



REFUGEE AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

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Mission Statement

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children seeks to improve the lives of refugee women, children and adolescents through a vigorous program of public education and advocacy and by acting as a technical resource. Founded in 1989 under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee, the Women's Commission is the first organization in the United States dedicated solely to speaking out on behalf of women and children uprooted by armed conflict or persecution.

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Meetings were also held with other international organizations and NGOs, including ICRC, ICVA, The Fund for an Open Society, OXFAM-UK, IRC, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and many local NGOs and women's organizations.

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I. Executive Summary

While the election of a democratic government in Belgrade in October 2000 has improved relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)¹ and its neighbors and permitted increased refugee return, FRY continues to host the largest population of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) in Europe: approximately 630,000 individuals.² With normalized relations between Belgrade and neighboring Croatia and Bosnia, there is new hope for some of the 390,000 refugees in Yugoslavia to perhaps someday return. But for many of the refugees remaining in the FRY, and for most of the 229,000 ethnic Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Gorani and others displaced from Kosovo, return is still an unrealistic and distant prospect.

Exhibit: Refugees and Internally Displaced People in Serbia and Montenegro, mid-2001

| | Population | Refugees | IDPS |
|-----------------------|------------|----------|------|
| Serbia (excl. Kosovo) | 7,500k | 377k | 197k |
| Montenegro | 650k | 14k | 32k |
| Total | 8,150k | 391k | 229k |

Total estimated number of refugees and IDPs in FRY: 630,000

Source: UNHCR, Belgrade

With the growing stability taking hold in the FRY, the international community is transitioning its support to Yugoslavia from emergency humanitarian relief to development assistance. That assistance can benefit and include refugees and displaced people as well.

At the same time, as FRY struggles to exit the decade of war, economic sanctions and political oppression that have devastated its economy, its population of displaced people and refugees finds itself more vulnerable than ever to the stresses of a country in transition to a market economy. In addition, international relief groups fear that sharp cuts in their funding could force them to drastically reduce programs that serve as many displaced people's main lifeline.

The most vulnerable: Refugees and IDPs, in particular women, the elderly, single-person-headed households and Roma displaced from Kosovo, live on the margins of a society that is experiencing considerable economic shock. FRY's battered health, education and social welfare programs face new funding shortages, as Yugoslavia's new market-oriented leaders struggle to attract foreign aid and investment. Meanwhile, price liberalization and inflation have rendered formerly cheap basic commodities painfully expensive. In a country experiencing 40 percent official unemployment (in reality much higher), refugees and IDPs find themselves at the bottom of the list to find jobs, access education, medical care and welfare.³ In addition, displaced people, particularly those from Kosovo and Roma, find themselves the continued target of subtle and overt acts of resentment, political manipulation and even attacks by elements of the larger population embittered by unemployment and acute poverty.⁴

Even as the overall picture in the Balkans is one of growing stability, new smaller flows of refugees and displaced people trailed into FRY in 2000-2001 from low-level conflicts in southern Serbia⁵ and neighboring Macedonia.⁶

This report is based on research conducted by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children and two field missions to Serbia and Montenegro in 2000-2001 focused on issues of concern for uprooted women, children and adolescents. It does not include information on the situation of displaced people in the UN-administered majority-Albanian province of Kosovo.⁷

Findings

The Women's Commission found that while international relief agencies and local organizations are providing important humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons in FRY, including assisting them in finding long-term, durable solutions, the situation of many is quite bleak. Government health, education and social sectors have little money and are in disarray. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has seen its budget to care for the refugees in FRY fall from \$45 million in 2000,⁸ to \$35 million in 2001, to \$25 million for 2002.⁹

What does this mean for women, children and adolescents living as refugees? Children have difficulty getting into schools, adolescents are likely to be denied secondary education or vocational training, families are forced into collective centers as they become burdens to hosts who may have housed them for the last six or seven years. Social workers say domestic violence has increased among some families; no statistics are available on this, but a study should be conducted to document the problem and address it. Other findings include:

- Even as the thrust of international assistance to Yugoslavia shifts from emergency humanitarian relief to sustainable development and local capacity building, refugees and IDPs will continue to require assistance from the international community in order to survive.
- A substantial number of the 630,000 refugees and IDPs in FRY will choose to stay permanently.¹⁰ While the new authorities in Belgrade are willing to integrate those refugees who want to remain, the costs of integrating them - finding them permanent housing and jobs and plugging them into the welfare scheme - are high. International assistance to Yugoslavia should be targeted to also benefit refugees and the displaced, and to boost Yugoslavia's own capacity to care for these vulnerable people who have until now been assisted by international aid agencies.
- Approximately 40,000 refugees and IDPs live in 600 collective centers, and are among the most vulnerable. One of the biggest problems aid agencies foresee is how to transition their support to these most vulnerable people, who include the elderly, medical cases and single-headed households, and facilitate transfer of their care to the FRY's own health and welfare systems. Yugoslavia's federal and republican governments will require considerable international financial assistance to incorporate these most vulnerable people.¹¹
- Women refugees and IDPs, including female single-headed households and widows, face particular problems. Social workers report that domestic violence is an unaddressed problem in many households. Refugee and IDP widows continue to have problems obtaining documentation of their husbands' deaths, which would entitle them to pensions.¹²

- The Roma (Gypsies) remain in particular need of international humanitarian assistance programs, as discrimination and traditional practices combine to limit their integration into local communities when return is not an option. Some 25,000 Roma, who fled Kosovo after the 1999 Kosovo war, remain displaced in Serbia and Montenegro, most living in huge collective centers.¹³ Social and racial discrimination, as well as traditional Roma practices and customs, limit their access to education, health centers and employment, particularly for girls.
- The 230,000 displaced people from Kosovo face particular pressures and difficulties in the FRY. Officially citizens of the country in which they are displaced, Kosovo IDPs have easier access to school and health care on the one hand, but don't receive additional assistance on the other. This even though many have lost their homes and jobs in Kosovo and are forced to now pay for their housing. The prospects for their return are much more difficult, as there are still grave security risks for non-Albanians in Kosovo. Meantime, the politically sensitive, unresolved issue of Kosovo's status means that the Kosovo Serb IDPs are the object of manipulation by Serbian politicians, anxious to appear determined to return Serbs to Kosovo, despite the current security risks.¹⁴
- Local Serbian and Montenegrin women's organizations are leading some of the most innovative programs to assist refugees and IDPs, and deserve increased financial and technical support. Women's organizations have been running humanitarian assistance programs, gender-based violence prevention programs and peace initiatives since the start of Yugoslavia's collapse in 1991, often at great risk to their safety. These organizations and their programs will need continued international support for some time before their activities can be coordinated with the national and local emerging government structures. In addition to financial assistance, indigenous organizations need intervention and support to hone their financial, administrative, management and inter-agency coordination skills. Local leaders should be encouraged to develop cross-border initiatives that promote tolerance and peace-building. Care needs to be taken by internationals to support local initiatives that will outlast international programs.
- Refugees and IDPs need continued psychological and social support financed by the international community. Most of the refugees and IDPs fled their homes in tense war situations and witnessed or experienced violence firsthand. Many lost friends and family members. Those without the resources or will to integrate into Serbian society remain psychologically fragile and socially isolated. Women heads of households, elderly people and adolescents remain particularly at risk. The psychosocial supports provided through local and international organizations have been lifelines and have helped many people maintain hope that keeps them from full-fledged despair. This support should be integrated with other assistance, such as income generation and skills training.
- Youth require greater access to education, vocational training and reproductive health services, as well as tolerance and conflict resolution skills. The number of refugee and internally displaced children and adolescents is significant. Adolescents are often among the most ignored in refugee situations, and educational, employment, health and social assistance programs for them are severely lacking in both Serbia and Montenegro. Girls, especially

Roma girls, are at risk of early marriage and have less access to education, vocational training and employment opportunities than any other group.

II. Background

A Decade of Displacement

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) currently consists of two republics, the Republic of Serbia (including the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina) and the Republic of Montenegro, with populations of roughly seven and a half million (excluding Kosovo's roughly two million people) and 650,000, respectively.¹⁵ During the wars in Bosnia and Croatia (1991-1995), some 200,000 people were killed, some two million people fled their homes, including 600,000 mostly ethnic Serbs who fled for Serbia and Montenegro. Rump Yugoslavia, as it was known, already strapped with international sanctions, found itself under additional strain to care for the refugees that its own brutal war-time policies helped generate. Shunned by the international community, and its government spending devoted to the war effort, Yugoslavia sank into economic crisis.¹⁶

That crisis deepened in 1998-1999, as Serbia intensified its crackdown against the majority Albanian southern province of Kosovo. As clashes between Serbian security forces and Kosovo Liberation Army rebels escalated, tens of thousands of Kosovar Albanians fled their homes.¹⁷ Fearing a severe humanitarian crisis, the United States and Europe threatened action against Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic unless he halted his repression of the Kosovars.

An October 1998 cease-fire proved short-lived. Despite the presence of several hundred unarmed OSCE monitors, clashes intensified throughout early 1999. Milosevic's representatives rejected a Kosovo peace plan put forward at Rambouillet, France in February 1999. With Serb security forces pouring into Kosovo in violation of the cease-fire agreement, in what appeared to be preparation for a major push against the KLA, NATO countries commenced bombing of Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999. Serb forces responded by intensifying their brutal campaign of terror against the Kosovar population, killing more than 10,000 Kosovar Albanians, and forcing some 800,000 to flee for their lives to neighboring Albania and Macedonia.

In May 1999, the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the ex-Yugoslavia (ICTY) indicted Milosevic and four of his deputies with crimes against humanity, for massacres they were alleged to have ordered in Kosovo.¹⁸

Meantime, the bombing and expulsions continued. After 78 harrowing days, Milosevic capitulated. In June 1999, NATO and the Yugoslav Army signed a Military-Technical Agreement in Kumanovo, Macedonia. Under the agreement, Serb security forces withdrew from the province, and 50,000 NATO-led peacekeepers moved in. The NATO presence enabled the stunningly rapid return of nearly all of the 800,000 expelled Kosovar Albanian refugees. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1244, which put Kosovo under UN administrative control for the foreseeable future.

As the Kosovar Albanian refugees flowed back into Kosovo in the summer and fall of 1999, almost half of the province's 200,000 Serb, Roma and other non-Albanian minorities fled for Montenegro and Serbia proper, fearing reprisals and revenge attacks.

While the trickle of people fleeing attacks in Kosovo has slowed considerably, international peacekeepers have largely been unable to halt brutal attacks that have killed dozens of Serbs, Montenegrins, Roma, Ashkali, Gorani and other non-Albanians in Kosovo, discouraging efforts at return. As of this writing, the UNHCR attempted its first return of Kosovo Serb IDPs to Kosovo. On August 13, 2001, two buses carrying 54 Kosovo Serbs, escorted by NATO-led peacekeepers, safely reached their homes in the village of Osojane, in northwestern Kosovo. So far, the return has tentatively been judged a success.¹⁹ But international refugee officials consider large-scale return of IDPs to Kosovo unrealistic for some time, as ethnic tensions and violence remain a disturbing feature of post-war Kosovo.

While Milosevic's defeat in elections and subsequent overthrow on October 5, 2000 has made way for more democratic forces to come to power in Belgrade, the FRY still faces issues that threaten its stability. The tiny Yugoslav republic of Montenegro, whose pro-western leadership was often at odds with Milosevic during the last years of his rule, still aspires to independence even in the post-Milosevic era. Violence in Yugoslavia's southern neighbor, Macedonia, has reawakened fears throughout the Balkans of an eventual de facto ethnic partition. Bosnia's unity is still fragile, with extremists on all sides working to preserve ethnic mini states. Along with Kosovo's unresolved status, disputes between Montenegro and Serbia over the future of the FRY, and continued instability in neighboring Macedonia, FRY's stability is yet to be secured.

III. Serbia

Refugees and Internally Displaced: Population Profile and Situation Overview

There are an estimated 197,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo in Serbia proper.²⁰ The majority -- almost 180,000 -- are ethnic Serbs, but as many as 11 percent are Roma (Gypsies), Ashkali, Muslim Slavs and a smaller number from other minority groups.²¹

In addition, the UNHCR estimates the number of refugees in Serbia to be 377,000. They are primarily from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereon, "Bosnia"), and most have been living in exile for five to nine years.

Returns to Croatia, and to a lesser extent Bosnia, picked up in 2000-2001, in the wake of the election of new democratic post-war governments in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo. UNHCR reports that some 17,000 refugees returned to Croatia, and 755 to Bosnia with its assistance in 2000. The pace of return remained about the same through 2001, with the UNHCR reporting that they are assisting a few hundred people a month return to Croatia. Fewer are returning to Bosnia, often spontaneously, without UNHCR assistance.

The Croatian embassy, UNHCR and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia and other NGOs report being bombarded with requests for information and applications to return.

However significant obstacles remain for those who would like to go back, as their old homes are often occupied by new families, themselves displaced, who resist leaving, and local authorities are even more reluctant to force them.²² Most refugees therefore will likely remain in FRY, integrating locally, a process that the new authorities in Serbia and the FRY say they are willing to support.²³

UNHCR and international NGO figures indicate that about 9 percent of the refugee/IDP population lives in collective centers – often barebones makeshift accommodations in abandoned schools, barracks and factories. Others live with host families; many pay rent. It is evident that many find it difficult and stressful to be living in someone else's home. Although no statistics were available, the Women's Commission found that many of the refugees and IDPs were living in shelters that they had rented on their own. Some were no longer able to pay rent as all their resources were going to food and fuel, but their landlords had not yet evicted them.

Winters in FRY can be brutal. While in 2000 UNHCR provided each family hosting refugees and IDPs with firewood, last winter (2000-2001), humanitarian aid organizations, facing a funding shortfall, were unable to do so. Serbia experienced exacerbating conditions with severe power shortages.

While NGOs provided cash stipends to a limited number of host families to purchase firewood, and UNHCR paid for heat for collective centers, on visits to several collective centers in Novi Sad and Kraljevo in late January 2001, the Women's Commission found some were inadequately heated. In some host shelters, families can only afford to heat one room. IDPs and refugees often tried to stay out of the heated room in order to give their hosts some privacy. Others lived in private accommodations where there was no heat at all.

Living in Close Quarters

For the last 19 months, an elderly couple from Kosovo has been sheltered in their son-in-law's house in the town of Kraljevo. Their second daughter, Marina, her husband and two children are also being sheltered in the same house. Marina's six-year-old son has cerebral palsy and needs physical therapy treatment which he is not getting, although it should be free to him. Marina does not take him for physical therapy because it is too far to walk and she does not have money for the bus.

Marina is six months pregnant but does not want the baby. She does not go for prenatal care. An international NGO has assisted this extended family by helping to build two rooms in the attic, one for each of the IDP families. Only the downstairs kitchen living area is heated. When the host is home from work, all of the members of the two IDP families retreat to their unheated rooms. Marina becomes weepy as she talks about being unable to care for her two sons, much less the unwanted baby due in three months.

Clearly, ten years of war, sanctions and government exploitation have devastated Serbia's economy. At the time of the Women's Commission's visit, more than 70 percent of an average salary was needed merely to meet a family's basic food requirements. Price liberalization saw consumer prices rise 3 percent in the first two months of 2001, while inflation rose almost 115 percent in the year 2000 alone.²⁴

One of the most vulnerable groups of refugees and displaced persons in Serbia is households headed by single individuals. In most cases, these heads of household are widows, but single men heading households are also at risk of isolation and hardship. In Kraljevo, the Women's Commission met a family of Kosovar Serbs headed by a father with four daughters, ages three to 10. Their mother had committed suicide during the bombing of Kosovo. After fleeing Kosovo, they first lived in a wooden trailer for months until authorities moved them and other IDP families to an old hotel to serve as a collective center. The girls' grandmother struggles to care for the children while their father looks for work.

Official government policies ensure universal access to medicine, but in reality the state pharmacies are empty. In addition to a lack of medicine, there has also been a decrease in funding by international agencies for much-needed psychosocial programs for those experiencing the trauma of forced exile. A UNHCR representative told the Women's Commission that she suspected the suicide rate was going up in the population as a whole. She also stated that there were many cases of childhood tuberculosis, cancer and polio, for which drugs were not available.

International and local organization leaders voiced concern that psychosocial support programs will be the first programs to be cut from international aid. They said these programs have been lifelines to the refugees and IDPs. The current government social service agencies are not able to provide minimal services to the non-displaced population let alone to the refugees and IDPs who have special needs because of their tenuous situation, overwhelming losses and exposure to war violence. Local social service agencies cannot provide for elderly who are no longer able to care for themselves, nor can they provide intervention when there is violence in a refugee or IDP family. Women leaders report a significant escalation of violence, including domestic violence, in the non-displaced and the displaced populations because of long-term economic stress and the years of living under the repressive Milosevic regime. In both populations, the perpetrators of the violence include decommissioned soldiers, who have also perpetrated and been the victims of wartime violence.

In addition to basic relief assistance, UNHCR and other international agencies agree that humanitarian assistance must include training in human rights and ethnic tolerance. Some of this work might be done through an expanded network of "clubs" which have been opened with support from both local and international NGOs in places with high concentrations of refugees and IDPs. These clubs are common rooms or places where exiles and local people can meet for recreation or educational activities, such as language courses, vocational education, sports, sewing and knitting. The need for this kind of program has not been fully met, and increased access would be particularly important to adolescents for whom dislocation meant a disruption of education.

Twice Displaced

The region of Kraljevo is a fertile river valley where three rivers meet. It is home to approximately 170,000 refugees and internally displaced persons who make up 12 percent of the total population. A collective center in the village of Mataruska Banja, a few kilometers from the city of Kraljevo, is home to Milan and his family: his parents, Marija and Milos, his sister, Sanja, her son, Sasa, and Sanja's husband's grandmother.

Milan, a painter, decorates the room he shares with his sister with his paintings—well-executed oils of Mostar, friends and still lifes. Milan seeks out one painting: “It looks nice here with all of those trees. This was outside Mostar, where we used to live, and far from Kraljevo.”

Before the war, the family enjoyed a good life in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Marija was a housewife and Milos worked as an engineer for more than 25 years. Milan and his sister were in school when a grenade destroyed their home and they were forced to flee.

They ended up in a refugee camp in Kosovo. In the camp, Sanja gave birth to a son, Sasa, who was later diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. “Sanja was happy with her husband and, at first, he took good care of her,” said her mother, noting that Sanja was still suffering from the severe stress she experienced during the bombing in Mostar. “But once he realized that their son was going to be disabled, it was different—and he left.” The seven-year-old boy is now in a wheelchair too small for him. His great-grandmother, who is in her mid-80's, takes Sasa for a walk every afternoon.

In 1999, when NATO began bombing Serbia, the family was forced to relocate again, this time to Kraljevo in Serbia.

“It is hard for all of us with Sanja and her son's illness,” explained the family. “Sanja is prescribed an expensive medication which is not available at government pharmacies. Sasa had surgery and in fact it made his condition worse. When he returned from the hospital he was unable to talk or walk. The doctors in Belgrade said his condition would improve with physical therapy and speech exercises, but three years later, nothing has happened.”

They have little income, since Milos has not been able to collect his pension from his former employer in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Milan and his father look for work in the fields in the summer months to help make ends meet. In his spare time, Milan teaches painting to refugee children.

Many families have been twice displaced because, between 1992 and 1996, thousands of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia were forced by the Milosevic government to resettle in Kosovo. Their presence was expected to dilute the Albanian majority and reduce pressure for a restoration of Kosovo's autonomy. Both Serb and Roma refugees were part of this forced resettlement. Many of them subsequently fled Kosovo when the NATO bombing ended in Serbia and Kosovar Albanians returned home from their exodus. Many left Kosovo because of a perceived threat of Kosovar Albanian retaliation and others left after their houses had been burned and/or they were threatened with, or experienced, retaliatory violence. When these refugees left Kosovo, many did not come with identification or other official documents because they had been burned or there was no time to get them. Without the papers supporting their refugee status, they came to be identified as displaced people and therefore lost some possibilities afforded to them by their previous refugee status.

Unfulfilled Dreams

Mileva lives in Novi Sad with her 12-year-old twin daughters and her 16-year-old son. Her husband was killed in the war in Croatia in 1992. She has been a refugee in Serbia for six years. Currently the family of four live in a one-room apartment, which she was able to rent a few months ago for 100 DMs (\$50) a month. She receives a widow's pension from the government of 100 DMs a month. In Croatia, the family had a house and land, but it was burned along with her passport and papers. She states they will never go back to Croatia.

A textile engineer in Croatia, Mileva cannot find textile work in Serbia. She earns a bit of money cleaning for others and babysitting, but it is never enough. She has not been able to pay rent for three months because she used all her money to buy food and wood for their heating stove. The Women's Commission's visit interrupted the family's meager lunch consisting of fried potatoes. All three children get top grades in school. One daughter wants to study law, and the son wants to go to the technical university. They say that these are dreams that they will not be able to attain because they will not even have the money to buy books or pay fees.

Like many refugees, Mileva received a piece of municipal land. Her brothers-in-law poured the foundation for her to build a house. But that was several years ago and Mileva has had no money to build further. She has no legal right to the land she is using and it could be taken from her and other refugees like her at any time.

Women

Refugee and IDP women face distinct difficulties surviving and recovering from armed conflict. Gender discrimination, limited opportunities, the experience of violence, many of their husbands' lives undermined by violence, contribute to their burden. Many are widows of combatants who were killed during the wars. Others are widows of civilian casualties of the wars.²⁵ Still others were alone with their families for months or years while their husbands went into hiding to avoid forced conscription or remained behind to fight or to protect their property.

Women IDPs from Kosovo are less likely to have been employed before becoming displaced than women from Serbia proper and, therefore, may lack employment training and skills, as well as the confidence to earn a living.²⁶

Roma IDPs and refugee women are much less likely than other IDP and refugee women to be literate or to speak Serbian fluently. The Roma society is particularly patriarchal among other former Yugoslav groups, and hence the Roma women in general often have little autonomy.

As has been much reported, sexual violence was used as a weapon of war in the Balkans. Serbian women's organizations report that many refugee and IDP women were raped during the war or as they fled. There is no data on the number of women and girls who suffered sexual violence during the conflicts.²⁷

Family violence has escalated as men have lost their livelihoods and subsequently respect and authority within the family. Many turn to alcohol and are abusive to their wives and children. Women's groups report that a decade of war has increased domestic violence. In 1995, the local NGO SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence reported that in 40 percent of cases, women who called the hotline reported that their partners threatened them with weapons.²⁸

Although reproductive health education is provided by various local and international NGOs as part of their medical programs, birth control devices and medication are not provided. Consequently, refugee and IDP women are having unwanted pregnancies. Many said they did not want to bring babies into their present living situations.

The Serbian women's NGO *Hi Neighbor* escorted the Women's Commission to Kalenic to visit a settlement of IDPs from Kosovo with a high concentration of widows with children. The collective center was an hour's drive from Belgrade and was once a dormitory for electricity plant workers. It is six kilometers from the nearest village, and isolation is the residents' most immediate problem. The collective center population consists of 50 women, their children and a handful of men. Although the shelters themselves are adequate and well heated, the area is barren and there is no place for children to play.

Most of the women's husbands were killed in Kosovo before they fled with their families. Gordana's situation is typical: After her husband was killed in June 1999 in Kosovo, she and her four children fled to Serbia proper. Her in-laws joined them later. Because Gordana cannot get a death certificate for her husband from Kosovo, she has not been able to get a widow's pension for which she should be eligible. Her father-in-law became sick last September and died in a local hospital. Now Gordana and her mother-in-law are left with children aged 5, 6, 8 and 9. Gordana would like to work, but she does not have any transportation to the closest town. Gordana admits that she does not know what a solution could be for herself and her family. She does not believe she can ever go back to Kosovo even if it were safe, as she feels it would be difficult to live in the community where her husband had been killed. She does not see a way out of her current situation.

Weeping, Gordana acknowledged that she keeps going for the sake of her children. She said she wanted her two girls to be more independent than she is. She told how her father-in-law would never allow his wife to buy anything unless he was with her. Before her husband's death, Gordana felt that her position as a woman was better than her mother-in-law's because her husband gave her money and trusted her to do the shopping alone. But even so, since she did not work, she could not be fully independent. She said she dreams that her daughters will be able to support themselves and thereby be more independent than she could ever be.

Snienana, another woman from the same collective center, also left Kosovo in June 1999 with her 13-year-old son and her 17- and 18-year-old daughters. Her husband and 15-year-old son disappeared several days before she left Kosovo, and she has not been able to find out what happened to them, although she is convinced they are dead. She has seen a video of dead bodies, taken by Americans after the Yugoslav Army left Kosovo, and she recognized the body of her son but not her husband. She has contacted the Red Cross in Novi Sad but it has not been able to learn anything about her husband's fate. Because she has no evidence that her husband is dead, Snienana is not able to receive a widow's pension.

The families in this collective center subsist entirely on humanitarian aid. A *Hi Neighbor* activist reports that the physical and social isolation have made these women passive and locked in their pain. Activists from *Hi Neighbor* visit the settlement once a week and offer psychosocial support

and try to help the women be connected to the outside world. They hold group activities for the children which take place in a nearby restaurant when it is closed and they are allowed the space. They bring material so the women can do handicrafts. Although they have income generation projects in other collective centers, they have not started one here, in part, because there are so many young children needing attention.

Responding to Domestic Violence

Sonja has been a refugee for nine years and had been a victim of domestic violence even longer. She lived in a collective center near Kraljevo with her husband. Recently, she fled from a severe beating by her husband at the collective center. Although Sonja asked for assistance from a local social service institution, she was told that she would have to get a letter from her husband saying he would not support her.

During the course of the day, while waiting in the state welfare office, she learned about the SOS Hotline and placed a call to it at 6:30 p.m. Within an hour, an SOS volunteer found some money to buy her a train ticket so she could go to her parents' home. "This refugee woman was lucky to have family in the region of Serbia; many others have no place to go while their husbands drink, waiting for a job or an opportunity to return home," noted an SOS worker.

Women's Organizations

Numerous independent women's and feminist groups provide assistance to refugee and internally displaced populations.²⁹ At the outbreak of conflict in Croatia and Bosnia, women formed organizations to oppose the mobilization for war. One of the most inspirational is **Women in Black**, an anti-war group, whose members have demonstrated every week in Belgrade's Republic Square for most of the past decade against war and violence. They also distribute relief supplies to refugees, work with women refugees and hold classes to educate people about how to combat racism and violence. The group, which was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2000, describes its mission as "to transform women's powerlessness and despair into a feminist women's movement of resistance to nationalism, militarism and sexism."³⁰

Yugoslav-based women's groups are diverse in their mandates, with programs ranging from activism on behalf of women's political, legal and social rights, to research and advocacy, humanitarian assistance, education and health services. Many groups serve refugees and IDPs as well as the larger population. Some of the major women's organizations assisting refugee and IDP women are:

° **The Autonomous Women's Center Against Sexual Violence**, Belgrade: Started in 1990 with the SOS Hotline (see below) to provide a safe environment for women survivors of all forms of sexual violence. It started providing support and counseling to women rape victims fleeing from Croatia and Bosnia in 1992 and continues to provide psychotherapy to those from that exodus who still need it today. It holds workshops for women on overcoming trauma, as well as workshops on human rights for Roma women. It does outreach to Roma settlements, as the Roma women find it hard to get to them in Belgrade. It has provided care and counseling to both Roma and Serbian IDPs from Kosovo who have been victims of rape used as a weapon of war.³¹

◦ **The Association for Women's Initiatives (AWIN):** An umbrella NGO established in December 1998. Its core activity is feminist activism, forming new women's initiatives and networking. It provides small grants to rural women's groups trying to start income generating projects. It gives free computer and English language courses for women to help them get employment. AWIN has capacity building workshops for smaller groups of women. Because Serbia is a major country of transition for trafficking of women from East Europe and the countries that comprised the Soviet Union on their way to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro, for the use of troops stationed there, AWIN has launched ASTRA (Anti-Sex Trafficking Action) to educate Serbian communities about the trafficking of women and girls and to help prevent trafficking. Serbia is a major transit point for the trafficking of women for sexual purposes from Eastern Europe and the countries that comprised the Soviet Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro. AWIN will collect data and make contacts with social work centers, health care providers and the police. AWIN holds anti-trafficking education campaigns in schools and community centers.

◦ **Group 484:** A women's NGO founded in 1995 by beloved peace activist, choreographer, artist and refugee Jelena Santic, who died tragically last year. Santic's original vision was to organize the 484 families who had arrived with the 1995 exodus of 250,000 refugees from Knin and Eastern Slavonia, to unite and work together to advocate for their own needs. Since its founding, Group 484 has expanded its scope of work and currently has 200 female refugee activists. Its mission is "to help people in need, to spread the culture of peace, dialogue, agreement, cooperation and nonviolent conflict resolution as the basis for the development of civil society."³² Its motto is that life is in your own hands. Its main work is to promote self organization and advocacy among refugees and IDPs. They stimulate social activism by educating refugees in human rights and children's rights through interactive workshops and classes. Group 484 gives help and support to refugees wanting to return to their homes in Bosnia and Croatia. It also provides humanitarian aid, psychosocial programs and legal advice to IDPs and refugees in private accommodations and collective centers.

◦ **Lastavica Women's Safe House:** A safe house for 115 women and children since the early 1990s. It helps the victims of domestic violence resolve psychological issues and adjust their legal status and undertakes legal advocacy. The Lastavica (Serbo-Croatian for swallow) initiative of refugee women's houses was started in Surcin, a town outside of Belgrade.³³ The Autonomous Women's Center and Oxfam-UK established the first collective house for refugee women in 1996. Originally, there were ten women living together in a small brick house. A second house was opened in Pancevo in 1997. The majority of refugee women supported in these houses are from Krajina and are either single or without support from their families. They organize themselves and share duties, which include cooking, gardening and raising chickens. The houses also serve as open centers for all refugee women in the area to visit and take classes. Educational and other activities benefit more than 100 refugees every month.

Skills development is offered through computer, English language and catering courses. Training is also offered in hairdressing, sewing and weaving. Legal support is organized once a week to help refugees with issues regarding refugee status, obtaining documents and claiming property. Some women leave the house when they obtain skills and find employment or marry. The vacancies are filled by other refugee and internally displaced women. Many of the women find

work through the Lastavica catering business, which produces food that is popular with local people and expatriates living in the area.

◦ **The SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence:** SOS Hotline is an NGO that has been assisting women and children victims of violence since 1991. One SOS worker described the program: “Since the beginning of the Balkan wars, family violence has escalated. We have to deal with all kinds of situations, including women who are trafficked, as well as incest cases. Some of the cases are refugees and IDPs, as well as local women. SOS has had to keep in touch with social welfare institutions that are, themselves, in bad shape. Some of their staff come to work with us because people really want to help, but the state institutions delay assistance because of procedures.”

◦ **Hi Neighbor:** The founder of Hi Neighbor is the energetic and highly motivated Vesna Ognjenovic, a university professor who left her teaching position in 1991 to start psychosocial outreach support to refugee women and children living in collective centers. By 2000, Hi Neighbor had 120 part-time professionals providing psychosocial support to refugees and IDPs in 25 Serbian municipalities.

Hi Neighbor, an implementing partner of UNHCR, has separate programs for preschool children, school children and adolescents with the main goal of cultural and social integration in local communities through activities that promote the development of age-appropriate developmental skills, including social competence and cognition, literacy and numeracy through process-oriented programs. Hi Neighbor also has programs for adults and elderly and, as with their child programs, they promote self-reliance. Activities for adults include projects promoting traditional handicrafts which also provide modest incomes for the participants.

Hi Neighbor Helps Provide a Living

At a shop in Belgrade, traditional clothes and other handicrafts sell at a brisk pace. The shop’s merchandise is produced by refugee women, who are using their sewing and embroidery skills to make high-quality materials. Some have learned weaving in recent years or months, as part of the Hi Neighbor training program. More than 240 refugee women earn some income from this work.

These organizations are just some of the dozens of impressive local women’s organizations formed in Serbia to address the unique needs and crises generated by the past decade of conflict and political repression. The majority of these organizations receive international monetary support, which has allowed them to provide not only aid but a breath of humanity and civil society into a country ravaged by totalitarian nationalism. To maintain their valuable work, these organizations will continue to need international funds until their work can be integrated into the emerging social infrastructure. Continued funding will ensure that their voices and actions promoting civil society will not be silenced or stopped.

Kosovo IDP Teens Want to go to School

Snienana's daughters, 17-year-old Tanja and 18-year-old Boba, both want to go to school. At the start of the school year, Boba was living in a secondary school dormitory in Belgrade in order to attend the school. She was doing well but was forced to leave by the administrator when he found out she was unable to pay the small dormitory fees. Tanja is trying to get her mother's permission to go and live with other IDP relatives who share a one bedroom house with a host family in a town with a secondary school. Snienana does not want her daughter to go as she does not believe that her life will be any better, but she will not stop her if she is unable to persuade Tanja to change her mind.

Another widow from Kosovo arrived at this same collective center three weeks ago with her 18-year-old son, Oliver, who completed economic secondary school in Kosovo. They came because the mother feared the son would be killed if they stayed in Kosovo. Oliver has nothing to do and claims he just stays in the room and sits on his bed. There are no books to read and no televisions or computers. Oliver would like books to read and Internet access. He would like to work, but without transportation he cannot look for a job. When asked for ideas on how to make his situation better, Oliver answered that if he had connections, he could maybe find a job but he would still need to be resettled closer to his work or be provided with transportation. Oliver said he could not envision a life without humanitarian aid.

Children

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the United Nations agency coordinating all programs and activities that benefit children in Yugoslavia, including non-refugee/IDP children. UNICEF encourages local and international service organizations to focus in geographic areas with the largest numbers of refugees and IDPs, as these areas have overwhelmed social service agencies least able to extend their sparse resources to cover services for refugee and IDP children.

UNICEF reports that there are more than 8,000 children in Serbia who have been orphaned or have lost one parent as a result of the decade of wars. Some of the children are in orphanages, others in foster care and still others live with close or distant relatives.³⁴ Twelve percent of children in Serbian orphanages are refugees or IDPs.³⁵

For many of the refugee and IDP children in Serbia, life was described as "only survival, no development." Food shortages have affected their education. To date, school meals have not been part of the education programs. This problem affects the entire population, but is particularly critical for refugee and IDP children.

The international community has supported important educational and community service programs for refugee and internally displaced children and adolescents since the start of the war. UNICEF described its program challenges in assisting children affected by conflict:

- ° Overburdened public services system (especially schools) due to the large influx of refugees and IDPs. For example, in certain areas of Vojvodina and Kraljevo, 42 percent of the people are refugees and IDPs;
- ° School rehabilitation, including the repair of heating infrastructure, equipping school kitchens and the provision of clothes, footwear and school kits;
- ° Enormous basic services needs, including medical care and heating, particularly for vulnerable groups, including minority ethnic groups, women and children;
- ° The deterioration of quality primary health care for children due to an increased number of beneficiaries, limited funds and a shortage of drugs and equipment.³⁶

UNICEF plays a lead role in helping children access education. They organize “catch up” classes for approximately 30,000 IDP children of primary school age (1,000 of them Roma) in collective and community centers and in Serbian primary schools. Most of the assistance for children has been geared toward younger children.

In theory, education is free for all, including refugees and IDPs, but due to lack of resources there is no money for school necessities or a hot meal for children. In some cases, collective centers are far from schools, making it difficult for children to attend. Finally, language is a barrier for Albanian- or Roma-speaking IDPs.

None of the children living in the Roma collective center Stari Aerodrom outside of Kraljevo attend school, and many never have. When interviewed by a Women’s Commission delegate, they unanimously stated that they wanted to go to school but could not because they did not have enough clothes or shoes to wear. Later, a UNHCR community services field officer in Kraljevo, revealed that all the children in the settlement had been given clothes, new shoes and book bags by an international NGO, but that there was no sign of these commodities one week later, and no children had entered school. Some agencies are helping to set up some play activities and Save the Children has created a playground for all to share—refugees, IDPs and local children—in this area, and it is the one bright spot in the camp.

It is very hard to get the Roma children to attend school due to chronic illnesses, lack of proper clothing and prejudice from local children. Many of the children’s parents are illiterate, especially the women. Traditionally the Roma have not valued education, and most of the IDP children from Kosovo have either never been to school or had dropped out before completing the fourth year. Even when the children show an interest in school, cultural attitudes to education compound the practical and psychological barriers to school attendance.

In the electric company collective center of Kalanic mentioned earlier, all the approximately 50 primary school-age IDPs are bused six kilometers to the nearest school. The younger ones get out one-and-a-half hours before the older ones but must wait for the same bus that takes them all back to the collective center at 3:00 p.m. During this 90-minute wait, the younger students are unsupervised while they play outside the school between a railroad track and a busy highway.

Youth

Adolescents affected by war and displacement are as a group at particular risk for poor adjustment. They are often underserved by humanitarian assistance programs.

Many refugee adolescents have been displaced for up to nine years and have spent much of their childhood and teenage years with little autonomy over their lives.³⁷ They still have strong memories of their old lives, which can keep them focused on their loss instead of moving forward. Often family roles have disintegrated as a result of long-term displacement, and parents are not able to provide normal boundaries and role models for their adolescent children. When fathers are present, they have lost their roles as family providers and protectors, and this has affected their self-esteem. Often the fathers turn to alcohol, which causes or adds to family violence and dysfunction.

Youth in such situations are understandably angry and have feelings of helplessness. Peers are the most important relations for this age group and with anger and lack of direction, they are prone to turn together to destructive behavior. If they remain without good role models and opportunities to constructively be involved in creating a more positive future for themselves, they are at risk of growing into angry young people who perpetuate the circle of violence and retaliation.

Many refugee and IDP adolescents are not in school because secondary school is not compulsory for children who have reached their 15th birthday. A Norwegian Refugee Council report on IDPs found that 20 percent of displaced children in Serbia do not attend school.³⁸ It is common for those who do to attend classes with over 50 children per classroom. Many areas where refugees and IDPs live are far from secondary schools. Others miss school because they don't have adequate clothing or money for school supplies.

The Women's Commission had a chance to meet such youth living in the electric company collective center of Kalanic. The approximately 50 primary school-aged children are bused six kilometers to primary school, but there is no secondary school in the area and no transportation to any secondary school.

The Women's Commission interviewed several adolescent girls who live at the Roma collective center Stari Aerodrum, near Kraljevo. Ana, 12, and Shameila, 13, are from the Klina area of Kosovo. Shameila completed four years of primary school, but Ana has never been to school. They speak a Roma language with their families and are not fluent in Serbo-Croatian. Both say they would like to go to school but cannot because they do not have appropriate shoes, clothes, books or supplies such as book bags and pencils. Although clean, their clothes look tattered, and their shoes are in such bad condition that they hardly manage to cover their feet.

When asked what they dreamed of for the future, Ana said she would like to be able to buy makeup and pretty clothes. Shameila agreed with Ana and added she also would like to have a boyfriend. When asked if they wanted to get married and have their own children when they grow up, both girls vigorously shook their heads, "no." When asked what they would do instead, they said they would like to work. When asked if they would like to work outside of the family or in the family like their mothers do, they replied that they wanted to work like their mothers do.

During the interview, which was conducted by the only running water source, community women were scrubbing clothes by hand with cold water. At this point, one of the women interrupted to say that the girls would be better off working for money outside of the community so that they would be able to buy what they wanted.

The women and an older girl started talking about the fact that it was important to go to school and learn to read and write. “At least to be able to write your own name,” added a middle-aged woman. One went on to say that the only way that could happen would be if a school was started in their settlement. The Women’s Commission delegate asked a 17-year-old girl if she would attend a school if it was in their settlement. She answered that she would not be able to because she had to care for her one-and-a-half-year-old baby.

A few local and international NGOs have programs that specifically target youth. The Novi Sad Humanitarian Center (NSHC), a local implementing partner of UNHCR, has a program providing education to Roma youth. A Women’s Commission delegate visited an NSHC class in Novi Sad. Fifteen youth between the ages of 13 and 19 were drawing pictures and sharing stories about the pictures. Because their Roma community does not emphasize activities such as drawing and coloring when children are young, these youth were drawing pictures with images more typical of much younger children. They were enthusiastic about this activity and eager to share their pictures and stories with the psychosocial worker leading the class. These same youth also participate in another NSHC class that is teaching them beginning reading and writing skills which help prepare them to enter a special government school for youth who have not finished primary school. Because these 15 youth are not literate, they need special catch-up activities in order to have a chance of succeeding in the special government school.

The local NGO, Group 484, also has psychosocial workshops for adolescent refugees. These workshops have the stated goal of promoting civil society values by supporting cultural activities and educating youth about principles of democracy and respect for differences. Many more local NGOs have programs promoting the development of civil society through activities with children and youth but do not target refugee and IDP youth. Many international NGOs have psychosocial programs that target refugee and/or IDP children and youth together.

In spite of programs that target refugee and IDP youth, either separately or more commonly as part of a larger children’s program, adolescents continue to be perceived as particularly underserved. UNICEF’s Project Officer, Svetlana Marojevic, sums it up well: “Adolescent refugees and IDPs are especially affected by the wars and displacement and remain the most neglected group. They need to feel useful and included and to get some qualifications. They are in need of psychosocial support and interventions, educational encouragement, counseling and clubs where they can talk about their animosity and how they can work through it to help in the process of building civil society.”

Roma IDPs and Refugees in Serbia

The Roma (Gypsies) are among the most vulnerable of the displaced.³⁹ The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), an international public interest law group, states that the Roma are the most deprived ethnic group of Europe. “Almost everywhere, their fundamental rights are threatened,” says the ERRC. “Disturbing cases of racist violence targeting Roma have occurred

in recent years. Discrimination against Roma in employment, education, health care, administrative and other services is common in many societies. Hate speech against Roma deepens the negative stereotypes which pervade European public opinion.”⁴⁰

The Roma who fled Kosovo have been accused by Kosovar Albanians of collaborating with the Serb authorities who expelled ethnic Albanians by the thousands during the war in Kosovo. In Serbia, they are the least welcome of the refugee and IDP groups.

The Women’s Commission delegation visited a camp in Serbia for Roma who had fled Kosovo. Stari Aerodrom gets its name from the former airport where it is located. One-hundred-and-forty-six Roma from Kosovo live in 12 large tents. When they first arrived, they were placed in atomic shelters underground. Many of the Roma felt those shelters were preferable to the tents, which bake in the summer heat and offer no protection from the winter’s cold. The women complained that the space they were given was dirty, and they did not have access to clean water.

The Women’s Commission interviewed women living in this airport camp. Hana (35) noted: “My children are sick all the time. It’s been more than a year since I’ve given any meat to my children.” Alija (37), a mother of seven, said: “We have no life here. We are like animals.” Violeta (30) has five children and lives with a grandmother who can barely walk. She would desperately like her family to move to a better area. Many of the children in these families do not speak Serbian, which makes it difficult for them to attend a regular school.

Five months later, the Women’s Commission visited this Roma group again. UNHCR had been able to provide each family group with a one-room container and a wood-burning stove. The containers, which are the shape and size of a railway freight car, were warm and cozy and had enough space for the families to keep their few possessions in order. The settlement had been provided with two outside taps of cold running water where women were gathered, washing their clothes. During this second Women’s Commission visit, most of the community’s men were in the process of constructing wooden awnings for their containers in order to make them more weatherproof. When asked where they got the wood and other material for the awnings, they stated that they bought the supplies themselves.⁴¹

The Roma here are not well received by the locals and this has further exacerbated their sense of isolation. Conditions for displaced Roma are reported to be worse in other places in FRY. There have been reports of Roma communities living near garbage dumps without water and electricity, in shacks made of pieces of wood and cardboard. There are also reported to be several hundred Roma from Kosovo living in an unfinished medical center building, also without electricity or water.⁴²

Recently, the Roma Association was formed in Belgrade to coordinate activities for the 73 local Roma associations in Serbia. The Association’s members come from the local Roma associations and are themselves Roma. In the last year, many local and international NGOs have received funding and developed programs for Roma IDPs and refugees as their plight gained publicity. Despite this support, Roma communities continue to struggle to meet their own needs.

IV. Montenegro

Refugee and Internally Displaced Communities: A Profile

Approximately 32,000 IDPs from Kosovo live in Montenegro. In addition, Montenegro is host to some 14,000 refugees. Refugees and IDPs number nearly 10 percent of Montenegro's total population of 650,000.⁴³

During the Women's Commission August 2000 visit, there was growing insecurity among many Montenegrins as relations with Serbia deteriorated. While these tensions have abated since the change of government in Belgrade, there is still debate about Montenegro's future, and many Montenegrins favor independence.

According to international aid organizations, December 1999 marked the end of the emergency phase of operations for IDPs in Montenegro. The move now is towards targeted assistance to those most in need. The Roma community is the most at risk because the Roma do not become integrated as easily as other ethnic groups. UNHCR is focused on assisting refugees and internally displaced people who would like to return home, and on helping those who do not want to return home to integrate locally.

Roma IDPs and Refugees in Montenegro

Seven thousand Roma from Kosovo have sought exile in Montenegro. Approximately half live in collective centers and half in private accommodations, often paying rent. As mentioned above, Roma have long faced discrimination in Europe, and their situation in Montenegro presents many challenges to the local communities, as well as to humanitarian assistance organizations. Among the larger of the Roma camps are Konik I and Konik II, just outside the capital city of Podgorica. Discussions with camp officials highlighted many of the old prejudices and stereotypes. However, the Women's Commission also witnessed and learned about programs and opportunities developed for Roma women and children that challenge these attitudes. As one elderly woman said with both sadness and defiance in her voice, "Just because we are Gypsies, we don't have to die."

The Women's Commission visited three Roma settlements. The sites were on or near garbage dumps, creating extreme health hazards. Housing in most cases was substandard, overcrowded and in disrepair. Services were limited, although there were several bright exceptions. Local discrimination combined with a poor economy has limited opportunities for men or women to find work to supplement their meager assistance packages—which many families are forced to sell just to survive.

The Roma not only fear repatriation to Kosovo, but many are afraid even of venturing outside their camps or settlements. Local violence against Roma is not uncommon. Inside the camps and settlements the trauma of displacement, lack of work, overcrowding, alcohol abuse and other factors have led to an increase in domestic violence. Although the subject is taboo and little data is available, women and humanitarian assistance staff noted domestic violence as a significant concern.⁴⁴

Konik I and Konik II

These two Roma camps are located on the outskirts of Podgorica. Surrounded by distant hills, the flat, dusty land is buffeted by strong cold winds in the winter and is hot and dry during the summer. The sites are surrounded by garbage dumps. A perimeter wall around Konik I utilizes old, rusted bodies of cars as a barrier wall to protect against the wind. There are distinct differences between the two sites that have a critical impact on the well-being of their inhabitants.

Konik I is a maze of barracks. This site was rebuilt after tents—which were the first shelters—were blown away in December 1999 during violent wind storms. The two-room barracks are overcrowded, with most housing seven to twelve people. The physical condition of the camp is very poor, with garbage strewn throughout the common areas and alleyways. The ground was muddy even in the dry heat, because of inadequate drainage. Flies were everywhere. UNHCR noted that despite the appearance of Konik I, much effort has been dedicated to its upkeep. An administrator from InterSoS, an Italian NGO which manages the camp, acknowledged the difficulties in running a center that lacks community unity. This is exacerbated by the overcrowded conditions that add to existing tensions and frustrations.

According to InterSoS, there are approximately 1,800 Roma in Konik I. There are three barracks per sector, with approximately 100-120 people in each sector. There is one representative per sector. All 17 representatives are male; there are 17 corresponding female representatives, but they have less power. Meetings with InterSoS are held twice a week to discuss a variety of problems. A key administrative issue is that the Roma here are from many different areas of Kosovo and therefore do not share the same community structures.

The delegation interviewed a group of 12 women in the room of a barrack. They were of varying ages and from six villages and cities in Kosovo. Despite their differences, they were united in their outspoken criticism of their daily existence. They spoke about the lack of material assistance. They had no soap, no shampoo. Their children were infected with lice, and they had no way to combat the chronic infestations. Their shelters were in poor condition and overcrowded. There was no electricity. “We live like animals,” stated one older woman with a sense of resignation. “I worked for 16 years in a factory in Pristina, and my husband for 21 years. We have five children. Our homes were destroyed, and now we live like animals.”⁴⁵ Despite their years of hard work, those who fled Kosovo are not eligible for their pensions in Montenegro. As she spoke, her husband pressed a crumpled photo of their old home, partially destroyed, into the visitors’ hands. It was a simple stand-alone concrete house with a tiled roof—far different from the conditions they find themselves in now.

Despite the hardships at Konik I, no one the delegation interviewed planned to return to Kosovo. Many women talked of the violence they had experienced, including rape and beatings in front of their children. While most were accompanied by their husbands in exile, several women spoke of their traumatized families. “I am sorry; I have to cry,” said one woman. “My husband was beaten so badly that he is not able to help me at home. Now I have to be both husband and wife.”⁴⁶

Another unified message among the women was concern for their children. Their nutrition seemed severely compromised by the lack of fresh foods, although a recent survey in the camp

did not detect any malnutrition. Distributed food packets (mostly rice and beans) were high in starch and often infested with insects. Some women admitted that they visit the markets late in the day to gather leftover vegetables. One stated emphatically: “We have lost everything, but we don’t want to lose our children.”

A visit to Konik II made obvious the sharp differences in the physical layout of the two camps. While this camp was the same area as Konik I, the population of 400 was only one-fifth as large. Another important difference was that this community was intact. All Roma in Konik II were from the same village in Kosovo, where they were led by the man who continued to be their leader. This produced an environment that was better organized and more unified. This camp was administered by the NGO World Vision.

During a walk through the camp, some other differences were immediately obvious. First and most importantly, the housing consisted of one-room cottages designed for one family. In addition to the single-room living area, most had a lean-to for storage, food preparation and cooking. Some had small gardens. This set-up created a stronger sense of personal ownership than the communal housing of Konik I, and the houses and surrounding areas were better maintained. Gravel on the ground provided much better drainage. While unemployment was high among the residents, World Vision had hired small teams to assist in garbage collection and disposal. This effort had resulted in a cleaner overall environment. The common areas were clean, with a brightly painted pre-school and an area designated for a future playground. In contrast to the widespread notion that Roma live in slums, a World Vision representative stated that trips to villages in Kosovo had found just the opposite—that many Roma lived in nice houses.

The World Vision representative acknowledged that the chances were slim that the IDPs from Konik would be returning to Kosovo: “The emergency is over. Kosovars are not going home, so we need to look at program sustainability.”

Niksic

The town of Niksic is approximately one-and-a-half hours northwest of Podgorica. Approximately 3,000 Roma from Kosovo live in settlements there in very poor conditions. The Women’s Commission visited one settlement surrounded by smoldering garbage dumps. Housing was ramshackle and in disrepair. People appeared to be living in the few communal toilets and showers. The delegation met with two groups at the Roma Center for Women and Children.

The Center is run by two local Montenegrin women who were concerned about the needs of the Roma from Kosovo. Its mission is to promote and protect women’s and children’s rights and to create positive social interactions among IDP, refugee and local communities, while combating discrimination. The Center is expanding to organize workshops that focus on domestic violence, reproductive rights, treatment of girls in the family and prostitution. A gynecologist, pediatrician and psychologist make regular visits. Children and young girls are welcome, and many frequent the Center.

The Center plays a vital role in community-building. One after another, women talked of how important the Center was as a place to socialize and share problems. “I feel like I save my life and my children every day by coming here,” commented one woman. Another said, “This Center is where I have been able to share my hardest moments.”⁴⁷

But these experiences do not come easily. Most women have to walk at least one hour to reach the Center and their lives at home are full with childcare, food preparation and other home chores. In fact, husbands might make it difficult for their wives to attend the Center if not for the small incentives, such as soap or laundry detergent, distributed to those who come.

The delegation met with a group of approximately 50 women. They came from different areas of Kosovo and had been in Montenegro for approximately one year. Their principal complaint was housing. Despite their inability to find jobs, rental fees of 50 Deutsche Marks per month (approximately \$25) were nearly impossible to raise. Even for those who could afford the rent, the “homes” were substandard, often with no water or electricity. Some were described as little more than shacks or sheds, sometimes shared with farm animals. Again, despite the horrendous physical conditions, the women did not anticipate returning home. Many of the women were heads of household—their husbands missing or presumed dead. One 39-year-old woman from Pec spoke of the importance of the Center as a place of community and support. “The program here is what keeps me sane. At home I am nervous and anxious. My house in Kosovo was burned, my three sons are missing. I have one daughter—six-and-a-half years old—with me here, but I am afraid to let her out of my sight. I am afraid to let her play with friends or even attend school. I am afraid of losing her, too.”⁴⁸

Food seemed to be in short supply, especially for infants. It was clear that no “infant packets” or supplemental food were available to new mothers. One mother, in reference to the food that is distributed, stated emphatically, “My baby can’t eat beans.”⁴⁹

In separate interviews, younger women, ranging in age from 13 to 21, described their lives. Most are responsible for taking care of their children or their brothers and sisters. They spend their days cooking, cleaning, collecting firewood or aid materials that are distributed, and watching younger children. Almost all said they had never been to school. (Roma boys are also reported to have little education.) Of the 20 girls, only one had completed primary school. “Sometimes we sell the aid and buy what we need,” explained one young woman. “We sell the rice or beans and buy things for the babies or buy washing detergent, vegetables or meat.”⁵⁰

A 17-year-old girl, Susanna, explained that she lost her parents in the war in Kosovo and was forced to marry in order to survive. She married a man 13 years older than she is, who has two young sons. Susanna lives with him, his sons and his sister, who has a family of seven. They live in a small shack of wood, tires and dirt, near the garbage dump at the outskirts of town. Although most of the girls have not been to school, they expressed a desire to learn to read and write, and to get jobs. The Center provides literacy and numeracy classes in which some refugees are enrolled. As of late January 2001, no Niksic Roma children had been allowed to attend the local elementary school.⁵¹

The Center is also a refuge when women are beaten by their husbands. “We have had several interventions by the police,” explained the Center’s director. “In one case the husband was

arrested. We tried to protect the woman and found her shelter. She left her husband and is now in a shelter in Podgorica. Many women have this problem but don't report it. They consider it a normal situation."⁵²

Anima

Anima means spirit, and the women running the program exemplify a spirit of survival and optimism. Based in the southern city of Ulcinj, the NGO Anima's founder is a gynecologist. Since 1994, Anima has assisted more than 6,000 refugees and IDPs through the collection and distribution of food and clothing. It has raised money to help with housing expenses, and it has offered medical help and treatment for pregnant women and babies. An SOS Hotline targets young girls who have health-related questions, as visits to a gynecologist are considered taboo for single women and girls. The organization currently employs 50 active women volunteers. Anima targets minority communities (mostly ethnic Albanians) but is available to all women. Through support workshops, seminars and networking systems they hope to "break the chain of violence of the last 10 years." Anima operates in six cities. Current seminar topics include female health issues such as breast cancer, combating prostitution and sex education. With funding from the Open Society Institute they will soon begin publication of an Albanian language women's magazine.

Children

The UN agency taking the lead in addressing issues of concern to children is UNICEF, which lists its priorities in Montenegro as:

1. Minority education—assisting Roma communities in accessing the public education system in Montenegro;
2. Building the capacity of the Montenegrin authorities and promoting family and community participation, including how to assist children with special needs, such as the disabled; pre-school programs;
3. Enhancing the protection of children—family crisis intervention, prevention programming, addressing alcoholism, domestic violence.

"It's not as hard for Slavic children to integrate into the school system here," explained the UNICEF staff. "Four thousand five hundred (4,500) internally displaced children enrolled in the formal education system last September. This was a big challenge for the Ministry of Education. We supported the Ministry by providing textbooks and basic education materials and by fixing school buildings."⁵³

The deputy of the Montenegrin Ministry for Refugees noted that refugee children who arrived in 1994, mostly ethnic Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, attended government schools near the collective centers where they lived. Most did well in school. "The school told us that the children were stimulating other kids to do better in all school activities," he said. "We estimate there are 1,500 primary school children who are not in school. Most of them are Roma children. Our intention is to integrate the children into the local school system, but the impediments are serious. They include social discrimination, language and cultural barriers, poverty and hygiene."⁵⁴

Currently, UNICEF is working in partnership with international assistance organizations, World Vision, InterSoS and Save the Children, which provide basic education in literacy, math and life skills to 800 Roma children from Konik I and II. UNICEF emphasized that this is not a parallel system, and it has no intention of creating a separate school system for Roma children. Instead, the program prepares Roma children for integration into regular school systems. Many of the children have never been to school, have never had a book read to them and lack the necessary skills and discipline to sit in a classroom and learn.

In September 1999, 40 children from Konik, after preparation in the non-formal setting, entered local schools. More than half dropped out. Since harassment is often cited as a problem, UNICEF and the other organizations are starting to work with the schools and community members. In September 2000, 150 children were ready to attend regular school. Most were entering first grade. There are now better systems in place to work with local teachers and parents to strengthen the community and combat discrimination. The attitudes of teachers recruited from the local communities toward Roma have changed substantially since the beginning of the program. Likewise, the children and their parents have shown a strong commitment to the preparatory program. Attendance is high and parents have made extreme efforts to incorporate good hygienic practices into their daily routine. However, the program in Konik I and II is expensive and is probably not sustainable in its current form. UNICEF's aim is to get the government to recognize that the Roma are not going to voluntarily repatriate and encourage the Ministry of Education to build their capacity to work with children with special needs.

In addition to its non-formal programs for school-aged children, UNICEF, Save the Children-US and others have developed pre-school programs in IDP communities throughout Montenegro. The challenge here is to make the program self-sustaining through increased community involvement and a joint training for playgroup leaders.

UNICEF has also been engaged in family crisis intervention programs, including alcohol abuse and domestic violence prevention for refugees and IDPs. If such protection programs are to be sustainable, local NGOs and government-funded programs must be involved, but a huge gap exists, as the mandate of the Ministry of Social Welfare does not cover these groups. Crises hit refugee and internally displaced families hard and they often need special care. "There is no state response in most of these cases of domestic abuse, alcoholism and other family crisis," noted UNICEF. "There is no counseling or prevention work. The police don't respond, hospitals don't either."⁵⁵

UNICEF hopes to address some of these concerns and build the capacity of the Ministry for Social Welfare. It is also working with international organizations to address some gaps, including the problem of street children. "I fear that many of the street children end up in detention centers because there is nowhere else for them," noted the UNICEF staff.⁵⁶ For domestic violence cases, it is mostly local NGOs that are responding, including the SOS Hotline, which offers counseling, and the Safe House for Women, which provides temporary shelter. Local capacity building is the key to program sustainability. As international organizations pull out there is an urgent need to partner with local organizations. However, much remains to be

done. “Fifty percent of the international NGOs are not working at all with local NGOs,” reported one UN staffer.⁵⁷

Adolescents

The Women’s Commission found few programs that focused specifically on refugee and internally displaced adolescents. UNICEF noted that the lack of attention to adolescent concerns was a problem. “Children 15 and older cannot go back to primary school officially,” noted one aid worker. The Montenegrin Ministry for Refugees observed that refugee and internally displaced youth faced similar problems to Montenegrin youth in that there were few employment opportunities.

Among the few agencies targeting adolescents and young adults are the Red Cross, which runs youth clubs with education projects on drug prevention and HIV/AIDS, and the Danish Refugee Council, which has developed a youth partnership program on the coast.

Durable Solutions and the Future

UNHCR is taking an aggressive approach in assisting individuals who might be interested in returning to their countries of origin. UNHCR is working with the American Refugee Committee (ARC) to organize “Go and See” visits for refugees. For this program, refugees go first to information centers for documentation and then are asked if they are interested in going back to their homes to see their villages. Trips are arranged by ARC. From January to August 2000, 30 individuals have returned home permanently and many others were scheduled for “Go and See” visits. “Our goal is to help them make informed decisions by helping them obtain documents, go and see and then decide,” UNHCR told the Women’s Commission.

But overall, UNHCR anticipates that most refugees and IDPs will stay in Montenegro, especially if the economy improves. “Last year the government saw it had no long-term strategy and said it would be developing one,” UNHCR told the Women’s Commission. “The government here is extremely well-intentioned, but they have limitations and not much capacity. Longer-term, collective center accommodations will be turned over to the Ministry of the Interior. Elderly, disabled, isolated—those who require long-term care—will become the responsibility of the social welfare system. But there is only one home for the elderly and one home for the mentally disabled here.”

Few of the 32,000 IDPs from Kosovo have expressed a desire to return. Eleven thousand identify themselves as Montenegrin, which illustrates the degree of family relations and their high hopes of staying. Eighty percent of all IDPs live in private accommodations.

Peace and Tolerance Work

The future of FRY and its current parts, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, remains cloudy and unstable. The international community has pledged to assist in democratic institution building, and this requires respect for minority rights and tolerance of differences.

Some nongovernmental organizations are contributing to this work, and expanded efforts should be supported. One agency, World Vision, has organized a series of projects to promote peace and tolerance in Montenegro. One of its projects focuses on teacher training designed to help

teachers learn strategies for preventing conflicts, resolving conflict peacefully and celebrating diversity in the classroom. Another World Vision effort, the “Bus Without Borders,” is designed to provide outreach to the Roma community and to encourage local Montenegrins to participate. The bus is designed for educational and recreational programs, with brightly colored seats and storage cabinets that hold supplies. The bus drivers speak Serbian and Albanian; one is a professional actor in children’s theater and the other also has experience working with children. These efforts and others like them will help ensure a more stable and secure future for all parts of the Balkans.

VI. Recommendations

Hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons are living in collective centers and with host families in Serbia and Montenegro, awaiting opportunities to return home to their countries of origin, or to find the means to integrate locally. It is a wait that has lasted nearly a decade for some, and a lifetime for many children and youth. **The Women’s Commission recommends the international community support the following:**

◦ **Educational and vocational opportunities for refugee and internally displaced adolescents.**

These should be coupled with conflict resolution and tolerance-building efforts. If secondary schools are not available in the areas where refugees and IDPs are living, funds should be provided for transportation or lodging nearer the schools.

◦ **Support to build the capacity of local non-governmental and civil society organizations, with women’s organizations receiving special attention.** As international support to the FRY government increases, the government should be required to contract with local organizations which have proven track records in delivering humanitarian and legal assistance. In addition, it is important to remember that as international humanitarian assistance to FRY is replaced with funds to support its long-term development, it is largely local groups that will take up the slack, providing long-term support and services to vulnerable populations. At the same time, care must be taken not to smother local organizations with too much external management or cash, and to respect the impressive local efforts refugees and local women have initiated themselves.

◦ **Increased support for psychosocial programs for refugees and IDPs.** These include programs targeting the elderly who are often isolated, women heads of household, children and youth. They provide skills training, opportunities for income generation and mental health counseling, including community mobilization activities.

◦ **An assessment of reproductive health concerns among refugees and internally displaced, including the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, and domestic violence.**

Adolescents must be included in this assessment. Funds should be provided for programs to address problems identified through this assessment.

◦ **Support UNHCR’s operations, meeting the budget it has requested.** This will allow the agency to continue its housing project for the most vulnerable, provide legal counseling and repatriation assistance, and restore much-needed community services programs.

◦ **Elderly people and widows who should be eligible for pensions but are not receiving them because of documentation problems, should receive assistance.**

◦ **Programs assisting Roma and promoting their integration into local communities are important, including efforts to integrate Roma into local school systems.** Roma girls will need special attention and encouragement. These programs should go beyond distribution of commodities like school clothes and book bags, and include community orientation and family support which promote school attendance. This could include Serbian language training. Other projects for youth and adult literacy deserve support, including escort projects which provide chaperones to Roma school children who are afraid to travel to school alone.

Acronyms

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| ERRC | European Roma Rights Center |
| EU | European Union |
| FRY | Federal Republic of Yugoslavia |
| IDPs | Internally Displaced Persons |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| NGO | Nongovernmental organization |
| NSHC | Novi Sad Humanitarian Center |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNHCHR | United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |

Endnotes

¹ The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) consists of two republics: Montenegro, with some 650,000 inhabitants, and Serbia, with approximately 10 million people, including two million in Kosovo. Serbia itself includes two provinces, Vojvodina, and the majority-Albanian province of Kosovo. Since a 79-day war in 1999, Kosovo has been under the administrative control of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). This report covers the situation of refugees and displaced people in Montenegro and Serbia, excluding Kosovo.

² According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Belgrade, as of August 2001, there are: 377,000 refugees in Serbia (excluding Kosovo), 14,000 in Montenegro; 197,000 internally displaced people in Serbia, and 32,000 internally displaced people in Montenegro. Totals are 391,000 refugees in the FRY (excluding Kosovo), and 239,000 displaced people in the FRY (excluding Kosovo). Some 9 percent live in some 600 collective centers throughout the country.

³ For more detailed analyses of the post-Milosevic Yugoslav economy and governmental spending, see the website of the Belgrade-based economics policy institute, G17 Plus, <http://www.g17plus.org.yu/english/main.htm>

⁴ Reports from the Humanitarian Law Foundation, (www.hlc.org.yu), the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (www.helsinki.org.yu/hcs/HCSreport20010510.htm), and interviews with Kosovo IDPs in Serbia. In a May 2001 report on racial discrimination in Serbia, the Helsinki committee reports that: "Previously latent racial discrimination against Roma and Jews has recently become rampant, and commonplace. It became a serious problem after the 1997 murder of a 14-year-old Roma boy by a group of Skinheads. The racially-charged incidents grew in intensity since the second half of 1999...The wars in former Yugoslavia, and notably displacement of the non-Serb population from Kosovo and return of Kosovar Albanians, affected Roma greatly."

⁵ An estimated 15,000 people fled their homes in southern Serbia's Presevo Valley during sporadic clashes between the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) and Serb police throughout 2000, and the phased return of Yugoslav security forces to the three-mile wide buffer zone between Kosovo and Serbia proper in early 2001. The UNHCR reports that up to 4,000 ethnic Albanian villagers have now returned to Presevo Valley. *UNHCR FRY July 2001 Update*.

⁶ The UNHCR reports that as of July 2001 at least 10,000 refugees from the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia have fled into the FRY (excluding Kosovo). Kosovo received an additional 76,000 refugees from FYROM. *UNHCR FRY July 2001 Update*.

⁷ Since the 1999 NATO war against the FRY, Kosovo has been under the administrative control of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

⁸ UNHCR requested \$65 million for its work in the FRY for the year 2000, but only received \$45 million.

⁹ A UNHCR official in Belgrade wrote on August 31, 2001, that they have been allocated only \$650,000 for all of UNHCR's five implementing partners for FY2002, less than half of what they had in 2001. "We just barely struggled to survive and offer some reasonable services, I can't see how we will manage next year," the official wrote.

¹⁰ UNHCR Geneva reports that approximately 60 percent of the 390,000 refugees in Serbia and Montenegro would like to stay and become fully integrated in their new communities. An even higher number of IDPs from Kosovo will likely stay in Serbia and Montenegro for the near to long term, as efforts at return have been extremely discouraging.

¹¹ Interview with UNHCR Belgrade, August 17, 2001. "Those who stay in collective centers tend to be the most vulnerable ones," a UNHCR official said. "They stay in collective centers because they cannot fend for themselves. Up until this point we have been covering for them, because they are refugees. But if these people are to stay and integrate, the state will have to take responsibility to care for them."

¹² UNHCR Repatriation Officer interview, January 23, 2001.

¹³ Telephone interview with UNHCR, Belgrade, August 17, 2001.

¹⁴ Interview with UNHCR.

¹⁵ The province of Kosovo is administered by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

¹⁶ For more on the wars that accompanied the break up of Yugoslavia, see Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Penguin, January 1997.

¹⁷ For more information on the Kosovo crisis, see <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/kosovo98/index.html> or Mertus, Julie, *How Myths and Truths Started a War*, California Press, 1999.

¹⁸ Milosevic was extradited to the Hague on June 28, 2001, where he awaits trial expected in 2002. On August 30, 2001, ICTY chief prosecutor Carla del Ponte indicated that Milosevic would also be charged with genocide, related

to war crimes in Bosnia and Croatia, in addition to the four counts of crimes against humanity he faces. For more information, see the www.icty.org.

¹⁹ UNHCR press release.

²⁰ UNHCR.

²¹ The self-identified “Gypsies” of Kosovo are commonly referred to as Roma, but include several groups or castes, including Roma and Ashkali.

²² The UNHCR runs “go and see” visits for Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo; and twice monthly buses between Serbia and Croatia.

²³ Interview with UNHCR, Belgrade.

²⁴ G17 plus, www.g17plus.org.yu.

²⁵ The UNHCR estimates that one in ten IDPs in Serbia is widowed, divorced or separated. Two thirds of IDPs over 15 years of age are married, and one third is unmarried.

²⁶ The UNHCR reports that one third of the IDPs over 15 years old were employed prior to leaving Kosovo, while 15 percent were unemployed. Approximately one third were dependants, and 7.3 percent were pensioners. UNHCR, Commissioner for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, 2001.

²⁷ For more on the use of rape in war-time Bosnia, see Alexandra Stieglmayer’s *Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

²⁸ “SOS Belgrade July 1993-1995: Dirty Streets,” in *Women in a Violent World: Feminist Analyses and Resistance Across ‘Europe.’* Editor, Chris Corrin, Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

²⁹ <http://balkansnet.org/women> and <http://www.womenngo.org.yu/eng>

FN <http://www.neww.org/countries/Serbia/>

³⁰ For more on Women in Black, see their web site <http://www.igc.org/balkans/wib/>

Also, see Donna Hughes’ article on WIB, in <http://www.feminista.com/v3n1/hughes.html>. Hughes writes: In the fall of 1991, women committed to democracy, peace and multi-ethnic states founded the anti-war organization Women in Black, in Belgrade, based on an Israeli anti-war women’s group. In their first public statement the activists defined themselves as an anti-nationalist, anti-militarist, feminist, pacifist group. “We wanted it to be clearly understood that what we were doing was our political choice, a radical criticism of the patriarchal, militarist regime and a non-violent act of resistance to policies that destroy cities, kill people, and annihilate human relations...We are the group of women who stand in silence and black every week to express our disapproval against war.”

³¹ See <http://balkansnet.org/women>, <http://www.womenngo.org.yu/eng>, and <http://www.neww.org/countries/Serbia/awcasv.htm>

³² Group 484, “Life in Your Own Hands,” October 2000. <http://www.xs4all.nl/~freeserb/ngo/e-g484.html>

³³ <http://www.womenngo.org.yu/eng/lastavica/laste.htm>

³⁴ Women’s Commission interview with UNICEF officer, January 25, 2001.

³⁵ Johnson, Dana E., “International Adoptions: New Kids, New Challenges.” *Pediatric Basics, the Journal of Pediatric Nutrition and Development*, Number 94, 2001.

³⁶ Consolidated Donor Report for Southeastern Europe, January-December 1999, UNICEF.

³⁷ A number of international organizations, including the World Health Organization and UNICEF, define “youth” as people between the ages of 10 and 24 years of age. Youth must also be identified within their distinct social and cultural contexts. In FRY, a variety of identifications of youth were made, including young people in their teenage years and those above age 18, in early adulthood. This report does not seek to fully define youth in the context of FRY, but rather identifies the need for deeper research and understanding by international and local organizations and communities regarding who comprises this group in order to better recognize and then address their circumstances effectively.

³⁸ Global IDP Database, FR Yugoslavia, Section Access to Education. www.idpproject.org

³⁹ See: *The Gypsies of Kosova, A Survey of Their Communities After the War*, by Paul Polansky, November 16, 1999, http://chgs.hispeed.com/Educational_Resources/Curriculum/Gypsies_of_Kosova/gypsies_of_kosova.html

⁴⁰ European Roma Rights Center website: <http://errc.org/about/index.shtml>

⁴¹ Women’s Commission interview, Stari Aerodrom IDP Camp, Serbia, January 26, 2001.

⁴² Interview with UNHCR staff, January 2001.

⁴³ UNHCR.

⁴⁴ Women’s Commission interview, August 11, 2000.

⁴⁵ Women’s Commission interview, August 12, 2000.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Women's Commission interview, August 13, 2000.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ E-mail from SOS Niksic, January 29, 2001.

⁵² Women's Commission interview, August 13, 2000.

⁵³ Women's Commission interview, August 11, 2000.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Women's Commission interview, August 11, 2000.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.