration and Asylum was not yet implemented, due to gaps in the legal framework and lack of national capacity, UNHCR worked closely with the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) to brief and train members of the International Police Task Force (IPTF) on the basic principles and practices of refugee protection. UNHCR also worked closely with the new Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) to elaborate the legislative framework with respect to immigration and asylum. MHRR staff were also given day-to-day guidance on the handling of asylum-seekers.
- The country-wide network of 55 legal aid centres received regular training to ensure consistency of service delivery. UNHCR also sought to introduce formal standards, including a code of ethics and revised reporting and case management forms.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

The year 2000 marked five years since the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. UNHCR believes that ethnic majority return movements to majority areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina have to a large extent now been completed. By contrast, the return of ethnic minorities to their pre-war homes has taken longer than initially hoped (despite several breakthroughs in problematic locations). There was nevertheless growing interest among IDPs and refugees in returning to their homes, even in cases where that was unthinkable only a year earlier.

These developments posed major challenges for the international humanitarian community, since resources were on the decline and only limited support could be provided when the authorities were unable to meet the needs of returnees. More than ever, the sustainability of return continued to be threatened by the shortage of housing and job opportunities.

As a result of the volatile situation in Serbia and Kosovo, the repatriation of refugees from the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia continued at a very slow pace. Although only a small trickle of asylum-seekers from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia arrived throughout the year, a large number of irregular migrants continued to arrive, increasing the burden on the Government.

Constraints

UNHCR's work was affected by various factors. Internally, there was the continuing uncertainty of adequate funding. Externally, UNHCR's offices were confronted with the difficulties in obtaining the co-operation of some local authorities and the continued presence of landmines. In general, the achievement of durable solutions was limited by the diminishing financial capacity of the relevant organisations and the lack of initiative, experience and resources of many government offices.

Funding

Throughout the year, UNHCR remained focused on the return of minority refugees and IDPs. With reduced funding, priority was accorded to projects in those areas where a series of political breakthroughs were enabling minority returns to go ahead and to projects to assist vulnerable people. Prioritisation exercises resulted in a decrease of approximately 15 per cent of activities in June, with another downward adjustment at the end of the year.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

One of the major legacies of the war remained the unresolved problem of property restitution. During 2000, the Office of the High Representative developed a Property Law Implementation Plan. Its objective was to resolve all outstanding claims registered by refugees and displaced persons. By year's end, out of roughly 249,000 claims, 111,500 had been determined and 51,500 had been implemented (i.e. pre-war occupiers repossessed their dwellings). This amounted to 21 per cent of all claims (29 per cent in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 13 per cent in the Republika Srpska) repossessing their properties.

The year witnessed the highest number of minority returns (67,445) since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In particular, there was a marked increase in spontaneous (and in many cases unregistered) returns to rural areas, especially to the Republika Srpska. The number of minority returns throughout Bosnia and

Herzegovina increased, due in large part to the implementation of the property laws. Refugees in Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia showed an increased interest, and took part in numerous go-and-see visits facilitated by UNHCR. Although the change of Government in Croatia led to a number of legal reforms, the return of Croatian Serb refugees to their homes remained problematic.

As of 31 December 2000, 13,300 refugees from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Temporary Protection Scheme. Except for those with specific protection concerns, most of them should be encouraged to voluntarily repatriate to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In 2000, UNHCR took responsibility for the process of determining refugee status in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNHCR received 262 asylum applications; 36 of them were recognised as refugees (26 Iranians, nine Iraqis and one Azerbaijani). Eight people were resettled during the reporting period.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: In its fifth year, the Bosnian Women's Initiative continued to help women's groups and associations. Over the years, some 60,000 Bosnian women throughout the country have benefited from its activities. To address community service needs, UNHCR introduced Quick Support Grants (QSGs) that provide individual assistance to minority returnees and benefit the receiving community in a more flexible and cost-effective way. The QSGs covered such immediate needs as minor repairs to family homes and communal facilities, as well as the procurement of agricultural tools and seeds. By the end of 2000, 213 micro-projects were undertaken, benefiting 23,169 persons. In the spring, UNHCR participated in an extensive field study on the situation of displaced women. The report, produced in collaboration with other humanitarian organisations, UNHCR legal aid centres and individuals, was entitled *Daunting Prospects: Minority Women: Obstacles to their Return and*



Integration. It showed that many women were reluctant to return to their pre-war homes because of the lack of community support, trauma as war victims, poor educational and employment opportunities, difficulties in repossessing and reconstructing their houses and the poor social welfare structure. By providing an accurate assessment of the specific needs of displaced women, the study will help to improve the implementation of projects that address these needs.

Crop Production: Tractors for site preparation were purchased and maintained and crop production activities for minority returnee communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were carried out.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: Various basic relief items were distributed to returnees, including beds (15,124), blankets (41,724), stoves (6,924), kitchen sets (7,913), mattresses (20,159) and plastic sheeting (51,610 square meters). The following items were stocked for future distribution: 9,817 beds, 31,799 blankets, 2,165 stoves, 5,655 kitchen sets and 25,112 mattresses. The distribution of these items put UNHCR staff in direct contact with the recipients and allowed them to listen to the concerns of returning families, many of whom have been disillusioned by the limited support of the international community. A survey at the end of August showed that only a fifth of the total number of returnee families could be offered adequate shelter. Fearing that the hitherto encouraging momentum of returns might be swiftly undermined, UNHCR embarked upon an accelerated programme of property rehabilitation in advance of the harsh winter conditions, and provided food, winter clothes, shoes and other domestic items.

Education: As a contribution to reconciliation efforts, UNHCR co-funded the Open Fun Football Schools project throughout the country. During the year, 19 Open Fun Football Schools were organised in 55 municipalities, with the participation of 4,078 students and 302 youth leaders. In areas where ethnic tension is still high, pilot projects have been initiated under the Imagine Co-existence project implemented by UNHCR and Harvard University.

Food: UNHCR, in co-operation with WFP and local partners, provided food aid for specifically targeted groups: residents of collective centres in Republika Srpska, persons transiting through transit and reception centres in the Federation, as well as extremely vulnerable minority returnees.

Health/Nutrition: Activities under this sector included outreach health services for some 2,000 beneficiaries in refugee asylum centres. Vulnerable individuals ben-

efited from regular health checks and medical treatment.

Income Generation: UNHCR and its partners approved and monitored 157 income generation, vocational education and training projects which helped close to 12,000 direct beneficiaries throughout the country.

Legal Assistance: UNHCR continued to provide technical and financial assistance to support the development of national asylum capacity. The MHRR, established by law in April, became operative over the summer months, but remained under-resourced. In November 1999 and April 2000, the necessary legislation was adopted in the Republika Srpska and the Federation respectively, to enable a re-registration exercise to be carried out in both entities. The exercise established the total number of IDPs at 518,252 and that of Croatian Serb refugees at 24,878. With intensive co-ordination and regular consultations, the legal aid centres provided a more effective service. The centres provided legal counselling to IDPs, returnees and others of concern to UNHCR, and represented them in courts of law when necessary. The legal aid centres offered assistance to more than 107,000 beneficiaries throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Operational Support (to Agencies): In addition to supporting the activities of its implementing partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNHCR engaged in a number of public awareness and information activities during 2000, including a nation-wide campaign to promote returns. A total of 12 short documentaries was produced and aired on 25 TV stations. To raise children's mineawareness, UNHCR and Stabilisation Force (SFOR) produced a colouring book for preschool children. A country-wide drawing and writing competition promoting co-existence was organised for primary and secondary school children.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: There were 94 collective centres throughout the country, housing a total of 9,032 displaced persons (4,889 people in 51 collective centres in the Republika Srpska and 4,143 in 43 centres in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). Although UNHCR ended its financial support for the maintenance of the collective centres, a co-funded project, Durable Solutions for Collective Centre Residents, implemented by an international NGO, was established to provide property reconstruction services and other durable solutions for collective centre residents on a case by case basis. To date, 27 projects have been completed. UNHCR contributed financially to the running of seven transit centres, managed and maintained by the local authorities, which provided accommodation for returning refugees and IDPs. Some 280 persons received daily meals in each

of the centres. UNHCR also provided humanitarian assistance for some 1,700 refugees (50 per cent of them children and two per cent elderly) from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, accommodated in five reception centres.

Transport/Logistics: Eighteen UNHCR-sponsored inter-entity bus services were operational at the end of 2000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, carrying a total of 83,229 passengers. After intense efforts by UNHCR, the Croatian authorities issued the necessary authorisation for two cross-border services, to facilitate go-and-see visits and the repatriation of Croatian Serb refugees. The first of these went into operation at the beginning of September and the second shortly thereafter. A total of 3,023 passengers were transported.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR managed its programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina from its office in Sarajevo, supported by 22 other offices. A total of 262 staff (44 internationals and 218 nationals) was employed.

Working with Others

UNHCR had a total of 30 implementing partners, consisting of 24 NGOs, two international agencies and four government ministries. The international community remained fully engaged in the fields of security, civil administration and development. SFOR maintained security and co-operated with UNHCR field offices in assisting returnees. UNMIBH/IPTF continued to assist the local police and the State Border Service. The Office of the High Representative and the OSCE supported the work of the Government. In the field of development aid, the World Bank, the IMF and the UN development agencies, as well as bilateral donors, started to shift from post-conflict recovery to longer-term development activities.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

UNHCR's overall strategy focused on the promotion of sustainable return through various activities. The increase in the number of minority returnees has been significant. By December, there were 67,445 minority returnees registered with municipalities throughout the country. Compared with 1999, this was an increase of 64 per cent. The principle of free (and fully informed) choice was upheld for IDPs and refugees considering their return. Although the right of minorities to return can never be called into question, local integration must remain an option for extremely vulnerable individuals

who have no chance of returning home. A major challenge is to engage a broad range of institutions in a more comprehensive regional and national post-war effort to find durable solutions for the region's displaced.

Offices

Sarajevo

Banja Luka
Bihac
Brcko
Bugojno
Doboj
Drvar
Gorazde
Jajce
Konjic
Mostar
Nevesinje
Orasje
Pale-Lukavica
Prijeedor
Stolac
Travnik
Trebinje
Tuzla
Visegrad
Zenica
Zvornik

Partners

Government Agencies

Federal Ministry for Social Affairs
Ministry for Civil Affairs and Communications
Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees
Ministry for Refugees of Republika Srpska

NGOs

Action contre la faim
Adventist Relief Aid
American Refugee Committee
Bosnia Support Programme
Bosnian Humanitarian Logistic Support
Catholic Relief Services
Danish Refugee Council
Humanitarian Civil Action
International Council for Voluntary Agencies
International Management Group
International Rescue Committee
Iustitia
Japanese Emergency NGOs
Malteser Hilfsdienst
Mercy Corps/Scottish European Aid
National Support Unit
New Bosnia Fund
Patria
Project Implementation Unit
Save the Children Fund
Swiss Disaster Relief
Tango
Terra
United Methodist Church Relief
Other
International Organisation for Migration
United Nations Volunteers

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects		Prior Years' Projects	
		notes		notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	6,826,012		7,304	
Community Services	3,473,205		1,385,364	
Crop Production	153,055		0	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	607,842		361,847	
Education	33,857		368,517	
Food	1,026,533		560,413	
Health / Nutrition	12,482		218,049	
Income Generation	1 771,348		1,944,190	
Legal Assistance	1,804,044		1,099,729	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	2,744,359		2,047,185	
Sanitation	0		138,725	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	708,167		6,883,122	
Transport / Logistics	1,367,529		2,826,044	
Water	0		127,676	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	5,112,816		(13,354,964)	
Transit Account	498		0	
Sub-total Operational	25,641,747		4,613,201	
Programme Support	4,770,111		328,868	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	30,411,858	(3)	4,942,069	(6)
Unliquidated Obligations	1,305,217	(3)	0	
TOTAL	31,717,075	(1) (3)	4,942,069	

Instalments with Implementing Partners

Payments Made	16,502,036		4,146,971	
Reporting Received	11,389,220		17,501,935	
Balance	5,112,816		(13,354,964)	
Outstanding 1 January	0		13,858,212	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		347,303	
Currency Adjustment	4,099		29,589	
Outstanding 31 December	5,116,915		185,534	

Unliquidated Obligations

Outstanding 1 January	0		6,379,696	(6)
New Obligations	31,717,075	(1)	0	
Disbursements	30,411,858	(3)	4,942,069	(6)
Cancellations	0		0	
Outstanding 31 December	1,305,217	(3)	1,437,627	(6)

Figures which cross reference to Accounts:

(1) Annex to Statement 1

(3) Schedule 3

(6) Schedule 6