

Working environment

The context

Serbia

Serbia hosts the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region. In 2008, the repatriation of refugees from Croatia slowed. This was due in part to a lack of consensus on the issues still to be resolved by the Sarajevo Process, which aims to find solutions for refugees. Restitution of property and compensation for former tenancy rights holders among refugees from Croatia remains crucial for completing the return process in the region.

Despite the Government's efforts, it has been difficult to integrate refugees with specific needs locally. Inefficient coordination mechanisms and limited resources have been the main stumbling blocks. Widespread poverty and the high unemployment rate also make life hard for refugees. In 2009, UNHCR will seek solutions for the refugees still living in collective centres as well as for IDPs.



Kosovo

Following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, the authorities instituted political reforms in line with the former Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status

Settlement. At the same time, UNHCR and other UN agencies continue to be guided by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 relating to Kosovo in their activities.

The arrival of new, non UN international actors makes coordination among the international organizations as well as with the authorities more challenging. For instance, the

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Bosnia	18,800	18,800	-	-
	Croatia	47,000	47,000	22,000	22,000
	Various	90	90	100	100
IDPs		205,000	205,000	204,000	204,000
Stateless		17,000	17,000	16,000	16,000
Total		287,890	287,890	242,100	242,100

functions and configuration of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) have been revised in light of the deployment of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), which aims to promote and monitor the rule of law, security and public order. The International Civilian Office (ICO) has also set up an office in Kosovo to supervise the implementation of the Settlement plan.

The economic situation in Kosovo remains bleak. Approximately 15 per cent of the population are extremely poor, while 45 per cent live below the poverty line and 41 per cent are unemployed. Kosovo's economy has been further weakened by corruption, social and political instability, and lack of legal infrastructure, all of which deter foreign investment.

UNHCR continues to support the spontaneous return of minorities to Kosovo by providing protection and humanitarian assistance.

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 needs for housing; employment and income-generating opportunities; health and education services; and documentation. Refugees and IDPs wishing to integrate locally stress the need for housing solutions and employment opportunities. As all collective centres in Serbia will be closed, the IDPs and refugees now living in them need to be provided with social housing or institutional care. Roma IDPs, especially women and children, represent the most socially excluded group.

Kosovo

UNHCR in Kosovo works with key stakeholders and local authorities to achieve durable solutions for displaced populations. The Office helps to build the capacity of local administrative structures to offer international protection. It also assists in the development of asylum systems and the prevention and reduction of statelessness, besides helping minority returnees, refugees, and IDPs.

The age, gender and diversity mainstreaming assessment completed in 2007 found that housing, unemployment, child labour, domestic violence, freedom of movement, access to information and legal assistance remain priority needs for people of concern in Kosovo. Other gaps exist in livelihood opportunities, education, health, documentation and civil registration.



An internally displaced family received a cow from UNHCR.

Main objectives

Serbia

- Help the Government of Serbia to find durable solutions for IDPs from Kosovo and for refugees from Croatia and BiH.
- Assist refugees with specific needs, IDPs and other marginalized groups.
- Work with the Government to build an asylum system in harmony with international standards.
- Eliminate current and potential situations of statelessness.

Kosovo

- Strengthen the authorities' capacities both at the central and local levels to develop and implement adequate protection systems in line with international standards.
- Seek durable solutions for protracted refugee situations through local integration and resettlement for a limited number of cases.
- Work with the authorities to draft and promulgate administrative and legislative amendments to ensure the proper registration of refugees and IDPs.
- Maintain contingency plans to respond promptly and effectively to possible population movements.
- Improve coordination mechanisms with key partners, develop new strategies to improve return conditions, and provide for the protection needs for all groups.

Key targets

Serbia

- Seventy refugee families are repatriated with their belongings to Croatia; 600 IDPs visit their places of origin in Kosovo.
- Some 270 refugees and 1,798 IDPs are provided with housing and self-reliance inputs such as agricultural tools and vocational training.
- Approximately 500 people with specific needs receive life-saving medical services and drugs; 2,000 are referred to medical institutions.
- The remaining refugee caseload benefits from naturalization.
- Some 7,000 IDPs and 5,000 refugees are given legal aid and counselling in the search for durable solutions.
- All people who report sexual and gender-based violence receive assistance.
- Up to 20,000 people in isolated collective centres as well as private accommodation are reached through a network of mobile teams.
- Asylum legislation, by-laws and operational instructions are adopted, an asylum reception centre and referral systems are fully functional, and the quality of national refugee status determination (RSD) procedures is improved.

Kosovo

- Some 2,000 minority returnees, including 400 from third countries and 530 Kosovo IDPs, receive supplementary food.
- At least 1,300 minority returnees, including people with specific needs returning from third countries, receive relief packages or other assistance.
- Up to 170 minority returnee, Kosovo IDP and refugee families are given emergency shelter assistance.
- Up to 250 minority returnees benefit from supplementary income-generating assistance; 160 self-reliance projects are implemented for returnees.
- Forty community development projects are established to support the reintegration of minority returnees and Kosovo IDPs.
- Some 3,000 returnees receive free legal aid in pursuit of durable solutions.
- Sixty sustainable self-reliance projects benefit refugees and IDPs.
- About 3,000 members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities at risk of statelessness are registered.

Strategy and activities

Serbia

In 2009, UNHCR will expand its durable solution programmes for IDPs while continuing to facilitate the local integration of refugees with specific needs in Serbia. Local integration activities for refugees will be implemented within the guidelines set out in the National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and the Poverty Reduction Strategy. UNHCR will help the authorities to close the remaining refugee and IDP collective centres by helping to construct social housing and helping those who move with cash grants and self-reliance projects.

UNHCR will continue to reduce its care and maintenance activities in Serbia in 2009.

Repatriation assistance, also to be phased out by the end of 2009, will primarily help extremely vulnerable refugee groups by transporting personal belongings to places of origin. The Office will provide legal advice on housing and property issues, as well as help with personal documentation and representation in court.

UNHCR will continue to promote IDPs' right to return to locations of their choice, and assist individual, spontaneous and voluntary returns to Kosovo. The Office will identify and register IDPs who want to relocate or return to their homes. A survey inside and outside the

remaining collective centres in Serbia will be conducted in close cooperation with the Serbian authorities. It is hoped that a joint approach and strategy will be established on both sides of the border through newly established return mechanisms.

Go-and-see as well as go-and-inform visits will continue to help IDPs make informed decisions on their future. In the absence of a clear government policy on local integration for IDPs, UNHCR will enhance self-reliance activities aimed at improving 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 displaced Roma. This group faces serious obstacles in gaining access to registration, documentation, and enjoyment of social and economic rights.

The Office will continue working with the authorities to boost protection of IDPs and refugees and will advocate for their inclusion in national and local social protection programmes. UNHCR will maintain a network of mobile outreach teams to improve social services at the municipal level and connect the vulnerable to existing national support structures. The Office will closely monitor and assist vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women and children, as well as survivors of gender-based violence.

To enhance asylum, UNHCR will help the authorities to fulfil their international obligations by providing legal expertise and technical assistance, training and advocacy. UNHCR will assess the existing risk of statelessness in the country 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. In 2009, the Office will play a leading role in the return process, working in close partnership with key stakeholders and local authorities.

UNHCR provides guidance to local authorities and other actors on return, protection and field-based projects. The Office aims to fund projects that are beneficiary-driven and incorporate basic protection safeguards.

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

Constraints

Serbia

While the repatriation of refugees from BiH remains a spontaneous process, organized returns to Croatia should be completed by the end of 2009. The extent of UNHCR's involvement will depend on finding solutions to the outstanding issues within the framework of the Sarajevo Process.

The unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo in February 2008 will pose challenges to IDPs seeking durable solutions. Lack of progress on Serbia's integration with the EU will have an impact on the quality of the RSD system.

Kosovo

The lack of agreement regarding its status will continue to be the main challenge faced by Kosovo. Another key concern is the new law restricting nationality to only those registered with the civil authorities or with proof of habitual residence in Kosovo as of January 1998. This law may render marginalized and disadvantaged communities vulnerable to de facto statelessness.

Since the unilateral declaration of independence, heightened tensions in the Serb-dominated northern town of Mitrovica have impeded UNHCR operations.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence in Serbia (excluding Kosovo)	
Number of offices	2
Total staff	57
International	6
National	44
UNVs	3
Others	6
UNHCR presence in Kosovo	
Number of offices	3
Total staff	78
International	9
National	58
JPO	1
UNVs	10

Coordination

Serbia

In 2009, UNHCR will work with other members of the UN Country Team to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Serbia. The Office will collaborate with UNDP on the development of joint programmes for IDPs.

UNHCR will expand its cooperation with the Government, primarily with the Serbian Commissioner for Refugees and the ministries of the Interior; Labour and Social Policy; and Kosovo and Metohija. The Office will coordinate closely with other UN agencies through the UNDAF framework and promote the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in the programmes of development agencies, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the European Commission and the OSCE. The Office will also continue to cooperate with NGOs and legal networks.

Kosovo

In 2009, UNHCR will work to harmonize policies and responses related to reintegration, statelessness, asylum and migration throughout the region. The Office will work with the authorities to develop local capacity for return and durable solutions, including at the municipal level.

UNHCR will participate in various working groups in order to mainstream issues related to protection, respect for human rights, the building of government capacity, and civil society. It will also support priorities identified by the Kosovo authorities. The Office will continue its work with UN Kosovo team (UNKT) to mainstream return, displacement and minority issues into the programmes of other UN agencies.

UNHCR will develop its partnerships with UNMIK, EULEX, ICO, OSCE, and KFOR, in the areas of human rights monitoring, rule of law, strengthening of the judiciary, and stabilization of the political and security situation in Kosovo.

Partners

Serbia

Implementing partners

Government: Serbian Commissioner for Refugees

NGOs: AmitY, Danish Refugee Council, Housing Centre, Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance, Intersos, Micro Development Fund, Microfins, Praxis, UNION

Operational partners

Government: Ministries of Labour and Social Policy; the Interior; Human and Minority Rights; Kosovo and Metohija; and Public Administration and Local Self-Government

Others: BPRM, Humanitarian Organisation Divac, Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, European Commission, OSCE, United Nations Country Team, UNV

Kosovo

Implementing partners

NGOs: Advocacy Training and Resource Centre, Civil Rights Program/Kosovo, Danish Refugee Council, Developing Together, Kosovo Agency for Advocacy and Development

Operational partners

Government: Kosovo authorities (line ministries)

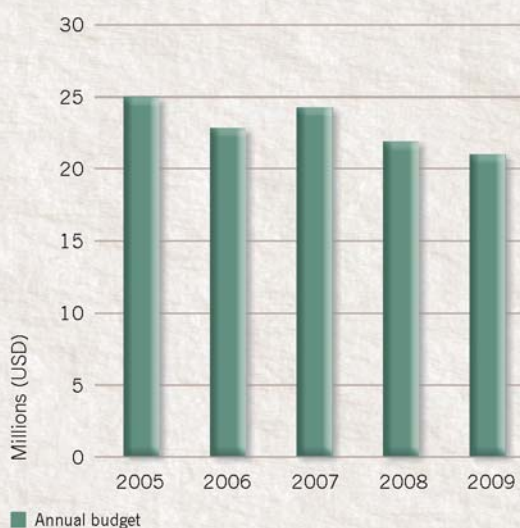
NGOs: CRS, CARE International

Others: European Union, EULEX, ICO, IOM, OSCE, UNDP, UNHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO

Financial information

With the easing of tensions in the region, operational requirements have shown a downward trend. However, rising prices and the strengthening of the local currency are affecting implementation. To ensure the maintenance of UNHCR's assistance and protection at an adequate level, more resources will be needed. Projects targeting extremely vulnerable groups and integration and reintegration initiatives will be the priority for this protracted refugee situation.

**UNHCR's budget
2005 - 2009**



Budget (USD)		
Activities and services	Annual budget	
	2008	2009
Protection, monitoring and coordination	4,934,040	4,088,870
Community services	442,612	737,171
Domestic needs	1,249,865	1,357,166
Education	540,979	574,322
Food	59,717	72,464
Health	104,159	109,485
Income generation	394,415	831,855
Legal assistance	2,471,829	2,953,358
Operational support (to agencies)	1,312,777	1,352,587
Shelter and infrastructure	2,393,915	3,388,098
Transport and logistics	1,508,956	1,614,457
Total operations	15,413,264	17,079,833
Programme support	3,641,124	3,817,362
Total	19,054,388	20,897,195