

# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## Operational highlights

- UNHCR helped 620 refugees to repatriate to Croatia, and some 200 vulnerable people were assisted to integrate locally in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).
- A social housing apartment building was constructed in Jablanica, providing local integration for seven vulnerable internally displaced families who had been moved from a substandard collective centre. Some 96 returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) moved into individual homes and benefited from income-generation projects.
- Some 5,300 vulnerable returnees improved their economic self-reliance through small-scale community-based projects in more than 30 return municipalities.
- The Office provided free legal assistance to Roma groups in order to prevent and reduce statelessness. More than 300 people were registered in the birth records and some 1,500 civil documents were obtained.

## Working environment

Ethno-national divisions, complex administrative structures and socio-economic problems, including high unemployment, continued to plague BiH in 2009. Progress towards European integration remained limited. The mandates of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the EU force (EUFOR) were extended into 2010.

UNHCR continued to secure solutions for IDPs, refugees, returnees and people at risk of statelessness, mainly Roma. However, the displacement issue remained highly politicized. The proposed revision of the strategy for implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which was intended to open new possibilities for durable solutions, was not adopted owing to political differences.

Housing remained a vital concern, especially for vulnerable individuals still living in collective centres. Other

needs related to livelihood opportunities; non-discriminatory access to the basic socio-economic and civil rights, specifically for minority groups; and access to civil documentation, especially for Roma.

## Achievements and impact

### Main objectives

UNHCR's primary aims in BiH were to promote durable solutions for all groups of concern; ensure access to protection and social and economic rights and services; and help the authorities to develop a national legal framework



Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Croatia	6,900	1,300	50	12
	Various	190	190	52	47
Asylum-seekers	Serbia	350	350	45	47
	Various	20	20	18	6
IDPs	Bosnia and Herzegovina	113,600	45,100	52	19
Stateless*	Stateless persons	9,700	500	52	-
Returned ex-IDPs including returned IDP-like	Bosnia and Herzegovina	300	300	51	-
Others of concern	Former internally displaced persons of concern to UNHCR	46,800	-	51	-
	Former Bosnian refugees of concern to UNHCR	4,000	-	51	-
Returnees (refugees)	Various	900	10	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>182,760</b>	<b>47,770</b>		

\* The great majority of this population are people who are yet to have their Bosnian nationality formally recognized.

and asylum system compatible with international standards. The Office also sought to identify durable solutions for residents with specific needs in collective centres. Finally, it aimed to reduce the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence through expanded awareness-raising activities.

### ● *Protection and solutions*

UNHCR encouraged the authorities to resolve the protracted situation of some 7,000 refugees from Croatia and to support the integration of vulnerable persons unable or unwilling to return. The Office assisted some 620 refugees to return to Croatia, providing transportation and repatriation grants and helping refugees seeking local integration with free legal counselling.

At the end of 2009, the country counted 113,600 IDPs, including 7,000 extremely vulnerable people living in poor conditions in collective centres. Despite efforts to find sustainable solutions, IDPs faced impediments such as poor livelihood prospects and lack of access to public utilities, education and health care.

In some cases, prospects for sustainable minority returns lagged because of continued discrimination. Progress was nonetheless made through the construction of a social apartment building and reconstruction of houses for vulnerable IDPs to enable them to move out of collective centres. The Office also supported their reintegration and self-reliance through income-generation projects.

At the end of 2009, there were some 370 asylum-seekers in BiH, mainly from Kosovo, with 50 new applications lodged during the year. Work to develop national capacity to operate an asylum system continued, but UNHCR continued to review some individual asylum claims. Resettlement opportunities were identified for a number of vulnerable refugees.

UNHCR worked to assist the Government with the development and implementation of relevant legislation, in particular the new by-law on asylum. It also supported specific projects in refugee-hosting communities and advocated for the facilitated naturalization of refugees.

The Office continued to identify and assist stateless people and those at risk of statelessness, particularly among the Roma minority. The Office worked to ensure

incorporation of principles relating to the prevention and reduction of statelessness into the country's citizenship laws. Two projects focusing on civil registration and access to rights, including citizenship, helped members of the Roma community obtain birth certificates, identity cards and other civil documents.

The Office addressed the issues of human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence through awareness-raising activities and cooperation with numerous partners. The Office maintained a safe house for victims of domestic violence and trafficking, where 41 women received immediate psycho-social, medical and other assistance.

### ● *Activities and assistance*

**Community services:** Some 800 people participated in social and community services activities, including vocational training and sexual and gender-based violence awareness sessions. More than 90 per cent of children at two reception centres for asylum-seekers successfully finished the school year.

**Domestic needs and household support:** Some 620 refugees repatriating to Croatia received cash grants. All women living in reception centres received hygiene items and sanitary materials monthly. UNHCR supported some 20 vulnerable returnee families with livestock and agricultural machinery, helping to sustain their return.

**Food:** UNHCR ensured monthly delivery of food parcels to all reception centre residents, and infants and children up to age 10. Lactating mothers received complementary food and milk. Some 200 residents of the reception centres received monthly allowances for fresh vegetables and fruits.

**Health and nutrition:** The Office ensured basic health care through the regular presence of a doctor and a nurse at the reception centres.

**Income generation:** Self-employment and livelihoods improvement opportunities for some 60 returnees and IDPs were supported through individually tailored income-generating projects. This assistance helped to sustain returns as well as increase beneficiaries' self-reliance



in both rural and urban environments. In addition, 20 refugee families and some 200 Croatian refugees who opted for local integration received support through income-generation projects.

**Legal assistance:** UNHCR extended free legal aid to more than 7,200 persons from various groups of concern. Around 1,000 refugees from Croatia received legal guidance in the return process. Conferences and workshops were organized for local civil society, international organizations and state employees dealing with displacement issues. Guidebooks and leaflets on the prevention and reduction of statelessness were printed and disseminated.

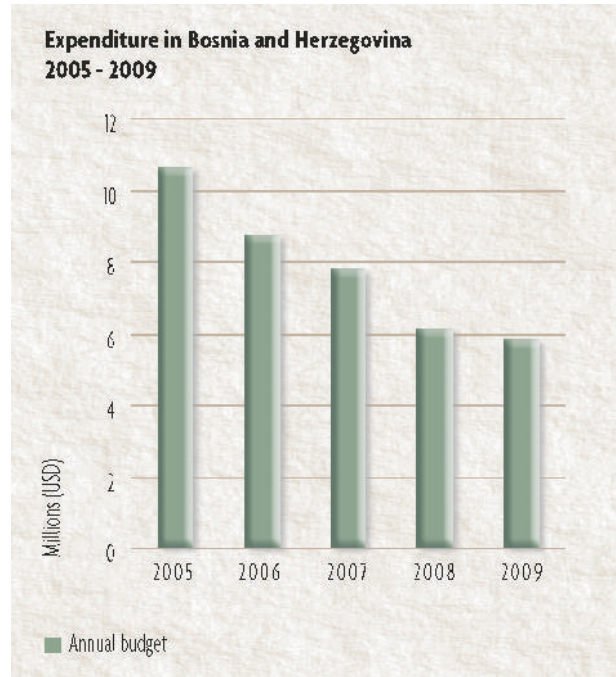
**Operational support (to agencies):** Public information and awareness-raising activities improved attitudes regarding people of concern to UNHCR.

**Shelter and other infrastructure:** UNHCR and its implementing partner reconstructed 23 houses for 96 returnee beneficiaries, and a social apartment building was constructed in Jablanica for seven vulnerable families who were moved from a collective centre. The Office maintained a safe house for victims of domestic violence and trafficking in Sarajevo.

**Transport and logistics:** The Office provided transportation for some 730 returnees and their belongings, delivered relief items to beneficiaries across the country, and transported children to educational and recreational activities.

### ○ Constraints

The internal political environment was the primary constraint. Inter-ethnic incidents became more frequent in 2009 and administrative reforms, the rule of law and efficient governance remained problematic. This situation, combined with serious economic and financial difficulties, limited the opportunities for return and local integration.



## Financial information

The budget and funding of the operation remained stable, although some projects were affected by exchange rate losses. Owing to timely prioritization of programme activities, partial compensation of incurred exchange rate losses and careful implementation enabled the Office to deliver assistance as planned.

## Organization and implementation

UNHCR operations in BiH were managed by the country office in Sarajevo with the support of a field unit in Banja Luka and a total of 35 staff: three international and 28 national employees and four UNVs.

## Working with others

UNHCR has developed a dynamic partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in the framework of a project to support vulnerable members of the Roma community. UNHCR solidified its partnership with State ministries dealing with refugee and IDP issues. UNHCR also continued to act as an observer in the State Commission for Refugees and Displaced Persons. The Office strengthened its collaboration with the OSCE, the EU Delegation, EUPM, EUFOR, the UN Resident Coordinator, NATO, IMF and the World Bank. UNHCR is an active member of the UN Country Team and



A Bosnian returnee purchases potatoes in a produce market.

participated in the weekly meetings of the High Representative's Office in BiH.

## Overall assessment

UNHCR supported efforts to improve legislation on asylum and refugees. The Office also supported the search for sustainable durable solutions, in particular for people of concern belonging to extremely vulnerable groups. Statelessness was addressed through services provided to reduce the risk of statelessness among the Roma. Increased advocacy brought the issue of internal displacement to the attention of the BiH authorities and international actors.

UNHCR and the international community will need to remain engaged in efforts to close the displacement chapter in BiH. Collective centres will be vacated if alternatives ensuring dignified living conditions and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods are available. The authorities should be given more

help to carry out social protection policies in the areas of social housing, psycho-social support and geriatric care. UNHCR and its partners will reinvigorate their efforts to ensure that minority returnees, asylum-seekers and refugees enjoy their rights.

Partners	
<b>Implementing partners</b>	
<b>Government:</b> Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, Ministry of Security	
<b>NGOs:</b> Hilfswerk Austria, Catholic Relief Services, <i>Bosanski Humanitarni Logisticki Servis</i> , <i>Vasa Prava</i> , Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Initiative, <i>Fondacija Lokalne Demokratije</i> , <i>Udruzenje Kali Sara - Crna Sara</i>	
<b>Operational partners</b>	
<b>Government:</b> Federation Ministry for Displaced Persons and Refugees, Republika Srpska Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons	
<b>Others:</b> EU, Office of the High Representative, OSCE, UN Country Team, UNDP, OSCE, World Bank, Swiss Cooperation Office	

## Budget, income and expenditure in Bosnia & Herzegovina (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Annual budget	6,103,311	867,974	5,032,317	5,900,291	5,847,831

Note: Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level and do not include seven per cent support costs for NAM contributions. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

## Financial report for UNHCR's operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current years' project			Previous years' project
	Annual budget	Supplementary budgets	Total	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	638,678	0	638,678	0
Community services	810,539	0	810,539	(3,588)
Domestic needs and household support	307,171	0	307,171	4,699
Education	7,333	0	7,333	170
Food	38,487	0	38,487	287
Health and nutrition	19,443	0	19,443	853
Income generation	378,899	0	378,899	(1,953)
Legal assistance	703,558	0	703,558	18,244
Operational support (to agencies)	155,756	0	155,756	1,622
Shelter and infrastructure	918,402	0	918,402	94,889
Transport and logistics	272,882	0	272,882	(1,208)
Instalments to implementing partners	401,260	0	401,260	(114,014)
<b>Subtotal operational activities</b>	<b>4,652,408</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,652,408</b>	<b>0</b>
Programme support	1,195,423	0	1,195,423	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>5,847,831</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,847,831</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cancellation on previous years' expenditure</b>				<b>(11,162)</b>
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>				
Payments made	3,650,592	0	3,650,592	
Reporting received	(3,249,332)	0	(3,249,332)	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>401,260</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>401,260</b>	
<b>Previous year's report</b>				
Instalments with implementing partners:				
Outstanding 1st January				169,892
Reporting received				(114,014)
Refunded to UNHCR				(54,281)
Currency adjustment				0
<b>Outstanding 31st December</b>				<b>1,597</b>