

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Operational highlights

- In December 2007, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR), in close cooperation with UNHCR, began revising the Strategy for Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The strategy will serve as a binding guide for authorities and organizations involved in supporting displaced people and the return process.
- In the course of the year, UNHCR emphasized the provision of protection, legal assistance and social outreach for returning refugees, as well as for those who cannot yet repatriate and need assistance in their place of refuge.
- The advice provided by the Office on draft legislation, complemented by training aimed at institution-building, led to the adoption of a by-law which regulates access to health and health insurance for recognized refugees.
- Sustainable-return grants benefited some 1,500 people in 2007.
- UNHCR participated in a project to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking. It is the first project in the country that targets returnee and internally displaced women who are victims of domestic violence and trafficking.



enhance cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The failure to introduce substantive political, administrative and socioeconomic reforms in the country forced the international community to extend the mandate of the Office of the High Representative for another year until June 2008.

## Working environment

In 2007, the process of forming the State and Entity governments after the 2006 elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina moved slowly. Throughout the year, the international community exhorted the Government to make progress in improving the police and public broadcasting services, enact constitutional reform, and

In mid-2007, the Office identified the lack of reconstruction and infrastructure assistance as the main obstacle to the sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Along with a high unemployment rate and slow economic recovery, which affect the entire population, returnees faced discriminatory practices that affected their ability to find employment. Due to differing school curricula and alphabets, access to the education system is limited.

UNHCR advocated for people of concern with specific needs to be included in legislation and in activities to find durable solutions.

## Achievements and impact

### Main objectives

- Support the national authorities to develop an asylum system that meets international standards.
- Collaborate with governments, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Commission (EC) to bring the Sarajevo Declaration or “3x4 Initiative”, fostering conditions conducive to return, to a successful close.
- Protect and support asylum-seekers and refugees.
- Find durable solutions for refugees and temporary admission card holders.
- Support returnees and the local integration of IDPs through shelter assistance and micro-credit projects.
- Encourage national authorities and development actors to tackle the challenges of post-war recovery, including political and economic transition issues and the rehabilitation of infrastructure.

### Protection and solutions

Insufficient capacity to make laws and administer regulations was the main obstacle affecting UNHCR’s support for refugees, IDPs, potentially stateless people and those with specific needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some progress was made in 2007 with the passage of by-laws, and UNHCR supported the drafting of the by-law regulating civil registration which entered into force in July 2007. The by-law fills gaps between domestic legislation and the international and national refugee law framework. The law directly concerns Roma groups, particularly Roma children, as the lack of registration and documentation means that they are in a position of de facto statelessness, preventing them from accessing basic services, including schools.

In 2007, UNHCR reinvigorated its involvement in IDP and returnee-related issues. After a review of the return process, it became apparent that a large number of people are in need of social support. In close consultation with the MHRR and other key actors, the Office began the revision of the *Strategy for Implementation of Annex VII (General Framework Agreement for Peace)*. This focused on return and repossession or reconstruction of houses.

Some 7,000 individuals with specific needs live in collective centres. UNHCR advocated for local integration as a durable solution for this group. However, to realize this right, legislation must be amended and resources redirected, as there is no effective social welfare mechanism to ensure that the basic needs of these people are met.

In response to the cessation of the temporary admission regime for people from Kosovo and the lack of a local integration option, UNHCR increased its resettlement efforts. Resettlement is being explored for a large portion of the remaining Roma and other groups from Kosovo with specific protection concerns. A total of some 180 people departed for resettlement in 2007. UNHCR assisted refugees and former habitual residents of Croatia to repatriate; close to 500 returned in 2007. However, the number of returnees remains low.

### Activities and assistance

**Community services:** Community activities were conducted for asylum-seekers being accommodated in Reception Centres: some 240 children attended various performances, and 65 per cent of the female and 28 per cent of the male population participated in training to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. Some 140 women – victims of domestic violence and trafficking – were accommodated in two safe houses. In 2007, approximately 1,500 people were involved in 87 projects in agriculture, community development, the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure, income generation and small-scale repairs.

| Persons of concern   |         |                |                           |                 |                   |
|----------------------|---------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Type of population   | Origin  | Total          | Of whom assisted by UNHCR | Per cent female | Per cent under 18 |
| Refugees             | Croatia | 7,200          | 1,700                     | 50              | 18                |
|                      | Various | 200            | 80                        |                 |                   |
| Asylum-seekers       | Serbia  | 600            | 600                       | 47              | 53                |
|                      | Various | 20             | 20                        |                 |                   |
| Returnees (refugees) | Various | 3,100          | 10                        | -               | -                 |
| IDPs                 |         | 131,000        | 46,100                    | 52              | 19                |
| Returnees (IDPs)     |         | 4,500          | 4,500                     | 52              | -                 |
| <b>Total</b>         |         | <b>146,620</b> | <b>53,010</b>             |                 |                   |



UNHCR photo

UNHCR supported renovation of this collective center in Kravice, near Bratunac, Bosnia.

**Domestic needs and household support:** Hygiene parcels were distributed to some 560 refugees and asylum-seekers. Some 470 Croatian returnees were provided with voluntary repatriation grants and 10 refugee families received monthly living allowances to facilitate their integration into the community.

**Education:** UNHCR assisted some 30 victims of violence and trafficking by funding formal education and vocational training, enhancing their employment chances. All refugee and asylum-seeker children in the reception centres and their vicinity attended primary school and received textbooks and materials.

**Food:** Food rations were distributed to all refugees and asylum-seekers (close to 380 as of year end) in the two reception centres. Complementary food parcels were distributed to families with infants and those with special nutritional needs.

**Health and nutrition:** The Office provided health care for more than 20 victims of domestic violence and trafficking. Primary health care was made available to all people residing in the reception centres.

**Income generation:** UNHCR supported the economic self-reliance of 30 victims of domestic violence and

human trafficking through individually tailored income-generation projects.

**Legal assistance:** Vasa Prava Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNHCR's implementing partner, assisted close to 27,600 people, including over 15,000 new beneficiaries, by providing legal services ranging from advice to representation before administrative and judicial bodies.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR helped partners protect asylum-seekers and refugees through the deployment of trained UNVs.

**Shelter and other infrastructure:** UNHCR assisted the MHRR and the Ministry of Security to maintain and improve living conditions in the two reception centres. The Office helped to reconstruct more than 40 houses for some 160 people with special protection needs, enabling them to leave the collective centres.

**Transport and logistics:** UNHCR provided transportation for some 470 refugees returning to Croatia and close to 30 returning to Kosovo. Roma children were provided with transportation to attend schools. Some 80 returnees with specific needs were transported to their reconstructed pre-war homes.

## Constraints

Internal developments in some countries of the region stalled the “3x4 Initiative” process. Returns to Kosovo were insignificant, as its political status remained a subject of discussion. At the same time, dire economic and social conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina limited prospects for the sustainable local integration of refugees, returnees and IDPs.

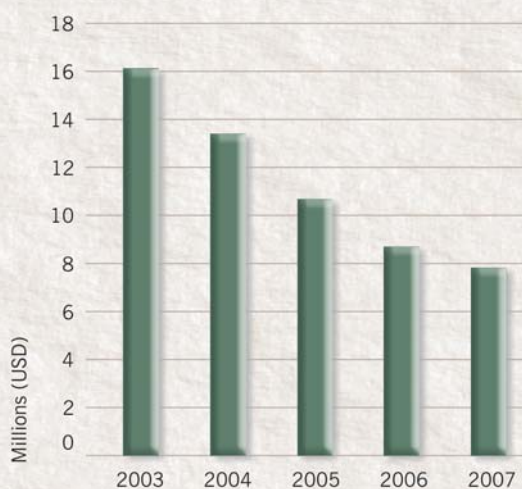
## Financial information

The financial strain on the operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007 was significant in view of the rapidly declining US dollar against the local currency. The compensation provided was limited (close to 13 per cent of the budgetary loss by mid-2007) and it did not cover the shortfall. Moreover, the overall funding available for the operation was 10 per cent less than in 2006, while the cost of materials and services in the country increased significantly. This placed additional constraints on the availability of assistance for people with specific protection needs.

## Management

The UNHCR operation is managed by the Representation office in Sarajevo. The field offices in Mostar, Tuzla and Banja Luka were closed as of June 2007. By year end, UNHCR had three international staff, 28 national employees – including five national officers, one Junior Professional Officer and a secondee. The operation was supported by three UNVs.

**Expenditure in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
2003 - 2007**



■ Annual budget

## Working with others

UNHCR maintained close partnerships with two international NGOs, four national NGOs, two State ministries and UNDP. Operational partnerships with the EC, the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Development Bank, OSCE and UNDP were expanded.

## Overall assessment

Though IDPs continued to return to their places of origin, progress on the repatriation of Croatian refugees was slow. UNHCR found solutions for a number of IDPs with specific needs through livelihood projects. The Office supported legislative reform to strengthen asylum procedures. It also solidified its partnerships and expanded fund raising to ensure that populations of concern are fully integrated into socio-economic development schemes. Whether through voluntary repatriation, limited resettlement in the case of asylum-seekers and refugees, or through return or durable solutions in the case of displacement, UNHCR continued to work with national and local authorities to find durable solutions and facilitate local integration.

### Partners

#### Implementing partners

**Government:** Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, Ministry of Security

**NGOs:** Catholic Relief Services, Bosanski Humanitarni Logisticki Servis, Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative, Fondacija Lokalne Demokratije, Hilfswerk Austria, Vasa Prava Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Others:** UNDP

#### Operational partners

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

**Others:** EC, Office of the High Representative, OSCE, UN Country Team, UNDP

## Budget, income and expenditure (USD)

|               | Final budget | Income from contributions | Other funds available | Total funds available | Total expenditure |
|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Annual budget | 7,813,800    | 674,982                   | 7,240,728             | 7,915,710             | 7,802,896         |

Note: Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

## Financial Report (USD)

| Expenditure breakdown                              | Current year's projects | Previous years' projects         |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
|  | Annual budget           | Annual and supplementary budgets |
| Protection, monitoring and coordination            | 2,170,239               | 0                                |
| Community services                                 | 713,171                 | 58,750                           |
| Domestic needs and household support               | 358,399                 | 41,342                           |
| Education  | 35,279                  | 0                                |
| Food   | 207,850                 | 45,851                           |
| Health and nutrition                               | 47,456                  | 15,410                           |
| Income generation                                  | 83,538                  | 0                                |
| Legal assistance                                   | 682,798                 | 3,293                            |
| Operational support (to agencies)                  | 131,085                 | 353                              |
| Shelter and infrastructure                         | 1,114,599               | 96,037                           |
| Transport and logistics                            | 311,887                 | (2,642)                          |
| Instalments with implementing partners             | 277,201                 | (258,392)                        |
| <b>Sub-total operational activities</b>            | <b>6,133,502</b>        | <b>0</b>                         |
| Programme support                                  | 1,669,394               | 0                                |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                           | <b>7,802,896</b>        | <b>0</b>                         |
| <b>Cancellation on previous years' expenditure</b> |                         | <b>(7,786)</b>                   |
| <b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>      |                         |                                  |
| Payments made                                      | 3,579,127               |                                  |
| Reporting received                                 | (3,301,927)             |                                  |
| <b>Balance</b>                                     | <b>277,201</b>          |                                  |
| <b>Previous years' report</b>                      |                         |                                  |
| <b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>      |                         |                                  |
| Outstanding 1st January                            |                         | 326,335                          |
| Reporting received                                 |                         | (258,392)                        |
| Refunded to UNHCR                                  |                         | (56,832)                         |
| Adjustments  |                         | (11,111)                         |
| <b>Balance</b>                                     |                         | <b>0</b>                         |