

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Operational highlights

- The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) decreased by almost a third to 135,500, following the completion of a re-registration exercise.
- Some 1,200 refugees returned to Croatia, of whom close to 1,000 were assisted by UNHCR.
- Durable solutions were found for 32 vulnerable displaced families who benefited from shelter assistance and moved out of collective housing.
- UNHCR supported the legal aid network *Vaša Prava* and advised and counselled more than 50,000 individuals, including returnees, refugees and IDPs.
- The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), supported by UNHCR's capacity building, had a functional asylum system and refugee status determination process in place by the end of the year.



Working environment

The general elections held in BiH in October 2006 passed smoothly, although the lead-up to the elections was marred by nationalist public statements. Despite a sharp rise in security incidents targeting returnees

during the pre-election period, the number of incidents was lower than in 2005. At the same time, the enactment of laws aimed at concluding a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union slowed down markedly. The country gained admission to the *Central European Free Trade Agreement* and NATO's *Partnership for Peace* in the course of the year.

Persons of concern

Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Croatia	7,300	2,600	50	18
	Serbia	3,000	500	52	35
Returnees (refugees)	Various	1,400		51	-
IDPs		135,500	50,600	52	19
Returnees (IDPs)		4,200	3,500	52	-
Total		151,400	57,200		

Prolonged negotiations on the establishment of governments at both the state and entity levels signalled discord within and between political parties. There were also continued setbacks in carrying through much needed reforms, namely of the police, broadcasting and education. Constitutional amendments to improve the functioning of the State were agreed upon by six political parties in March 2006. They had, however, not been adopted by the end of the year and this forestalled other reforms.

Given the country's specific challenges and political uncertainties in the region, the Office of the High Representative, which was planned to close by mid-2007, is now set to remain open until June 2008.

Achievements and impact

Main objectives

- Identify durable solutions for the remaining refugees and most needy IDPs by the end of 2006.
- Through field monitoring, advocacy and support, enhance the capacity of the local authorities to take on the responsibility for reconstruction and sustainable return.
- Strengthen linkages with other multi- and bilateral organizations in line with UNHCR's "4Rs" strategy for a smooth transition to development.
- In cooperation with other international agencies, advocate for conditions more conducive to the safe and dignified voluntary repatriation of Croatian refugees.
- Ensure the provision of protection, legal and material assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers and facilitate voluntary repatriation whenever appropriate.
- Ensure the further development of the asylum system along with national counterparts, including guaranteed access to asylum procedures at borders and legislation in accordance with international and European standards.
- Expand the programme aimed at assuring self-sufficiency for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Protection and solutions

While continuing its mandated work to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR expanded the search towards finding durable solutions for the remaining refugees and most needy IDPs. At the same time, UNHCR continued to support the Government in building the national asylum system, to enact asylum legislation that is in compliance with international and European Union standards, and to create an efficient and integrated refugee status determination process.

UNHCR carried out age, gender and diversity mainstreaming participatory assessments for temporary admission card holders, refugees and IDPs. The findings revealed that people under temporary protection continued to suffer from their long-standing precarious legal status. For refugees and IDPs alike, there was a lack of understanding of civil rights and entitlement to services and benefits. The findings also demonstrated that livelihood opportunities and communal infrastructure needed to be in place for both local integration and returns to be truly sustainable.

With UNHCR's support, the national legal association *Vaša Prava* has become increasingly independent and self-sustaining. In 2006, it raised two-thirds of its operating funds directly from seven different sources.

Activities and assistance

Community services: More than 3,500 returnees benefited from quick-support funds and small-scale income-generating activities that ranged from infrastructure repairs to the provision of agriculture inputs. Six hundred and fifty asylum-seekers and refugees participated in workshops on sexual and gender-based violence and the prevention of domestic violence. Vocational training was provided to more than 120 refugees.

Domestic needs and household support: The number of families receiving monthly living allowances to facilitate their move from reception centres grew from 14 families in January to 20 families (70 people) in June 2006; and then decreased to 16 families (56 people) at the end of the year. Hygienic items were distributed on a regular basis to all women and girls of childbearing age at the three reception centres in Bosanski Petrovac, Mostar and Sarajevo. Approximately 1,000 refugees received repatriation grants on their return to Croatia.

Health and nutrition: More than 560 refugees and asylum-seekers with special needs living in reception centres received food parcels. UNHCR continued to support the Government and municipal health centres, which provided health care to the residents of the three reception centres.

Legal assistance: Over 50,000 persons throughout BiH accessed free legal advice on matters ranging from repatriation to local integration. In addition, more than 140 border guards and officials were trained on protection issues to improve the identification of people in need of protection at the country's entry points. UNHCR continued to assist in the development of a national asylum system. Six refugees were recognized in 2006, and more than 90 applications remained at year's end.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR worked to strengthen the capacities and resources of its national partners. Operational support was provided to UNHCR's implementing partners.

Shelter and other infrastructure: UNHCR supported three reception centres where more than 560 persons were living at the end of the year. In addition to regular maintenance, some repair works at the Rakovica and Petrovac reception centres were undertaken in 2006. UNHCR also interviewed more than 2,000 persons in support of a Council of Europe Development Bank loan to the Government, of whom 251 were selected as beneficiaries.

Transport and logistics: More than 40 refugee families (approximately 420 people) with special needs were transported, along with their personal belongings, to their communities of origin in Croatia. Roma refugee children were provided with coupons for the public transport system to attend school. UNHCR also continued to distribute food and non-food items to vulnerable persons of concern to the Office.

Constraints

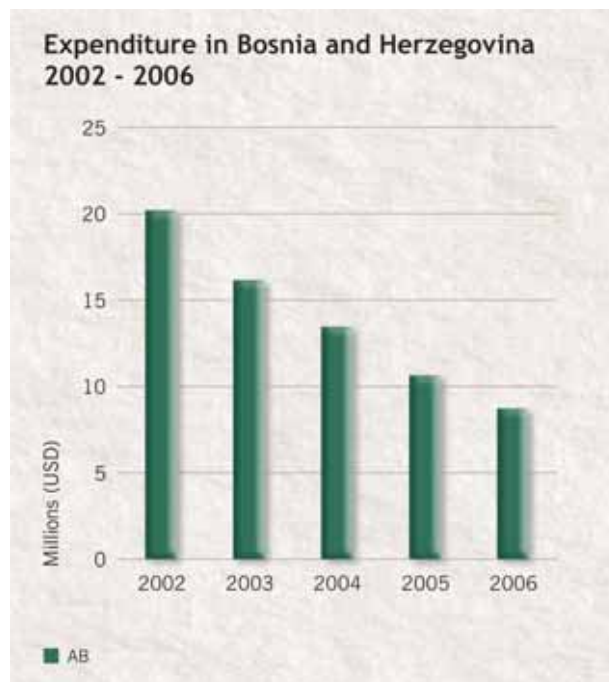
The political stalemate surrounding the future status of Kosovo had an impact on UNHCR's search for durable solutions for refugees from Kosovo, whose temporary admission status has been extended once again to June 2007. For this group, shelter assistance was still their primary need, as they have no social ties in BiH and, therefore, lack informal support networks.

The needs of internally displaced persons, who have no other alternative than to remain in collective accommodation, far exceeded what UNHCR can accomplish given its limited mandate and resources. A by-law on access to health care for all persons under international protection in BiH was not adopted, as the Government was not yet fully operational by the end of 2006.

Financial information

UNHCR's operations in BiH were affected by funding constraints resulting from the capping of the budget. These budget cuts accelerated the Office's planned and gradual phase-down of its operations. However, UNHCR's programmes in BiH continued to attract the interest of donors who provided additional earmarked funding for specific activities related to finding durable solutions. The Office also increasingly relied on its operational partnerships to meet the needs of refugees and other people of concern.

UNHCR's expenditure in BiH continued to decrease in 2006 in line with its strategy of a responsible phase-down and due to an overall decline in the number of refugees and other people of concern in the country.



Organization and implementation

Management

Apart from its main office in Sarajevo, UNHCR maintained three field offices in Mostar, Tuzla and Banja Luka. A total of 61 staff were engaged in UNHCR's operations, comprising seven international staff, one junior professional officer, ten national officers and 43 general service staff.

Working with others

UNHCR's operational partnerships with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, UN agencies, bilateral organizations and NGOs, played an ever-increasing role in facilitating durable solutions for the remaining internally displaced persons and returnees. Particular attention was devoted to strengthening national capacity, namely the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, the Ministry of Security, the national Legal Network Association *Vaša Prava* and the Bosnian Humanitarian Logistical Service, so that in the future UNHCR will be able to phase out its operations with the guarantee that structures will be in place to meet the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.



UNHCR/Soledad Sánchez Marín

IDPs in Srebrenica collective centre.

Overall assessment

UNHCR continued to work towards the completion of its obligations under Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Office's programmes assisted the most vulnerable and disadvantaged refugees and IDPs, and boosted communities' reintegration capacity. The challenge of ensuring the sustainability of returns remained high on UNHCR's agenda. National and international partners and other actors paid particular attention to the sustainability of the economic and social components of their assistance programmes. With its multi-sectoral expertise, the Office contributed substantially to the international community's efforts to address a complex range of issues, from full adherence to the law on reconstruction of properties to non-discriminatory access to social services and employment opportunities in the course of local integration and returns.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government: Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, Ministry of Security.

NGOs: *Bosanski Humanitarni Logisticki Servis*, Bosnia & Herzegovina Women's Initiative, Catholic Relief Services, Hilfswerk Austria, Malteser Hilfsdienst, Mercy Corps Scotland, *Vaša Prava*.

Operational partners

Others: Council of Europe Development Bank, European Commission, IMF, OSCE, Swiss Development Cooperation, UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank.

Budget, income and expenditure (USD)

Annual programme budget

Final budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
9,885,180	1,354,259	7,368,154	8,722,414	8,722,414

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects	Previous years' projects
	AB	AB and SB
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,831,626	0
Community services	796,557	10,487
Domestic needs and household support	347,026	10,435
Food	158,845	19,575
Health and nutrition	17,221	12,963
Legal assistance	802,723	12,798
Operational support (to agencies)	233,935	8
Shelter and infrastructure	772,134	69,351
Transport and logistics	253,939	383
Instalments with implementing partners	326,335	(136,000)
Sub-total operational activities	6,540,340	0
Programme support	2,182,073	0
Total expenditure	8,722,414	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure		(13,366)
Instalments with implementing partners		
Payments made	3,279,045	
Reporting received	(2,952,709)	
Balance	326,335	
Previous years' report		
Instalments with implementing partners		
Outstanding 1st January		140,878
Reporting received		(136,000)
Refunded to UNHCR		(4,979)
Adjustments		101
Balance		0