

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Promote the sustainable voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons, to and within the country, by strengthening the ability of public authorities and local institutions to meet their needs, and by providing multi-sectoral assistance to areas willing to accept the return of minority groups; assist the Government to meet the needs of 75,000 refugees newly arrived from Kosovo and other parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia), by providing direct support for their basic care, as well as for legislative reform. UNHCR's overall strategy was to abandon large-scale rehabilitation and reconstruction and, instead, strengthen the capacity of public authorities and other local institutions to meet the challenge.



Persons of Concern

MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED	PER CENT FEMALE	PER CENT < 18
Croatia (Refugees)	39,600	0	-	-
Yugoslavia FR (Refugees)*	26,100	1,600	43.7	45.8
Others of Concern	882,500**	-	-	-
Returned in 1999	32,000	480	-	-

* Of the new arrivals from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, some 45,700 had repatriated voluntarily by the end of the year.

** Including 810,000 IDPs, as well as 72,500 IDPs who returned during the past two years.

Impact

- Key legislation was adopted or amended to deal with amnesty, return, citizenship and property. UNHCR-trained local lawyers ran an extensive network of legal aid and information centres, advising refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and representing them in court.
- By mid-1999, the Return Application Database System was fully operational within and between the two Entities (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska). It facilitated planning by furnishing valuable information on the likely timing and destination of return movements.
- Within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, UNHCR and the authorities prepared 56 projects aimed at achieving the sustainable return of minority groups.

Income and Expenditure - SP Activities (USD)

WORKING BUDGET	INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS*	OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE**	TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
62,852,416	8,445,529	50,369,773	58,815,302	56,279,894

* Includes contributions earmarked for the Special Operation in South-Eastern Europe.

** Includes opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

- UNHCR worked closely with the Government to amend the Instruction on Temporary Admission to Bosnia and Herzegovina of Refugees from the Territories of Kosovo and Metohija, to include all persons from Yugoslavia seeking protection on a group basis. The Instruction thus provided the legal basis for the protection of a total of 75,000 refugees from Yugoslavia (principally Kosovo and Sandzak provinces).
- Thanks to effective co-operation between UNHCR, the authorities and other institutions, the basic needs of the refugees from Kosovo were met.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

Since December 1995, UNHCR has been implementing Annex 7 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Agreement), which provides for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. The Office of the High Representative (OHR), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) continued to play an important role in urging full implementation of the Dayton Agreement throughout the year.

Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed a large-scale influx of refugees from Kosovo and elsewhere in Yugoslavia that peaked at 75,000 refugees in June. With UNHCR support, the authorities amended legislation that provided the legal basis for the admission to safety and protection of these refugees, and assistance for them.

The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe was launched in June 1999 to harness the support of the international community for reforms and investment aimed at stabilising the entire region. It provides a comprehensive regional framework for tackling population displacement issues in support of the Dayton Agreement's Peace Implementation Council and the Humanitarian Issues Working Group.

Constraints

Although co-operation between the Entities (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska) improved markedly in 1999, economic, political, and administrative constraints hampered the return process, especially the return of minorities to their homes. The process of privatisation continued to be slow and the legislative framework was inadequate to attract foreign capital. Persistent political tensions, fuelled further by the decision on the Brcko arbitration and events in Kosovo, made the security climate in the Republika Srpska unpredictable. As a result, UNHCR and its partners considerably reduced their field presence in the Entity for several months, leading to delays in the implementation of some projects. A major constraint in addressing the influx from Yugoslavia was the authorities' relatively limited experience of asylum-related matters.

Funding

Donor fatigue and the huge demands generated by the Kosovo emergency obliged UNHCR to reduce and modify its assistance programme for returnees and IDPs.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

UNHCR monitored the protection needs of newly arrived refugees from Yugoslavia, identified and processed individuals for resettlement and family reunification, and established a voluntary repatriation programme for Kosovo Albanians and Sandzak Muslims. By the end of the year, some 45,700 refugees had returned to Yugoslavia, 3,100 of them as part of assisted or organised movements. The amended Instruction on Temporary Admission to Bosnia and Herzegovina of Refugees from the Territories of Kosovo and Metohija provided a firmer basis from which to work on behalf of asylum-seekers in the future. It also facilitated UNHCR's work to identify and process individuals for resettlement and family reunification.

In 1999, some 32,000 refugees repatriated to Bosnia and Herzegovina and 43,385 IDPs returned to their homes (of these movements, some 41,000 were considered to be "minority returns"). Ten Information Centres merged with the Legal Aid Centres, creating a comprehensive legal aid network. The network can now lodge suits on behalf of refugees, returnees and IDPs before national courts and human rights institutions in selected cases likely to create legal precedents. More than 150 complex legal cases were dealt with. UNHCR also continued to work (with other international organisations active in the field) on a litigation strategy for certain types of complex cases. Two legal journals were published during the year, in order to facilitate the dissemination of information and further strengthen the protection network.

The Return Application Database System was fully operational within and between the two Entities. This database is the main source of information on the intention to return and is used for planning purposes by the authorities and the Reconstruction and Return Task Force (RRTF). It also gives applicants information on the status of the property to which they plan to return. By year-end, 67,277 applications had been received for return to the Federation, and 49,230 for return to the Republika Srpska. In December UNHCR handed over responsibility for the database to the

Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications, as well as the two relevant Entity Ministries.

The Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees (CRPC) conducted a survey on the preferences and intentions of refugees and IDPs. More than 3,000 interviews were conducted throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia. The survey confirmed that the majority (61 per cent) wished to return to occupy property owned prior to the war. Those surveyed also confirmed that concerns for personal security and security of property were the main barriers to return. Nineteen per cent indicated a preference to sell, lease or exchange their pre-war property if it could not be rebuilt. Of those interviewed, 67 per cent had claims still pending, and 21 per cent had already been advised by the competent authorities that they would be unable to return until alternative accommodation could be found for the current occupants.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: This was the last year of UNHCR's humanitarian assistance for the general population, including vulnerable groups: the elderly, the handicapped, severely traumatised individuals, and households with no income. Special assistance, such as home care, distribution of hygiene items and psychosocial support, was provided through outreach programmes for isolated and frail elderly and disabled persons. UNHCR also initiated a project to enable local structures to continue these activities once its programmes have been discontinued.

Crop Production: Two tractors were purchased and used for site preparation and crop production activities in Serb minority returnee communities in Mostar.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: The following non-food items were distributed in response to the needs and pattern of minority returns across the country: beds (12,200), blankets (25,000), heaters (5,500), kitchen sets (5,500) and mattresses (16,200). This assistance made the return of minority groups more sustainable, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Education: UNHCR concentrated its limited resources on the rehabilitation of infrastructure in selected areas to which minorities were returning. Small-scale rehabilitation of two schools was undertaken, benefiting the entire community. UNHCR also supported initiatives to provide vocational and skills training (1,000 direct beneficiaries, including school children).

Food: In co-operation with WFP, UNHCR was responsible for providing food aid (through local partners) for specifically targeted groups: residents of collective centres in Republika Srpska, persons transiting through nine transit/reception centres in the Federation, refugees from Kosovo as well as extremely vulnerable minority returnees. A total of 11,000 residents in collective centres and 9,000 refugees from Yugoslavia benefited.

Health/Nutrition: UNHCR implemented specific health and medical assistance activities in selected areas to which minority groups returned. Projects were matched up with activities in the housing sector, in order to enhance the sustainability of the returnee communities. These included small-scale rehabilitation of war-damaged public health care facilities as well as transport for patients receiving medical care. Some 20,000 people were transported to medical facilities for treatment using 15 ambulances donated by a charitable foundation.

Income Generation: UNHCR concentrated its basic income-generation activities in areas to which minority groups returned in both the Federation and the Republika Srpska, to provide basic income as a means to make return sustainable. A total of 6,891 persons received grants to start small business activities. Half of this total went to individuals who returned to their former homes. This was the last year of UNHCR's involvement in micro-credit projects. Activities were implemented in co-ordination with the World Bank. Service-providers will continue using the revolving fund established for this purpose and UNHCR will retain a monitoring role in the year 2000. The Bosnian Women's Initiative continued to help women's groups and associations. During the year, 157 micro-projects were implemented through NGOs acting as umbrella agencies, benefiting an estimated 18,100 people. Negotiations to hand over the project to the World Bank or a development agency were not concluded in 1999.

Legal Assistance: UNHCR took the lead in pushing for legislative reform relating to displacement, return and repatriation, as well as citizenship and asylum, in co-operation with the Council of Europe and OHR. UNHCR drafted and/or provided comments on 16 pieces of legislation and set in place mechanisms to monitor implementation. The Office also engaged in legal and administrative capacity building. This entailed training and support for the relevant authorities and Legal Aid Centres, including the provision of expert legal and

technical advice. A network of Legal Advice Centres operated by local and international NGOs provided information on access to essential services and entitlements, and offered legal advice regarding citizenship, property, legal documents, passports and asylum laws. Some 60,000 people benefited from these services.

Operational Support (to Agencies): UNHCR funded capacity-building activities (through umbrella agencies and other partners) as well as a portion of the operational support costs of its implementing partners.

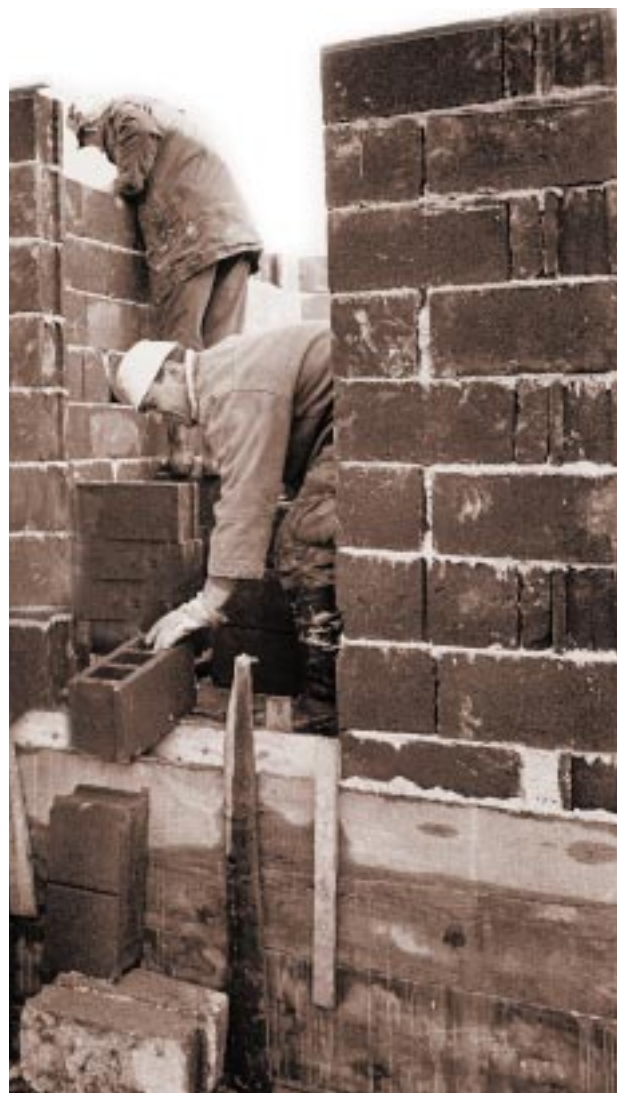
Sanitation: Human waste control activities were financed in selected areas to which minority groups returned, and where no other agency was operational (benefiting 5,000 people) and in collective centres (11,000 people).

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: The year 1999 marked the last year of UNHCR's large-scale shelter programme, which had been introduced in 1996 to support the return of refugees and IDPs. A total of 851 housing units were re-built (245 in northern B and H, 256 in southern B and H, 150 in eastern B and H, and 200 in western B and H) with the help of eight partners. For each recipient the programme had one living-room rebuilt, plus one bedroom and one bathroom (to International Management Group [IMG] standards) and provided doors, windows, bricks, roofing material etc. Implementing partners sub-contracted the work to local builders through a competitive bidding process. Most of the 3,404 people who benefited from this activity were minority returnees, 67 per cent of whom were unemployed. Just over half were women, including 18.6 per cent who were heads of household. There were still some 11,000 residents in 110 collective centres throughout the country – most of them vulnerable and elderly. UNHCR decided to reduce material assistance to this group by early 2000 and concentrate on finding durable solutions on a case-by-case basis. To respond to the arrival of more than 70,000 refugees from Kosovo, UNHCR funded the construction of two new collective centres, bringing to four the total used by these refugees. In co-operation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre, UNHCR co-ordinated six de-mining teams during the year, concentrating on areas to which minority groups returned.

Transport/Logistics: UNHCR had planned to close down the warehouses in Banja Luka and Mostar by the end of June, but postponed the closure of Banja Luka

owing to the Kosovo emergency. UNHCR's inter-Entity bus lines supported minority group movement inside the country and initial assessment visits by IDPs inspecting their former houses. A total of 14 bus lines operated across the country at the beginning of the year. Another seven were added and nine lines were taken over by commercial companies, leaving 12 UNHCR-operated bus lines by the end of 1999. More than 65,000 passengers used these buses during the year. Negotiations continued for the launch of an inter-State bus line between western Bosnia and Herzegovina (Banja Luka) and Croatia.

Water: Water-supply projects were supported in selected areas to which minority groups returned, and where no other agency was operational. Limited assistance was provided for the rehabilitation of water supply systems (closely co-ordinated with the IMG). These activities benefited 5,000 people in areas to which minority groups returned and 11,000 people in collective centres.



ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

The operation was managed from UNHCR's country office in Sarajevo, supported by 23 field-based offices. As from March, during the Kosovo emergency, UNHCR temporarily re-deployed 23 per cent of its staff to Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Kosovo. By year's end, the total number of staff in the country was 289 (57 international staff, including seven JPOs, and 232 national staff). The UNHCR Special Envoy for the Balkans and his staff relocated from Sarajevo to Pristina in June 1999.

Working with Others

UNHCR worked with 32 NGO implementing partners, of which 17 were local NGOs. In addition, some 115 small associations were funded through the Bosnian Women's Initiative. During the Kosovo emergency, UNHCR established NGO co-ordination mechanisms in Sarajevo, and worked closely with IOM on activities related to resettlement, the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme, and subsequent repatriation. To hasten legislative reform, UNHCR worked closely with OHR, OSCE and UNMIBH on the Returnee Monitoring Framework. By co-chairing the RRTF in various field locations, together with OHR, UNHCR was able to provide guidance to members of the regional and local RRTFs (especially on minority return projects). The Office also worked closely on contingency plans (for sudden massive influxes of refugees) with the Stabilisation Force, donors, and international relief agencies.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

UNHCR's overall strategy was to begin to phase out large-scale rehabilitation and reconstruction and, instead, focus on activities to strengthen the ability of public authorities and local institutions better to meet the needs of returnees and IDPs, as well as new asylum-seekers. This strategy was in part pursued through energetic support for the Stability Pact process. A major challenge is to engage a broad family of institutions in a more comprehensive regional and national post-war effort to find durable solutions for the region's displaced.

Offices

Sarajevo	Jajce	Sanski Most
Banja Luka	Konjic	Stolac
Bihac	Livno	Travnik
Brcko	Mostar	Trebinje
Bugojno	Nevesinje	Tuzla
Doboj	Orasje	Visegrad
Drvar	Pale	Zenica
Gorazde	Prijedor	Zvornik

Partners

Government Agencies

Federation Ministry for Social Affairs, Displaced Persons and Refugees
Local Initiative Department Federation
Local Initiative Department Republika Srpska
Ministry for Civil Affairs and Communication
Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons of Republika Srpska
National Support Unit

NGOs

Action Contre la Faim
Adventist Development and Relief Agency
Agency for Refugee Assistance
American Refugee Committee
Bosnian Humanitarian Logistic Services
BOSPO
Technisches Hilfswerk
Catholic Relief Services
Center for Affirmation of Human Rights and Liberties
Center for Social Care of the Elderly West Mostar
Center for Social Care of the Elderly East Mostar
Danish Refugee Council
Delphi International, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
Impact Teams International
Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Rescue Committee
IUSTITIA
Japan Emergency NGOs
Malteser Hilfsdienst
Mercy Corps/Scottish European Aid
Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad
New Bosnia Fund
Norwegian Refugee Council
Patrija
Plavi Most
Project Implementation Unit
Ruhama
Sumejja
Tango
United Methodist Committee on Relief
World Vision Bosnia

Other

United Nations Development Programme
UNDP/BH Mine Action Center

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects*		Prior Years' Projects*	
	Special Programmes	Total	Special Programmes	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	12,472,496	12,472,496	258,789	258,789
Community Services	1,618,086	1,618,086	1,097,464	1,097,464
Crop Production	56,772	56,772	1	1
Domestic Needs / Household Support	536,749	536,749	1,015,623	1,015,623
Education	214,024	214,024	697,454	697,454
Food	1,791,015	1,791,015	226,547	226,547
Health / Nutrition	619,131	619,131	386,437	386,437
Income Generation	3,458,729	3,458,729	1,987,034	1,987,034
Legal Assistance	1,299,032	1,299,032	877,570	877,570
Operational Support (to Agencies)	3,725,414	3,725,414	770,833	770,833
Sanitation	263,230	263,230	99,734	99,734
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	7,862,292	7,862,292	7,698,799	7,698,799
Transport / Logistics	1,247,576	1,247,576	360,018	360,018
Water	337,044	337,044	264,465	264,465
Instalments with Implementing Partners	12,110,653	12,110,653	(5,798,708)	(5,798,708)
Sub - total Operational	47,612,241	47,612,241	9,942,061	9,942,061
Administrative Support	2,287,957	2,287,957	63,550	63,550
Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries	49,900,198	49,900,198	10,005,611	10,005,611
Unliquidated Obligations	6,379,696	6,379,696	0	0
TOTAL	56,279,894	56,279,894	10,005,611	10,005,611
Instalments with Implementing Partners				
Payments Made	33,207,413	33,207,413	10,050,006	10,050,006
Reporting Received	21,096,761	21,096,761	15,848,713	15,848,713
Balance	12,110,653	12,110,653	(5,798,708)	(5,798,708)
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	8,979,875	8,979,875
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	1,063,159	1,063,159
Currency Adjustment	3	3	(370,453)	(370,453)
Outstanding 31 December	12,110,656	12,110,656	1,747,556	1,747,556
Unliquidated Obligations				
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	10,509,477	10,509,477
New Obligations	56,279,894	56,279,894	0	0
Disbursements	49,900,198	49,900,198	10,005,611	10,005,611
Cancellations	0	0	503,866	503,866
Outstanding 31 December	6,379,696	6,379,696	0	0

* There was no General Programme expenditure in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

