

# Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Total requirements:  
USD 5,688,204

## Working environment

### The context

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has a complex political structure. The country of approximately four million inhabitants has 13 constitutions, 14 legal systems, 13 prime ministers and some 140 different ministries. In this context, negotiating compromises and finding solutions to a number of political, economic and social problems is a tremendous task. The pace of reforms, including those that directly affect the populations of concern to UNHCR, is slow.

Despite notable progress in 2008, when BiH signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, problems linked to the efficient functioning of state bodies persist. Reform of the police and the Constitution is pending, as are legislative amendments pertaining to the social and judicial spheres—including asylum.



## 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	Croatia	6,600	800	6,100	400
	Serbia	170	170	150	150
	Various	30	30	30	30
Asylum-seekers	Serbia	450	450	300	300
	Various	30	30	30	30
Returnees (refugees)		1,000	50	800	50
IDPs		100,000	5,000	70,000	5,000
Returnees (IDPs)		3,800	2,400	3,000	1,900
Others of concern	Bosnia	2,000	500	1,500	500
<b>Total</b>		<b>114,080</b>	<b>9,430</b>	<b>81,910</b>	<b>8,360</b>

The economic situation has improved, but the trade deficit and unemployment rate are among the highest in the region. The latter diminishes the chances of employment for returning internally displaced persons (IDPs), integrating refugees and asylum-seekers alike, seriously reducing the sustainability of returns and integration.

Women, minorities and other groups are particularly affected by these economic, social and legislative deficiencies. Though the security situation is stable, ethnically motivated incidents continue to be reported in some areas of IDP and refugee return.

## The needs

A substantial number of IDPs have returned, but face legal, social, economic or political obstacles to reintegration. In recent years, as international aid has decreased, the Government has tried to step in to support for IDPs and returnees, for instance by rebuilding houses. However, in order for returns to be sustainable, broader economic, legal, security and social protection measures are needed.

Moreover, there is a critical need to address the situation of those IDPs who are unable or unwilling to return and need humanitarian assistance and support to integrate into society. There is also a need for a fair, equitable and transparent national legal framework and asylum system. The state education system is in need of a drastic overhaul.

## Main objectives

UNHCR has two main goals in BiH: First, it must find appropriate durable solutions for refugees and IDPs through the promotion of voluntary repatriation, sustainable return, local integration and naturalization. Second, it must support the Government in further enhancing its capacity to respond to the needs and rights of people of concern.

## Overall objectives

- Promote appropriate durable solutions for all groups of concern.
- Ensure all people of concern have access to protection, social and economic rights and services.
- Enhance the capacity of the national authorities to develop a functional national legal framework and asylum system compatible with international standards.
- Seek durable solutions for residents with specific needs in collective centres through cooperation with

the Government and advocacy among international agencies and donor governments.

- Reduce sexual and gender-based violence as well as trafficking of people of concern through expanded awareness-raising activities.

## Key targets

- All residents of residential centres receive food assistance and other relief items; all women of reproductive age receive hygiene items; 70 per cent of adult/adolescent residents participate in activities to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.
- All asylum-seekers are registered and possess legal documents.
- Some 200 Croatian refugees return home and receive repatriation grants prior to their departure; 50 refugees returning to Croatia receive transport assistance.
- About 100 Croatian refugees who opt to remain in BiH receive one-time assistance, such as construction packages, business grants, etc.
- All IDPs, asylum-seekers, refugees and returnees have access to free legal advice.
- Fifty vulnerable refugee families are helped to integrate locally by means of temporary monthly living allowances or vocational training and small business grants.
- Thirty IDP families with specific needs from collective centres are assisted to make sustainable returns or find other durable solutions.
- Twenty women victims of domestic violence or trafficking receive social and economic assistance.

## Strategy and activities

UNHCR's strategy for 2009 takes into account the many difficulties hampering return as well as the political, economic and social realities prevailing in BiH. Furthermore, it seeks to address legislative gaps that have an impact on refugees and asylum-seekers as well as others of concern.

Refugees from Croatia constitute the largest refugee population in BiH; some 7,000 of them still need durable solutions. The Office will continue its collaboration with the OSCE, European Commission and the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees within the 3x4 Initiative, which fosters conditions conducive to return. UNHCR will also enhance advocacy at the regional level to help the return process to Croatia.

For refugees from other parts of the former Yugoslavia, primarily Kosovo, very few of whom opt for voluntary repatriation, UNHCR will focus on coordinated assistance for local integration. Some will be considered for resettlement.

The focus on the sustainability of returns will be preserved, while UNHCR's assistance will be directed primarily at individuals with specific needs and extremely vulnerable groups.

Special attention will be paid to displaced people still living in collective accommodation. UNHCR will work with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) along with the State Commissions for Displaced People and Refugees to find durable solutions for these residents through housing reconstruction assistance, sustainability activities or social housing.

The Office will advocate among donors and international agencies for additional funds to meet the needs of returnees and the displaced, and will continue to lobby for the strengthening and harmonization of laws to safeguard the rights of all people of concern.

## Constraints

The complex domestic and regional political context will continue to affect operations in BiH. The ethnic divide in BiH makes design and implementation of uniform state policies and projects more difficult. Slow economic growth is likely to make it difficult for the Government to allocate enough resources to the national health and social services to meet the needs of refugees and IDPs.

## Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence	
Number of offices	1
Total staff	34
International	3
National	24
UNVs	4
JPO	2
Others	1



UNHCR and the Government support residents at the Salakovac reception centre

## Coordination

UNHCR will work closely with the authorities at all levels. The Office is a member of the Board of Principals chaired by the High Representative and the UN Country Team and participates in the 3x4 Initiative. UNHCR will also work with the OSCE, the European Commission, and donor embassies in Sarajevo and with multilateral and bilateral bodies.

### Partners

#### Implementing partners

**Government:** Ministries of Human Rights and Refugees; Security

**NGOs:** Bosnia and Herzegovina Humanitarian Logistics Service, Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative, Foundation for Local Democracy, Catholic Relief Services, Hilfswerk Austria, Vasa Prava BiH

#### Operational partners

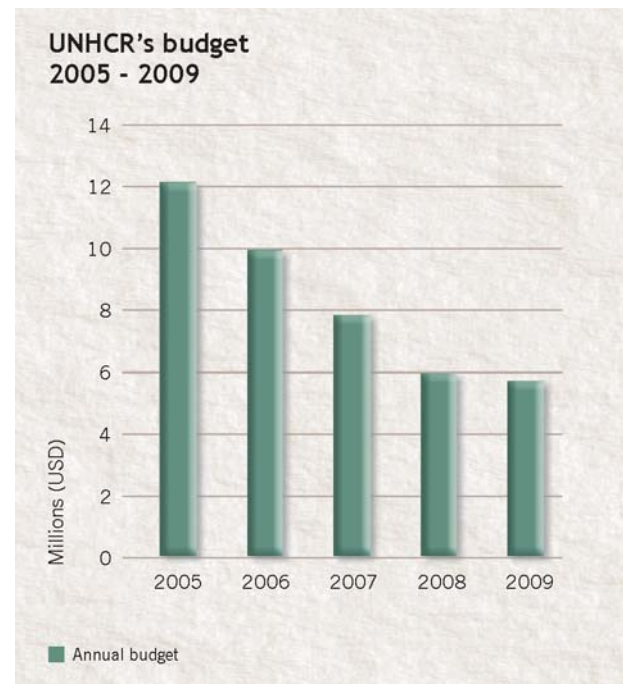
**Government:** Federation Ministry for Displaced Persons and Refugees, Republika Srpska Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons

**NGOs:** Hilfswerk Austria, Mercy Corps, Danish Refugee Council

**Others:** Council of Europe Development Bank, European Commission, World Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

## Financial information

Operational budgets for BiH began decreasing from 2002 until they reached relative stability in 2007. The budget covers the most essential sectors but does not address many needs. At the same time the budget and programme implementation are subject to pressure by steeply rising commodity and service prices as well as exchange rate fluctuations. Measures taken to mitigate exchange rate losses could not prevent a 10 per cent drop in the provision of assistance packages linked to sustainable return, reintegration and integration.



### Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual budget	
	2008	2009
Protection, monitoring and coordination	731,620	674,218
Community services	531,475	208,878
Domestic needs	745,877	382,890
Education	0	15,470
Food	182,846	116,027
Health	18,285	0
Income generation	0	61,881
Legal assistance	541,521	517,277
Operational support (to agencies)	147,362	175,675
Shelter and infrastructure	1,021,230	1,901,450
Transport and logistics	311,403	220,452
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>4,231,620</b>	<b>4,274,218</b>
Programme support	1,383,584	1,413,986
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,615,204</b>	<b>5,688,204</b>