

# Serbia

## Working environment

### The context

#### Serbia

The Republic of Serbia hosts the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region. In 2007, repatriation to Croatia slowed, in part because of a lack of consensus on remaining open issues in the Sarajevo Process. Despite efforts by the Government, local integration of the most vulnerable refugees remains problematic, mainly due to lack of institutional capacity, inefficient implementing mechanisms for national development strategies and limited resources.

#### Kosovo

The situation in the province of Kosovo is highly unpredictable as status negotiations continue. These negotiations have a direct bearing on durable solutions for people of concern to UNHCR, including IDPs within Kosovo, minority returnees and asylum-seekers. A report on the progress of discussions is expected in December 2007. Despite constraints and uncertainty, minorities returned to Kosovo in slightly higher numbers thus far in 2007 compared to 2006.

Unless post-status legislation in the areas of residence and nationality is further elaborated, some segments of the population risk statelessness. This applies particularly to the most vulnerable ethnic communities that include the Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian groups who, due to their social marginalization, have been unable or unwilling to register as habitual residents in Kosovo.

In addition, the elections scheduled for November 2007, along with high unemployment as well as power and water shortages may bring about heightened political tensions and potential unrest. The forthcoming elections will also influence the process of transferring government functions from the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG).



### The needs

#### Serbia

In Serbia, UNHCR provides protection and assistance to refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia, as well as to IDPs from Kosovo. UNHCR is also working to develop an integrated asylum system and to prevent and reduce statelessness.

A participatory assessment undertaken among refugees and IDPs identified the following needs: (a) lack of and access to adequate housing; (b) limited access to employment and income-generation opportunities; (c) lack of access to health services and to education; and (d) access to documentation. Refugees wishing to locally integrate need housing, vocational training and livelihood support. Vulnerable refugees and IDPs in collective centres need basic humanitarian assistance, psychosocial support and institutional care.

Most refugees and IDPs require legal aid to obtain personal documents and regain their property. Roma IDPs represent the most socially excluded group, especially the women, children and youth.

### Kosovo

UNHCR seeks durable solutions, and contributes to capacitating the local administrative structures. The Office provides appropriate assistance to vulnerable minority returnees, some 21,000 people displaced within Kosovo, and a small but growing group of asylum-seekers. Freedom of movement, access to services, housing, employment, civil registration, balanced information and legal assistance remain priority needs for the populations of concern in Kosovo. Moreover, individuals forcibly returned from Western Europe often require subsistence assistance and accommodation.

The age, gender and diversity participatory assessment conducted in 2006 and 2007 found that the lack of livelihood opportunities are among the most challenging problems for IDPs, regardless of ethnic group. Furthermore, many IDPs live in temporary accommodation and are extremely vulnerable, resulting in poor health. There is a lack of access to health services for children and the elderly.

Female Serb IDPs and minority returnees are especially concerned about the provision of electricity, water, heating and public transportation, while freedom of movement is a main concern for both men and women. The sense of insecurity is a consequence of past and recent incidents that have affected minorities and reflects a lack of trust in security providers.

Returnees and IDPs of Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian ethnicity face multiple protection risks, including child labour, early marriages and lack parental encouragement to attend school. As a result, only 30-40 per cent enrol in primary school and most girls leave school before the age of 13 years. This is compounded by insufficient family resources to purchase school material and limited transportation. Many children are not registered and lack

documentation. Young marriages and teenage pregnancies further increase the risk of child labour.

### Total requirements

2008: USD 19,054,388

2009: USD 20,315,870

## Main objectives

### Serbia

- Provide support to the Government of Serbia to achieve durable solutions for refugees from Croatia and BiH, and for IDPs from Kosovo;
- Provide support for local integration to those refugees/IDPs from Kosovo, who are unable or unwilling to return;
- Provide assistance to the most vulnerable refugees, IDPs and other marginalized groups;
- Continue assisting the Government in building an asylum system in harmony with international standards;
- Eliminate current and potential situations of statelessness.

### Kosovo

- Support return and sustainable community-based re-integration of minority returnees, including those returning from third countries;
- Promote protection principles and support durable solutions for people displaced within Kosovo;
- Develop and strengthen local capacities relevant for return, durable solutions and asylum within a wider migration context. Emphasis will be placed strengthen community and municipal return capacity;
- Assist *de facto* stateless individuals and prevent cases of statelessness;
- Maintain adequate contingency planning and preparedness levels to respond promptly and effectively to possible population movements.

## Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2008		Dec 2008 / Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Croatia	58,000	58,000	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	22,000	22,000	-	-	-	-
	Various	50	50	50	50	50	50
IDPs		204,000	204,000	200,000	200,000	190,000	190,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>284,050</b>	<b>284,050</b>	<b>240,050</b>	<b>240,050</b>	<b>210,050</b>	<b>210,050</b>

## Strategy and activities

### Serbia

UNHCR will pursue two durable solution options for refugees: repatriation and local integration. Organized repatriation to Croatia will be carried out on a small scale in 2008 and phased out by the end of 2009. Repatriation assistance will target extremely vulnerable refugees through the transport of their personal belongings to places of origin. In parallel, the Office will continue to provide legal advice on housing and property issues, as well as help with personal documentation and in-court representation.

In 2008-2009, UNHCR will facilitate the local integration of refugees in Serbia, and enhance durable solution programmes for IDPs. Local integration activities for refugees will be implemented within the context of the *National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees* and the *Poverty Reduction Strategy*. The Living Standards Measurement Survey, conducted in 2007, will identify ways to better address IDPs' needs, with special focus on Roma IDPs. UNHCR

will help the authorities close the remaining refugee and IDP collective centres through construction of social housing and by assisting those that move with cash grants and self-reliance projects. During 2008 and 2009, UNHCR will reduce its care and maintenance activities.

UNHCR will continue to promote IDPs' right to return to the locations of choice depending on the developments in Kosovo, and assist individual, spontaneous and voluntary returns to Kosovo. UNHCR will give more attention to go-and-see visits, which enable IDPs to make an informed choice regarding their durable solution options. Without a clear government policy on local integration for IDPs, UNHCR will enhance self-reliance activities to improve their access to housing and employment. UNHCR will also assist the authorities to protect and assist the most vulnerable IDPs, with a special focus on the rights of the Roma IDPs who face serious obstacles in gaining access to the legal system, registration and documentation, and their social and economic rights.

The Office will continue working with the authorities to increase access to social protection of IDPs and refugees

## Key Targets for 2008 and 2009

### Serbia

- 100 refugee families are repatriated with their belongings to Croatia; 600 IDPs visit their places of origin in Kosovo.
- 450 refugees and 2,175 IDPs provided with housing and self-reliance inputs, such as agricultural tools and vocational training.
- 500 vulnerable people receive life-saving medical services and drugs; 1,500 referred to medical institutions.
- 30 per cent of the remaining refugee caseload are naturalized.
- 7,000 IDPs and 5,000 refugees are provided with legal aid and counselling in search for durable solutions.
- 100 per cent of reported sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases receive assistance.
- Asylum legislation, by-laws and operational instructions are adopted, an asylum reception centre and referral systems are established and RSD procedures begin to be transferred to national authorities.

### Kosovo

- 1,400 minority returnees, including 250 from third countries are assisted with appropriate supplementary food.
- 730 minority returnees, including 250 from third countries, are assisted with non-food items and/or limited ad-hoc assistance for extremely vulnerable individuals.
- 160 self-reliance projects implemented for returnees.
- Up to 160 minority returnee families are assisted with emergency shelter assistance.
- Up to 400 needy minority returnees benefit from supplementary income-generating assistance.
- 33 community development projects, including eight projects to support reintegration and durable solutions of keep.
- 4,000 returnees have access to free legal aid assistance to achieve a durable solution.
- 40 sustainable self-reliance projects benefit IDPs in Kosovo; 180 extremely vulnerable Kosovo IDP families receive basic humanitarian assistance.
- 3,000 Roma community members are registered to reduce the risk of statelessness.



and will advocate for their inclusion into national and local social protection programmes. UNHCR will maintain a network of mobile outreach teams to improve social services at the municipal level and assist the vulnerable to contact existing national support structures. Efforts will be made to closely monitor and assist vulnerable groups as elderly, women, children and adolescents, and survivors of SGBV.

To enhance asylum, UNHCR will continue to assist authorities with the legislative and institutional framework to fulfil international obligations, by providing legal expertise and technical assistance, training and advocacy. UNHCR will assess the existing risk of statelessness and will advocate for accession to the 1961 Statelessness Convention.

### Kosovo

UNHCR's strategy for Kosovo will remain flexible to respond to the evolving political environment. The return strategy targets groups of concern such as minority returnees, IDPs within Kosovo, forced returnees from third countries belonging to minority ethnic groups and asylum-seekers. In the absence of safe and dignified conditions, UNHCR will facilitate voluntary minority return to Kosovo. The Office foresees an increase in returns from third countries once the status negotiations are concluded.

In line with Security Council Resolution 1244 and the expected phase-out of UNMIK, UNHCR will play an increased role in providing durable solutions for the displaced population in Kosovo, in close collaboration with the PISG.

The Office will support the municipal and central authorities, local NGOs, and IDP associations in providing adequate services to returnees to enhance sustainable return. IDPs returning to their homes will receive multi-sectoral support, including legal counselling, shelter assistance and other forms of humanitarian assistance. For those returning to locations other than their places of origin, UNHCR will support "organised and facilitated return projects", though the Office's role will be determined on a case-by-case basis and according to vulnerability criteria.

UNHCR will also pursue return or local integration solutions for IDPs in Kosovo. Direct interventions will be limited to vulnerable residents in collective centres. The Office will provide legal aid assistance to solve property and documentation issues that hamper return or integration.

The Office will also continue to undertake the RSD responsibilities pending the establishment of an eligibility body within the PISG. UNHCR envisages a gradual handover of RSD functions to the Government



UNHCR/G. Popovic

UNHCR assists Roma IDPs from Kosovo in gaining birth certificates and Serbian nationality documents, essential for getting access to education, health, employment and even marriage.

by end-2009. UNHCR will enhance training and local capacity-building activities to support the creation of a fair and efficient asylum system in Kosovo.

To prevent and reduce statelessness, UNHCR will support the current civil registration campaign undertaken by local partners particularly for the Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian groups in Kosovo.

## Constraints

### Serbia

Following January 2007 elections, the formation of the Government in Serbia took several months. As a result, laws that will have a crucial impact on issues related to refugees, IDPs and asylum have not yet been adopted.

The pace and possibility of voluntary repatriation, particularly to Croatia, will depend on resolving the two outstanding issues of former occupancy/tenancy rights (OTR) and pension rights (co-validation).

Widespread poverty and high unemployment have an adverse impact on refugees and especially IDPs. In 2007, UNHCR shifted the focus of its durable solutions programme from refugees to IDPs, targeting those living in collective centres and in poor private accommodation.

## Kosovo

The overall security situation in the province remains fragile. Sporadic incidents involving minority groups and targeting cultural sites continue to occur. The precarious security conditions, the bleak economic situation, high unemployment, the unresolved status of some returnees' properties, limited and poor health and education facilities, and shortage of housing may discourage return. Many reintegration projects remained unfunded.

## Organization and implementation

### UNHCR presence in Serbia (excluding Kosovo)

	2008	2009
Number of offices	2	2
Total staff	69	67
International	6	6
National	49	47
UNVs	14	14
JPOs	0	0

### UNHCR presence (Kosovo)

	2008	2009
Number of offices	5	5
Total staff	90	87
International	14	12
National	64	64
JPOs	1	1
UNVs	10	10
Deployees	1	0

## Coordination

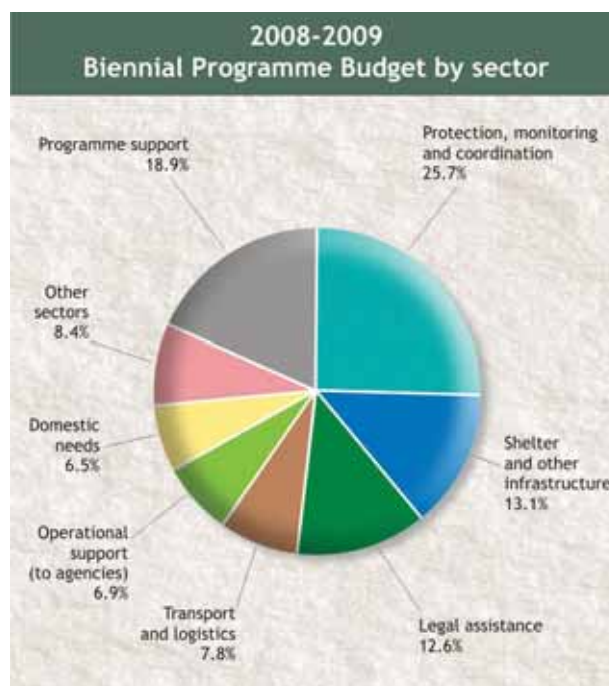
### Serbia

In 2008 and 2009, UNHCR will maintain its active role in the UN Country Team, with particular involvement in the Millennium Development Goals Strategy in Serbia. The Office will closely collaborate with UNDP to further develop programmes for vulnerable categories including IDPs and refugees. The two agencies will design joint projects following UNDP's Area-Based Approach.

UNHCR will intensify its cooperation with Government structures, primarily with the Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija. The recently-established cooperation with the People's Office of the President of the Republic of Serbia linking refugee/IDPs with local vulnerable households will be further strengthened. The Office will coordinate closely with other UN agencies through the UNDAF framework and advocate for the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in programmes of bilateral development agencies, the Council of Europe Development Bank, European Commission, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. UNHCR will continue cooperating with NGOs and legal networks.

### Kosovo

In 2008, UNHCR will increasingly engage with the authorities to develop local capacity for return and durable solutions, including at the municipal levels. The Office will actively pursue capacity building with the Department for Border, Migration and Asylum. The Office will continue its work with UN Kosovo Team (UNKT) to mainstream return, displacement and minority issues into UN sister agencies' programmes. UNHCR will further develop its strong relationship with UNDP in return, reintegration and recovery projects, as well as with UNICEF. In 2008-2009, UNHCR will interact with OSCE and other international actors involved in monitoring of human rights, return, and durable solutions.



## Serbia

Partners
<b>Implementing partners</b>
<b>Government:</b> Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, Ministry of Labour.
<b>NGOs:</b> AmitY, Danish Refugee Council, Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance, International Consortium of Solidarity, Intersos, Micro Development Fund, Microfins, Praxis, UNION.
<b>Operational partners</b>
<b>Government:</b> Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija, Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government.
<b>Others:</b> Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, European Commission, OSCE, United Nations Country Team, UNV.

## Kosovo

Partners
<b>Implementing partners</b>
<b>NGOs:</b> Advocacy Training and Resource Centre, Civil Rights Program/Kosovo, Danish Refugee Council, Developing Together, International Catholic Migration Commission, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Church Aid.
<b>Operational partners</b>
<b>Government:</b> PISG/UNMIK.
<b>NGOs:</b> Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberty, Catholic Relief Services, CARE International.
<b>Others:</b> European Union, IOM, OSCE, UNDP, UNHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO.

Budget (USD)			
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget		
	2007	2008	2009
Protection, monitoring and coordination	5,944,393	4,934,040	5,176,927
Community services	876,201	442,612	486,874
Domestic needs	1,333,410	1,249,865	1,328,848
Education	559,400	540,979	573,702
Food	19,500	59,717	66,489
Health	126,628	104,159	104,159
Income generation	200,000	394,415	542,798
Legal assistance	2,576,095	2,471,829	2,481,062
Operational support (to agencies)	1,364,491	1,312,777	1,423,230
Shelter and other infrastructure	2,995,000	2,393,915	2,777,867
Transport and logistics	1,172,500	1,508,956	1,558,356
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>17,167,617</b>	<b>15,413,264</b>	<b>16,520,313</b>
Programme support	3,789,033	3,641,124	3,795,556
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,956,650</b>	<b>19,054,388</b>	<b>20,315,870</b>