

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

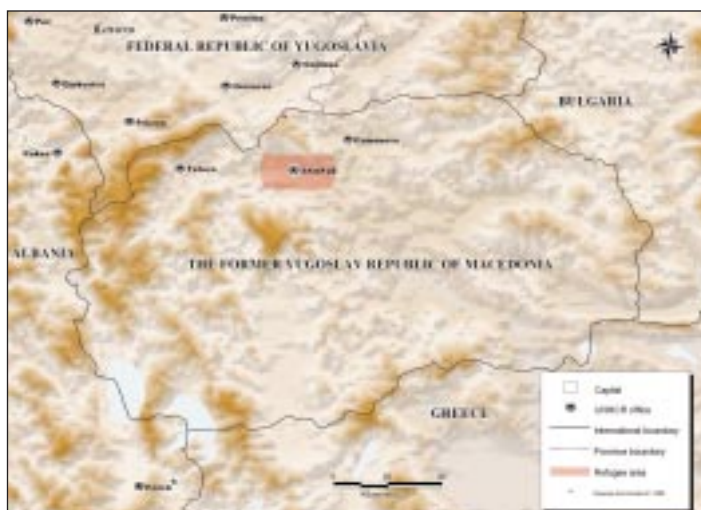
Protect and assist refugees from Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, until voluntary repatriation became feasible, while helping the Government establish appropriate refugee status determination procedures. In the post-emergency phase, help national authorities and NGOs rapidly to acquire urgently needed technical and organisational skills to build local capacity.



Persons of Concern

MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED	PER CENT FEMALE	PER CENT < 18
Yugoslavia, FR (Refugees)*	21,000	13,000	53.5	43.8
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Refugees)	200	200	55	35

* During 1999, FYR Macedonia received 344,500 refugees, almost all of whom repatriated during the year.



Impact

- In response to the rapid influx of 344,500 refugees from Kosovo, UNHCR successfully co-ordinated a large-scale, multifaceted relief effort, which included the support of NATO. UNHCR worked mainly on protection, shelter, legal support, and community services. Morbidity and mortality rates remained low due to effective action by a great many humanitarian organisations, backed up by strong government support.
- To ease the burden on The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR Macedonia), UNHCR mounted the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme (HEP), whereby 96,000 refugees were accepted by a number of European and other countries in an operation of unprecedented scale and speed. An additional 1,382 refugees were transferred to camps in Albania under the Humanitarian Transfer Programme (HTP).
- A spirit of purposeful co-operation with the authorities favoured continued strategic planning (including emergency preparations) and detailed work on refugee status determination procedures.
- UNHCR and its partners successfully registered all refugees in the camps by mid-June, just before repatriation began.

Income and Expenditure - SP Activities (USD)

WORKING BUDGET	INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS*	OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE**	TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
67,509,004	2,685,263	39,037,464	41,722,727	41,680,307

* Includes contributions earmarked for the Special Operation in South-Eastern Europe.

** Includes opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

FYR Macedonia had received a first wave of refugees from Kosovo in 1998. In late March, following the launch of the NATO air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia), refugees began to pour into the country. The Government had long been concerned about the possible de-stabilising effect of a large-scale influx. The FYR Macedonian Government generally admitted refugees until 30-31 March, when it slowed down entry processing at the Blace border. Subsequent arrivals were bottled up in a field at Blace on the FYR Macedonian side of the border until 4 April, when the Government's concerns were allayed by a promise of rapid help with the provision of shelter, combined with the evacuation of a number of refugees to third countries. UNHCR insisted on the need for the border to remain open. Within nine weeks, the country received 344,500 refugees. Of the refugees, 150,000 (over 40 per cent) stayed with host families, and another 100,000 were accommodated in camps. Others took advantage of HEP or HTP.

In the post-emergency phase, following large-scale repatriation to Kosovo in June and July, UNHCR in Skopje provided logistical support for the reception and onward delivery of relief items needed inside Kosovo, and gave support to organised repatriation of vulnerable refugees and other groups in transit through the country. A total of 223,000 refugees repatriated to Kosovo from FYR Macedonia. Following large-scale repatriation, UNHCR continued to assist some 2,500 refugees who moved from the temporary camps to nine collective centres throughout the country, as well as some 10,400 refugees accommodated by host families. Of those receiving UNHCR assistance, some 2,100 (mainly Roma refugees) were thought to be new arrivals who entered FYR Macedonia after September 1999. In addition, an estimated 8,000 undocumented Serb, Roma and Albanian refugees from Kosovo remained in the country. In September, the Government decided to allow refugees to remain until March 2000 (enjoying temporary protection) and urged all relevant organisations to speedily create the conditions which would permit their safe return thereafter. (In March 2000, the Government decided to prolong temporary protection until 28 June 2000.)

Constraints

The massive influx of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo caught UNHCR and the humanitarian community

off guard. It raised Government concerns that FYR Macedonia's delicate inter-ethnic balance would be affected and the country de-stabilised. The country made the opening of its borders conditional upon burden-sharing arrangements, including humanitarian evacuation to third countries. In addition, the marked preference shown for NATO and bilateral action sometimes made it difficult for UNHCR to discharge its customary co-ordination function during refugee emergencies. However, intensive co-ordination and capacity building initiatives ultimately proved effective to strengthen humanitarian co-ordination.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

UNHCR urged the Government to adopt an internationally sanctioned legal framework for asylum and statelessness. This resulted in the Government granting 'Temporary Humanitarian Assisted Person' status to refugees from Kosovo. The Office also facilitated voluntary repatriation to Bosnia and Herzegovina of some 300 refugees remaining in the country. In response to the influx from Kosovo, protection efforts focused on ensuring the Government's adherence to principles of asylum and non-refoulement; ensuring registration of refugees in camps; and facilitating HEP and the regional burden-sharing HTP initiative.

UNHCR and its partners successfully registered all refugees in the camps by mid-June under the Kosovar Refugee Registration Project. Follow-up checks were made for refugees remaining in camps or with host families. Refugees in camps and collective centres received UNHCR refugee identity cards. UNHCR also processed data for over 30,000 host families who benefited from a financial compensation scheme. Registration data facilitated the issuance of refugee documentation, the provision of humanitarian assistance, repatriation, family tracing and overall planning. Camp security was an issue during the early days of the emergency with unfortunate incidents of mob violence, two cases of abduction (investigated by UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior), beatings, etc. Entry and exit controls were introduced to improve the situation, but several ineligible people nevertheless found unauthorised ways to enter the camps. The problem was compounded by the large numbers seeking to enter the camps purely to become eligible for HEP. With the arrival of a camp security contingent (composed of FYR Macedonian police and four

police officers from Sweden) the situation improved. As soon as refugees began to repatriate spontaneously in mid-June, a series of 'go-and-see' visits to Kosovo were organised. Efforts were then redoubled to ensure prompt admission, registration, and documentation of newly arrived ethnic non-Albanians from Kosovo and southern Serbia.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: UNHCR's activities in camps focused on the organisation of camp life, health and hygiene education and psychosocial activities for women and the vulnerable. Activities for children and adolescents were developed to mitigate the negative effects of war-related trauma and the disruption to normal family life caused by displacement. UNHCR made efforts in the post-emergency phase to shift the focus of community services from camps and collective centres to host communities where refugees would have more contact with local communities and become less dependent on outside support.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: Blankets, mattresses, sleeping bags, plastic sheets, jerry cans, buckets and hygiene kits, procured both locally and internationally, were given to refugees in the camps, to some 2,500 refugees in collective centres and to all new arrivals at the border. Assistance was given to refugees who moved from camps to host families, as well as more than 5,000 refugees who repatriated to Kosovo. Kitchen sets were mainly distributed in the camps.

Education: UNICEF played the lead role in education, covering education in camps and in some collective centres. Refugee children in host families and those residing in some centres were allowed to attend local schools.

Food: Basic and complementary food was purchased by UNHCR and distributed to refugees during the early phase of the emergency. At a later stage, sufficient food was made available by WFP, through the FYR Macedonian Red Cross (MRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to refugees both in camps and host families. They who also received complementary food from various NGOs funded bilaterally.

Health/Nutrition: The health and nutritional status of the refugees was closely monitored. UNHCR co-ordinated efforts to ensure that refugees were given access to health care facilities. There were no major

epidemics in the camps and the general nutritional status of refugees was satisfactory. Medical screening was undertaken to identify refugees needing medical evacuation for treatment outside the country. A total of 3,980 refugees were registered by IOM; of these 1,032 were evacuated to 26 countries for medical treatment.

Legal Assistance: This took the form of activities to hasten: the promotion and implementation of a national legal framework for asylum and statelessness; implementation of the HEP; registration and the issuance of UNHCR cards to each refugee; and repatriation.

Operational Support (to Agencies): UNHCR funded the costs of operational support incurred by implementing partners. These included: salaries; auditor's fees; office rental, supplies, equipment and utilities; travelling expenses and fuel etc.; and other overheads as defined by UNHCR guidelines. The services of seven UNVs who worked during and after the emergency were also covered. Conference rooms were rented directly for co-ordination and inter-agency meetings.

Sanitation and Water: Sanitation and water-related activities in the nine refugee camps involved water supply, latrine construction and sewage disposal. Facilities were built in all camps as fast as possible, to improve sanitary conditions and prevent the spread of diseases. Water and sanitation systems were overhauled in all collective centres that took in refugees when they left the camps.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: Despite the generous support of host families, nine tented camps/transit centres were erected with overall capacity for 100,000 refugees. Later, nine collective centres were identified and rehabilitated for the some 2,500 refugees remaining over the winter period. Rehabilitation was one of the priorities in the post-emergency phase, with special attention paid to environmental protection. UNHCR and various agencies assisted host families to better insulate their dwellings against the harsh winter weather. This sometimes involved structural repairs. Stoves and heating fuel were given to 450 Albanian, Roma and Serbian host families.

Transport/Logistics: UNHCR worked with its operational partners to deliver relief items to about 100,000 refugees in nine camps. In the post-emergency phase, logistics support continued for some 2,500 refugees.

In addition, UNHCR as lead agency provided logistics support to NGO partners, including customs clearance, and extended its support to the humanitarian operation in Kosovo.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR's initially small office in Skopje grew rapidly to assume regional co-ordination functions during the Kosovo emergency. It was later reclassified as a Branch Office, headed by a Representative. Over 156 international staff were sent on mission and 100 national staff were hired during the emergency (on a temporary basis). By December, the number had levelled off at 72, consisting of 21 international plus 51 national staff.

Working with Others

UNHCR worked closely with several UN sister agencies, particularly WFP, WHO, and UNICEF. During the emergency, staff seconded from the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) worked out of the UNHCR office in order to speed up co-ordination. Over 200 international NGOs were operating in the country during the emergency, most funded bilaterally. UNHCR organised regular information-sharing and sector co-ordination meetings throughout the period, particularly for its 29 operational partners (20 international and nine national NGOs and Government ministries). In an effort to ensure stricter adherence to the basic principles of refugee law, UNHCR sought to encourage the government to work more closely with European Union institutions and the Stability Pact initiative for South-Eastern Europe. This aim was pursued through a series of meetings with local authorities, heads of international agencies and visiting delegations from key European institutions, such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

UNHCR succeeded in ensuring that the refugees' needs for protection and assistance were met, despite their numbers and the Government's initial reluctance to let them in. In the autumn, UNHCR commissioned *The Kosovo refugee crisis: An independent evaluation of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response*, and carried out an internal review of its response to the Kosovo crisis, in the hope of identifying ways to improve its emergency preparedness and response mechanisms in future. In early 2000, the findings were presented to UNHCR's Standing Committee.

Offices

Skopje
Kumanovo (opened in April 1999)
Tetovo (opened in April 1999)

Partners

Government Agencies

Ministry of Health
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Ministry of Urban Planning and Construction

NGOs

Action Against Hunger
American Refugee Committee
Arbeiter Samariter Bund
Care Australia
Catholic Relief Services
Centro Regionale d'Intervento per la Cooperazione
Danish Refugee Council
HELP
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Center for Migration Policy Development
IFCR
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
Intersos
Italian Consortium for Solidarity
Macedonia Press Center
Macedonian Center for International Cooperation
Macedonian Red Cross
Mercy Corps International
Norwegian Refugee Council
Oxfam
Public Enterprise "Driska"
Public Enterprise for Postal Service "Makedonska Posta"

Other

International Organisation for Migration
United Nations Volunteers

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Prior Years' Projects		
	General Programmes	Special Programmes	Total	General Programmes	Special Programmes	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	266,140	4,873,159	5,139,299	1,124	17,251	18,375
Community Services	0	1,101,407	1,101,407	0	0	0
Domestic Needs / Household Support	1,167	1,649,447	1,650,614	0	0	0
Education	1,223	0	1,223	1,808	0	1,808
Food	17,162	376,564	393,726	9,565	0	9,565
Health / Nutrition	6,506	119,330	125,836	41,896	1,188	43,084
Legal Assistance	6,687	2,706,186	2,712,873	2,884	2,180	5,065
Operational Support (to Agencies)	0	1,882,661	1,882,661	0	0	0
Sanitation	0	247,165	247,165	0	0	0
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	40,735	5,486,779	5,527,514	16,085	0	16,085
Transport / Logistics	10,032	1,428,732	1,438,764	1,720	0	1,720
Water	0	57,056	57,056	0	0	0
Instalments with Implementing Partners	0	8,395,943	8,395,943	0	0	0
Sub - total Operational	349,652	28,324,429	28,674,081	75,083	20,619	95,702
Administrative Support	40,751	586,117	626,869	0	0	0
Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries	390,403	28,910,547	29,300,950	75,083	20,619	95,702
Unliquidated Obligations	58,440	12,769,760	12,828,200	0	0	0
TOTAL	448,843	41,680,307	42,129,150	75,083	20,619	95,702
Instalments with Implementing Partners						
Payments Made	0	19,836,660	19,836,660	0	0	0
Reporting Received	0	11,440,718	11,440,718	0	0	0
Balance	0	8,395,943	8,395,943	0	0	0
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0	0	0	0
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outstanding 31 December	0	8,395,943	8,395,943	0	0	0
Unliquidated Obligations						
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	98,116	86,598	184,713
New Obligations	448,843	41,680,307	42,129,150	0	0	0
Disbursements	390,403	28,910,547	29,300,950	75,083	20,619	95,702
Cancellations	0	0	0	23,033	65,979	89,012
Outstanding 31 December	58,440	12,769,760	12,828,200	0	0	0

