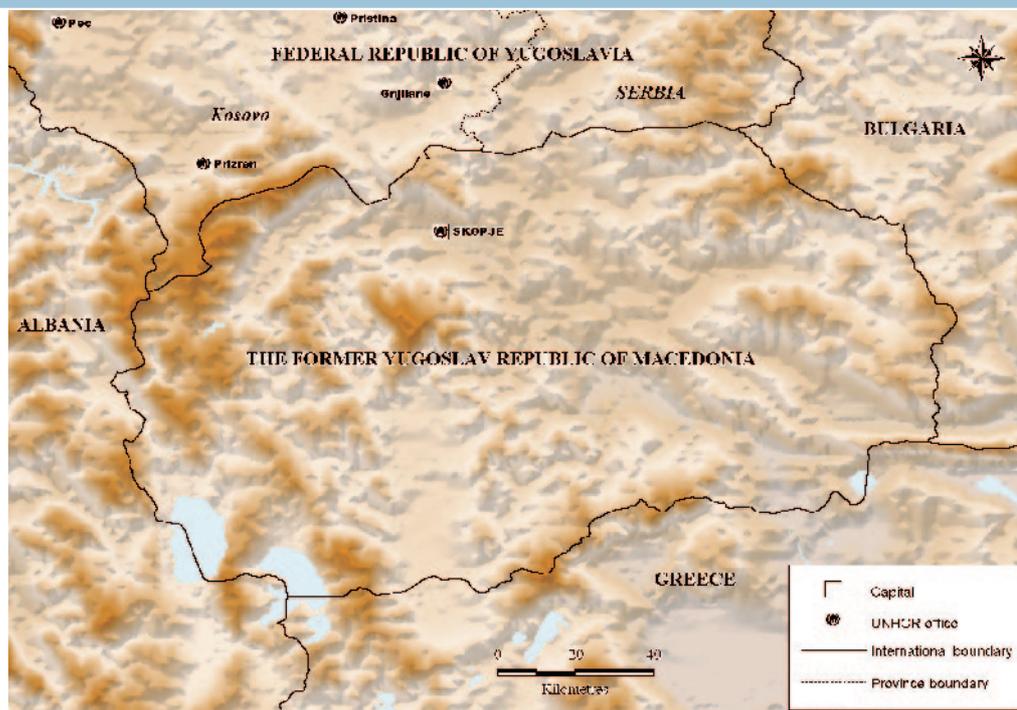


FYR Macedonia

Main Objectives

- Give asylum-seekers and refugees access to a fair and efficient asylum system backed up by procedures to support those newly integrating into Macedonian society.
- Ensure protection and assistance for the residual Kosovo minority refugee population in FYR Macedonia (those with temporary protection (TP) status) with special support for refugee women, children, adolescents, and elderly and vulnerable individuals.
- Remove the remaining obstacles to the return of refugees and IDPs uprooted during the 2001 conflict in the FYR Macedonia, and help them to reintegrate permanently.
- Establish a comprehensive legal and administrative framework in line with international standards to prevent statelessness and facilitate the acquisition of citizenship for long-term habitual residents.



Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Asylum-Seekers	150	300
Refugees from Kosovo	2,800	2,500
IDPs, Returnees, and War-Affected Populations	10,000	2,000
Total	12,950	4,800
Stateless population	40,000	40,000

Total Requirements: USD 4,975,194

services. A Law on Amnesty for former members of the National Liberation Army (NLA) was adopted by the Parliament in March 2002. The successful implementation of the Parliamentary Elections in September 2002 contributed to increased stability in the country.

UNHCR has addressed problems related to incomplete state succession and in particular to the issue of unresolved citizenship. UNHCR provided expert advice to the Ministry of Interior on the proposed amendments to the present citizenship legislation and encouraged individual residents to exercise their rights within the existing legal regime. The Office continued to work with national and regional authorities in order to raise

Working Environment

Recent Developments

The Framework Agreement, signed in Ohrid in August 2001 provided an end to hostilities, pledged increased rights to ethnic minorities and prepared the ground for the return of 170,000 people displaced in the region. Although the situation remained tense during 2002, conditions have gradually improved. Fifteen constitutional amendments were adopted to guarantee minority rights in the areas of language, education and public



Returnees in Tetovo. UNHCR / B. Betzelt

the issue of statelessness and of unresolved citizenship status with various actors including the international organisations involved.

Constraints

Since the adoption of the Framework Agreement designed to bring a solution to the 2001 conflict, the vast majority of those displaced during the spring and summer of 2001 have returned home. Nevertheless, several obstacles continue to impede return including acts by non-state agents such as rebels and NLA members, documentation problems, destroyed homes and non-functioning basic services. Other obstacles are factors immediately implicated in any search for root causes of the conflict: long-standing inter-ethnic tensions, the poor socio-economic situation and the weakness of institutions attempting to oversee the transition from a centrally controlled to an open market economy.

Most of the residual refugee population from the 1999 Kosovo crisis (some 2,800 persons with TP status) cannot return home due to the continued lack of conditions conducive to the return of members of the minority groups involved. Considering the length of time these people have lived in exile,

deprived of basic rights, UNHCR has advised the Government to broadly enhance their current legal status. UNHCR recommends the granting of residence permits and an extended set of rights including the right to engage in employed and self-employed activities, freedom of movement and travel documents.

At present, asylum claims are still adjudicated within an unsatisfactory legal and institutional asylum framework. The current Law on Movement and Residence of Aliens does not meet international standards. The new draft Law on Asylum is still awaiting clearance from the Ministry of Finance and it is far from certain that it will pass successfully through Parliament

in the immediate future. FYR Macedonia continues to face problems related to incomplete state succession, and in particular to the issue of unresolved citizenship status, following the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Strategy

Protection and Solutions

UNHCR will continue to facilitate the voluntary return to Kosovo of those minorities for whom conditions conducive to safe and sustainable reintegration have been created. The framework for voluntary repatriation includes the collection, dissemination and exchange of information on the security and human rights situations in the areas of return. The Office will facilitate the participation of refugees in the reconciliation process through go-and-see/come-and-inform visits that enable them to take informed decisions concerning their possible return. A very limited number of cases will be submitted for resettlement during 2003. These are likely to be asylum-seekers who have been refused refugee status or the complementary form of protection envisaged in the new Asylum Law and who are at risk of refoulement.

The Office will continue to call for the ratification of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the adoption of amendments to the Citizenship Act, the identification of the true extent of statelessness, increased regional linkages and the provision of free legal assistance by NGOs. The amendments may possibly be adopted as early as the first quarter of 2003, following which the Office will support the drafting and adoption of all relevant by-laws and implementing protocols.

UNHCR regards as a matter of some urgency the adoption of a Law on Asylum which conforms with regional and international standards. The Office will advocate the adoption of the current draft as the basis for a complete legal framework for assessing asylum claims in a fair and efficient manner.

The Office will continue its monitoring activities: representation in the asylum procedure, legal assistance, court representation and lobbying activities in support of long-term habitual stateless residents of concern to UNHCR. UNHCR will also continue capacity-building of local NGOs, which already provide legal services. UNHCR does not expect them to become fully independent in 2003 but will be able to significantly reduce its direct financial support.

Assistance

UNHCR will continue its operations for the residual refugee population from the 1999 conflict, as well as for the new individual asylum-seekers and refugees, focusing on durable solutions, such as repatriation, and integration. The Office will work closely with the relevant government ministries to design a comprehensive integration programme for recognised refugees, including training of government officials, asylum adjudicators, judges and NGOs. The Office will channel its financial assistance for the integration process through the state system to encourage the Government to assume greater financial responsibility for the refugees on its territory. UNHCR will continue to hold joint training activities with the Ministry of the Interior. The Office plans to carry out similar capacity-building activities in 2003 in co-operation with other members of the Migration and Asylum Initiative Country Team.

Working closely with the Ministry of Interior and the legal NGO network, UNHCR will also continue its activities on behalf of those still displaced by the 2001 conflict. Active field monitoring will help ensure that both refugees and IDPs can return home in a safe and a sustainable manner (including assistance with personal documentation, residency documents and citizenship). UNHCR will disseminate country of origin information.

UNHCR will continue to provide basic humanitarian assistance to the refugees from Kosovo, and returnees from the 2001 crisis. This will include provision on a selective basis of basic food assistance to the refugee population, non-food and domestic support to the refugee and returnee groups and also cash assistance for individuals opting for repatriation or local integration.

Desired Impact

The desired impact of UNHCR's activities in 2003 would be that the Asylum Law is adopted, a proper legal and institutional asylum framework is developed and implemented, and a system is established for integrating persons recognised as refugees under the Asylum Law. Further, the refugees remaining from the 1999 Kosovo crisis will have received adequate protection and assistance to find durable solutions. The remaining obstacles to the return of the refugees and the IDPs must be removed, to facilitate sustainable return and reintegration. Lastly, a comprehensive legal and administrative framework in line with international standards must be established to address problems related to documentation and citizenship.

Organisation and Implementation

Management Structure

UNHCR presence in the FYR Macedonia in 2003 will continue to be headed by a Representative and will initially include some 25 staff (six international and 19 local). All activities will be managed from the Branch Office in Skopje, following the closure of the two Field Offices by the end of 2002.

Co-ordination

Following the transition from the Humanitarian Assistance phase to a long-term and sustainable development phase in late 2002, the UNDP Resident Representative will co-ordinate overall development efforts in FYR Macedonia. Meanwhile UNHCR will continue to liaise with various international and governmental bodies in order to facilitate adequate inter-agency co-operation in areas of mutual concern.

Offices

Skopje

Partners

Government Agencies

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

NGOs

Centre for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies

Civil Society Resource Centre

Institute for Sociological, Political, and Judicial Research

Legal NGO Network

Macedonian Centre for International Co-operation

Macedonian Red Cross

Others

Council of Europe, Stability Pact

European Agency for Reconstruction

European Union Monitoring Mission

International Committee of the Red Cross

IFRC

International Organisation for Migration

Kosovo Housing and Property Directorate

NATO

Office of the EU Envoy for FYR Macedonia, EC Delegation

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

UNICEF, OCHA, Open Society Institute

UNMIK Office for Return and Communities

Budget

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	528,457
Community Services	400,000
Domestic Needs	275,000
Food	850,000
Health	150,000
Legal Assistance	685,000
Operational Support (to Agencies)	220,000
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	830,000
Transport / Logistics	190,000
Total Operations	4,128,457
Programme Support	846,737
Total	4,975,194