

Bosnia and Herzegovina

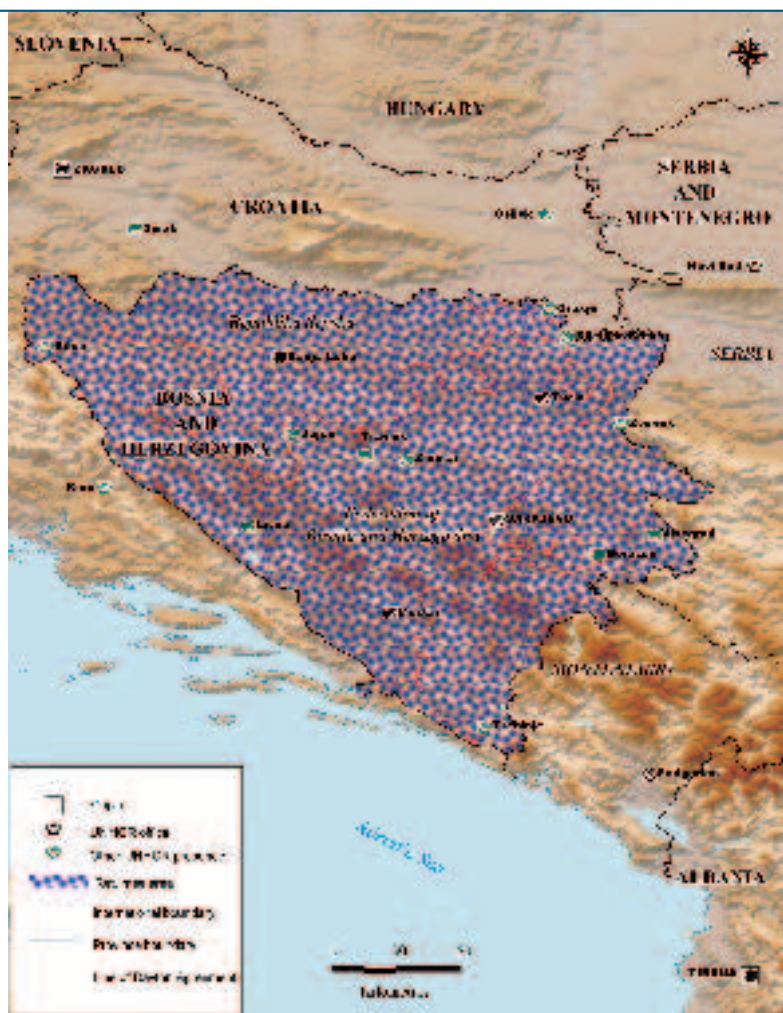
Main objectives

Build on positive political and social developments and continue to promote the return of internally displaced persons and refugees; promote local integration of especially vulnerable displaced persons who cannot return to their pre-war homes; maintain a field presence in strategic locations in order to monitor the protection of returnees; provide legal assistance and advice through the national Legal Aid and Information Centres and strengthen the network of these centres; work with other international actors to promote implementation of the property law.

Press for speedy provision of housing for returnees and closure of the collective centres; assist in the development of a national asylum system, but continue in the interim to determine the status of asylum-seekers and seek durable solutions for refugees.

Impact

- 107,000 returns, including 37,000 former refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) returned home. This represents an increase for the fourth consecutive year. 1,600 persons voluntarily repatriated to Croatia from BiH with UNHCR assistance.
- By the end of 2002, 209,850 property claims had been successfully resolved, owing in large measure to work on the Property Law Implementation Plan undertaken by UNHCR in partnership with the Office of the High Representative, OSCE, the Commission for Real Property Claims and the United Nations Mission in BiH. Moreover, 28 per cent more claims were settled in 2002 than in the previous year.
- The new "Instruction on the Status of Persons from Serbia and Montenegro (SiM) Admitted Temporarily in BiH" entered into force on 20 March 2002, and extended the temporary admission status of the SiM refugee population for a period of 12 months, subject to re-registration.



- While building the capacity of local institutions, UNHCR continued to carry out refugee status determination under its mandate on behalf of the BiH Government. As at 31 December 2002, 78 asylum-seekers from third countries were accommodated in Refugee Asylum Centres. UNHCR also continued to be involved in the establishment of the legislative framework for an effective asylum system in BiH.
- In accordance with a decision of the Council of Ministers, UNHCR worked alongside the State Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, the Office of the High Representative, OHCHR and IOM (the Working Group), in providing substantive comments on a new draft Law on Immigration and Asylum.

Working environment

The context

In accordance with its mandate as the lead agency for the implementation of Annex VII of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, UNHCR continued to concentrate on the promotion of sustainable return. The number of returns from, to and within BiH in 2002 comfortably exceeded the 2001 figure. However, the gap between housing needs and available resources for reconstruction has been widening under the impact of worldwide competition for the donor community's funds. At the same time, major donors have put in place flexible funding mechanisms to better respond to actual needs in the field. UNHCR noted a more active involvement by the local authorities in the return process. The creation in 2002 of a Joint Project Fund under the aegis of the State Commission for Refugees and Displaced Persons was a welcome step in the direction of increased local ownership of return projects.

In early October 2002, elections were held throughout BiH to form new governments at the State and Entity Levels. The turnout was disappointing. Little could be accomplished on the political front in the following months as leaders began to put together coalitions and governments.

Constraints

Although much progress has been made in creating a more favourable environment for minority returns, the gap between reconstruction needs and available resources had a damping effect on the momentum of return. The situation was further exacerbated by extremely limited employment opportunities, especially outside urban areas. Further progress on returns – and their ultimate sustainability – will be increasingly dependent on the overall economic development of BiH.

In 2002, some 430 security incidents were reported. UNHCR strongly condemned those incidents and, at the same time, continued to work closely with

Persons of Concern				
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
IDPs	367,500	-	-	-
Returnees (former IDPs)	70,800	-	-	-
Croatia (Refugees)	22,000	-	50	20
Returnees (from Serbia and Montenegro)	16,700	2,180	-	-
Serbia and Montenegro (Refugees)	6,000	1,140	52	32
Returnees (from Croatia)	4,440	1,020	-	-
Returnees (from Sweden)	2,480	-	-	-
Returnees (from Germany)	2,180	-	-	-
Returnees (from Norway)	940	-	-	-
Returnees (from Denmark)	840	-	-	-
Returnees (from Austria)	730	-	-	-
Returnees (from USA)	690	-	-	-
Asylum-seekers	460	460	48	41

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme Budget				
Revised Budget	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
22,407,231	7,307,346	12,897,597	20,204,943	20,198,372

¹ Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.
² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.
The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

the authorities in order to ensure that more appropriate measures were put in place to prevent any recurrence. Landmines are still a danger, particularly along the Entity boundaries, and hamper the economic recovery of rural areas.

Funding

In 2002, the UNHCR programme in BiH once again faced funding shortfalls, which had an adverse effect on implementation at the field level. Some 13 per cent of the ExCom approved operational budget remained unmet. Consequently, implementing partners could not be assured of the eventual availability of budgeted project funds. The overall support eventually provided thus represented only a fraction of the resources required to assist the large number of returnees.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

The steady increase in the number of recorded returns is partly attributable to increasingly successful implementation of the property law. UNHCR has been instrumental in pushing the process of the Property Law Implementation Plan forward, in concert with other international and local actors. UNHCR, together with OHR and OSCE, has also seen progress on issues affecting the sustainability of returns: non-discriminatory access of returnees to pensions, education, health care and utility services.

UNHCR continued to identify durable solutions for SiM refugees. Over the course of 2002, UNHCR worked in co-operation with BiH authorities and IOM to establish an organised voluntary repatriation programme for refugees and asylum-seekers from SiM. While progress in this area has been modest, a start has been made, with more than 150 persons applying for voluntary repatriation in the second half of 2002. A few problems over authorisation to return (from the SiM authorities) have yet to be resolved before voluntary repatriation can become a straightforward option for all who want to return. UNHCR facilitated the resettlement of 206 SiM refugees to third countries in the course of 2002. In the absence of a fully functioning asylum system and realistic prospects of local integration,

UNHCR continues under its mandate to submit the claims of recognised refugees for resettlement to third countries. During the course of 2002, UNHCR facilitated the resettlement of 30 refugees who had been forced to leave their homes outside the region. At the end of 2002, the asylum applications of 457 persons were at various stages of refugee status determination.

Together with other members of the international community, UNHCR maintained its involvement in the process of setting up asylum institutions (and the necessary accompanying legal framework). An extended programme of training activities on asylum-related issues was held for national and international officials. Some of these activities were undertaken with the direct participation of the authorities and other institutions such as the Council of Europe.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Quick Support Funds (QSF) have been designed to facilitate sustainable minority returns through the provision of immediate and crucial support to extremely vulnerable individuals and/or groups in minority return areas. During 2002, 331 micro-projects were implemented for 23,455 direct beneficiaries. The Foundation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative was officially registered in October 2002, and UNHCR provided operational costs for its Secretariat.

Domestic needs/household support: In the course of 2002, the following domestic items were distributed: 9,734 beds (of which 3,819 were from previous stocks), 22,138 blankets (from available stock), 4,331 stoves (of which 910 from stock), 10,996 mattresses (from available stock), and 54,600 square metres of plastic sheeting (of which 37,660 square metres from stock).

Food: Food was provided to beneficiaries in the Refugee Asylum Centres and Transit Centres (TCs), which are maintained by the Federation Ministry of Social Affairs, Displaced Persons and Refugees).

Health/nutrition: UNHCR provided basic first aid units for the TCs. UNHCR also covered some costs associated with medical services for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Legal assistance: The network of Legal Aid and Information Centres continued to play an important role in carrying out UNHCR protection activities. The centres remain the primary source of free legal assistance and information for persons of concern to UNHCR during the return, relocation, and reintegration process. The network, consisting of three international and two local NGOs, employed 89 legal staff, 35 information and field officers and 34 administrative staff. Beneficiaries throughout BiH were assisted through 36 legal aid centres and 18 mobile legal teams, which reached the most remote regions of the country. The network provided UNHCR with legal analysis and information on trends in the implementation of legislation in more than 20 different areas. In 2002, the network assisted 63,519 new beneficiaries in 81,864 return-related cases.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR was engaged in a number of public awareness and public information activities during 2002. Among the activities were: support to the regional return campaign launched by UNHCR in SiM, the mass re-registration of SiM refugees and the launching of the new UNHCR BiH website.

Shelter/other infrastructure: At year's end, 46 collective centres with 3,023 residents remained operational in BiH. During the course of the year, UNHCR and a government donor completed 91 projects, (including house repairs) to provide lasting solutions for some 292 residents.

Transport/logistics: Three inter-Entity bus lines supporting the return of minorities were operational in the first half of 2002; only one remained in the latter half of 2002. A total of 21,734 passengers used the service. These bus lines reduced the need for organised assessment visits to priority areas of return (25,930 passengers by December 2002). The only cross-border bus line, Trebinje-Dubrovnik-Trebinje, carried 8,722 passengers in the course of the first six months of the year. This service was terminated in July following the long-awaited commercialisation of the route. At the same time, UNHCR transported 485 families to their reconstructed pre-war homes; these particularly vulnerable returnee families also required transportation of their personal belongings to their places of origin.

Organisation and implementation

Management

In the course of 2002, six UNHCR offices were closed and 55 posts discontinued, leaving a year-end total of 172 staff in 14 remaining offices.

Working with others

UNHCR closely collaborated with a total of 17 implementing partners: nine international NGOs, five local NGOs and three ministries. As the lead UN humanitarian agency facilitating returns, UNHCR BiH has been a regular member of the weekly Board of Principals meeting chaired by the High Representative. The main policies of the country are discussed at this meeting, and return and reconstruction issues have been given prominence. UNHCR participates in an analogous structure at the regional level.

At the State level, UNHCR's main counterpart and project implementing partner was the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees. UNHCR provided considerable support and capacity-building to the Ministry in the course of 2002. At the Entity level, UNHCR's implementing partners were the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons in Republika Srpska and the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs and Displaced Persons in the Federation. The two Ministries have assisted returning refugees and displaced persons as well as the residents of collective centres.

UNHCR is an active member of the UN Country Team where UN Agencies, under the chairmanship of the UN Resident Co-ordinator, seek to maximise the advantages of joint programming. Human rights and return-related issues often feature as topics for consideration.

UNHCR worked and continues to work with the EU, particularly in the framework of its Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme for BiH.



Reconstructed village after the war. *UNHCR / R. Chalasani*

Overall assessment

For international actors, 2002 was a year in which to strengthen co-operation in the implementation of Annex VII of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, particularly within the context of declining overall funding assistance. The year 2002 saw a record number of registered returns. From this it may be inferred that UNHCR amply achieved its objective of promoting minority returns. This progress was achieved largely through more accurate targeting of beneficiary groups for humanitarian assistance (through QSFs), enhanced advocacy efforts, close monitoring of the implementation of the Property Laws, and extensive dissemination of legal advice and information via the established

network of LAICs. Constant liaison with other actors and active participation within the existing co-ordination bodies contributed positively to the achievements of UNHCR's objectives.

One of UNHCR's strengths was its role of advocate, and in particular its efforts to make local authorities responsible for their decisions and its support for strengthened inter-Entity and State institutions. This work will have a crucial bearing on the success of return projects in 2003.

The implementation of UNHCR's programme faced serious difficulties as a result of an overall shortfall of funds. These difficulties were to a certain extent mitigated by UNHCR's constant re-



assessment of return movements and the status of assistance, allowing it to effectively and flexibly allocate the limited funds and human resources, focusing on priority needs.

Progress was also noted in regard to the strengthening of the capacity of the State Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees to assume BiH's responsibilities under the 1951 Convention.

Offices

Sarajevo
Banja Luka
Bihac
Bijeljina (Brcko)
Bugojno (closed 30/09/2002)
Doboj (closed 30/09/2002)
Gorazde
Konjic (closed 30/06/2002)
Livno
Lukavica/Pale (closed 31/03/2002)
Mostar
Orasje
Prijedor (closed 30/06/2002)
Stolac (closed 30/06/2002)
Travnik
Trebinje
Tuzla
Visegrad
Zenica
Zvornik

Partners

Government Agencies

Federation Ministry of Social Affairs, Displaced Persons and Refugees
Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees
Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons of Republika Srpska

NGOs

American Refugee Committee
<i>Bosanski Humanitarni Logisticki Servis</i>
European Committee for Training and Agriculture
Genesis Project
Helsinki Citizens Assembly – Job 22
<i>Hilfswerk Austria</i>
International Council of Voluntary Agencies
International Rescue Committee
<i>Iustitia</i>
<i>Malteser Hilfsdienst</i>
Mercy Corps Scotland
Project Implementation Unit – Housing
Save the Children Federation (USA)

Others

Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit
UNVs

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Annual Programme Budget		Annual Programme Budget	
	Current Year's Projects	notes	Prior Years' Projects	notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	5,536,254		66,876	
Community Services	3,051,501		1,089,491	
Crop Production	0		36,858	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	621,295		77,099	
Food	518,384		781,047	
Health / Nutrition	27,860		15,475	
Income Generation	0		43,009	
Legal Assistance	1,649,987		632,000	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	1,438,940		415,533	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	1,063,292		473,662	
Transport / Logistics	737,665		220,619	
Transit Account	22,313		(19,319)	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	1,944,203		(3,592,566)	
Sub-total Operational	16,611,694		239,784	
Programme Support	3,365,287		57,258	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	19,976,981	(3)	297,042	(5)
Unliquidated Obligations	221,391	(3)	0	
Total	20,198,372	(1) (3)	297,042	
Instalments with Implementing Partners				
Payments Made	9,070,760		41,979	
Reporting Received	7,126,556		3,634,545	
Balance	1,944,203		(3,592,566)	
Outstanding 1st January	0		3,898,443	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		278,349	
Currency Adjustment	0		(27,529)	
Outstanding 31 December	1,944,203		0	
Unliquidated Obligations				
Outstanding 1st January	0		390,626	(5)
New Obligations	20,198,372	(1)	0	
Disbursements	19,976,981	(3)	297,042	(5)
Cancellations	0		93,584	(5)
Outstanding 31 December	221,391	(3)	0	(5)
Figures which cross-reference to Accounts: (1) Annex to Statement 1 (3) Schedule 3 (5) Schedule 5				