



RUSSIAN FEDERATION

IN SHORT

Main Objectives

- Develop an asylum system that meets international standards.
- Identify appropriate durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Facilitate the local integration of various categories of persons covered by the CIS Conference Programme of Action.
- Provide humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons in the northern Caucasus.

Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2000	Dec. 2000
Refugees	116,000*	116,000*
Asylum-Seekers	12,500	12,500
Involuntarily Relocated Persons (IRPs)	965,000**	795,000
New IDPs from Chechnya	200,000***	t.b.d.
Formerly Deported People (FDPs) / Meskhetians	15,000	13,500
Total	1,308,500	937,000

* This figure comprises some 380 refugees from outside the CIS and 115,600 from the CIS.

** This figure includes some 170,000 persons who left Chechnya during the 1994-1996 conflict. UNHCR's programme in 2000 will concentrate on some 50,000 of the most vulnerable persons.

*** Situation as at 1 November 1999.

Total Requirements
USD 12,900,255



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WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Recent Developments

Northern Caucasus

Owing to an increase in military activities in Chechnya since October 1999, thousands of persons have been forced to flee their homes, creating major humanitarian problems in the northern Caucasus. Following earlier fighting in Dagestan and the displacement of some 17,000 Dagestanis, some 200,000 internally displaced persons from Chechnya, mostly women, children and the elderly, fled to neighbouring Ingushetia to seek food and shelter. This displacement increased the total population of Ingushetia by some fifty per cent. Many of the displaced found accommodation with host families while others were housed temporarily in tents, railway cars and public buildings. The federal authorities planned to resettle some of these persons to other parts of Russia, and to areas of Chechnya under federal control, in order to relieve the congestion. Meanwhile, thousands more displaced by the fighting within Chechnya were receiving little, if any, emergency aid.

In response to these events, UNHCR continued to transport considerable quantities of humanitarian assistance by road from its operational base in Stavropol. The authorities undertook distribution while UNHCR local staff monitored the distribution in the absence of international staff, due to low security in the area. Expenses for distribution of relief supplies have been covered by allocations from the Emergency Fund.

In November, UNHCR led a UN inter-agency mission to assess the emerging needs. The mission visited both Ingushetia and Dagestan and held extensive discussions with the regional and federal authorities. It also witnessed the condition of some of the several thousand persons waiting to enter Ingushetia. The mission's recommendations for future action are now being studied.

Initiatives with Development Agencies

In other regions of the Russian Federation, UNHCR has increased its cooperation with development institutions in the fields of micro-finance, training and business/skills-development. Working relations have been established with private training centres in Moscow to give asylum-seekers and refugees short but intensive practical job training combined with internships in small enterprises. With the ILO, a joint programme to devel-

op Employable Job and Business Skills for both refugees and forced migrants is in preparation. Regular meetings are held with bilateral and multilateral donors in order to coordinate activities and exchange information.

Protection/Legal Developments

As part of the ongoing restructuring of the Federal Migration Service (FMS), in September 1999 the authorities decided in September 1999 to abolish the Department of Immigration Control and to hand over its responsibilities to the territorial migration services for Moscow and Moscow Region. UNHCR will closely monitor the possible consequences of this change, notably for non-CIS asylum-seekers and refugees. Recently, the situation of asylum-seekers, refugees, IDPs and IRPs in Moscow who are not properly registered, has been affected by measures taken to counter terrorist incidents in some of Russia's urban centres. Under these measures they can be deported from Moscow. FMS has printed, but not yet distributed, asylum-seekers certificates, refugee identity cards, refugee travel documents and temporary asylum certificates.

According to various reports, prospects for the local integration of recognised refugees has improved in the regions; they also have greater access to social services, employment, education and health care, although lack of proper documentation issued by the relevant authorities remains the major problem. UNHCR has noted a 30 per cent increase in the number of newly arriving asylum-seekers during 1999, with Afghans accounting for the greatest increase.

Eligibility procedures continue to be implemented at a slow pace and refugee status is still granted in a restrictive manner. However, improvements have been noticed in St. Petersburg since beginning of 1999. In the whole of the Russian Federation, the FMS granted refugee status to 135 persons in 1998 and to 117 persons during the first six months of 1999. As at 30 June 1999, the total number of recognised refugees stood at 421 persons. In 1999, only five cases have been registered at Moscow's international airport for determination of their status and all were denied refugee status.

UNHCR participates in the working group which is drafting a new citizenship law. The Council of Europe and the Presidential Commission on

Citizenship have met three times in 1999 with UNHCR on the issue of citizenship and the implementation of this law to specific groups of people, including the formerly deported Meskhetians.

Constraints

Federal and regional authorities lack the resources and the capacity to implement adequate procedures for the determination of refugee status. Inadequate staff security in the northern Caucasus continues to affect the mobility of international staff as well as the ability of UNHCR and its partners to accomplish some of their objectives in the region. Projects designed to benefit FDPs are constrained by economic instability and the sheer size of the Russian Federation.

STRATEGY

Protection and Solutions

In July 1999, just over 142,000 people registered as refugees with the FMS had originated from the CIS (mainly Georgia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) and the Baltic countries, compared to a mere 379 from outside the former Soviet Union. Despite the acquisition of refugee status, many refugees from CIS countries are not permanently registered and cannot therefore obtain Russian citizenship. This lack of registration also results in discrimination, including housing evictions and lack of access to employment, social benefits or pensions. Procedures for the determination of the refugee status of persons from outside the CIS still do not conform to international standards and only very few asylum-seekers receive refugee status. During the pre-registration period, asylum-seekers are not yet protected by the Refugee Law of 1997. They have no legal right of abode in the Russian Federation, and receive no documents. The main thrust of UNHCR's action in 2000 will therefore be to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers are treated according to international standards.

The present assistance programme is being reoriented to become more cost-effective and solutions-oriented.

Resettlement opportunities will be sought for the most vulnerable asylum-seekers from outside the CIS, in particular unaccompanied minors, the sick and injured, single elderly persons, single female

heads of households and asylum-seekers who are in danger of long-term detention and deportation. In addition, voluntary repatriation programmes for refugees from outside the CIS and the Baltic States will be facilitated for those who request UNHCR's assistance.

In the year 2000, the voluntary repatriation to South Ossetia and Georgia proper of Georgian refugees (some 400-500 families) will continue to be advocated and facilitated. In contrast, in view of the slow pace of return of Georgians to North Ossetia and the administrative hurdles facing returnees seeking to reintegrate there, assistance will be provided for reintegration in North Ossetia only in a limited number of cases.

The FMS has registered some 965,000 IRPs and IDPs, the majority of whom are ethnic Russians holding Russian citizenship. They arrived mainly from the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union, but also from Chechnya during the 1994-1996 conflict. UNHCR's activities on behalf of IRPs since 1996 initially concentrated on increasing the capacity of federal and regional governments, as well as NGOs, to address the broad range of problems inherent in facilitating their integration into the many regions of the Russian Federation. Subsequently, emphasis was put on developing employment opportunities by initiating micro-credit schemes through specialised NGOs, to enable IRPs to start up small businesses. UNHCR will continue this work in 2000 and encourage multilateral lending agencies to participate.

In 2000, UNHCR's main objectives are to capitalise on the success of small-scale non-discriminatory community programmes, such as the rehabilitation of local schools and hospitals, and advise the local authorities on international standards relating to the protection of national minorities. The Office will also strengthen local institutional capacity to provide assistance to FDPs. The areas most affected by the presence of Meskhetians will receive community-based support for medical and educational facilities. The group will also receive social and legal counselling. Lasting solutions will be sought in cooperation with the federal and regional authorities, the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and other international institutions.



medical facilities, hostels for elderly internally displaced persons, and other infrastructure, in coordination with the local Ministries of Health, Education, and Social Protection. The established network of community workers, drawn from the refugee community, will receive training in providing social counselling services, basic health advice and psychosocial support to asylum-seekers. Existing vocational training activities in favour of women and adolescents will be expanded and complemented through cooperation with other agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.

UNHCR will focus on those regions that have been particularly affected by the presence of IRPs and IDPs. To address the needs of the most vulnerable migrants, regional governments and NGOs will be assisted to develop their own operational capacities. While UNHCR addresses the main issues in many of the key regions of the Russian Federation, particularly in the western and southern parts of the country, work will continue with the federal authorities to identify other regions where further international assistance may be required for those most in need.

Assistance

Capacity-building remains the cornerstone of UNHCR's programme in the Russian Federation, through support to federal and regional governments to deal with population movements and by strengthening some 30 NGOs working in the interest of refugees. This will be tackled in various ways, such as training, seminars and institutional support. There will be limited and carefully directed assistance to asylum-seekers, refugees, IDPs, IRPs and FDPs. The emphasis here will be on income-generating projects. At the same time efforts will continue to include these groups into broader developmental policies and programmes by other institution.

Particular attention will be given to ensuring that the specific needs of women, children and adolescents, and other beneficiaries with special needs, such as the elderly, are met. Relief items, including winter clothing, shoes and hygienic items, will be provided to women, children and elderly refugees in Stavropol, Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the regions of the northern Caucasus, Krasnodar, Rostov, Altai, Saratov and Orenburg. Community-based projects for 2000 will focus on the rehabilitation of schools and playgrounds,

UNHCR provided humanitarian relief to populations displaced as a result of recent renewed fighting in Chechnya. Further humanitarian assistance may be needed during 2000 for IDPs from Chechnya, until they are able to return to their former homes or settle in other regions of the Russian Federation. The financial requirements for such assistance, once determined, will be met through the Operational Reserve or through a Supplementary Programme.

The most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in the Moscow and St. Petersburg areas will receive cash assistance, but efforts will be intensified to nurture the self-sufficiency of the beneficiaries through the simultaneous implementation of self-reliance projects. UNHCR will continue to support primary and secondary education for refugee children in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The educational and psychosocial needs of asylum-seeker children will be assessed, and then specially designed activities will be implemented to address these needs. Experienced psychologists working at the Red Cross clinic for asylum-seekers in Moscow will watch out for behavioural problems related to post-traumatic stress, cultural adaptation and domestic conflict.

Desired Impact

- Prompt and correct appeal procedures, fair implementation of existing legislation and issuance of documentation to refugees and asylum-seekers; successful integration of refugees in North Ossetia (Georgian refugees) and other parts of the Russian Federation.

- Increased self-sufficiency of the approximately 50,000 most vulnerable persons among the IRPs and increased involvement of developmental agencies in the process.

- Full legal status as citizens of the Russian Federation, access to social entitlements and benefits for the IDPs from Chechnya in the areas where they are settled, and prompt material assistance.

- Improved legal and social conditions for Meskhetians, including the provision of permanent legal status as citizens of the Russian Federation.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management Structure

In 2000, UNHCR's operation in the Russian Federation will be run by 13 international and 42 national staff, as well three Junior Professional Officers.

Coordination

UNHCR's Regional Representative in the Russian Federation has acted as Resident Coordinator since the Regional Office in Moscow opened in 1992. This facilitates coordination and cooperation with a wide range of UN agencies, international organisations and NGOs in the country, and places UNHCR close to or at the centre of developments and initiatives of relevance to the operations. In addition to representing the UN as a whole at the diplomatic level, the Resident Coordinator administers UN Common Premises, and acts as Designated Official in charge of UN staff security.

Within the framework of a comprehensive and solution-oriented approach, close coordination will continue with the OSCE and IOM on the implementation of the CIS Conference Programme of Action.

Offices
Moscow St. Petersburg Stavropol Vladikavkaz
Partners
Government Agencies
Border Guards and District Administrations Department of Immigration Control Federal and Regional Migration Services Ministry of Education Ministry of Health Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Ministry of Nationality St Petersburg Prosecutor's Office
NGOs
Children's Fund of Stavropol and North Ossetia Civic Assistance Compatriots Danish Refugee Council Equilibre Solidarity Forum of Migrant Organisations Hoko Migrant Organization Magee Woman Care International Memorial Human Rights Centre Opportunity International Partner Foundation Society of Families with Many Children St. Petersburg and Moscow Red Cross
Other
ILO IOM People's Friendship University, Moscow Russian Academy of Science Russian Lawyers Committee in Defense of Human Rights

Budget (USD)	
Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	1,731,781
Community Services	858,984
Domestic Needs/ Household Support	1,144,238
Education	497,635
Food	85,800
Health/Nutrition	673,765
Income Generation	1,903,014
Legal Assistance	1,475,913
Operational Support (to Agencies)	1,136,465
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	963,176
Transport/Logistics	199,210
Water (non-agricultural)	86,700
Total Operations	10,756,681
Programme Support	2,143,574
Total	12,900,255

