

# Serbia

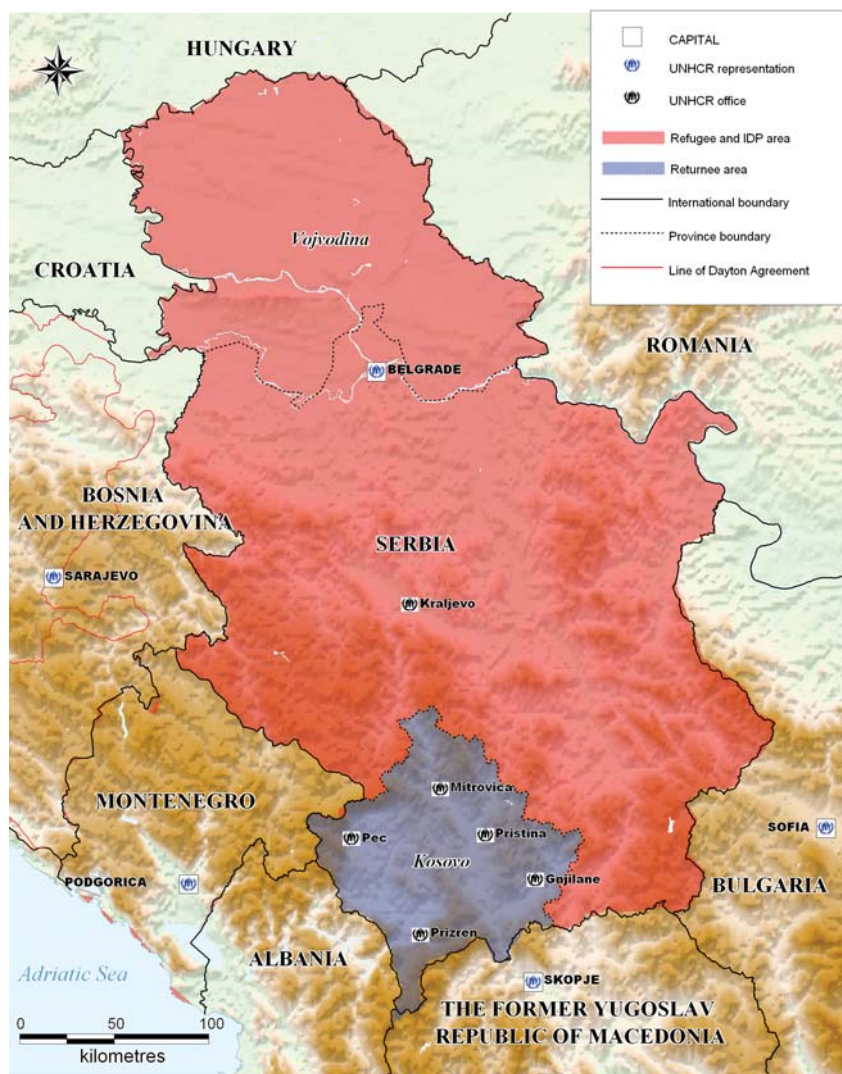
## Operational highlights

### Serbia

- Parliament adopted a Law on Asylum, and a reception centre for asylum-seekers and refugees became operational in November 2007.
- UNHCR's efforts to build the capacity of associations of internally displaced people (IDPs) in protection, publicity and financial accountability helped them to play a bigger role in advocating for rights.
- The Office published an *Analysis of the Situation of IDPs from Kosovo in Serbia: Law and Practice*, to advocate for IDP rights in conformance with international standards.
- Repatriation continued, although on a lesser scale: 193 refugees were helped to return to Croatia and 68 Roma IDPs were assisted to return voluntarily to their new homes in Roma Mahala, Kosovo. Some 4,800 IDPs from Kosovo and more than 11,000 refugees from Croatia received information and counselling with regards to return, as well as free legal advice.
- UNHCR assisted some 520 refugees through local-integration programmes, including housing and agricultural support. For the first time, such programmes were also made available to IDPs, and some 1,800 of them benefited.
- Civil documents were provided to some 5,300 IDPs and 2,300 refugees. Registration procedures for some 110 IDP were initiated, and 85 cases were successfully completed.

### Kosovo

- UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the provisional authorities in Kosovo in January 2007 to help build the capacity of municipal authorities to address return and reintegration issues. Joint Municipal Teams assessed protection and assistance needs of those who had returned spontaneously.



- The Plementina IDP camp was closed; 81 families obtained social housing.
- UNHCR's efforts to minimize deportations to Kosovo led to a 30 per cent drop in the forced returns of individuals belonging to minority communities.
- Some 1,900 people at risk of statelessness obtained civil and habitual-resident documents. As part of UNHCR's efforts to prevent statelessness, another 1,900 people received counselling on civil-registration issues.
- UNHCR helped to draft a new asylum law and improved the institutional capacity of the Ministry of the Interior's Department of Border Control and Migration, with two training events in Pristina, two study tours abroad and on-the-job training.

## Working environment

### Serbia

The year 2007 was marked by domestic political complications. Though parliamentary elections were held in January, a new coalition government was formed only three months later. The developments related to Kosovo (see *below*) had an impact on the country's external relations as well as on its internal political life. The signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union was postponed for an indefinite period. Negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina on Kosovo's status were not successful, and the Parliament of Serbia adopted a resolution opposing the independence of Kosovo. Due to the preoccupation with Kosovo, important legislation (such as the Law on Social Housing) was not adopted. Other statutes, including the Law on Asylum, were passed only after substantial delays.

Three participatory assessments in 2007 focused on naturalization, return and employment, and health and housing, respectively. Rights- and community-based approaches helped the Office concentrate on the self-reliance of the displaced in housing, vocational training and documentation.

The sensitive political situation compelled UNHCR to maintain its emergency preparedness and response capacity. In the absence of clear and sustainable durable solutions, UNHCR had to continue with small projects to improve the living conditions of more than 200,000 IDPs. At the same time, the Office was searching for solutions for vulnerable refugees and IDPs living in collective centres.

### Kosovo

The political situation in Kosovo was marked by the proposal on its status drafted by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. The proposal was accepted by Kosovo Albanian leaders but opposed by the Government of Serbia. The UN Security Council did not succeed in adopting a resolution on the issue, and

negotiations between the concerned parties were inconclusive. These events created an atmosphere of uncertainty among IDPs, who postponed their decisions on return.

Following elections to the Assembly of Kosovo and municipal polls in November 2007, the probability of independence became stronger. This raised anxiety among the ethnic minority populations in Kosovo, despite the relative stable security situation. The post-election process of appointing new heads of departments in Pristina and at the municipal level slowed the implementation of some return and reintegration programmes.

## Achievements and impact

### Main objectives

#### Serbia

- Assist refugees from Croatia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina to find durable solutions.
- Assist IDPs from Kosovo, including returnees arriving in Serbia under readmission agreements, to find durable solutions.
- Protect and assist the most vulnerable refugees, IDPs and other marginalized groups.
- Assist the Government to build an asylum system and devise procedures in harmony with international standards; transfer refugee status determination (RSD) responsibilities to the Government.

#### Kosovo

- Contribute to the establishment of conditions for the sustainable return and reintegration of minority returnees, including monitoring and supervision, to prevent further displacement.
- Address the integration needs of IDPs within Kosovo.
- Assist the local government to build municipal return and reintegration capacity and develop protection skills.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Croatia	70,200	70,200	50	10
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	27,300	27,300	54	12
	Various	500	500	-	-
Asylum-seekers	Various	10	10	-	-
Returnees (refugees)	Various	900	210	-	-
IDPs		226,400	226,400	50	22
Returnees (IDPs)		1,600	1,600	50	38
<b>Total</b>		<b>326,910</b>	<b>326,220</b>		

- Develop a fair and efficient asylum system matching regional standards, especially by building capacity at the Ministry of Interior in Kosovo.
- Strengthen UNHCR and its partners' preparedness to deal with emergency situations.

## Protection and solutions

### Serbia

More than a decade after the displacement crisis, Serbia still hosts some 97,000 refugees. In 2007, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of refugees to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. With respect to Croatia, the main concern remains the resolution of the two outstanding issues identified within the Sarajevo consultation process: co-validation of pension rights and a fair resolution of the problem of former tenancy rights holders. In view of the slowdown in repatriation, UNHCR increased its efforts to promote local integration and naturalization for refugees unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin.

IDPs' living standards continued to decline especially for the residents of collective centres and the marginalized Roma minority. Assisting and protecting IDPs has been a priority for the Office. UNHCR advocated for the removal of obstacles that prevented IDPs from exercising their rights as citizens. It also sought free legal aid, documentation and housing and self-reliance assistance for the most vulnerable groups.

Age, gender and diversity assessments indicated that the situation of Roma IDP children was of special concern due to their lack of birth certificates and other documents. UNHCR's community services mobile team network referred child protection cases to local social welfare centres and other sources of assistance. These organizations helped the children to obtain documents, gain access to health facilities and enroll in school, besides assisting them to integrate into host communities.

Eighteen new cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported in 2007, and the victims were assisted. UNHCR also offered free legal assistance to 32 victims of such violence and arranged for court representation in 53 proceedings. The Office helped eight women and 16 children find accommodation in the Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence.

### Kosovo

In conformity with Security Council Resolution 1244, UNHCR supervised and monitored the safe return of refugees and IDPs. Although the return process stalled in 2007, the number of voluntary returnees was slightly

higher than in 2006. UNHCR supported a range of durable solutions for IDPs in 2007, with voluntary spontaneous return the most common solution.

The sustainability of returns remained a major issue for ethnic Serbs, as some returned to Serbia or continued to shuttle between Serbia and Kosovo. The returns of Roma and affiliated ethnic groups were more sustainable, although surveys and participatory assessments indicate that these groups are concerned about security, access to justice, limited freedom of movement, severe economic conditions, restitution of property, education and employment.

The majority of Roma community members are still marginalized. They have to overcome many administrative and other obstacles before they can be fully integrated into society.

UNHCR has campaigned to secure the basic human rights of minority groups. The office assisted many members of minority communities to obtain legal documents. In 2007, UNHCR implemented reintegration projects through community development, self-reliance and income generation.

The Office helped to build the capacity of municipal officers, social workers and others through training, workshops, technical assistance and joint field assessments.

## Activities and assistance

### Serbia

**Community services:** An IDP survey of some 8,400 individuals was undertaken; a network of community based social services and a referral system was made accessible through 54 mobile teams covering all of Serbia. The teams assisted some 21,000 people. Psycho-social support was provided to some 1,300 children and 2,100 elderly refugees and IDPs.

**Domestic needs and household support:** The Office distributed 1,200 cash grants to refugees and IDP families with specific needs to help them meet shelter and health needs and to cope with winter conditions. Similarly, funds were made available to pay for the food and accommodation of 103 asylum-seekers. Expenditures increased in 2007 due to the procurement of relief items for 20,000 people in the event of a new displacement.

**Education:** Pre-school preparation was organized for some 270 Roma IDP children. Some 290 Roma IDP and refugee children who had dropped out of primary schools were provided remedial courses. All children benefited from the local school system. UNHCR also





UNHCR/V. Samarčić

One of the refugee families who received housing under the local integration programme in Serbia.

conducted vocational courses for some 540 IDPs to boost their chances of employment.

**Food:** Food rations for 5,000 people were procured and pre-positioned as part of the emergency preparedness exercise.

**Health and nutrition:** Some 620 IDPs and refugees with specific needs received medical services, medicines and special devices not provided by the regular health system. Some 1,200 IDPs and refugees were referred for further medical treatment. UNHCR also helped the Government to establish HIV and AIDS prevention programmes.

**Income generation:** 375 refugees and IDPs living in private accommodation were supported through small agricultural-assistance packages.

**Legal assistance:** Close to 700,000 data entries were consolidated and automated from two registry offices. Furthermore, some 1,200 refugees and 4,800 IDPs got information and counselling on legal issues, while 2,300 documents were given to refugees and 5,350 to IDPs. Six information bulletins for refugees and IDPs

were published, and 127 representatives of the judiciary trained. The Roma IDP Forum Conference helped pay for the participation of 20 NGOs. As a result IDPs, especially Roma, were able to lead more dignified lives in displacement and to find durable solutions.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR produced 25 television programmes highlighting issues of concern to refugees returning to Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina which were broadcast on Serbian TV. The shows informed refugees of developments in places of return as well as integration activities in Serbia. Similarly 50 TV programmes provided information to IDPs on the issues related to the return to Kosovo and IDPs rights. Each broadcast attracted some 400,000 viewers, increasing public awareness of refugee and IDP issues. It also increased public and media support for UNHCR activities and helped advocacy efforts.

**Shelter and other infrastructure:** Twelve collective centres were repaired to ensure basic living conditions for IDPs and refugees; some 140 families with no prospects to leave collective accommodation received housing loans and 20 families moved into newly constructed housing units. These measures allowed for

the closure of 11 out of 72 centres. A partial self-help programme provided some 660 privately accommodated individuals with building materials.

**Transport and logistics:** Some 2,000 individuals with specific protection needs were assisted. UNHCR provided transport for 88 refugees repatriating to Croatia and for the personal belongings of 105 refugee families. Some 68 mainly Roma returnees to Kosovo were provided with transport assistance; 27 visits to Kosovo were organized for 392 IDPs.

## Kosovo

**Community services:** UNHCR supported 45 community development projects benefiting some 10,600 people throughout Kosovo as part of a reconciliation and reintegration initiative for minority spontaneous returnees. It promoted inter-ethnic dialogue at 29 multi-ethnic meetings, which saw a total of 280 participants. The Office also sponsored 19 additional meetings with 130 participants, including municipal and central authorities, minority and majority representatives, and NGOs.

**Domestic needs and household support:** Conditions improved for 1,110 individuals with specific needs after they received mattresses, blankets, plastic sheets, multi-purpose stoves, firewood and sanitary napkins. To maintain UNHCR's preparedness, the contingency stock of relief items was increased to meet the requirements of 20,000 people.

**Food:** Some 460 spontaneous returnees from minority groups received three-month food rations consisting of wheat flour, beans, oil, sugar and canned meat. Contingency food stocks have been replenished to include an emergency three-day food ration to immediately respond to a crisis, and a 27-day ration, for 5,000 people.

**Income generation:** Twenty-two income generation projects involving minority returnees were implemented to assist in their reintegration.

**Legal assistance:** UNHCR conducted a survey of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. A new database has been developed to facilitate the local integration of refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. To help IDPs with their decisions to return, 68 "go and see visits" were organized. An information network covering all Kosovo's municipalities ensured outreach and the identification of unregistered people, primarily among the Roma community. As a result 3,680 people received legal

assistance and documents were issued to 1,870 individuals, reducing the risk of statelessness.

In 2007, UNHCR continued to carry out RSD and 10 asylum-seekers were granted refugee status. The Office helped build the knowledge of standard operating procedures regarding the reception of asylum-seekers among Ministry of Internal Affairs officials and the police. Legal counselling and assistance were offered in 47 cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR strengthened its protection, assistance, monitoring and response capacity through the recruitment of nine UNVs. In Kosovo, the Office organized field visits to IDPs within the territory and sponsored a weekly TV show, "Returns", to keep the displaced well-informed about return possibilities.

**Shelter and other infrastructure:** UNHCR helped some 210 individuals in the Plementina temporary collective centre (prior to its closure) with accommodation and basic assistance. The Office kept the following shelter items available in contingency stocks: 230 tents, 164 winterized tents, five large tents (for storage and community activities) and 400 plastic sheets.

**Transport and logistics:** UNHCR maintained a fleet of 12 trucks to ensure timely delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Office also kept a warehouse and a mechanical workshop (for vehicle maintenance) operational in 2007.

## Constraints

### Serbia

The completion of the Sarajevo Process, which is aimed at solving the return issues in the region, was again postponed in 2007, and the main issues linked to the occupancy or tenancy rights of refugees from Croatia and validation of their pension rights remained unresolved. This prevented the 68,000 Croatian refugees who remain in Serbia from finding durable solutions.

Political developments linked to the situation in Kosovo, as well as the lack of sustainable return and reintegration opportunities, had an adverse impact on the 200,000 IDPs (particularly Roma IDPs and residents of collective centres). UNHCR and the authorities established a strategy to close the collective centres gradually and improve living conditions for IDPs.

## Kosovo

Uncertainty about the future status of Kosovo remained the key constraint. Returnees and minority IDPs continue to experience difficulties in exercising their fundamental rights, such as access to administrative and social services, restoration of property, security and freedom of movement.

To improve the situation of the populations of concern, UNHCR worked with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to build their capacity to integrate IDP returnees and provide protection for this group.

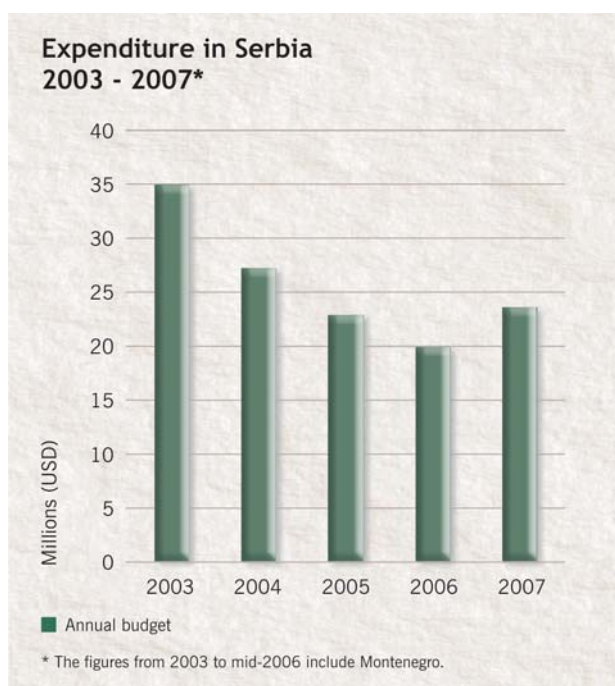
## Financial information

### Serbia

Operational budgets suffered from exchange rate losses. Although this was partially offset, mitigation measures did not fully overcome the loss, and projects to improve living conditions and close collective centres had to be postponed. Only 11 of the planned 17 collective centres could be closed.

### Kosovo

Unfavourable exchange rates affected the Kosovo operation, although mitigation measures enabled programmes to continue.



## Organization and implementation

### Management

#### Serbia

The Serbia operation (excluding Kosovo) continued to be managed from the Representation office in Belgrade. A field office was maintained in Kraljevo, southern Serbia, where a sizeable population of concern to UNHCR resides. The two UNHCR offices were staffed by six international and 49 national personnel, and supported by 20 UNVs.

#### Kosovo

The Kosovo operation was managed by the Office of the Chief of Mission based in Pristina. In order to ensure proper monitoring of returns and protection, the field offices in Mitrovica, Peja/Pec, Pristina, Prizren and Gjilan/Gnjilane remained operational in 2007. UNHCR deployed 17 international and 63 national staff, supported by nine UNVs.

## Working with others

#### Serbia

UNHCR strengthened its partnership with the Government and other stakeholders. The Office was involved in UN Theme Groups on Gender, Disability and Youth. UNHCR and UNDP conducted an IDP socio-economic survey which was linked to the Living Standards Measurement Survey conducted by the World Bank in 2007. The Office worked with UNDP on joint programming in the IDP-populated areas of central and southern Serbia. UNHCR and the OSCE organized round tables on legal problems in the local integration of refugees. Finally, UNHCR worked with 18 implementing partners to deliver protection and assistance.

#### Kosovo

In 2007, UNHCR collaborated in Kosovo with eight implementing partners, including four international NGOs. An agreement was signed with the Office of the Prime Minister on intensive training for ministry staff and municipal officers. At the operational level, UNHCR worked closely with UNDP and UNICEF on a variety of return projects. The Office kept in close touch with the OSCE mission to strengthen international monitoring of human rights, return and durable solutions issues.



## Overall assessment

### Serbia

Joint activities were begun within the UN Country Team and with UNDP to improve the living conditions of IDPs. Another positive step was the creation of a task force to resolve the problem of refugees and IDPs at collective centres. The Office was unable to complete its voluntary repatriation programme by the end of 2007 due to the stalled Sarajevo peace process. Delays in the adoption of the asylum law and the opening of an asylum centre meant that the Office was not able to implement planned asylum activities.

### Kosovo

Operating in a politically fragile environment, UNHCR promoted inter-ethnic dialogue, respect for human rights, and equal access to public services. This was exemplified by local ethnic groups who undertook joint development projects. However, this process proved to be difficult in some locations, especially Mitrovica, given political sensitivities.

To improve the pace of returns to and within Kosovo and to facilitate integration, the following conditions need to be met: more protection capacity among local institutions, streamlined return procedures, and better coordination between central and local authorities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Communities and Return needs to take the lead on return issues, and the role of Municipal Return Officers must be strengthened.

### Partners: Serbia

#### Implementing partners

**Government agencies:** Commissioner for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, Municipality of Krusevac, the City of Kragujevac, Republican Statistical Office, Faculty of Law  
**NGOs:** Danish Refugee Council, Amity, Association for Protection and Promotion of Mental Health of Children and Youth, Housing Centre, Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance, InterSos, Micro Development Fund, MicroFins, Praxis, Red Cross of Serbia, Union of IDP Associations, Vizija  
**Others:** Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, EAR, European Commission Delegation to Serbia, IOM, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure and Capital Investment, Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, OSCE Mission to Serbia, People's Office of the President of the Republic of Serbia, UNDP, UN HABITAT, UNICEF, UNV, WHO, Agency for Human and Minority Rights

### Partners: Kosovo

#### Implementing partners

**NGOs:** Advocacy Training and Resource Centre, Civil Rights Programme-Kosovo, Danish Refugee Council, Developing Together, International Catholic Migration Commission, Mercy Corps, Norma Lawyers' Association, Norwegian Church Aid  
**Others:** CARE International, CRS, IOM, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Local Government and Administration, Ministry for Returns and Communities, MPDL, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNMIK/Provisional Institutions of Self Government, WHO

### Budget, income and expenditure (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Annual budget	24,189,764	5,106,608	18,861,857	23,968,465	23,614,188

Note: Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

Financial Report (USD)		
Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects	Previous years' projects
	Annual budget	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	5,419,841	0
Community services	795,049	451,816
Domestic needs and household support	2,450,027	132,006
Education	577,980	90,793
Food	151,374	4,535
Health and nutrition	95,195	32,194
Income generation	191,983	13,872
Legal assistance	3,221,270	546,700
Operational support (to agencies)	1,468,805	38,116
Sanitation	0	6,360
Shelter and infrastructure	2,595,935	875,826
Transport and logistics	1,403,324	107,053
Instalments with implementing partners	1,260,883	(2,299,270)
<b>Sub-total operational activities</b>	<b>19,631,667</b>	<b>0</b>
Programme support	3,982,521	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>23,614,188</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cancellation on previous years' expenditure</b>		<b>(24,963)</b>
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>		
Payments made	9,815,627	
Reporting received	(8,554,744)	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>1,260,883</b>	
<b>Previous years' report</b>		
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>		
Outstanding 1st January		2,478,051
Reporting received		(2,299,270)
Refunded to UNHCR		(141,764)
Adjustments		811
<b>Balance</b>		<b>37,828</b>