

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers and address the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) with a view to finding durable solutions; support the development of a government system to deal with refugees, statelessness and migration issues, through closer co-ordination with the ministries, the parliament and courts; improve inter-agency co-operation and NGO capacity to address refugee problems; and promote awareness of refugee-related legislation through joint activities, seminars, press conferences and publications.

Persons of Concern

MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED	PER CENT FEMALE	PER CENT < 18
Azerbaijan	5	5	-	-
Iraq	5	5	-	-
Asylum-seekers	220	220	-	-
IDPs	1,000	1,000	-	-

Impact

- Vulnerable refugee women received secure accommodation.
- Refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from training and counselling and their children could attend schools.
- UNHCR rehabilitated medical facilities and schools for the benefit of IDPs, particularly in former conflict zones.
- UNHCR's support to government institutions and national NGOs to develop their ability to handle refugee matters resulted in greater knowledge and awareness of refugee issues.
- Protection letters issued by UNHCR (for a minimum of three months confirming that the person is undergoing refugee status determination and should be protected from *refoulement*) gradually won the respect of the national administration.
- A parliamentary working group, working closely with UNHCR, drafted a refugee law for presentation before Parliament in 2000.



Income and Expenditure - SP Activities (USD)

WORKING BUDGET	INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS*	OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE**	TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
242,625	182,000	126,076	308,076	200,000

* Includes contributions earmarked for the Special Programme in the CIS countries.
 ** Includes opening balance and adjustments.
 The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

The Republic of Moldova continues to suffer from the consequences of the conflict in Trans-Dniestr, which in 1992 displaced some 130,000 persons (51,000 of them became IDPs). Although the majority have either settled elsewhere or returned to their homes, unregistered small-scale irregular population movements continue and an estimated 1,000 persons are in a long-term quandary. The unrecognised Moldovan Trans-Dniestrian Republic, which constitutes an important staging point for east-west migration and irregular population movements, controls 14 per cent of Moldovan territory with 780,000 inhabitants (out of 4.3 million). The central authorities are denied effective control of the eastern frontier and revenues, which aggravates an already very poor economic situation. Despite government encouragement, UNHCR had only limited contacts with the de facto authorities in Trans-Dniestra.

Although the relevant authorities showed a more flexible interpretation of the aliens law, the Constitutional Right to Asylum was not implemented. Confronted by competing priorities and political instability, the Government lacks the resources and resolve to assume responsibility for asylum and relies heavily on international support. However, following the conclusions of the parliamentary working group, which worked closely with UNHCR, the Government of Moldova announced its intention to accede the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees.

The arrival of asylum-seekers from the Russian Federation (Chechnya) added a new delicate dimension, which highlighted a legal vacuum, security concerns and the vulnerability of unprotected individuals excluded from social support structures.

Constraints

UNHCR's activities were affected by the absence of a single official institution responsible for refugee and migration questions: a consequence of political uncertainty and financial difficulties. An equally serious obstacle was the lack of relevant legislation (the government had not acceded to the 1951 Convention and its Protocol).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

In order to address the precarious situation in which both refugees and asylum-seekers remained, UNHCR organised training activities and several special briefings, in which some government officials participated. This helped to promote awareness concepts of refugee law that tend to be misunderstood. These training events also provided useful information for asylum-seekers about their rights and obligations while in the Republic of Moldova.

Considering the absence of a government policy or relevant administrative structures, UNHCR's registration system remained an important source of reliable data for statistical and substantive purposes, including meaningful analysis of irregular migration. In 1999, UNHCR registered 187 families seeking asylum (286 individuals). The updating of the registration system and provision of allowances led to improved responses to material needs and to greater self-sufficiency. Furthermore, UNHCR succeeded in convincing the Ministry of Education to allow children holding protection letters to attend school on the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: Secure accommodation was given to single mothers with children, pregnant women, nursing mothers and families with four or more children. The Office also supported the preparation of two studies: one an assessment of the IDP situation and the other on income-generation projects.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: Cash subsistence allowances were given to 54 highly vulnerable applicants (108 persons). Eight families received housing support (single heads of household and/or numerous children). The total number of beneficiaries was 343.

Education: The objective was to facilitate access for refugees and asylum-seekers to primary education and to pay for pre-school facilities. Thirty-one children could attend pre-school institutions and primary schools. Assistance was given in priority to institutions which accepted refugee and asylum-seeker children. UNHCR financed two schools in Chisinau and eight in former zones of conflict or in Trans-Dniestra. The reconstruction of premises, transport of children and school furniture were funded. In non-government controlled areas, where the Cyrillic script is the norm, the Office

was able to reduce tension by funding eight special schools attended by 8,000 children whose mother tongue is Romanian. In addition, persons of concern could benefit from language courses, cultural events, tolerance education and other activities such as concerts.

Health/Nutrition: UNHCR undertook the rehabilitation of six medical institutions in the capital and in the former conflict zones. Although the relevant medical institutions agreed to accept refugees and asylum-seekers, the Office funded some treatment and medication. Additional funding was provided for the purchase and delivery of medical supplies and equipment to an NGO medical point, which provided basic services.

Legal Assistance: UNHCR organised a number of international and national seminars, study visits, training courses and conferences, mainly for lawyers, paralegal staff and civil servants. The objective was to familiarise these groups with applicable international standards and to promote the introduction of a domestic refugee law. The Office also supported the publication of research related to refugee issues and human rights standards. Governmental institutions and implementing partners received technical assistance and training (e.g. legal counselling, interviewing, procedures for the determination of refugee status). UNHCR funded translation and transportation costs, and fees for visas and legal representation.

Operational Support (to Agencies): Financial support was provided to implementing partners for general operating costs, some travel expenditure, public information activities and salaries.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: An architect was hired to supervise the rehabilitation of medical institutions and educational premises.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

One international and six national officers staffed the office in Chisinau. The Office started an internship program and recruited three local interns. It also pooled resources with the Bucharest and Ankara offices to collaborate on training and publications.

Working with Others

UNHCR participated in inter-agency meetings chaired by the Resident Representative (UNDP) and co-operated actively with UNICEF on school reconstruction projects. Joint exploratory missions to Trans-Dniestria with OSCE drew upon UNHCR's expertise on regular population displacement. Close co-operation with the World Bank's Moldovan Social Investment Fund led to joint projects benefiting IDPs such as community projects in former conflict zones. Consultations with IOM continued on a potential project that would help prevent irregular migration. Quarterly co-ordination meetings and bilateral consultations with UNHCR's eight implementing partners led to better programme delivery and accountability.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

UNHCR continued to play an indispensable protection and assistance role, especially for IDPs, which was appreciated by the Government. Although on a limited scale, the Office's activities improved relations with local and central authorities. The overall objectives proved to be sound, although the initial timeframe for their achievement was too tight. While resolution of the IDP issue is part of UNHCR's aims, strategic partners need to be identified if the problems of internal displacements are to be solved in the long-term and a lasting political settlement is to be ensured. More attention must be focused on the unresolved Trans-Dniestrian conflict and the enforcement of relevant international standards.

Office

Chisinau

Partners

NGOs

Charity Refugee Centre
Foundation for Sustaining Parliamentarianism and Democracy
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
Moldovan Centre for Human Rights of the University Advocates
Moldovan Red Cross Society
Save the Children Fund
Society for Refugees
Support-Plus ("Sprijin-Plus")

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Prior Years' Projects		
	General Programmes	Special Programmes	Total	General Programmes	Special Programmes	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	294,900	0	294,900	432	0	432
Community Services	500	1,450	1,950	7,498	36,000	43,498
Domestic Needs / Household Support	27,851	0	27,851	16,730	0	16,730
Education	6,880	53,669	60,549	17,539	63,000	80,539
Health / Nutrition	6,469	110,123	116,592	6,853	0	6,853
Legal Assistance	80,633	0	80,633	99,539	117,289	216,828
Operational Support (to Agencies)	27,548	3,344	30,892	11,460	6,000	17,460
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	0	3,300	3,300	0	38,797	38,797
Instalments with Implementing Partners	8,474	13,663	22,137	(151,577)	(197,093)	(348,670)
Sub - total Operational	453,255	185,550	638,805	8,474	63,993	72,466
Administrative Support	52,905	0	52,905	0	0	0
Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries	506,159	185,550	691,709	8,474	63,993	72,466
Unliquidated Obligations	15,226	14,450	29,676	0	0	0
TOTAL	521,386	200,000	721,386	8,474	63,993	72,466
Instalments with Implementing Partners						
Payments Made	89,580	19,268	108,848	25	22,045	22,070
Reporting Received	81,106	5,605	86,711	151,602	219,138	370,740
Balance	8,474	13,663	22,137	(151,577)	(197,093)	(348,670)
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	155,402	121,010	276,412
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0	3,825	1,927	5,752
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outstanding 31 December	8,474	13,663	22,137	0	(78,010)	(78,010)
Unliquidated Obligations						
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	18,559	68,262	86,821
New Obligations	521,386	200,000	721,386	0	0	0
Disbursements	506,159	185,550	691,709	8,474	63,993	72,466
Cancellations	0	0	0	10,086	4,269	14,355
Outstanding 31 December	15,226	14,450	29,676	0	0	0

