



Working environment

The context

The Government of the Russian Federation is facing challenges with issues related to migration and demographic change. It has expressed interest in adopting a new refugee law. UNHCR is helping with the drafting of the new law.

Since 2007, there has been considerable improvement in the availability of asylum and documentation for people of concern to UNHCR. A reorganized and strengthened Federal Migration Service has processed asylum claims with enhanced fairness and efficiency. This has allowed UNHCR to focus its attention on building national capacity in refugee matters, sharing best practices in refugee status determination (RSD), supporting the appeals process in general and assisting with individual appeals.

The security situation in the northern Caucasus remains difficult. UNHCR has had limited access to people of concern in that area, especially after the closure of its office in Ingushetia in early 2007 for security reasons. The opening of an office in Grozny awaits the agreement of the federal authorities.

The needs

People of concern in the Russian Federation (excluding the northern Caucasus) require protection as well as humanitarian assistance, including nominal financial support and medical services.

In the northern Caucasus, there are some 16,500 internally displaced people, of whom 13,000 live in Ingushetia and 3,500 in Dagestan. Approximately 25 per cent of those in Ingushetia live in temporary housing, while the rest have found private accommodation. UNHCR is working with the authorities to identify the most appropriate durable solutions for

these IDPs. There are some 55,000 displaced people living in Chechnya, mostly in private accommodation.

North Ossetia-Alania is host to some 12,800 refugees (including stateless persons) and those forced to flee their homes during the conflict in the early 1990s. Some 23 per cent of the refugees live in collective centres. It is estimated that up to 6,000 people may seek accommodation in North Ossetia-Alania this winter as a consequence of the recent conflict. Most are expected to live with relatives or host families.



Main objectives

- Support the development of an asylum system that meets international standards and ensure full and unhindered access to asylum and protection.
- Promote accession to the Statelessness Conventions.
- Identify and pursue appropriate durable solutions for refugees.
- Help meet the assistance and protection needs of IDPs and returnees.
- Work with development and other actors on integration and reintegration.
- Strengthen public information activities to raise awareness of displacement issues.
- Develop local fundraising capacity.

Key targets

- All asylum-seekers, refugees and IDPs have legal support, proper documents and effective judicial protection.
- All IDPs and refugees in the northern Caucasus are provided with permanent shelter by the end of 2009.
- Returns to Chechnya are voluntary.
- Refugees and asylum-seekers in need of international protection, particularly in Moscow and St. Petersburg have access to basic, preventive and reproductive health services, including HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment programmes.
- Refugee and asylum-seeker children have access to education.
- Cases of statelessness reported to the Office are provided with assistance.
- Training on statelessness and citizenship is supported at the institutional level.
- Local fund raising is increased by targeting the private sector.
- Public information programmes combat xenophobia and encourage more tolerant attitudes towards populations of concern to UNHCR.

Strategy and activities

UNHCR will improve protection for populations of concern, including through support for local integration. Resettlement will remain an important durable solutions option for some refugees.

The Office will provide legal advice, analysis and training in the area of asylum and refugee law and will cooperate with the authorities on legislative revisions. It will conduct advocacy and promotional activities. Furthermore, UNHCR will encourage accession to the Statelessness Conventions and support efforts to find solutions to statelessness.

In the northern Caucasus, UNHCR's collaborative strategy with the Government and the international community will shift from humanitarian assistance to recovery and development. Free legal assistance to IDPs, refugees and war-affected populations will be provided through legal counselling centres run by UNHCR's local NGO partners.

In North Ossetia-Alania, UNHCR will address shelter needs and work to regularize the legal status of refugees. Refugees willing to return will be eligible for UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme. In Chechnya, UNHCR will monitor refugee and IDP returns. It will work closely with the authorities to identify and support vulnerable people of concern who are unable to benefit from government housing programmes. In Ingushetia and Dagestan, UNHCR will help to find durable solutions, including local integration, for IDPs.

Constraints

Prospects for local integration in the Russian Federation are limited, often leaving resettlement as the only viable durable solution for refugees. In the northern Caucasus, especially in Ingushetia, the overall security environment remains a concern. In addition, the lack of shelter and employment makes the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs difficult.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence	
Number of offices	2
Total staff	64
International	11
National	42
UNVs	8
JPOs	3

Coordination

UNHCR cooperates with government counterparts at the federal level and in the republics. A northern Caucasus theme group within the UN Country Team which was created following the closure of the OCHA office in the Russian Federation will ensure continued coordination with all actors. UNHCR will retain its lead role in the protection and shelter sectors.

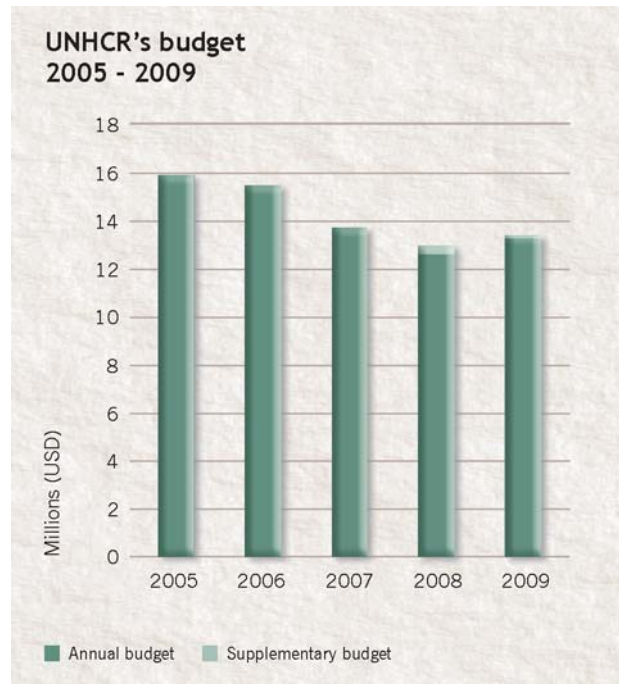
Partners
Implementing partners
NGOs: Association of Media Managers, Children's Fund (North Ossetia-Alania), Civic Assistance, Danish Refugee Council, Equilibre-Solidarity, Ethnosfera, Guild of Russian Filmmakers, Magee Womancare International, Memorial Human Rights Centre, Nizam, Stichting Russian Justice Initiative, St. Petersburg Centre of International Cooperation of the Red Cross, St. Petersburg Society of the Red Cross, Vesta
Others: IOM, UNV
Operational partners
Government agencies: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Office of the General Prosecutor of the Russian Federation; Headquarters of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, Civil Defence and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters (EMERCOM) of the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic, the Republics of Ingushetia and North Ossetia-Alania; Federal Migration Service (FMS) of the Russian Federation, and Departments of the Federal Migration Service in the regions; Judicial Department under the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, Border Guards Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation; Government of the Chechen Republic, Government of the Republic of Ingushetia, Government of North Ossetia-Alania, Moscow City Education Department, Ombudsman of the Russian Federation, Ombudsman of the Chechen Republic
NGOs: Psychological Support Centre Gratis, Caucasian Refugee Council
Others: Council of Europe, European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UNAIDS, UNDP, Canadian High Commission

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	Afghanistan	2,980	2,980	2,980	2,980
	Georgia	450	450	450	450
	Various	300	300	300	300
Asylum-seekers	Afghanistan	400	400	400	400
	Various	100	100	100	100
Returnees (refugees)		200	200	300	300
IDPs		73,730	73,730	70,000	70,000
Returnees (IDPs)		1,500	1,500	1,300	1,300
Stateless		40,000	40,000	35,000	35,000
Others of concern	Afghanistan	61,800	1,800	41,000	1,000
	Russia	132,580	45,260	132,580	45,260
	Various	2,420	2,420	2,360	2,360
Total		316,460	169,140	286,730	159,450

Financial information

In the Russian Federation, budgets have fluctuated but generally decreased since the mass displacement of people from Chechnya in late 1999-2000. Though humanitarian needs have indeed diminished, transition from relief to longer-term solutions, in particular, housing is becoming increasingly costly. In spite of substantial progress in developing the national asylum system, UNHCR's protection activities remain labour-intensive and it will require a few more years to fully resolve the situation of protracted displacement.



Budget (USD)						
Activities and services	2008			2009		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget Georgia Crisis	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget Georgia Crisis	Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	3,616,867	63,750	3,680,617	4,057,732	20,000	4,077,732
Community services	591,924	0	591,924	641,336	0	641,336
Domestic needs	402,775	80,000	482,775	0	5,000	5,000
Education	327,924	0	327,924	216,311	0	216,311
Health	989,403	0	989,403	999,600	0	999,600
Legal assistance	3,011,791	4,213	3,016,004	3,503,784	0	3,503,784
Operational support (to agencies)	688,496	24,300	712,796	581,073	0	581,073
Shelter and infrastructure	1,039,437	75,000	1,114,437	984,345	20,000	1,004,345
Transport and logistics	0	141,487	141,487	0	50,000	50,000
Total operations	10,668,617	388,750	11,057,367	10,984,181	95,000	11,079,181
Programme support	1,843,082	11,250	1,854,332	2,204,289	5,000	2,209,289
Total	12,511,699	400,000	12,911,699	13,188,470	100,000	13,288,470

Note: Supplementary programme budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.