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Bosnia - Former Yugoslavia: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

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SUMMARY

The current civil conflict among the ethnic groups of the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, began in 1991 and continues to the present. The conflict has been marked notably by its concentration on expelling civilians of different ethnic groups from conquered territory in order to create separate states for each ethnic group as well as the territorial conquest of "historic" ethnic homelands. Physical mistreatment of civilians and other human rights violations have been used by all sides to accomplish this. Since 1992, the primary focus of the war has been in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the greatest number of victims in need of assistance have been Bosnian Muslims.¹

REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Nearly 1.4 million people in Bosnia-Herzegovina have been driven from their homes by warfare. Destruction of buildings, interruption of gas, water, and electrical service, and blockades of relief supplies have necessitated humanitarian assistance to another 1.5 million who remain in their homes, especially in the Muslim towns. Between July and September, 417,000 Serbs, Croats, and Muslims fled their homes in Bosnia and Croatia as Bosnian Serb forces drove the remaining Muslim civilians out of Srebrenica and Zepa, Croatian forces retook territory in the U.N. protected areas of Croatia known as Krajina, and Bosnian and Croat forces overran Serb territory in the Bihac area.

Altogether, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that international assistance reached 3.5 million people throughout the former Yugoslavia in early July. Of these, 2.7 million are in Bosnia, 400,000 in Croatia, and 405,000 in Serbia. This estimate does not include recent population movements of Muslims (40,000) in July and Krajina Serbs in early August (estimated 250,000 into Bosnia and Serbia) and over 14,000 Muslims and Croats from Serb-held areas in retaliation for territorial conquests by the Croatian army.

¹ For information on the conflict in Yugoslavia, see U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. Bosnia-Former Yugoslavia: Ongoing Conflict and U.S. Policy, CRS Issue Brief 91089.



YUGOSLAVIAN REFUGEES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

In addition to those displaced within their own country, many Yugoslavs have fled to other parts of Europe and others have been resettled in the United States, Canada, and Australia. According to press reports, over 700,000 persons from former Yugoslavia have sought asylum in western Europe with 350,000 in Germany alone. About 500,000 are Bosnians. Most have been granted temporary asylum and will be repatriated when conditions in their home countries improve. About 30,000 have been permanently resettled by UNHCR in 25 countries, mostly in Europe. Many of the permanently resettled are former prisoners of the well-publicized Bosnian Serb detention camps. UNHCR estimated, on July 31, that 50,000 additional Bosnians will need permanent resettlement in the next year. In testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on August 1, 1995, the State Department noted that the United States expects to admit 15,000 Bosnians in FY1996, almost double the number expected to be admitted in FY1995. In FY1994, 7,000 Bosnians were resettled in the United States.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

UNHCR is the lead U.N. agency and coordinates international humanitarian assistance in all the former Yugoslavia. It produces a monthly report on humanitarian activities. Some units of UNPROFOR--the U.N. Protection Force--are assigned to escort UNHCR relief convoys in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) coordinates food aid contributions throughout the region. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) carries out relief activities, as well as programs related to detainees, missing persons, and family-tracing activities. Many other U.N. agencies and international and local non-governmental organizations provide assistance in the coordinated relief effort. Relief supplies are provided by truck convoy when possible. Much aid also arrives by air and in isolated areas, by military air drop.

Prior to the recent military activities, U.N. agencies involved in former Yugoslavia had appealed for \$470 million to cover their activities in calendar 1995. About 60 percent of this aid has been made available so far. In September, the appeal was raised to \$515 million to cover calendar 1995.

U.S. humanitarian assistance is being provided through USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Office of Food for Peace (FFP), and the Bureau for Europe and Newly Independent States (ENI), the Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), and the Department of Defense Office of Humanitarian and Refugee Affairs (HRA). In addition to humanitarian assistance, the Department of Defense is involved in peacekeeping and other military operations in the area which are not reflected in this paper. OFDA produces regular situation reports on U.S. assistance to the area. The following table lists U.S. government expenditures in former Yugoslavia since the beginning of the conflict.

U.S. Disaster Assistance to Former Yugoslavia				
Source: USAID/OFDA				
	FY1992	FY1993	FY1994	FY1995*
USAID/OFDA	\$3,760,201	\$34,566,860	\$30,620,914	\$41,020,181
USAID/FFP	\$9,350,000	\$93,500,000	\$95,661,600	\$57,964,200
State/PRM	33,632,138	\$65,300,000	\$76,125,450	\$49,451,111
USAID/ENI	\$619,900	\$6,200,000	\$25,955,000	\$25,692,000
DOD (included in FY1993)		\$144,300,000	\$159,600,000	\$3,395,000
Total aid	\$47,362,239	\$343,841,260	\$387,869,602	\$177,522,492

*As of 9/18/95

Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vicinity



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