

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE



UNHCR

2013 GLOBAL REPORT

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Croatia

Montenegro

Serbia (and Kosovo:
Security Council
resolution 1244 (1999))

The former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia



Under the Regional
Housing Programme, these
Serbian refugees in Croatia
have received housing

UNHCR / Z. FRANKOVIC



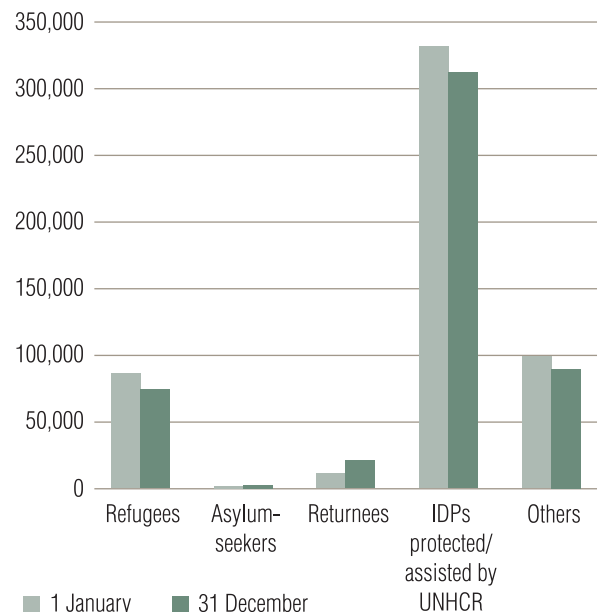
| Overview |



Highlights

- UNHCR and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) supported partner countries of the Regional Housing Programme (RHP) in developing housing projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. This marked the first stage in finding solutions for the most vulnerable refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees.
- Together with IOM, the Office assisted governments in addressing challenges arising from increasing mixed movements of refugees and migrants in a protection-sensitive way. A governmental roundtable in December identified related priorities.
- Montenegro acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and, with European Commission support, UNHCR and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, hosted a regional meeting aimed at tackling the long-term challenges of civil registration and documentation.
- UNHCR commenced consultations with concerned Governments in the western Balkans on the cessation of refugee status for those displaced from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia during the 1991-1995 conflicts, pursuant to the “ceased circumstances” clauses of the 1951 Convention.

People of concern to UNHCR in South-Eastern Europe | 2013



Working environment

Government data in South-Eastern Europe indicated that approximately 400,000 people in the subregion remained displaced. Of them, nearly 300,000 – including 200,000 IDPs – had outstanding needs resulting from the conflicts in the 1990s. Among these IDPs were approximately 80,000 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) minorities. The regional economic situation remained precarious, severely affecting the lives of people of concern to UNHCR.

Twenty years after the conflicts in South-Eastern Europe, approximately 20,000 individuals lacked civil registration and documentation as a result of social marginalization, compounded by factors related to the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and resulting displacement.

Moreover, more than 12,000 individuals sought asylum in South-Eastern Europe in 2013, at least 2,500 of whom were from the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria). Serbia continued to receive the majority, with just over 5,000 in 2013, while Montenegro reported an increase of 230 per cent on 2012, with more than 3,000 in 2013. The majority of applicants continued their journey, as very few were recognized as refugees.

The agreement between the authorities in Pristina and Belgrade, facilitated by the European Union and known as the Pristina-Belgrade Dialogue, contributed significantly to regional stability and promised hope for a solution for people displaced in 1999.

Achievements and impact

UNHCR helped the four partner countries of the RHP implement a system for selecting the most vulnerable beneficiaries. This included assisting in drafting regulations in States that lacked a legal framework and adjusting existing legal frameworks in others to ensure they reflected regionally-accepted UNHCR vulnerability criteria. Furthermore, the organization supported Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia in carrying out a regional public information campaign, with the aim of ensuring that all vulnerable displaced people eligible for housing assistance knew about the projects and their role in facilitating durable solutions. By year-end, some 300 vulnerable refugee and IDP families had been selected for assistance through these projects designed to facilitate the sustainable (re)integration of more than 8,000 individuals.

The Office assisted governments by assuming full responsibility for durable solutions in Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)) and welcomed support from the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, who visited Serbia and Kosovo in 2013. As IDP returns to Kosovo remained limited,

the organization assisted the Government of Serbia in developing a return strategy and in advocating for donor support to ensure durable solutions for around 90,000 IDPs. UNHCR also provided sustainable housing solutions, vocational training, income-generating activities, health and social services, and limited return-related support and legal assistance to extremely vulnerable IDPs.

Together with the European Commission and the OSCE-High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office assessed outstanding challenges in civil registration and documentation to help reduce statelessness in South-Eastern Europe, which mostly affected the RAE communities. The regional meeting held in Montenegro in October 2013 outlined the steps necessary to resolve remaining obstacles facing undocumented people. UNHCR and its partner organizations continued supporting those lacking the civil registration and documentation necessary for acquiring or confirming nationality, while Bosnia and Herzegovina amended its nationality law to facilitate the naturalization of stateless people and refugees.

In December, UNHCR and IOM co-organized a regional expert roundtable in Vienna for senior officials from the western Balkans and representatives of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), the European Commission, IOM and UNHCR, to identify areas where more targeted action could resolve existing challenges. The Governments agreed on priority areas and an action plan to be implemented, including protection sensitive entry mechanisms, reception arrangements and processing of asylum applications.

The organization consulted with concerned governments on issues related to the cessation of refugee status for those displaced from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as a result of the 1991-1995 conflicts, cessation clauses of the 1951 Convention, and discussed how cessation could be best integrated into, and support, the durable solutions process.

Constraints

Regional asylum systems were unprepared for the recent sharp rise in the number of new asylum-seekers. While most governments in the subregion had already adopted legislation in line with international norms, implementation sometimes remained insufficient. Difficulties in applying for asylum at borders, inadequate reception conditions and the lack of procedural safeguards in the refugee status determination (RSD) process posed serious challenges. In addition, exceptionally low recognition rates discouraged people in need of protection. Most countries in the subregion lacked solutions frameworks to address the needs of newly-arriving refugees and

other groups with specific needs from outside the region.

Implementation of the RHP was delayed during the preparatory process, and no housing solutions were provided in 2013. In 2013, only 81 returnee families received housing in Croatia, which corresponds to only 4 per cent of the number of housing units allocated in 2011.

The situation in the northern region of Mitrovica remained tense, hampering progress on plans to realize durable solutions for the many outstanding vulnerable IDPs. Kosovo continued to face economic difficulties, which restricted sustainable development and contributed to low rates of voluntary return and reintegration challenges for returnees. In addition, a lack of land allocation for displaced people (especially RAE minority communities) in need, coupled with tensions with local communities, also hindered the return process (fewer than 800 people returned in 2013).

Montenegro's lengthy procedures, particularly for refugees from Kosovo, meant that less than 64 per cent of refugees were successful in their application for foreigner status. Many were still awaiting local integration at year-end. Some 160 families registered to return from Montenegro to Kosovo, but the majority could not repatriate owing to the lack of available land, housing assistance and alternative accommodation.

Operations

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNHCR and partners concluded visits to all 255 known Roma communities and identified 417 individuals at risk of statelessness. The Office assisted 237 people in confirming their citizenship. Under the new mixed asylum migration initiative of UNHCR and IOM, the Ministry of Security's Sectors for Asylum and for Immigration, Service for Foreigners' Affairs and Border Police started a dialogue with regional counterparts. Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced a 53 per cent increase in new asylum-seekers compared to 2012, and granted refugee status to two individuals and subsidiary protection to 44 others – a 46 per cent higher recognition rate than in 2012. The organization's extensive advocacy contributed to amendments to the Law on Citizenship which came into force in November 2013, providing for the naturalization of refugees and stateless people after five years of stay in the country. UN development partners engaged with the Office to support local authorities with more inclusive planning for vulnerable IDPs and minority returnees in 20 prioritized municipalities.

In **Croatia**, UNHCR advocacy saw the fifth extension of the application deadline for the Country Housing Programme for former occupancy/tenancy rights holders outside the Areas of Special State Concern, resulting in some 1,500 new family applications. Croatia relaxed provisions enabling undocumented

Roma to acquire Croatian nationality and committed to resolving the status of Roma fully by 2020. The capacity of two reception centres was increased to accommodate 700 asylum-seekers. Croatia also adopted a Protocol to address the needs of unaccompanied and separated minors outside the asylum procedure; improved its framework for protection; and adopted the National Migration Policy and Integration Action Plan to assure the integration of those granted international protection.

In **Montenegro**, through outreach activities, 378 non-refugees and 300 refugees were identified as at risk of statelessness. An additional 42 people were successfully assisted in acquiring citizenship. The organization worked towards full implementation of the Government's strategy on durable solutions for ex-Yugoslav refugees: several laws, related to social protection and employment, were amended in order to enhance their integration prospects. Through free legal aid, 1,971 beneficiaries were able to apply for foreigner status, a prerequisite for their legal stay in Montenegro. As a principal partner in building the asylum system in Montenegro, UNHCR's recommendations on asylum system development were incorporated into the action plan of the accession negotiations with the European Union. A high number of asylum-seekers led the organization to intensify monitoring of RSD and reception conditions.

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the development and implementation of the UNHCR-funded social housing project, with 20 apartments, led to preparation for 100 social housing units co-funded by the Government and the European Union, on government-allocated land. The Office's advocacy resulted in more organized returns to Kosovo than in 2012, with the completion of individual houses and income-generating activities for returning families. Mixed migration movements continued apace, with 1,350 asylum-seekers from more than 30 countries registered. UNHCR supported the Government in drafting a national action plan to operationalize the migration and asylum system and contribute to the comprehensive regional approach for the western Balkans, based on full compliance with the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In **Serbia**, sustainable housing solutions provided by UNHCR, the Government and the European Union enabled 136 refugees and 709 IDPs to leave six collective centres that were subsequently closed. The Office and the Government sought systemic solutions for the legally invisible and undocumented Roma. Through UNHCR's statelessness project, almost 7,000 people were provided with legal aid and over 4,300 stateless Roma had their nationality confirmed. Upon UNHCR's initiative, an advocacy working group on asylum was formed, comprising key national and international stakeholders, to promote and support improvement of the legal framework and the establishment of a fair and efficient asylum system in Serbia.

In Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)), UNHCR helped build the capacity of the authorities responsible for RSD and policy and legislative development. These authorities completed legislative reforms, including in relation to the laws on asylum, foreigners and human trafficking. The Office also contributed to the drafting of the laws on asylum and on citizenship of Kosovo to ensure compliance with international standards. More than 1,000 children received birth certificates through late registration procedures. The new 2014-2018 Strategy for Communities and Returns and its Action Plan was

adopted by the Ministry for Communities and Returns, and durable solutions were provided for 92 returnees of displaced RAE minority communities returning from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro. Overall, more than 700 displaced people voluntarily returned to Kosovo from within the region. The informal settlement of Leposavic, the last camp in Kosovo, which has hosted hundreds of Kosovar Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian displaced people for more than 14 years, was closed.

| Financial information |

UNHCR's 2013 financial requirements of USD 50.9 million for the subregion were USD 12.7 million less than in 2012. This was due to the progressive downscaling of operations, as States assumed more responsibility for implementing durable solutions and UNHCR focused mainly on protection monitoring. Available funding

allowed expenditure of USD 27 million, with the operation in Serbia representing the highest proportion at 29 per cent. The gap in funding limited the Office's ability to provide solutions for the most vulnerable refugees and IDPs, as well as for the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

Budget and expenditure in South-Eastern Europe | USD

Operation		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Budget	3,401,638	1,635,389	0	4,117,966	9,154,993
	Expenditure	2,284,727	988,930	0	2,413,281	5,686,938
Croatia	Budget	1,622,763	408,355	2,969,382	0	5,000,500
	Expenditure	899,376	293,572	1,763,381	0	2,956,329
Kosovo ¹	Budget	3,127,562	1,371,306	4,251,858	216,667	8,967,393
	Expenditure	1,199,178	1,218,992	3,211,855	0	5,630,025
Montenegro	Budget	4,315,047	247,815	0	0	4,562,862
	Expenditure	2,421,128	169,170	0	0	2,590,297
Serbia	Budget	2,133,223	1,202,359	0	15,915,225	19,250,806
	Expenditure	1,394,361	1,044,916	0	5,389,097	7,828,375
The former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	Budget	3,598,315	385,829	0	0	3,984,144
	Expenditure	1,946,641	317,083	0	0	2,263,724
Total budget		18,198,548	5,251,053	7,221,240	20,249,857	50,920,698
Total expenditure		10,145,410	4,032,664	4,975,236	7,802,378	26,955,688

¹ S/RES/1244 (1999)

Voluntary contributions to South-Eastern Europe | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA					
European Union	302,110				302,110
Germany			373,134		373,134
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security			11,439		11,439
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA Total	302,110		384,574		686,684
CROATIA					
Croatia				70,032	70,032
European Union		302,429			302,429
CROATIA Total		302,429		70,032	372,460
KOSOVO¹					
European Union		648,404			648,404
KOSOVO Total		648,404			648,404
MONTENEGRO					
European Union	189,519				189,519
MONTENEGRO Total	189,519				189,519
SERBIA					
European Union	141,006		761,792		902,798
Private donors in Serbia			20,416		20,416
Russian Federation			100,000		100,000
SERBIA Total	141,006		882,208		1,023,214
Total	632,636	950,833	1,266,782	70,032	2,920,282

¹ S/RES/1244 (1999)

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM)