

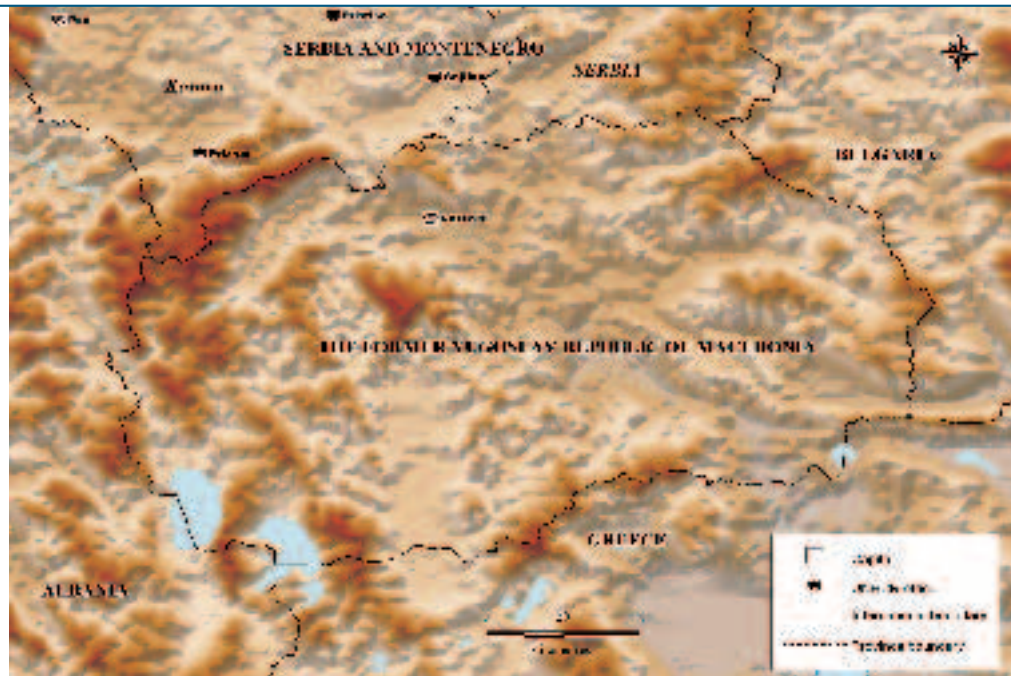
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Main objectives

Promote safe and sustainable return to areas where national protection has been effectively re-established; provide all returnees and war-affected populations with access to basic assistance; support the Government in an effort to find a comprehensive solution to the problem of the long-term residents of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) who lack effective citizenship; ensure that the residual Kosovo minority refugee group with Temporary Humanitarian Assisted Person (THAP) status continue to receive protection from the Government and access to the national asylum procedure; enhance their socio-economic rights and actively search for durable solutions; strengthen the national protection system by means of: adoption of the draft asylum law and implementing by-laws; closer co-operation within the Migration and Asylum Initiative (MAI) and the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP); promotion of a stronger and more self-confident civil society: provide specially targeted support to refugee women, children, adolescents, older refugees and vulnerable individuals.

Impact

- As a lead agency under the Ohrid Framework Agreement (FA) for the return of persons displaced during the 2001 ethnic conflict, UNHCR repaired 3,022 moderately damaged houses in the former conflict areas and implemented 111 quick impact projects (QIPs). Returnee kits were distributed to some 1,700 families and firewood was provided to vulnerable returnees. The Office operated 15 shuttle bus services in remote, conflict-affected areas during most of 2002.
- Through intense lobbying by UNHCR and its



NGO Legal Network, a number of administrative obstacles in the citizenship procedure were resolved, such as unregistered births and the problem of long-term residents lacking effective citizenship.

- National NGOs providing legal assistance increased their capacity and field presence following training. UNHCR improved the plight of long-term residents of FYROM by raising awareness of statelessness and lack of personal documentation in general, and their lack of citizenship in particular.
- The THAP status for the non-Albanian population from Kosovo was extended twice during the year until 28 March 2003. Their group profile was updated during re-registration in October and shared with UNHCR offices in Kosovo and Serbia to enhance planning. UNHCR also advocated that donors and NGOs include the group in their projects. Cross-border co-operation was strengthened and led to a number of “go and see” and “come and inform” visits, as well as initiatives on a joint strategy for voluntary repatriation for 2003.
- As the Supreme Court continued rejecting refugee status cases (based on the internal flight alternative, with a very high burden of proof placed on the asylum-seeker) a round

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Prior Years' Projects		
	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Notes	Annual Programme Budget	Notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	603,188	535,945	1,139,134		7,602	
Community Services	213,223	1,104,287	1,317,510		269,576	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	116,056	460,623	576,678		344,224	
Education	0	0	0		(374)	
Food	363,084	0	363,084		13,435	
Health / Nutrition	167,288	0	167,288		44,859	
Income Generation	0	0	0		(296)	
Legal Assistance	636,960	522,127	1,159,087		184,809	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	69,197	251,079	320,275		158,307	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	638,041	2,155,883	2,793,924		704,081	
Transport / Logistics	87,086	376,284	463,369		84,165	
Transit Account	0	0	0		(988)	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	446,373	905,334	1,351,707		(1,167,717)	
Sub-total Operational	3,340,495	6,311,562	9,652,057		641,683	
Programme Support	833,071	1,135,157	1,968,228		62,621	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	4,173,566	7,446,719	11,620,285	(3)	704,304	(5)
Unliquidated Obligations	68,990	250,292	319,282	(3)	0	(5)
Total	4,242,556	7,697,011	11,939,567	(1) (3)	704,304	
Instalments with Implementing Partners						
Payments Made	2,570,056	3,567,633	6,137,688		429,213	
Reporting Received	2,123,683	2,662,298	4,785,981		1,596,929	
Balance	446,373	905,334	1,351,707		(1,167,717)	
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		1,357,246	
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		181,927	
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		(7,602)	
Outstanding 31 December	446,373	905,334	1,351,707		0	
Unliquidated Obligations						
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		823,076	(5)
New Obligations	4,242,556	7,697,011	11,939,567	(1)	0	
Disbursements	4,173,566	7,446,719	11,620,285	(3)	704,304	(5)
Cancellations	0	0	0		118,772	(5)
Outstanding 31 December	68,990	250,292	319,282	(3)	0	(5)
Figures which cross-reference to Accounts: (1) Annex to Statement 1 (3) Schedule 3 (5) Schedule 5						

table seminar was organised by UNHCR to familiarise judges with basic principles of international and national refugee law.

- Refugees in collective centres and host families were provided with basic food and non-food items, as well as access to health and education, in close co-operation with national authorities and international agencies. A Refugee Committee was established jointly by UNHCR and refugees. UNHCR met refugees on a regular basis to provide counselling and information on recent developments regarding their status and stay in FYROM.

Working environment

The context

Work in FYROM in 2002 was inevitably bound up with the aftermath of the internal conflict of 2001. Priority was placed at the national level on the implementation of the Framework Agreement (language, education, as well as participation in public services), the development of legislation provided for in the Agreement, the general elections (eventually held in September) and the census in November. The question of amnesty for former members of the National Liberation Army (NLA) was

addressed through an amnesty law adopted by Parliament in early March. With the return of some 80 per cent of the displaced population in early 2002, the focus of the humanitarian community gradually shifted from relief assistance to activities aimed at strengthening civil society, developing institutional capacity and revitalising the struggling economy. Returns of minority residents, mainly ethnic Macedonians and Serbs, however, continued at a slow pace throughout the year, despite work to build confidence and promote dialogue between the ethnic communities. As of 31 December 2002, the number of IDPs had been reduced to 8,456, while some 3,500 persons were officially registered as refugees in Kosovo. To restore government authority in the area hit by the 2001 crisis, ethnically mixed police units were deployed in all affected villages. The continued presence of NATO, the EU Monitoring Mission and OSCE has contributed to the stability of the country.

The role of Humanitarian Co-ordinator for the return of the displaced people was formally phased out as of 1 October. UNDP took over co-ordination in the context of developmental efforts in the country.

Constraints

The major remaining obstacles included a continued lack of security for the ethnic minorities, with the

Persons of Concern				
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Returnees (former IDPs)	65,100	-	-	-
IDPs	9,440	-	49	-
Returnees (from Serbia and Montenegro)	7,350	-	-	-
Serbia and Montenegro (Refugees)	2,770	2,770	51	48
De facto stateless (others of concern)	2,130	-	-	-

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme and Supplementary Programme Budgets					
	Revised Budget	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
AB	4,733,737	1,851,001	2,391,991	4,242,992	4,242,556
SB	8,223,162	5,220,317	3,011,253	8,231,570	7,697,011
Total	12,956,899	7,071,318	5,403,244	12,474,562	11,939,567

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.



A returnee in the Skopje region. UNHCR / B. Betzelt

threat of unexploded ordnance and landmines, as well as structural damage to homes still awaiting rehabilitation. In 2002, large numbers of the population still lacked freedom of movement or sufficient access to basic services including schools, health facilities, and utilities. Many lost their livelihood with the closure of small businesses, and unemployment was estimated at 32 per cent of the workforce. Ethnic and crime-related violence was rife. Communities remained divided, with views polarised on many essential issues: general elections, the census, documentation and citizenship, and legislation related to the Ohrid FA implementation. This impeded co-operation with governmental institutions on priorities such as the development of a fair and efficient asylum procedure and the adoption of an asylum law conforming to international standards. The temporary nature of the THAP status impeded the search for durable solutions, particularly local integration, and left refugees feeling anxious about the future. In July, the decision to resettle 307 persons from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minorities revived demands for group resettlement from those remaining, hampering the search for other durable solutions, especially repatriation. Although security in Kosovo did improve in 2002, it remained the major factor preventing the return of minorities from FYROM.

Funding

UNHCR's global financial shortfall adversely affected project planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance, as budgets had to be revised downward by around nine per cent. IDP/returnee initiatives under the Supplementary Programme were fully funded, covering a wide range of activities such as housing repair, QIPs, and shuttle bus services. Due to delays in housing reconstruction and security problems in mixed communities, returns were delayed and the emergency programme was extended for three months into 2003. The unspent 2002 balance was carried over into the first quarter of 2003, enabling UNHCR to phase down activities smoothly.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

Voluntary repatriation of refugees from the 1999 Kosovo crisis was facilitated: 81 were given transport, repatriation grants and basic food parcels. A further 182 individuals voluntarily relocated to Serbia. Macedonian citizenship was granted to 208 Gorani THAPs of Macedonian ethnic origin. UNHCR facilitated their naturalisation by issuing one-time cash grants. There are 26 recognised refugees living in the Republic. Thirty individuals of Bosnian origin have had an unregulated or tolerated status since 1992. A total of 196 (out of the 307 submitted for resettlement) had departed by the end of 2002.

The naturalisation procedure had involved several administrative obstacles: in 2002 these were lifted by the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), notably the six-month birth certificate requirement. The MOI's information leaflets on national legislation and procedures for acquiring citizenship, personal identity documents, and registering births, marriages, domicile and deaths were printed in early 2002 in five minority languages and distributed by the NGO Legal Network and the branch administrative offices of MOI.

The draft Law on Asylum, which remained pending with the MOI at the end of the year, was broadly in conformity with EU and international standards. New asylum applications were submitted by 118

individuals and one was granted refugee status. UNHCR was recognised as a member of the MAI Country Team and took part in four meetings convened in 2002. NGOs from the legal network provided free legal advice and social counselling to asylum-seekers and refugees (this involved a total of 3,472 cases, including those rejected, those withdrawn, and those pending). Among those assisted, 1,659 persons with unregulated citizenship were interviewed. The network identified 2,161 long-term residents of the country who lacked effective citizenship and had children without birth certificates. Applications for naturalisation were lodged in 290 cases, 80 of which met with success. NATO, OSCE and UNHCR jointly lobbied the MOI to address documentation and citizenship problems in the northern village of Tanuševci and elsewhere.

Activities and assistance

Community services: The emphasis was placed on local integration assistance for 822 of the most vulnerable refugees, including the mentally and physically disabled, single parents, single females, families with a history of domestic violence, neglected children and unaccompanied older people. Over 3,200 people were assisted with psycho-social counselling sessions, health care, school support programmes, English classes, sewing classes, and sports activities. A mobile outreach team visited over 5,700 vulnerable refugees and local Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs, returnees and IDPs.

Education: UNHCR promoted education for refugee children at all levels, working closely with UNICEF to provide access to primary schools. Over a third of the children regularly attending school were female and 92 per cent of all those enrolled completed the school year.

Domestic needs/household support: Blankets, mattresses, firewood, hygiene items, kitchen sets and underwear were provided to refugees living in collective centres or with host families. The special needs of refugee women, children and the disabled were covered (e.g. sanitary materials and diapers).

Food: WFP phased out its food assistance programme to refugees and UNHCR took over the responsibility from 1 July 2002. Food packages included basic, complementary and fresh foods for

refugees in collective centres. Refugees lodging with host families received basic food parcels and monthly cash grants for complementary food items. Responsibility for food procurement, storage, and distribution was entrusted to an international NGO under a sub-agreement.

Health/nutrition: Health care services were provided in three private health clinics. There were no infectious diseases among the refugees. The project included provision of medicines and baby formula for refugees in host families, assistance with health care in local hospitals, dental care, orthopaedic needs and psycho-social support. A special medical programme for disabled returnees and IDPs was implemented over the first half of 2002, benefiting 600 vulnerable individuals.

Legal assistance: The emphasis was placed on the durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. UNHCR raised the questions of citizenship and statelessness with government authorities, and assisted the individuals in question. Capacity-building activities aimed at enhancing the quality of the legal output of the local legal network.

A first round table seminar on local integration of recognised refugees was organised for 70 participants from the relevant ministries and implementing partners. The draft report compiled by the CARDS expert mission (European Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation) included the need to prioritise the development of legal and institutional local integration mechanisms alongside the development of an asylum system.

Operational support (agencies): UNHCR provided administrative support to NGOs: this included the provision of office space and supplies, utilities, as well as the services of UNVs and consultants. UNHCR also funded public awareness campaigns centred on World Refugee Day.

Shelter/other infrastructure: UNHCR continued to manage two collective centres (working through the Government and a local NGO). In July, UNHCR began providing subsistence allowances for rental and utilities in private/host accommodation, as an earlier donor withdrew. The shelter pro-

programme for IDPs was completed in October 2002, with the rehabilitation of a total of 1,344 moderately damaged houses (bringing the total number of repaired houses to 3,022) in conflict-affected regions, benefiting around 8,000 people in 33 villages. 111 QIPs were implemented, comprising repairs to public buildings, roads, water systems, sewage-disposal systems, waste management systems and support for livestock, employment and income generation activities. Capacity and confidence-building resulted from an increased UNHCR field presence.

Transport/Logistics: UNHCR procured and stored construction materials which were obtained at competitive prices through international, regional, and local tenders. UNHCR provided logistical support for the shelter project and QIPs; this served to enhance stabilisation and the return process.

Organisation and implementation

Management

In 2002, UNHCR maintained three offices in the country: the branch office in the capital and two satellite offices in conflict-affected areas: Tetovo and Kumanovo, which were phased out in December 2002. At the peak of operations there were 88 staff members including 13 internationals, 54 nationals, 4 UNVs, 13 supply chain project staff and four consultants. Staffing was gradually reduced from September onwards. UNHCR also hosted the Country Office of OCHA and the Country Office of UNSECOORD.

Working with others

UNHCR enjoyed close co-operation with the Office of the EU Special Representative to FYR Macedonia, the Delegation of the European Commission, European Agency for Reconstruction, ECHO, the Council of Europe, OSCE, ODIHR, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNMIK, the Office for Return and Communities, IOM, and the Stability Pact. A series of round table seminars attended by other UN agencies, local government, and NGOs facilitated the transition from emergency to development programmes.

Overall assessment

An exit strategy was agreed at the June 2002 meeting of the Humanitarian Issues Working Group; this entailed phasing out the emergency programme by the end of the year. It also involved a gradual shift from the provision of assistance to returnees to the monitoring of renewed protection by the national authorities. Due to delays in housing reconstruction and security problems in mixed communities, returns were delayed and the emergency programme was extended for three months into 2003. UNHCR succeeded in responding to the needs of the displaced population by maintaining a presence in areas of return, and balancing the work of refugee and emergency programmes. The return of more than 14,000 persons was undoubtedly hastened by UNHCR's follow-up on the adoption of an Amnesty Law, facilitation of freedom of movement, and funding of housing repairs. In May, OIOS conducted an external audit.

Offices

Skopje

Kumanovo (closed in December 2002)

Tetovo (closed in December 2002)

Partners

Government Agencies

Ministry of the Interior

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

NGOs

American Refugee Committee

Catholic Refugee Services

Civil Society Resource Centre

Cooperazione e Sviluppo

Danish Refugee Council

Handicap International

Institute for Social

IFRC

International Rescue Committee

Macedonian Red Cross

Political, and Juridical Research (ISPJR/CFMRS)

Others

UNVs