

# Serbia

## Working environment

### The context

#### Serbia

The three-year-old State Union of Serbia and Montenegro came to an end on 3 June 2006, when Montenegro declared its independence following an earlier referendum. As a consequence, one of UNHCR's main counterparts in the Union, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, was dissolved. Some of the Ministry's functions were transferred to the Office for Human and Minority Rights of Serbia.

Another important development for Serbia was the start of the United Nations-mediated talks on the future status of Kosovo. So too was the suspension in May 2006 of negotiations on the stabilisation and association agreement between the European Union (EU) and Serbia. The main reason for the collapse of the talks was Belgrade's failure to arrest and hand over Ratko Mladic, the Serb general accused of atrocities during the wars that engulfed the former Yugoslavia, to the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia. The EU expressed its willingness to resume the negotiations once Serbia fulfilled its obligations in this regard. In July, the Government of Serbia adopted a plan to cooperate with the tribunal to improve its EU-accession prospects.



#### Kosovo

The overall security situation in the province of Kosovo remains stable but fragile. Though there has been a decrease in serious ethnically motivated crimes, minorities are still subject to low-level violence, intimidation and harassment. The precarious security environment is aggravated by the weakness of the rule of law and

### Planning figures: Serbia

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Croatia	56,500	56,500	38,100	38,100
	BiH	22,000	22,000	14,450	14,450
	Various	20	20	20	20
Asylum-seekers	Various	50	50	90	90
IDPs		206,700	206,700	204,000	204,000
Others of concern	Stateless	3,000	-	3,000	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>288,270</b>	<b>285,270</b>	<b>259,660</b>	<b>256,660</b>

dearth of criminal investigations or prosecutions. Ethnic imbalances in local law-enforcement authorities in several areas have also contributed to fears among the population who have limited freedom of movement in the province.

Talks on the future status of Kosovo, which are expected to culminate in late 2006, have heightened a sense of uncertainty among minorities in the province. The potential for further unrest and displacement remains.

Meanwhile, important government functions are being transferred from the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the newly created Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG). Regardless of the outcome of the status talks, these institutions will need to be strengthened so they can effectively assume their responsibilities.

## The needs

### Serbia

UNHCR's activities in Serbia are linked to refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the Republic of Croatia, also known as the "post-Dayton population"; internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo; and asylum system development.

A participatory assessment has found that among refugees opting for local integration there is a need for housing, vocational training and livelihood support. Vulnerable refugees in collective centres need basic humanitarian assistance, while others need psychosocial support and institutional care. Many of these refugees also require legal aid to obtain personal documents and regain their property. This is especially the case with regard to lost tenancy rights among refugees displaced from previously socially owned housing in Croatia.

IDPs in Serbia have many of the same needs as refugees, particularly housing assistance and livelihood support. In

2007 UNHCR plans to expand its programme to IDPs, who have so far not benefited from this type of assistance.

### Kosovo

At the macro level, there is a need to bridge humanitarian relief and development. Long-term strategies targeting infrastructure projects, housing, economic investment and employment for minorities and returnees must be designed and implemented. The aim is to ensure the full economic, social and civic reintegration of minority returnees, IDPs and refugees into stable communities.

Freedom of movement and access to services, housing, jobs, civil registration, balanced information and legal assistance are needed by all persons of concern to UNHCR in Kosovo. Those forcibly returned from Western Europe, in particular, are often in dire need of subsistence assistance and accommodation.

Certain needs are particularly acute among specific non-Serb minority populations, especially the Roma, Ashkalija and Egyptians. These groups suffer from low literacy, lack of support for traumatized adults and children and insufficient care for the elderly or chronically ill.

**Total requirements: USD 20,956,650**

## Main objectives

### Serbia

- Support refugees from Croatia and BiH to find durable solutions.
- Support IDPs from Kosovo, and returnees arriving in Serbia under readmission agreements, to find durable solutions.
- Protect and assist the most vulnerable refugees, IDPs and other marginalized groups.

## Planning figures: Kosovo

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	The FYR of Macedonia	600	600	-	-
	Various	310	310	300	300
Returnees (refugees)		8,000	2,000	10,000	3,000
IDPs		19,000	19,000	15,000	15,000
Returnees (IDPs)		5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Others of concern	Minorities at risk	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000
	Stateless	-	-	3,000	3,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>117,910</b>	<b>111,910</b>	<b>118,300</b>	<b>111,300</b>

- Assist the Government to build an asylum system and devise procedures in harmony with international standards; hand over refugee status determination (RSD) to the Government.

### Kosovo

Contribute to the establishment of conditions for the sustainable return and integration of minority returnees, including monitoring and supervision, to prevent further displacement.

- Address the integration needs of IDPs within Kosovo, in concert with other local and international actors.
- Find durable solutions for refugees from the former Yugoslavia and mandate refugees.
- Support the local government to build municipal return and integration capacities and develop protection skills.
- Develop a fair and efficient asylum system that matches regional standards through sustained capacity building, particularly at the Ministry of the Interior.
- Strengthen UNHCR's preparedness (and that of its partners) to deal with status-related challenges that could result in renewed displacement.

## Strategy and activities

### Serbia

While repatriation remains the preferred durable solution for most refugees, there are some obstacles in the way. Most of these are related to property issues and require intervention and coordination with UNHCR offices in neighbouring BiH and Croatia. Organized repatriation to Croatia will be gradually phased out in 2007, though the transport of refugees' personal belongings will continue. UNHCR will also continue to provide legal advice on housing and property issues, as well as help with personal documentation and in-court representation.

UNHCR will also facilitate the local integration of refugees by advocating their inclusion in the poverty reduction and development strategies of European and multilateral institutions. UNHCR will help the authorities close the remaining collective centres for refugees by assisting those moving out with cash assistance and other forms of aid, vocational training and microcredit and income-generating activities. Vulnerable refugees in private accommodation will also benefit from this assistance.

### Key targets for 2007

#### Serbia

- 200 refugee families are repatriated with their belongings to Croatia.
- 20,000 refugees obtain citizenship ID cards and are de-registered.
- 1,200 refugees move out of the remaining collective centres and are provided with financial and in-kind assistance.
- 5,000 IDPs given legal advice to help them access social services and obtain personal documents.
- 1,800 IDPs receive legal counselling on return issues.
- 3,800 IDPs move out of collective centres and receive financial help and assistance.
- 620 IDPs participate in vocational training.
- A database is developed by the authorities to facilitate the profiling and monitoring of persons of concern returning under readmission agreements.
- 5,000 refugees receive legal aid, including representation in court, to help with property restitution.
- 54 mobile teams provide psychosocial support and community services to vulnerable refugees and IDPs.
- After the enactment of an asylum law (in late 2006 or early 2007), by-laws and operational instructions are adopted, an asylum reception centre and referral system are established, and RSD is handed over to the authorities.

#### Kosovo

- All IDPs within and outside Kosovo have access to timely and reliable information on the situation in return locations, related projects and available assistance.
- All returnees and refugees have access to free legal advice.
- All vulnerable minority returnees, refugees, IDPs and asylum-seekers receive basic material assistance.
- Procedures to deal with sexual and gender-based violence are refined and prevention strengthened.
- Legislative and institutional asylum frameworks are established.
- PISG officials, border-police officers and judges are trained in protection issues.



Home at last: Former residents of Plemetina camp move into their new apartments in Magura, central Kosovo.  
UNHCR / S. Halili

UNHCR will also assist the authorities to protect and assist the most vulnerable IDPs. Special attention will be given to internally displaced Roma who face serious obstacles in gaining access to the legal system, civil registration, documentation and their social and economic rights. Due to the prevailing security situation and the uncertain outcome of the Kosovo status negotiations, UNHCR will continue to help individual returnees to Kosovo purely on a voluntary basis. The Office will search for alternative solutions for IDPs who are unable or unwilling to return. The outcome of the final status talks on Kosovo could result in new population movements for which UNHCR is strengthening preparedness.

UNHCR will monitor and assist the most vulnerable refugees and IDPs, such as the elderly, women, children and adolescents. A network of mobile outreach teams will improve social services at the municipal level and connect the vulnerable to existing support structures. The introduction of the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming approach in mid-2006 will further strengthen UNHCR's understanding of the varied needs of persons of concern.

The final draft of the Law on Asylum, which was prepared by a government working group in June 2006, is expected to be ratified by the end of 2006 or early 2007. Until then UNHCR will continue to conduct refugee status determination (RSD). The Government will require UNHCR's support to implement the asylum legislation, especially to put in place a fair and efficient RSD procedure. Admission to the territory, prevention of *refoulement* and the establishment of a referral mechanism and appropriate reception conditions will be important pillars of the new asylum system. Links with UNHCR operations in neighbouring countries, as well as with the European Commission and its asylum programmes, will help with training and capacity building in Serbia.

In 2005 the Government of Serbia adopted a Citizenship Law that generally complies with international legal standards and has offered Serbian citizenship to a large number of refugees from BiH and Croatia. However, it

will need help to implement an efficient naturalization process and mechanisms for the de-registration of refugees. UNHCR will assist the Department for Administration of the Ministry of the Interior to upgrade its capacity to process refugees' applications for Serbian citizenship.

## Kosovo

UNHCR has developed a flexible strategy to adapt to the changing political environment affected by the status talks. It will gradually scale down direct assistance to returnees, though it will continue to monitor their conditions. The Office will put more effort into empowering the municipal and central authorities and local NGOs to take over the responsibility of providing adequate services to returnees.

The Office will continue to conduct RSD, but will place more emphasis on the development of an asylum system in accordance with international standards. Again, UNHCR will work to gradually hand over RSD responsibilities to the authorities.

UNHCR will provide food and domestic items, shelter assistance, legal and social counselling, self-reliance and income-generating support for the neediest among minority returnees, refugees and IDPs in Kosovo. Given the high number of unregistered individuals from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian populations in Kosovo, UNHCR (together with UNMIK, PISG and local NGOs) will implement a registration campaign. It is expected that this will also reduce these communities' risk of being excluded from public services and denied their civil rights.

In order to promote dialogue among the parties concerned, UNHCR will continue to chair the Direct Dialogue Working Group on Returns. "Go-and-see" visits will continue, while micro projects to ease inter-ethnic dialogue and integration will be implemented at the community level.

## Constraints

### Serbia

The "3x3 Initiative", whereby the regional governments committed themselves to finding durable solutions for the displaced by the end of 2006, is behind schedule. The deadline will not be met mainly due to the lack of agreement on issues related to former tenancy rights holders in Croatia.

The precarious security situation, lack of freedom of movement, inadequate conditions for sustainable reintegration and uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the Kosovo talks will have a negative impact on the

return of IDPs to Kosovo. The eventual decision on the status question will also affect the orientation of UNHCR's long-term strategy for IDPs.

### Kosovo

The uncertainty surrounding the status talks has had a negative effect on minority returns. Many are waiting for the outcome of the negotiations before making their decision on return. Other impediments to return include insecurity, restricted freedom of movement, limited PISG capacity, a shortage of housing, unresolved property disputes and a general lack of employment opportunities. Furthermore, IDPs and returnees are confronted with obstacles in accessing to and/or lack of infrastructure in the areas of health and education, justice and public administration. Return projects approved through a joint PISG-UN appraisal mechanism remain largely under-funded.

Moreover, Kosovo has the highest unemployment rate in the subregion. This is exacerbated by rapid population growth, with 40-50,000 young people added to the labour pool each year. Kosovo also faces a difficult transition from a predominantly agricultural society to a market economy.

## Organization and implementation

### UNHCR presence (Serbia, excluding Kosovo)

Number of offices	2
Total staff	75
International	6
National	49
UNVs	20

### UNHCR presence (Kosovo)

Number of offices	5
Total staff	90
International	17
National	63
UNVs	9
Deployees	1

## Management

### Serbia

The operations in Serbia (excluding Kosovo) will be managed by the UNHCR office in Belgrade and the field office in Kraljevo, with the latter covering central and southern Serbia. With Montenegro's independence, the UNHCR office in Podgorica will be responsible for managing all activities in that country.

### Kosovo

UNHCR in Kosovo will continue to be headed by the Chief of Mission based in the office in Pristina. In addition to Pristina, UNHCR will retain its presence in Mitrovica, Peja/Pec, Prizren and Gjlan/Gnjlane.

## Coordination

### Serbia

UNHCR's main government counterparts are the Serbian Commissioner for Refugees and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia, the Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija, the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the Office for Human and Minority Rights. The Office will coordinate closely with other UN agencies through the UNDAF framework and advocate for the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in the assistance programmes of bilateral development agencies, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the European Commission, including the European Agency for Reconstruction, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. UNHCR will also cooperate with NGOs and legal networks.

### Kosovo

UNHCR regularly arranges meetings with all implementing partners and participates in NGO coordination meetings focusing on best practices and lessons learned. The Office will continue regular meetings with donors and their liaison offices in Kosovo, concerned PISG Ministries and UNMIK. These will be complemented by areas of responsibility-based coordination mechanisms with implementing partners and other stakeholders in the return process. Close coordination with UNHCR Offices in Serbia, Montenegro and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will also continue.

Partners: Serbia
<b>Implementing partners</b>
<b>Government:</b> Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, Ministry of Labour.
<b>NGOs:</b> AmitY, Danish Refugee Council, Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance, International Consortium of Solidarity, INTERSOS, Micro Development Fund, Microfins, Praxis, UNION.
<b>Operational partners</b>
<b>Government:</b> Coordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija, Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government.
<b>Others:</b> Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, European Commission, OSCE, UN Country Team and UNV.

Partners: Kosovo
<b>Implementing partners</b>
<b>NGOs:</b> Advocacy Training and Resource Centre, Civil Rights Program/Kosovo, Danish Refugee Council, Developing Together, International Catholic Migration Commission, Mercy Corps, Mother Theresa Society and Norwegian Church Aid.
<b>Operational partners</b>
<b>Government:</b> PISG/UNMIK.
<b>Others:</b> European Union, IOM, OSCE, UNDP, UNHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO.

Budget (USD)		
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006 <sup>1</sup>	2007
Protection, monitoring and coordination	5,963,886	5,944,393
Community services	2,343,142	876,201
Domestic needs	1,269,390	1,333,410
Education	508,920	559,400
Food	111,914	19,500
Health	210,556	126,628
Income generation	67,371	200,000
Legal assistance	3,269,103	2,576,095
Operational support (to agencies)	1,770,796	1,364,491
Sanitation	10,568	0
Shelter and infrastructure	3,179,308	2,995,000
Transport and logistics	1,428,931	1,172,500
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>20,133,886</b>	<b>17,167,617</b>
Programme support	4,785,072	3,789,033
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,918,958</b>	<b>20,956,650</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes activities in Montenegro for an amount of USD 2,387,055.

