

South-Eastern Europe

Working environment

UNHCR continues to pursue durable solutions for the 504,000 people who are refugees or displaced in South-Eastern Europe, paying particular attention to those who are extremely vulnerable, including unaccompanied elderly people, disabled individuals and minority group members. Many live in destitute conditions and face obstacles to access and exercise their basic civil rights. Though the regional economy has improved, lasting durable solutions for refugees and displaced people are linked to the pace and implementation of needed political, judicial and socio-economic reforms.

Albania

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Croatia

Montenegro

Serbia

The former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia



The future status of the province of Kosovo remains at the top of the regional political agenda. At the end of July 2007, the discussion on Kosovo's status moved from the UN Security Council to the Contact Group. A troika was formed to conduct further talks in an attempt to seek a negotiated solution. A report on progress is expected by 10 December 2007.

The implementation of the Sarajevo Declaration (the Sarajevo Process) is expected to continue. The political will of national and regional stakeholders is necessary to resolve the outstanding displacement issues. The countries involved will need to enact coordinated national plans based on clear legal and procedural frameworks to pursue durable solutions, including local integration and voluntary repatriation. Such national plans will require adequate financial support, including from international donors.

Instances of harassment, abuse and sporadic incidents of violence targeting minorities remain of concern. The Roma population in particular is frequently confronted with discrimination, underlining the need to address deep-rooted prejudices and enhance protection for all, including members of minority groups. UNHCR is seeking to prevent and reduce the risk of statelessness, which is compounded by the lack of personal identity documents and other civil records.

Strategy

UNHCR's objectives in South-Eastern Europe focus on refugees and other people displaced by the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH); refugees and people displaced from and within Kosovo; asylum-system development as well as the prevention and reduction of the risk of statelessness.

UNHCR will promote and pursue durable solutions for refugees and other displaced individuals. UNHCR will seek to ensure unhindered access to basic civil rights, including education, health, documentation, employment and social services. It will support Governments to identify and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, including victims of sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking and minority group members. To gradually reduce its operational involvement in this region, the Office will increase its interaction with international structures and governments engaged in regional developmental activities.

Extensive efforts will be made to develop and strengthen nascent asylum systems, including through training, monitoring legislation and its implementation, providing support for infrastructure and other resource requirements. UNHCR's role is critical, as the countries continue to progress towards European Union



UNHCR/M. Flood

Serbia. Members of the Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian communities move into new apartments in Mitrovica, province of Kosovo.

candidate-country status. Likewise, UNHCR will seek to prevent and reduce statelessness through providing legal support for individual cases and technical expertise to governments.

Constraints

The process of supporting the countries in the region to undertake administrative, judicial and other reforms facilitating durable solutions for refugees and other people displaced during the war in BiH and Croatia will extend beyond 2008. Lack of political will to strengthen the reconciliation process in the areas of return, as well as insufficient attention and financial support for sustainable durable solutions for refugees and IDPs are slowing progress. Finding sustainable durable solutions for people displaced from and within Kosovo is further complicated by the ongoing sensitive negotiations related to its future status.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in BiH and Serbia (including Kosovo) are outlined in separate chapters.

Albania: UNHCR will continue to assist the Government with technical advice, training and the promotion of an asylum legislation which will meet international standards. Durable solutions will be pursued for recognized refugees, in particular local integration. Limited material support will be provided to people of concern covering gaps in the national system's social assistance to the most vulnerable. The Office will continue collaboration with the UN Country Team in support of the "Delivering as One" concept.

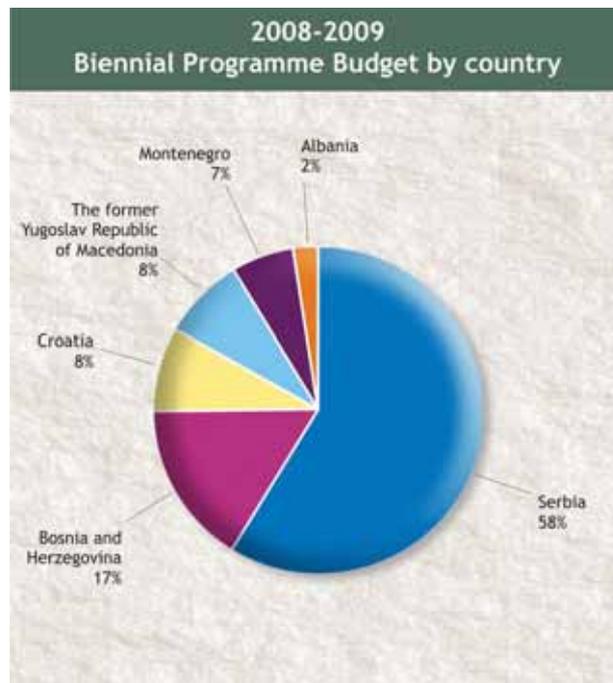
Croatia: UNHCR will provide legal advice and assistance to returnees to secure non-discriminatory access to property, housing rights, assistance programmes, as well as to pursue sustainable reintegration. The Office will work with the Government to ensure that the legislative framework and systems in the area of asylum and migration reflect international and European standards and practices, as well as to prevent and reduce statelessness. UNHCR will closely monitor the implementation of the new Law on Asylum and the new Law on Foreigners which will enter into force as of 1 January 2008.

Montenegro: On behalf of refugees from BiH and Croatia, the Office will advocate for a clarified legal status and pursue durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and local integration. UNHCR will urge the

Government to permit those displaced from the province of Kosovo to benefit from enhanced access to economic and social rights in Montenegro. Special efforts will be made to seek durable solutions for minority groups such as Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptians who constitute 25 per cent of the people of concern to UNHCR.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

Populations of concern to UNHCR include refugees from Kosovo – most of whom are Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptians. Durable solutions for these refugees are inseparably linked to the future status of the province. Possibilities for local integration remain limited, and as such, the Office will seek to reorient material assistance to self-reliance support, gradually implemented through government structures. UNHCR will assist asylum-seekers and refugees who wish to repatriate voluntarily. The Office will also monitor and support the strengthening of the asylum system. Similarly, UNHCR will work with the Government to speed up the country's accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.



Budget (USD)			
Country	Annual Programme Budget		
	2007	2008	2009
Albania	734,890	758,726	672,730
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,702,164	5,615,204	5,584,304
Croatia	3,191,177	2,821,722	2,821,722
Serbia	20,956,650	19,054,388	20,315,870
Montenegro	2,162,812	2,312,508	2,347,880
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,085,829	2,685,404	2,698,152
Total	36,833,522	33,247,952	34,440,658