



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : MACEDONIA

Compilation of the information available in the Global IDP
Database of the Norwegian Refugee Council

(as of 26 August, 2002)

Also available at <http://www.idpproject.org>

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
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PROFILE SUMMARY	6
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CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT	9
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BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT	9
THE ETHNIC ALBANIAN MINORITY DEMANDED EQUALITY WITH THE ETHNIC MACEDONIAN MAJORITY (JUNE 2001)	9
POLITICAL BREAKTHROUGH WITH SIGNING OF INDEPENDENT CEASE-FIRES WITH NATO (JULY 2001)	11
POLITICAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN MACEDONIAN PARTIES PAVED WAY FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION (AUGUST 2001)	11
MACEDONIAN AUTHORITIES MADE CONCESSIONS AND FINALLY REACHED DEAL ON AMNESTY ISSUE (DECEMBER 2001-MARCH 2002)	12
MACEDONIAN POLICE WAS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO ALBANIAN VILLAGES, BUT PROTEST AROSE (DECEMBER 2001)	13
ETHNIC ALBANIAN SEPARATISTS WARNED OF FURTHER CONFLICT (JANUARY 2002)	14
LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT LAW IMPROVED RIGHTS OF ETHNIC ALBANIANS (JANUARY 2002)	15
POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN STATUS QUO AS OF MARCH 2002	15
NEW RULES WERE ADOPTED ON USE OF ALBANIAN LANGUAGE, BUT MAJOR OBSTACLES REMAIN (JUNE 2002)	16
MACEDONIA TO HOLD PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2002, BUT FEARS EXIST ABOUT DISRUPTION BY ETHNIC ALBANIAN GROUP	17
POLICE FORCE ENTERED LAST EX-REBEL STRONGHOLD, PROMPTING RETURN OF DISPLACED (JULY 2002)	18
STABLE SITUATION IN MACEDONIA, ALTHOUGH TENSIONS BEFORE ELECTIONS EXISTED (AUGUST 2002)	18
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED THAT IMPUNITY WILL THREATEN A LASTING PEACE (AUGUST 2002)	19
CAUSES OF DISPLACEMENT	20
SUMMARY OF PHASES OF CONFLICT (FEBRUARY-AUGUST 2001)	20
FIGHTING IN THE TETOVO REGION CAUSED DISPLACEMENT, AND TRAPPED THOUSANDS OF CIVILIANS INSIDE TOWNS (FEBRUARY-MARCH 2001)	20
CONCERN FOR FAMILY WAS FOR SOME A REASON NOT TO FLEE, AFTER ALLEGED PROVOCATIONS BY SECURITY FORCES AND POLICE (MARCH-APRIL 2001)	21
RENEWED FIGHTING IN KUMANOVO REGION DISPLACED CIVILIANS, WHILE HUNDREDS WERE EVACUATED (APRIL-MAY 2001)	21

THOUSANDS OF IDPS AND LOCAL VILLAGERS REFUSED TO LEAVE LIPKOVO DURING CEASE-FIRE (MAY 2001)	22
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN VILLAGES AROUND KUMANOVO WERE A CAUSE OF DISPLACEMENT (MAY 2001)	23
FIGHTING IN ARACINOVO LEAD TO DISPLACEMENT OF THOUSANDS, DESPITE THE CONCLUSION OF A CEASE-FIRE (JUNE 2001)	24
RENEWED VIOLENCE NEAR TETOVO RESULTED IN DISPLACEMENT OF HUNDREDS (NOVEMBER 2001)	24

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES **26**

NATIONAL FIGURES	26
IDP FIGURE IS HARD TO ESTIMATE AND VARIES GREATLY THROUGH TIME (SEPTEMBER 2001)	26
TOTAL IDP NUMBER AS OF AUGUST 2002	26
DEVELOPMENT OF TOTAL IDP NUMBER FROM MAY 2001 TILL JULY 2002	27
THE CRISIS SHOWED A PEAK OF 84,669 IDPS IN AUGUST 2001; TABLE WITH TOTAL IDP NUMBERS BY MONTH (MARCH-NOVEMBER 2001)	28
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION	29
NUMBER AND LOCATIONS OF IDPS (AUGUST 2002)	29
AREAS OF ORIGIN OF REMAINING IDPS (AUGUST 2002)	30
NUMBER AND LOCATIONS OF IDPS (MAY-JULY 2002)	31
IN MAY 2002, A DE-REGISTRATION EXERCISE FOR IDPS WAS CARRIED OUT	32
NUMBER AND LOCATIONS OF IDPS (JANUARY 2002)	32
MOST OF THE IDPS ARE HOUSED WITH HOST FAMILIES, WHILE A MINORITY IS SHELTERED IN COLLECTIVE CENTERS (OCTOBER 2001)	34
DISPLACED FLEEING VIOLENCE IN TETOVO FLED MAINLY TO LOCAL VILLAGES OR TO SKOPJE (JULY 2001)	35
FIGHTING AROUND ARACINOVO DISPLACED THOUSANDS (JUNE 2001)	35
ETHNIC VIOLENCE AROUND THE CITY OF TETOVO CREATED SOME 20,000 IDPS (MARCH 2001)	35
DISAGGREGATED FIGURES	36
IN MARCH 2002, SOME 30 PERCENT OF THE IDP POPULATION WAS ETHNIC MACEDONIAN	36
MAJORITY OF DISPLACED ARE WOMEN, CHILDREN AND ELDERLY PEOPLE, WHILE OVER HALF OF THE DISPLACED WERE ETHNIC MACEDONIAN (MARCH-SEPTEMBER 2001)	36

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT **37**

GENERAL	37
DISPLACED MAINLY FLED TO HOST FAMILIES (MOSTLY RELATIVES), BUT ARE ALSO SHELTERED IN COLLECTIVE CENTERS (MARCH-SEPTEMBER 2001)	37
DISPLACEMENT OCCURRED ACCORDING TO ETHNIC PATTERNS (JULY 2001)	37
CEASE-FIRES WERE SECURED TO EVACUATE TRAPPED VILLAGERS (MAY 2001)	38

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT **39**

GENERAL	39
AI REPORTED ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES PERPETRATED BY BOTH SIDES OF THE CONFLICT (AUGUST 2002)	39

HRW REPORTED SEPARATION AND TORTURE OF IDPs BY MACEDONIAN POLICE FORCES (MAY 2001)	39
SOME 22,000 PEOPLE WERE TRAPPED IN VILLAGES DURING FIGHTING (JULY-AUGUST 2001)	41
SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)	42
GENERAL	42
HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OF THE IDPs AND RETURNEES (JULY-AUGUST 2002)	42
IDPs EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT CONDITIONS DURING THE WINTER (SEPTEMBER 2001)	42
DISPLACED PROTESTED AND PLANNED TO TURN RADICAL IF IGNORED (AUGUST 2001)	42
GENERAL NEEDS OF DISPLACED DEPEND ON LOCATION OF DISPLACEMENT (JULY 2001)	43
GENERAL NEEDS OF CIVILIANS TRAPPED IN VILLAGES (JULY-AUGUST 2001)	43
HEALTH	44
HEALTH SYSTEM IS FRAGILE AND NEEDS OF IDPs ARE AT RISK (NOVEMBER 2001)	44
NUTRITION	45
MACEDONIA'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR SERIOUSLY WEAKENED BY CONFLICT (NOVEMBER 2001)	45
SHELTER	45
SHELTER SITUATION IS CHARACTERISED BY HOST FAMILY FATIGUE (NOVEMBER 2001)	45
ACCESS TO EDUCATION	47
GENERAL	47
DISPLACED HAVE ACCESS TO (DISRUPTED) EDUCATION SYSTEM (DECEMBER 2001)	47
PROPERTY ISSUES	48
GENERAL	48
MANY DISPLACED LOST THEIR HOMES AND ALL OF THEIR POSSESSIONS, INCLUDING LIVESTOCK AND CROPS (JULY-DECEMBER 2001)	48
PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT	49
GENERAL	49
OBSTACLES TO RETURN WERE DIFFERENT ACCORDING TO ETHNICITY OF DISPLACED PERSONS (AUGUST 2002)	49
HUMANITARIAN AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE CONTINUED TO BE ESSENTIAL FOR RETURN (MAY 2002)	50
DISPLACED ETHNIC MACEDONIANS RETURNING TO LIPKOVO ASKED FOR TEMPORARY COLONIES (APRIL 2002)	50
DESPITE POLITICAL BREAKTHROUGH, RETURN WAS INHIBITED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF ACCESS AND SECURITY, AND PROBLEMS WITH WATER AND ELECTRICITY (NOVEMBER 2001)	51
ALTHOUGH NEARLY HALF RETURNED TO THE TETOVO REGION, MANY ETHNIC MACEDONIANS REFUSED TO RETURN WITHOUT AN ESCORT OF MACEDONIAN TROOPS (OCTOBER 2001)	52
RETURN PATTERN WAS DICTATED BY THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE REGION (SEPTEMBER 2001)	52

ORGANISED BY THE GOVERNMENT, ETHNIC MACEDONIANS RETURNED TO THE ETHNIC ALBANIAN ARACINOVO REGION (SEPTEMBER 2001)	53
MORE THAN HALF OF THE DISPLACED FLEEING FIGHTING AT ARACINOVO RETURNED HOME BY AUGUST 2001	53
MAJORITY OF DISPLACED FLEEING VIOLENCE IN TETOVO REGION RETURNED BY THE BEGINNING OF APRIL 2001	54
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS	55
GENERAL	55
ACCESS WAS RESTRICTED IN CONFLICT AREAS, DUE TO CHECKPOINTS AND UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (JULY 2001)	55
IN ORDER TO GIVE HUMANITARIAN AID OR EVACUATE, THE ICRC HAD TO REQUEST CEASE-FIRES (MAY 2001)	55
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES	56
GENERAL	56
ATTENTION: WEB-LINK TO DETAILED INFORMATION ON IDP AID BY NGO AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION, SPECIFIED BY SECTOR	56
UN RESPONSE 2002, CONSOLIDATED APPEAL	56
THE UNITED NATIONS-PLANS FOR 2002, GENERAL	56
THE UNITED NATIONS-PLANS FOR 2002, SPECIFIED BY SECTOR	57
SUMMARY OF UNHCR'S LEAD ROLE REGARDING RETURN, CONFIDENCE BUILDING AND STABILISATION (JANUARY 2002)	60
UN RESPONSE IN 2001	61
IDP-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF UNICEF (MAY 2002)	61
THE UN RESPONSE: PROTECTION (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	62
THE UN RESPONSE: SHELTER REPAIR (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	62
THE UN RESPONSE: WATER ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	63
THE UN RESPONSE: HEALTH (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	63
THE UN RESPONSE: EDUCATION (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	64
THE UN RESPONSE: PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	64
THE UN RESPONSE: WINTERISATION (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	65
THE UN RESPONSE: ECONOMIC RECOVERY / COMMUNITY SUPPORT (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	65
THE UN RESPONSE: AGRICULTURE (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2001)	65
THE UN RESPONSE: FOOD (SEPTEMBER 2001-MAY 2002)	66
HOUSING REPAIR PROGRAMMES WERE IMPLEMENTED, WHILE ETHNIC ALBANIAN NEWSPAPER SPOKE OF DISCRIMINATION IN AID ALLOCATION (OCTOBER 2001)	66
UNHCR FACILITATED THE RETURN OF DISPLACED (AUGUST 2001-APRIL 2002)	67
UNICEF GAVE MINE AWARENESS INFORMATION, DISTRIBUTED HYGIENIC ITEMS, AND PROVIDED STRESS-COPING SUPPORT (JUNE 2001)	69
INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE	70
EUROPEAN DONORS PLEDGED FUNDS FOR DE-MINING AND RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES TO ENABLE THE RETURN OF DISPLACED (JULY 2002)	70
HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES DREW UP A FRAMEWORK FOR THE TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO RECOVERY (MARCH 2002)	70

TABLE INDICATING PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS AS ANNEX TO THE TRANSITION FRAMEWORK (MARCH 2002)	72
WFP HIGHLIGHTED MAIN PROBLEMS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO IDPs (JANUARY 2002)	77
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION FUNDED EMERGENCY AID FOR HOUSING REPAIR AND HOST FAMILY SUPPORT (NOVEMBER 2001-JUNE 2002)	77
EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR RECONSTRUCTION MANAGES MAIN EU ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES (JANUARY 2002)	79
EUROPEAN COMMISSION DONATED FUNDS FOR AID TO REMAINING DISPLACED (FEBRUARY 2002)	80
THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR MIGRATION PLANNED FOR THE PROVISION OF HEALTH PROGRAMMES (NOVEMBER 2001)	81
EUROPEAN COMMISSION DONATED FUNDS FOR EMERGENCY AID TO IDPs (SEPTEMBER 2001)	81
ICRC/IFRC	81
ARC AND THE FEDERATION DISTRIBUTED HYGIENE PARCELS TO IDPs AND FAMILIES (JULY 2002)	81
ICRC LAUNCHED NEW DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMME FOR VILLAGERS AND RETURNEES (MARCH 2002)	82
SUMMARY OF ICRC ACTIVITIES FOR DISPLACED DURING THE CONFLICT (FEBRUARY 2002)	82
ICRC CONDUCTED MINE/UXO AWARENESS PROGRAMME, BENEFITING DISPLACED WANTING TO RETURN (DECEMBER 2001)	84
MRC ASSISTED AND COUNSELED DISPLACED IN HEALTH, PROPERTY AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES THROUGH THE SKOPJE INFORMATION CENTRE (NOVEMBER 2001)	86
ICRC-PLANS FOR IDP ASSISTANCE FROM SEPTEMBER 2001 ONWARDS (AUGUST 2001)	86
ICRC BROUGHT FOOD TO CIVILIANS IN LIPKOVO AND EVACUATED MOST VULNERABLE (AUGUST 2001)	87
SUMMARY OF ICRC ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF IDPs AS OF JULY 2001	88
ICRC CONTINUED TO EVACUATE AND ASSIST DISPLACED FROM THE TETOVO REGION (JULY 2001)	88
MRC DISTRIBUTED REGISTRATION CARDS TO IDPs, ENTITLING THEM TO FREE MEDICAL CARE AND MEDICINES (JUNE-JULY 2001)	89
AMERICAN RED CROSS GAVE HEALTH LESSONS TO DISPLACED (JUNE 2001)	90
THE RED CROSS EVACUATED CIVILIANS TRAPPED BY FIGHTING IN KUMANOVO-LIPKOVO REGION (MAY 2001)	90
ICRC ACTIVITIES FOR THE DISPLACED IN THE SKOPSKA CRNA GORA, TETOVO, AND KUMANOVO REGION (MARCH-MAY 2001)	91
NGO RESPONSE	92
ATTENTION: WEB-LINK TO DETAILED INFORMATION ON HUMANITARIAN AID, SPECIFIED BY NGO	92
MCIC IMPLEMENTED REHABILITATION PROGRAM FOR DISPLACED AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS (JULY 2002)	92
NGO ROLE IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD IN MACEDONIA (DECEMBER 2001)	96
CAD WAS FUNDED BY THE EU TO REPAIR HOMES (OCTOBER 2001)	97
CRS ASSISTED DISPLACED FAMILIES IN COLLECTIVE CENTERS (AUGUST 2001)	97
ACT APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE TO IDPs (TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY MCIC) (JULY 2001)	98
ISLAMIC RELIEF ASSISTED 300 DISPLACED FAMILIES (JUNE 2001)	100

LIST OF SOURCES USED **101**

PROFILE SUMMARY

Internal displacement has only been a recent phenomenon in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (hereafter referred to as Macedonia). People only became displaced in the beginning of 2001 when the National Liberation Army (NLA) took up arms to fight for the rights of ethnic Albanian community in Macedonia. The peak in the number of IDPs was reached in August/September 2001, when some 70,000 persons were registered as internally displaced. Since the conclusion of the peace agreement in August 2001, the situation has progressively improved, enabling most refugees and internally displaced persons to return. As of August 2002, only 7,421 persons remained displaced (RFE/RL 26 July 2002; UN OCHA 8 March 2002)

Background

Amongst the Macedonian population, some 23 per cent are ethnic Albanian, while some 67 per cent are ethnic Macedonian. Despite co-operation at the political level, the relations between Macedonians and Albanians have been marked by growing geographic, economic and social segregation (IHF 8 June 2001). The first ethnic Albanian demand which led to the taking up of arms by the NLA, was constitutional of nature. The Albanians felt that the constitution divided the population into first and second-class citizens and thus formed a basis of discrimination against the Albanians. A second Albanian demand was to have Albanian recognised as a second official language, to be used in courts, parliament, public administration and the educational system. Finally, Albanians criticised the Citizenship Act adopted in 1992 and its new draft, labelling it as restrictive and discriminatory.

On the 13th of August 2001, the conflicting parties reached a peace agreement, providing for constitutional change recognizing all ethnic groups within the country. It contained provisions on the language issue, declaring that Albanian would become Macedonia's second official language in areas where the ethnic Albanians composed more than 20 per cent of the population. Furthermore, it stated that ethnic Albanians would be proportionately represented in public institutions such as the police forces or the government administration. It also created the 'double majority' voting system, enabling parliamentarians from ethnic minorities to veto legislation that is only supported by ethnic Macedonian parliamentarians (RFE/RL 13 August 2001). The issue of amnesty for former NLA combatants was left undecided, but this was solved in March 2002, when an amnesty law was voted on and approved by the parliament.

A local self-government law was passed in January 2002, giving the ethnic Albanians more control over affairs in the areas where they represent the majority. On 19 June 2002, the Macedonian parliament adopted the last package of laws envisioned in the Ohrid peace agreement, which regulate the use of the Albanian language in all government institutions as well as in taking the census, which is slated for November 2002. It did not, however, adopt the draft law on parliamentary rules or a new passport law.

Parliamentary elections will be held on 15 September 2002.

Displacement

In between the taking up of arms in February 2001 and the conclusion of the peace agreement, fierce fighting occurred, leading to the displacement of thousands of people. Besides the fighting, another factor which caused displacement was the conduct of Macedonian police forcing villagers out of their homes (IHF 8 June 2001). A further feature of displacement were the many civilians and displaced trapped in villages in areas affected by fighting, many of whom were evacuated by the ICRC.

When fighting broke out in the Skopska Crna Gora region in March 2001, some 22,000 people became internally displaced, but most of these IDPs returned home by April 2001. The situation worsened again in

the beginning of May 2001 and continued till August 2001, when renewed fighting broke out in the Kumanovo, Aracinovo, and Lipkovo regions. The peak in the number of IDPs was reached in August/September 2001, when some 70,000 persons were registered as internally displaced, 60 per cent of whom were ethnic Macedonians (UNHCR 25 September 2001). In March 2002, this ratio changed due to the return of a significant number of IDPs; out of the total population of internally displaced, some 30 per cent was ethnic Macedonian (UN OCHA 8 March 2002).

The majority of IDPs were settled in with host families (in most cases relatives). When numbers of the displaced were highest during the month of August 2001, some 60 662 IDPs were residing with host-families. Accommodation was also provided by means of collective centers. At the end of August 2001, there were 3 857 persons accommodated in 21 collective centers (IFRC 7 December 2001). As of 15 August 2002, the total number of displaced residing with host families was at 5,447, while some 1,974 persons were sheltered in collective centers (IFRC 15 August 2002).

The count of the number of displaced was complicated because of the frequent movement of IDPs to and from their homes during the course of the fighting, and because of the occurrence of large numbers of people fleeing to Kosovo, many of whom returned to Macedonia, but not always to their original homes (USCR September 2001).

Protection and assistance

During the conflict, Human Rights Watch reported the systematic separation of ethnic Albanian males fleeing fighting and the subsequent beating of some of these men at police stations, stating that this conduct violated international human rights law, and in the most severe cases amounted to torture (HRW 31 May 2001). Many civilians and displaced were also trapped in villages in areas affected by fighting. During the conflict, humanitarian access was restricted in certain areas, due to checkpoints and unexploded ordnance (ACT 5 July 2001).

Regarding assistance needs, displaced sheltered in collective centers were in a less than optimal position, while displaced accommodated in host families were provided with generous support. Host families were also supplied with humanitarian assistance, although host family fatigue was noted. In a worse position were the people who moved in with their relatives in remote rural areas and people still inside the affected areas.

An important problem for the population has been access to drinking water (ACT 5 July 2001). As of July 2002, the main concern was the need to support the displaced and their host families as well as those in collective centres, specifically for food, hygiene and health. Returnees also had similar needs. In some regions the main subsistence need is the supply of water (Kumanovo and Tetovo) as well as agricultural support.

Return and rehabilitation

The return of the displaced population has been facilitated by humanitarian programs of national and international organisations (for details see paragraph on response). The return of displaced to their home villages has also been made possible by the patrolling of multi-ethnic police units in villages which were occupied by the ethnic Albanian rebels during the months of fighting.

However, obstacles for a full-scale return still remain, such as health reasons or the threat of unexploded ordnance and mines, which is impacting on access to reconstruction and agriculture programs as well as the redeployment of mixed police patrols. Damaged or destroyed homes also need to be repaired so that people can return (UN OCHA 2 May 2002). Most ethnic Albanians who can not return yet are faced with damage to houses, while those ethnic Macedonians who can not return cite insecurity as an obstacle to return.

Ethnic Albanian communities have been far more likely to return to their villages and they remained displaced for a shorter period of time than ethnic Macedonians (USCR September 2001).

Response

The international community was quick to respond to the needs of the displaced and is still well represented in Macedonia.

The main humanitarian actor during the conflict was the ICRC which has provided relief to displaced and resident populations, evacuated vulnerable people, and reunited separated families. In September 2001, the ICRC decided to stop the registration of and assistance to newly displaced in light of the halt in fighting. Because of the changing political and humanitarian situation in Macedonia, the office of the World Food Program closed down at the end of May 2002. The ICRC continued with food distribution for all IDPs with registration cards from the Red Cross.

Other organisations who were or are active in Macedonia are, among others, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, WHO, IOM, UNMAO, ECHO, FAO, as well as numerous NGOs, such as MCIC, El Hilal, Islamic Relief, ACT, Children's Aid Direct, MSF, or Catholic Relief Services, distributing food and non-food items, offering health-care, or repairing homes.

The main activities during the conflict were focused on short term emergency relief and rehabilitation for displaced and affected communities. However, at the beginning of 2002 when the conflict seemed to be contained, the international organisations and the national actors drew up a transition framework which focused on the shift from relief aid to long-term development. Activities focus on the rehabilitation of the infrastructure in villages of return, the distribution of returnee kits, the re-establishment of primary health care and education, confidence and community building, early childhood development and child protection, mine clearance, rehabilitation of water systems, as well as the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector (UN OCHA, 9 March 2002). All these activities are conducive to a return to normalcy and the return of the remaining internally displaced.

(August 2002)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Background of the conflict

The ethnic Albanian minority demanded equality with the ethnic Macedonian majority (June 2001)

- Twothirds of the Macedonians are ethnic Macedonians and one-fifth are Albanians, who live culturally and socially separated from each other
- Albanians feel that the Constitution makes a distinction between first and second-class citizens, instigating discrimination against Albanians
- An important Albanian demand was to have Albanian recognised as a second official language
- The Citizenship Act, adopted in 1992, was seen by the Albanians as restricting their rights and political influence

"In the beginning of March 2001 Macedonia attracted international attention following reports of clashes between Macedonian forces and Albanian armed groups of the National Liberation Army (NLA) in northern Macedonia close to the Kosovo border. The guerrillas claim to fight for the rights of Albanians within Macedonia. In the beginning of April, fighting spread to Tetovo and surrounding villages.

[...]

a) General Background

Macedonia has a population of more than 2 million. According to official statistics 66,6% are ethnic Macedonians while 22,9% are Albanians. There are also Turks, Vlachs, Roma, Serbs and others. Albanians claim that they constitute more than 30% of the population, and that there have been grave shortcomings in the last two censuses, despite the fact that the second one, in the year 1994, was conducted under the monitoring of the international community. Albanians claim that, due to the Citizenship Act, over 100 000 Albanians were left out of the statistics. A new census scheduled to take place in the autumn of 2001 will hopefully resolve the conflict over the size of the ethnic groups.

Macedonia has until recently been noted as a positive example of peaceful multiethnic co-existence in the Balkans. Since 1992 the country has had coalition governments consisting of both Macedonian and Albanian parties. However, despite co-operation at the political level, the relations between Macedonians and Albanians have been marked by growing geographic, economic and social segregation. There has been a lack of contact and collaboration between the two largest ethnic groups and a lack of understanding for each other's situation and motives.

There are a number of factors that separate the two main ethnic groups. Macedonians and Albanians belong to different cultures and religions. Most Albanians are Muslims while the Macedonians are Orthodox Christians. They speak different languages and there is little inter-ethnic communication. There are few mixed marriages. Albanians are geographically concentrated in the western areas close to the Kosovo border while Macedonians live in other parts of the country. Even in multiethnic towns, like the capital city Skopje, Macedonians and Albanians live in separate neighbourhoods, with their own cafés and meeting places. They read different newspapers that address mainly their 'own' population groups. Even after a doubling in numbers during the last two years, only 7% of civil servants are Albanians. Albanians have established a tradition of small enterprises and shops, and ethnic Macedonians and Albanians generally operate in different economic spheres. In the police less than 3% are Albanians.

Day-to-day discrimination and several episodes of police brutality and other human rights violations have been documented by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the Macedonian Helsinki Committee. Consequently, there is a growing feeling of mistrust towards the state among Albanians. The war in Kosovo contributed to further widening the gap between the groups. Albanians sympathised with their 'brothers' in Kosovo, while ethnic Macedonians sympathised with the Serbs, as they feared that a Kosovo dominated by Albanians could give rise to increased nationalism among Albanians in Macedonia. The Macedonians also feared that the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Kosovo might destabilise the country and alter the demographic balance in favour of the Albanians.[...]

b) The Constitution

The Preamble of the Macedonian Constitution has been the subject of controversy since it was adopted soon after the 1991 referendum on Macedonian independence from Yugoslavia. The dispute is based on whether Macedonia should become a 'civic state' for all citizens regardless of ethnicity, or a 'national' state dominated by ethnic Macedonians, as it is perceived mainly by the Albanian population. The Preamble states:

Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanies and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia.

Albanian political parties claim that the Constitution is the main source of the current conflict. The Albanians feel that the Constitution divides the population into first and second-class citizens and thus represents the basis of discrimination against Albanians.

On the other hand, the general opinion among Macedonians is that the country is already rather generous regarding the 'rights of the Albanians'. Many ethnic Macedonians fear that constitutional amendments may threaten their identity and be the first step towards dividing the country. They suspect that the Albanians in reality wish to divide Macedonia in order to create a 'Greater Albania.'

c) Language and Higher Education

Macedonian language, written using the Cyrillic alphabet, is the official language in Macedonia. Minority languages can be used alongside Macedonian in municipalities where those nationalities are in majority or make up a 'considerable number of inhabitants'. To have Albanian recognised as a second official language is one of the most important demands for the Albanians. This would include the use of Albanian in public administration, courts, parliament, and in all levels of education.

The dispute over language has been harsh, particularly in regard to the issue of higher education. The Albanian community has long considered this as one of the most important Albanian demands. [...]

d) Census Disputes and the Citizenship Act

Albanians claim that over 100 000 Albanians were left out of the statistics of the census in 1994, after a restrictive Citizenship Act was adopted in 1992. The Citizenship Act has also been criticised by various international human rights organisations, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, UNCHR, etc. Such pressure has eventually led the Macedonian authorities to propose a new Citizenship Act. According to the draft law ten instead of fifteen years of residency will be sufficient for naturalisation, the provisions on the conditions like income, living place and health are much better, as are the provisions on marriage as a condition for earlier naturalisation. Nevertheless the Ombudsman's office regarded these improvements as minor, and assessed that this draft does not represent any substantial changes to the existing legislation.

The discriminative aspects of the legislation are also linked to the fact that ethnic Macedonians may be granted citizenship regardless of their country of residence. The term of the Act, that the state can also deny

a person citizenship for security reasons without giving any reason or explanation, was removed after a decision of the Constitutional Court of Macedonia three years ago. The Albanians complain that these restrictions have been intentionally instated in order to restrict the rights and political influence of Albanians." (IHF 8 June 2001)

Political breakthrough with signing of independent cease-fires with NATO (July 2001)

- In July 2001, the rebels and the government each signed a separate cease-fire with NATO, which paved the way for NATO deployment to disarm the rebels and army and police forces
- NATO indicated that the operation would be a voluntary one, without any enforcement

"For the first time since the start of the conflict in February [2001] there is cautious optimism that the civil war in Macedonia could stop. Last week the Albanian rebels and Macedonian government each signed a separate cease-fire agreement with NATO. If the Albanian and Macedonian politicians reach a political agreement, NATO is ready to commit a force of 3.000 people to observe the cease-fire and to disarm the rebels. But also the paramilitary groups as well as reservists of the army and police should be disarmed. Otherwise, the implementation of a political agreement could be in jeopardy.

[...]

Since it is unthinkable that the rebels would submit their arms to the Macedonian authorities, the Macedonian government asked NATO to collect those arms. NATO-spokesperson Paul Barnard declared in Skopje that NATO does not want to enforce the disarmament. It will be a voluntary arms collection. But, as we have seen in Kosovo, there is a real danger that only part of the weapons - possibly the oldest - will be submitted while the rest will be hidden - maybe on the other side of the border with Albania. The arms depots of the Albanians should be dealt with in an inclusive way , across the different borders." (PC 11 July 2001)

Political Agreement between Macedonian parties paved way for conflict resolution (August 2001)

- The accord provided for constitutional change on the language issue and public representation, as well as creating the "double majority" voting system
- NATO stressed that before deploying a force, a cease-fire had to be in place and that the guerrillas would be willing to disarm voluntarily in exchange for an amnesty
- On the 13th of August 2001, the rebels signed an agreement with NATO to disarm, paving the way for NATO deployment
- In November 2001, constitutional amendments were made, but the issue of amnesty remained

"An accord signed today [13 August 2001] by leaders of Macedonia's main political parties is a step toward resolving complaints of inequality by the country's ethnic Albanians. But it is only part of a larger peace plan. The political accord does not include provisions under which guerrilla fighters would disarm in exchange for an amnesty. Those issues are to be resolved in a separate military agreement that is being brokered by NATO.

[...]

Under the accord, the constitution would be changed to recognize all of the country's ethnic groups -- and not simply the ethnic Macedonian Slav majority. Albanian would become a second official language in communities where more than 20 percent of the population is ethnic Albanian. There also would be proportional representation for ethnic Albanians in the Constitutional Court, in the government administration, and within the country's police forces.

The accord would create a 'double majority' voting system in parliament that would enable lawmakers from minority groups to block legislation that has support only from ethnic Macedonian legislators.

Robertson noted that the political accord satisfies one of three conditions that must be met before NATO deploys a force of 3,500 peacekeepers to help disarm ethnic Albanian guerrillas. NATO also is insisting that a sustainable cease-fire is in place and that the guerrillas agree to disarm voluntarily in exchange for an amnesty.

[...]

Alliance spokesman Francois Le Blevenec told RFE/RL the political accord clears the way for NATO envoys to start serving as mediators in indirect talks between the government and guerrilla leaders. He said it also gives President Boris Trajkovski and Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski the authority to declare a partial amnesty as part of a disarmament deal.

[...]

But Trajkovski said yesterday that he doesn't think guerrilla leaders will be satisfied with the political rights gained by ethnic Albanians under today's political accord. Trajkovski says he still thinks the real goal of the guerrillas is to capture Macedonian territory in order to form a Greater Albania." (RFE/RL 13 August 2001)

The rebels accepted the agreement on the 13th of August:

"Ethnic Albanian guerrillas in Macedonia signed an agreement Tuesday with NATO to give up their weapons, Paul Barnard, a spokesman for the NATO negotiator Pieter Feith, told AFP.

Barnard said that the Macedonian government had also offered a partial amnesty to the rebels, the details of which would be released later.

[...]

The disarmament deal will pave the way for the deployment of a NATO peacekeeping force of up to 3,500 soldiers to enter Macedonia and set up collection points on rebel held territory to receive voluntarily surrendered weapons." (AFP 14 August 2001)

In November 2001, constitutional amendments were made, but the issue of amnesty remained:

"On November 16, in a vote muscled by the European envoys, the Macedonian parliament adopted constitutional reforms giving the same rights to the ethnic minorities, primarily the Albanian community, as to the majority Macedonian population." (AFP 25 December 2001)

"A major remaining issue is the actual implementation of amnesty. UNHCR believes that the effective implementation of an amnesty is key in normalizing further the situation in FYROM. The amnesty should not only apply to the former Albanian rebels but also to draft evaders and deserters of all communities who had refused to take up arms during the six-month internal conflict. A generous amnesty will make for the smooth introduction of a multi-ethnic police force into the former conflict areas and will help reduce fear among people of all communities." (UNHCR 16 November 2001)

Macedonian authorities made concessions and finally reached deal on amnesty issue (December 2001-March 2002)

- In December 2001, the first amnesties were granted, meant to defuse ethnic mistrust and enabling the return of police to rebel-dominated territory
- In the beginning of March 2002, an amnesty deal was reached:

"Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski pardoned 11 jailed ethnic Albanian guerrillas on Wednesday, launching an amnesty seen as crucial to sustaining an August peace settlement.

The amnesty, aimed at defusing ethnic mistrust and enabling the return of police to rebel-dominated territory in coming weeks, was decreed under Western diplomatic pressure last month after weeks of nationalist obstruction.

It is to cover all rebels who are not indictable by the U.N. war crimes tribunal and voluntarily disarmed under NATO supervision by September 26, unless captured before then.

[...]

"The pardoning commission will continue to process others on the list of 88 pardoning proposals. The President will bring further pardoning decisions in the next few days." Officials said detainees would be freed after their names and cases were published in Macedonia's official gazette, expected shortly." (Reuters 5 December 2001)

More amnesties were granted soon after:

"Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski on Friday granted an amnesty to 22 jailed ethnic Albanian guerrillas, two days after pardoning a first group of 11 fighters, his office said.

[...]

On Wednesday, Trajkovski pardoned the first 11 of 88 former rebels under the terms of an amnesty proclaimed in October as part of a NATO-sponsored arms collection operation and whose criminal activities were related the conflict." (AFP 7 December 2001)

In the beginning of March 2002, an amnesty deal was reached:

"Following the pledge of the peace treaty, many political changes took place, beginning with the amnesty law for NLA members. This law was voted on and approved by the Macedonian Parliament in the late evening of March 7. About 300 prisoners and detainees held because of the armed conflict last year were released." (IFRC 4 July 2002)

Macedonian police was scheduled to return to Albanian villages, but protest arose (December 2001)

- Police was planned to be sent back to villages in the Tetovo, Kumanovo, and Skopje regions
- In some villages the return was blocked by ethnic Albanians

"The Macedonian government will send police back to 15 villages formerly controlled by ethnic Albanian rebels on Thursday, an OSCE spokesman said.

[...]

The plan provides for the deployment of police into former conflict zones in northern areas of the country and an organised return of refugees who fled their homes during more than six months of fighting.

The villages that will witness the return of police on Thursday are situated in the northwestern region of Tetovo, the area of the northern town of Kumanovo and the capital Skopje, Pasnicu said.

[...]

The plan, adopted by Macedonian authorities and worked out with the international community, was agreed after a pilot project of police redeployment in five northern villages, launched in late October.

Under the plan, the police units would include members of the country's large ethnic Albanian minority.

[...]

Residents of the villages were given fliers outlining the details of the multiethnic structure of police teams and explaining the amnesty of ethnic Albanian fighters of the National Liberation Army (NLA), the OSCE spokesman said." (AFP 11 December 2001)

In some villages the return was blocked by ethnic Albanians:

"Government efforts to restore order in north western Macedonia suffered a setback on Thursday when the inhabitants of the mainly ethnic Albanian village of Dobroste refused to allow in a police patrol.

[...]

The patrol, which was accompanied by observers from NATO and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) eventually gave up trying to enter the village.

Last minute difficulties also delayed the deployment of mixed police patrols in other Macedonian villages around the city of Tetovo.

[...]

Some of the mixed police controls went ahead without hitches on Thursday however, for example in three villages around Gostivar." (AFP 13 December 2001)

Ethnic Albanian separatists warned of further conflict (January 2002)

- The Albanian National Army, an ethnic Albanian group, warned that it was ready for further fighting
- The ANA are believed to be former members of the Albanian nationalist movement which spawned the Kosovo Liberation Army, and claims to be fighting for a so-called Greater Albania

"The Albanian National Army (ANA), a shadowy ethnic Albanian group, warned Monday that its fighters would be ready for further fighting in Macedonia in response to what it called "possible offensives" by government forces.

In a statement quoted by the Macedonian state news agency MIA, the group said that it had decided to "step up preparations for an adequate response to possible offensives by repressive Macedonian forces against Albanians".

"We are forced to defend our interests, our homes and our families," the statement continued, adding that anti-Albanian forces within the Skopje government "had used all their potential for destroying the Albanian people".

The ANA claims to be fighting for what it calls a Greater Albania and has vowed to overturn a Western-brokered peace plan which ended an ethnic Albanian uprising in Macedonia last August.

The statement comes amid the return of joint police patrols in Macedonian regions, controlled until recently by the guerrillas of the self-styled National Liberation Army (NLA).

And that operation has been supervised by NATO, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union.

[...]

In recent months, Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski has pardoned 64 of 88 former rebels under the terms of an amnesty proclaimed in October as part of a NATO-sponsored arms collection operation and peace plan which has granted wider minority rights for ethnic Albanians.

But the ANA has rejected the accord and its statement said that the peace plan was "just a stab in the back for Albanians".

[...]

The previously unknown ANA are believed to be former members of the Albanian nationalist movement which spawned the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)." (AFP 14 January 2002)

Local self-government law improved rights of ethnic Albanians (January 2002)

- The Macedonian parliament passes the local self-government law on 24 January 2002, giving Albanians more control in regions where they form the majority

“After months of political haggling, the Macedonian parliament has bowed to international opinion and passed a crucial devolution law [on 24 January 2002] to improve the rights of the Balkan republic's ethnic Albanian minority.

[...]

Known as the local self-government law, the measure forms a key part of a Western-sponsored peace accord. Unless it reached the statute books, there seemed little chance that a donors' conference would be convened to decide how much foreign aid should be allotted and how it would be distributed.

Now European Union officials say the conference may meet in early March [2002].

[...]

The devolution law covers budgeting, municipal planning, education, health care, public services, culture and welfare. Albanians sought more control over their affairs in the areas where they represent the majority. Albanian parties blocked the proceedings after deputies from Macedonian parties submitted dozens of obstructive amendments to the original draft. Many of these were aimed at a clause granting municipalities the right to merge - a step Macedonian deputies said would eventually lead to "federalisation" or "cantonisation".

[...]

The deadlock was broken after Albanian parties dropped their demand for municipalities to merge (they will be allowed to form joint administrative bodies instead) and agreed that health care funding should remain in the hands of the central authorities.

The assembly passed the bill by a two-thirds of majority, the margin now required for all measures relating to ethnic minority rights.” (IWPR 30 January 2002)

Political and humanitarian status quo as of March 2002

- Since August 2001, 15 constitutional amendments were adopted, as well as a general amnesty law
- The general security and humanitarian situation improved, stimulating a return to normalcy

“Since the signing of the Framework Agreement in August, 2001, the parliament of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has adopted 15 constitutional amendments, providing for additional minority rights in the areas of language, education as well as participation in public service. In addition, a general amnesty law for former Albanian insurgents was approved by parliament on 7 March, removing a major obstacle towards ethnic reconciliation and further reducing the threat of another humanitarian emergency.

The active mediation of the international community, including the presence of OSCE and EUMM observers and some 800 NATO troops under Operation Task Force Fox mission, has contributed to a general improvement of the security and humanitarian situation. As a result, international observers do not expect an organized armed conflict this spring and summer, but they note that pockets of disgruntled extremists could present a danger to stability. Field reports suggest that most of the population want to get back to normal conditions as soon as possible.

The deployment of Macedonian security forces is continuing slowly with minor problems, but reasonably well with the help of international monitors. Security forces have been deployed in over 50 out of 138 planned villages. Training for ethnically mixed security forces is also continuing apace. A second group of 250 recruits which includes 150 ethnic Albanians began training in February.” (UN OCHA 8 March 2002)

“While implementation of the Framework Agreement, including the redeployment of security forces and a law on amnesty, has proceeded more slowly than envisaged, the situation on the ground has improved dramatically since the summer of 2001, when the humanitarian community was assisting some 170,000 people who had fled their homes. Significant humanitarian and rehabilitation activities, not only in terms of the relief provided but also in terms of reuniting divided communities have been carried over the past six months. These activities have facilitated the return of more than 140,000 refugees and displaced persons by providing assistance to repair homes and basic infrastructure, restart schools and health services and restore basic coping mechanisms.” (UN OCHA 9 March 2002)

New rules were adopted on use of Albanian language, but major obstacles remain (June 2002)

- On 19 June 2002, parliament adopted the last laws envisioned in the peace agreement and included rules on the use of the Albanian language in all government institutions
- Issues still at stake were the use of Albanian in parliamentary debates and written communications, as well as the new passport law

“On 19 June [2002], when the parliament adopted the last package of laws envisioned in the Ohrid peace agreement of August 2001, two of the three major Macedonian-language newspapers did not cover the story. This is quite amazing, since the laws deal with a number of key issues that helped spark the ethnic Albanian insurgency in early 2001.

Perhaps most importantly, the package included new rules regulating the use of the Albanian language in all government institutions as well as in taking the census, which is slated for November 2002 (see "RFE/RL Newline," 20 June 2002). The legislature did not, however, adopt the draft law on parliamentary rules or a new passport law.

Nevertheless, Justice Minister Hixhet Mehmeti praised the parliament's work. "According to the laws, [the position of the] Albanian language is on the rise as an official language. According to the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Albanian is a language that will be used in all judicial and administrative work," Mehmeti said (see "Macedonia: Parliament Adopts Albanian-Rights Laws, Proposes Dual Passport," rferl.org, 20 June 2002).

But before all constitutional provisions come into effect, the parliament has to adopt its own new rules that regulate the use of the Albanian language in its debates as well as in the written communications of the legislature. Here, however, the compromise that is necessary to pass the measures seems elusive.

On 22 June, many dailies reported that it is likely that the parliamentary procedures will have to be adopted after the parliamentary elections slated for 15 September. According to reports in the Macedonian-language press, ethnic Albanian politicians of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PPD) told the parliamentary commission dealing with procedural questions that the draft rules are unacceptable. At present, the draft rules allow the use of Albanian only in spoken but not in written communications.

The second point at issue is the new passport law. On 21 June, the government withdrew its first draft regulation, which envisaged the issuing of two different passports for ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians. The decision came after not only President Boris Trajkovski and the opposition Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), but also some members of the ruling Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO-DPMNE) announced that they oppose the new regulation (see "RFE/RL Newline," 20, 21, 24, and 26 June 2002).

In the meantime, the government came forward with a new proposal. Unlike the first draft, it uses only the Macedonian language on the covers of all passports. Inside the passports, personal data can be in the Albanian language as well.

Both issues are complicated by the ethnic Albanian politicians' unwillingness to make more compromises and by what the Albanian-language daily "Fakti" called the ethnic Macedonian politicians' "aversion to the Albanian language." (RFE/RL 28 June 2002)

Macedonia to hold parliamentary elections on 15 September 2002, but fears exist about disruption by ethnic Albanian group

- On 15 September 2002, elections will be held for parliament
- Fears existed that a group of ethnic Albanian rebels, the Army of the Republic of Ilirida (ARISH), will disrupt the elections
- Mainstream Albanian political parties rejected the Interior Ministry allegations, while NATO stated that it had no credible information the groups existence

"Voters in Macedonia will elect new members to its multi-ethnic parliament on September 15 in line with provisions of the peace accord that ended the ethnic Albanian uprising last year, parliamentary speaker Stojan Andov said Thursday.

"I expect fair, free and democratic elections. I expect the crisis in Macedonia to end" with the elections, Andov told reporters.

The elections were decided as part of an agreement reached in May between the leaders of the four main political parties, two Macedonian and two ethnic Albanian.

On June 19, the Macedonian parliament adopted a package of electoral laws.

Macedonia will be divided in six districts, which will each choose 20 deputies to sit in the parliament, according to the new laws, which are also designed to prevent any possibility of voting fraud.

The September election is being held two months before the present legislature was due to have completed its term and is expected to be monitored by around 700 European Union observers." (AFP 4 July 2002)

Fears exist of a disruption of the elections by ethnic Albanians:

"Macedonian authorities allege that a group of ethnic Albanian rebels intends to disrupt the 15 September general elections. But as RFE/RL reports, NATO says it has no knowledge of the group or its planned activities.

Following weeks of speculation in the Macedonian news media, the Macedonian Interior Ministry yesterday said it could confirm the existence of a 200-man force of ethnic Albanians, calling itself the Army of the Republic of Ilirida (ARISH). Ilirida is the term some Albanian nationalists have used to refer to ethnic Albanian-inhabited northwestern Macedonia.

Macedonian Interior Ministry spokesman Voislav Zafirovski told reporters in Skopje yesterday that Ilirida is a part of a larger political international grouping of Albanian nationalists -- the National Front -- that he says is plotting to disrupt the current parliamentary election campaign and block implementation of the one-year-old Ohrid framework peace agreement. "The long-term goal of the National Front for the

Liberation and Unification of Albanian Territories is the creation of a Greater Albanian state in the Balkans."

The threat of a "Greater Albania" is a traditional populist scare tactic in Macedonian and Serbian politics used by nationalists in a bid to win support. Macedonia is due to hold parliamentary elections on 15 September and the ruling Macedonian nationalist party -- the VMRO-DPMNE of Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski and Interior Minister Ljube Boskovski -- is expected to lose by a ratio of at least two to one to the opposition Social Democrats of Branko Crvenkovski.

[...]

The mainstream Albanian political parties in Macedonia rejected the Interior Ministry allegations about Ilirida as "pure speculation." And NATO's spokesman in Skopje, Craig Ratcliff, issued a statement saying the alliance has no credible information about the existence of a so-called Army of Ilirida." (RFE/RL 9 August 2002)

Police force entered last ex-rebel stronghold, prompting return of displaced (July 2002)

- On 5 July 2002, Macedonia's multi-ethnic police force entered the last former rebel stronghold
- People displaced during the fighting returned to their homes together with the police patrols

"Units from Macedonia's new multi-ethnic police on Friday entered a village in the northwest of the country, the last former rebel stronghold where government forces and ethnic Albanian guerrillas clashed last year, officials said.

Government spokesman Zoran Tanevski told AFP that the police patrols have entered the village of Tanusevci, near the border with the UN-administrated Kosovo province around noon (1000 GMT) Friday.

Tanusevci is the last of 140 villages that were controlled by ethnic Albanian guerrillas during last year's conflict which brought the former Yugoslav republic to the edge of the civil war.

"The return to Tanusevci marks the full control regained by security forces on the whole of the Macedonian territory," Tanevski said, adding that no incidents were reported during the police deployment of the village.

A dozen villagers who had left their homes during the conflict, as well as the representatives of NATO and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) entered the village together with mixed patrols, Tanevski said.

A return of other residents of Tanusevci has yet to be organized, he added." (AFP 5 July 2002)

Stable situation in Macedonia, although tensions before elections existed (August 2002)

- Although the general situation is stable, tension are still being felt before the elections

"Currently the situation in Macedonia is stable, with some minor security incidents in the Tetovo area. Elections are scheduled in mid-September, monitored by OSCE with a special attention given in the former crisis regions. NATO will also provide security and monitoring of the elections in these areas. There aren't any serious security issues anticipated in the near future.

There are mixed feelings about future violence, especially with the elections coming up. In fact, two houses in a mixed village were set on fire just two days ago; its was speculated to be related to the upcoming elections." (ARC 16 August 2002)

Amnesty International concerned that impunity will threaten a lasting peace (August 2002)

- AI stated that a lack of respect for the rule of law resulted from continued impunity in country
- The ICTY in the Hague only deals with a small number of human rights abuses
- Police operate within an atmosphere of impunity while former rebel combattants were granted an amnesty
- AI believes that this situation will hinder statebuilding efforts in Macedonia

"The continued impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of abuses committed during the conflict in Macedonia will perpetuate lack of respect for the rule of law, Amnesty International said today as it released the report *Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Dark Days in Tetovo*.

Amnesty International remains concerned that the human rights abuses committed during the conflict by both sides have not been subjected to investigation and are not likely to be effectively investigated in most cases. The only exception is a very small number of cases in which the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia has declared an interest.

"The police operate in an atmosphere of impunity and there is no indication that the violations committed by state agents will be subject to any investigation, while members of the National Liberation Army (NLA) have been a granted an amnesty," the organization stated." (AI 15 August 2002, "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Impunity threatens lasting peace")

"Although the fighting has ended between the Macedonian security forces and the National Liberation Army, an ethnic Albanian armed group, the conflict has left communities riven by ethnic tensions and underlying grievances unresolved. Those responsible for human rights abuses on both sides have not been held to account. Yet previous experience has shown that a failure to deliver justice to the victims of abuses and to strengthen the protection of human rights threatens a lasting peace.

[...]

An amnesty granted for "criminal acts related to the conflict of 2001" has ensured that members of the NLA will not be held accountable for abuses of human rights. The authorities have shown no sign of investigating the activities of the security forces. The only investigations known to be in hand are being conducted by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia. It is focussing on a few of the worst war crimes alleged to have been committed both by the Macedonian authorities and the NLA but has neither the mandate nor the resources to investigate all abuses.

[...]

The organization believes that a failure to effectively redress abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law will hinder the overall process of building a state which fully respects and protects the human rights of all within its jurisdiction." (AI 15 August, "Dark days in Tetovo", pp.1-2)

Causes of displacement

Summary of phases of conflict (February-August 2001)

- The rebels first actions were in the Tetovo and Skopje areas in February 2001, and a ceasefire was reached in April 2001
- Fighting broke out again at the end of April 2001, with fighting around Skopje, Lipkovo, Kumanovo, and Aracinovo

“Inter-ethnic relations have deteriorated over the past months due to the appearance of militant insurgent groups in February 2001. Their first actions were directed to the villages near the border with Kosovo, in the Tetovo and Skopje areas, and on the Skopska Crna Gora and Shar Planina mountains. The Government's immediate response was to secure the political and military isolation of the ethnic Albanian insurgent. After the extremists were driven out from their positions in the mountains, a ceasefire was announced after which most of the 20,000 refugees returned to their homes.

The ceasefire provided space necessary for the political dialogue on the long-term solution of the crisis. [...]

Following the ceasefire in April 2001, the situation deteriorated again on April 28th when eight soldiers were massacred in a terrorist ambush near the village of Vejce, close to the Kosovo border in the Tetovo area. In a reaction to the massacre, attacks occurred on Albanian properties at the beginning of May. Other nationalities were also victims of these revenge attacks. The turmoil was most intense in Bitola on May 1st and 2nd, and some incidents have been reported in Skopje, Veles and other towns. Afterwards, the insurgents in the so-called National Liberation Army (NLA) made attacks on several villages in Lipkovo Municipality, Kumanovo area. Around 15,000 people were caught in skirmishes, after many unsuccessful appeals from the security forces for them to evacuate the area. The latest NLA attempt to extend the area of conflict was in the village of Aracinovo, near Skopje (10 km from the centre of the city), was stopped by Macedonian security forces action after 2 weeks siege of the village.” (ACT 5 July 2001)

For a detailed account of the fighting from January-May 2001, please see:

AFP, 8 May 2001, "Timetable of troubles in Macedonia"

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/8dedd6aaeab5c1a6c1256a4700420044?OpenDocument>

Fighting in the Tetovo region caused displacement, and trapped thousands of civilians inside towns (February-March 2001)

- Fighting between the ethnic Albanian rebels and government forces in the Tetovo region caused the displacement of thousands and led to the isolation of civilians trapped in villages

“In late February, violence flared in Albanian-inhabited villages in northern Macedonia close to the border with Kosovo. In mid March, the violence spread to Macedonia's second largest city, Tetovo. The rebels claimed to be defending themselves against Macedonian security forces, i.e. their own government, and to be fighting for Albanian national rights in Macedonia. The coalition government in Skopje promptly raised the alarm, blaming Kosovo Albanian elements for exporting rebellion to Macedonia, and calling for the NATO-led forces in Kosovo (KFOR) to seal the border. The rebels claimed they were local Albanians, numbering 2,000 and recruiting dozens of volunteers from the surrounding area every day.” (ICG 5 April 2001)

“The recent crisis in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia led to the displacement of thousands of civilians and the isolation of an indeterminate number of others, who were trapped in remote villages around Tetovo and whose needs remained unknown for some time.” (ICRC 11 April 2001)

Concern for family was for some a reason not to flee, after alleged provocations by security forces and police (March-April 2001)

- Security forces and police allegedly provoked and mistreated the local population in their search for weapons
- The arrests and ill-treatment caused fear among the population, and some stated that concern for their family was the reason they had not fled

“The mayor of Xhepqishte, Vebi Ismaili, told of provocations by the security forces in the municipality and of police brutality in the village of Germa, where the forces - while they were searching for weapons - acted in a threatening manner and destroyed furniture and property in a number of houses.

[...]

In the village of Poroj, not far from Selce, we were told that Macedonian security forces entered the village one or two times every day. They were often masked carrying knives and they provoked the Albanians by playing Serbian music from the loudspeakers of the police vehicles. On 6 April Naser Veliu (42), Xhelal Halili (44) and more than 30 other men from Poroj (two from Germa) were arbitrarily arrested by the police. Some were arrested on their way to work, others in their homes. All were thrown into a military truck, and subjected to beating, kicking and verbal abuse for several hours. "We were beaten by canes, batons and other weapons, and one of the arrested was sexually abused," said Naser Veliu. The arrested men were taken to the police station in Tetovo where the ill-treatment continued. Several of the victims needed medical attention afterwards. Most were released without charges.

The incidents in Poroj appears to have been an act of vengeance on the part of the police after the armed clashes in the area in March, or possibly an attempt to frighten and subdue the population. The arrests and ill-treatment have caused fear among civilians, who experience strong feelings of humiliation. Several people stated concern for their family as the reason they had not joined "those in the mountains." (IHF 8 June 2001)

Renewed fighting in Kumanovo region displaced civilians, while hundreds were evacuated (April-May 2001)

- Frustrated with the slow pace of the political process and with the police conduct against Albanians, the rebels took up arms again in May 2001
- The fighting caused the displacement of civilians, while others were evacuated

“Tensions between the NLA and the authorities have been escalating over the past week, culminating with Albanian fighters in the Kumanovo area proclaiming an autonomous territory.

At the weekend, Albanian fighters killed eight Macedonian troops close to the border with Kosovo, in the worst outbreak of violence since the battles around Tetovo in March.

[...]

The NLA says its renewed activity is linked to their frustration with the slow pace of talks on improvements of Albanian rights. The government has so far rejected the community's demands for their status in the constitution to be elevated from minority to nation.

They claim to have been further angered by evidence that the police force has allegedly been harassing innocent Albanians, in operations against NLA targets.” (IWPR 3 May 2001)

Kumanovo region (Matejce, Slupcane)

"Ethnic Albanian guerrillas took the battle to the Macedonian government on Sunday [27 May 2001], capturing part of a village south of their main strongholds despite an ongoing security forces offensive.

Civilians continued to flee the area as police units sent reinforcements to Matejce, just south of the rebels' village strongholds in Lipkovo and Slupcane, where the guerrillas were threatening to over-run a police station.

[...]

A group of some 40 ethnic Albanian villagers said they had fled Matejce during the shooting, with one of them saying that a part of the village was under the control of ethnic Albanian guerrillas of the National Liberation Army (NLA).

[...]

He added that 1,358 people have been evacuated overnight from two hamlets south of Matejce -- Nikustak and Vistica -- which have so far been spared from clashes.

It was not clear how many civilians remained in Slupcane, which has a peacetime population of around 4,000 ethnic Albanians.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of civilians had remained in the village since early May, hiding from fighting in the cellars of their houses.

Slupcane has been the target of repeated government bombardments since May 3, when the NLA rebels seized the village in the name of their self-declared crusade for increased rights for Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority.” (AFP 27 May 2001)

Thousands of IDPs and local villagers refused to leave Lipkovo during cease-fire (May 2001)

- The government appealed to IDPs and local villagers to leave villages during cease-fire, but many stayed behind
- Reasons for not leaving were mainly solidarity, pressure from armed elements, as well as fear for the Macedonian police and army

"The flight of ethnic Albanian villagers from a rebel enclave in Macedonia dried up on Friday, disappointing the government after it appealed to civilians to leave the conflict zone.

Government troops are maintaining a cease-fire after bombarding rebel-held areas for two weeks, and authorities have warned villagers to use the opportunity to get out in safety before the army takes 'decisive action' against the guerrillas.

[...]

An estimated 1,500 villagers quit the area on Thursday, but most appeared to be from villages not actually occupied by guerrillas of the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA).

There may still be as many as 3,000 villagers in Slupcane, a rebel stronghold which has suffered heavy bombardment by the Macedonian army, and an unknown number in Vakcince, the other main target of shelling.

The larger village of Lipkovo, which is also in NLA hands, is believed to be harboring thousands of displaced people who have abandoned their homes closer to the firing line.

'We have reports that villagers from Slupcane and two other villages have gone into Lipkovo, so the village population has been doubled,' the police official said. 'It wouldn't surprise me if some of them are living in the open.' (Reuters 18 May 2001)

"The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, appeals to the citizens of Lipkovo to leave the village due to their personal safety. The appeal says that the Ministry along with the international community will organize transport for the citizens of Lipkovo to any destination in Macedonia they choose. The evacuation of the civil population with busses from Lipkovo through Orizare and Opae to the gathering place - football stadium in Kumanovo will supervised by the International Red Cross." (GFYROM 30 May 2001)

"Apart from the people who agreed to be evacuated [by the ICRC], many of the villagers indicated that they were still not willing to leave their shelters. As previously stated, the reasons are multifaceted and cannot be taken in exclusion - either they express a reluctance to come into contact with the Macedonian authorities, or indicate a strong wish to stay together in a spirit of solidarity." (ICRC 18 May 2001, 'ICRC Update No.7')

"R Francois Steamm, the head of the ICRC in Skopje, said the organization estimates that there are roughly 10,000 ethnic Albanians living in the villages that are being targeted by the Macedonian army, Reuters reported. Steamm said the people remain there -- despite calls for them to leave for their own safety -- for several reasons. He said 'we cannot exclude [that] there is some pressure by the armed men, also some others are staying in solidarity, and a certain number are not leaving because they do not feel like encountering the Macedonian army.' Steamm added that 'there's every reason for concern over the state of refugees in these villages.' He said living in a cellar for a long period of time takes a 'physical and psychological' toll." (RFE/RL 23 May 2001)

"More than 10,000 ethnic Albanian villagers were refusing Wednesday to leave the rebel-held Macedonian village of Lipkovo, fearing they would be beaten by police, the local mayor told AFP.

Husamedin Halili said that at least 12,000 civilians were crowded into Lipkovo after villagers fled surrounding hamlets, and that 20,000 were trapped in the area, which has been the scene of fierce fighting for the past month." (AFP 30 May 2001)

Human rights violations in villages around Kumanovo were a cause of displacement (May 2001)

- Shelling and violent conduct by the army and the police forced civilians to leave their homes

"After the killing of 8 soldiers by the NLA on 28th April and of another two on 3rd May as well as the declaration of a 'liberated zone' around Kumanovo by the NLA, the Macedonian army and police started to resume their military actions against the NLA. The army and police forces started to shell, interrupted by some short ceasefires, around a dozen of villages in the northwest of Kumanovo, with a bigger number of villages, that can be only reached after crossing police checkpoints that can refuse the passage.

At the humanitarian relief organisation 'El Hilal' we spoke to a number of internal displaced persons (IDPs). One man came from the village Orizaje, being in the middle of the fighting zone, and he told us that one old man was shelled with 7 grenades when he went out of the house to do some field work. He also told us that the cemetery of the village was hit by 10 grenades, and that nearly all the houses had been destroyed.

About another village, Opae, being outside of the fighting zone by that time, we were informed by residents, that the police had used violent means in forcing them to leave the village. 'Both army and police entered the village. They came also to our basement, where 45 people had gathered, and made us leave by beating and pointing with guns at us. Some were beaten, when they had been on the street already. They tore apart the Koran, put it on the ground, and made us walk on it. They broke every window, took all paintings from the wall and then looted everything they could.' According to these reports also the mosque has been destroyed by the army. It struck them that only Albanian property was destroyed in this operation, but no Macedonian one.

We spoke also to the seven members of the Hamidi family one day after they had been evacuated from the village of Runica, 4 kilometers north of Slupcane, in connection with a military operation of the Macedonian army in this village. According to them, all 7 family members, including 4 young women, had been heavily beaten on the back and the breast. Three of them showed us the traces of the beatings. The young man and one of the women additionally had head wounds from strokes with a kalashnikov. Reportedly the young man was covered with gasoline and threatened to be burnt, which was prevented by his mother and his sisters. The old father, also having been severely beaten so that his breast was swollen, was in a very bad condition and urgently needed to be transferred to a hospital, which was complicated by the fact that the family, as well as the relatives were too afraid to pass through the police checkpoints, who control everybody who is coming in and out of this region. According to the report of the family masked army members, numbering around 150, entered the ten house hamlet at around 4 a.m. in the morning of May, 21st. They said that the village at this time was with the exception of them empty, as all other villagers had left already in the night. They were forced to leave their house, and later had to watch the village burning. According to them the hamlet was completely destroyed. Only at 4 p.m. were they brought by a helicopter to the police station in Kumanovo, from where they were brought to relatives close to Kumanovo." (IHF 8 June 2001)

Fighting in Aracinovo lead to displacement of thousands, despite the conclusion of a cease-fire (June 2001)

- Civilians, many of whom were already displaced, fled Aracinovo out of fear for possible fighting
- Two weeks later, fighting around Aracinovo caused the village to be entirely abandoned, displacing more than 10,000 people

"Following the arrival of ethnic Albanian armed groups in Aracinovo, several thousands of people are reported to have left Aracinovo and nearby villages - either to Kosovo, where they are being cared for by the UNHCR, or within Macedonia. It is important to underline that these people, many of whom are already displaced from the Kumanovo region, decided to leave in anticipation of a possible outbreak of fighting in and around the village." (ICRC 15 June 2001)

"The cease fire brokered on Sunday, 24 th of June, prevented an escalation of military conflict (at least for a short time and limited to the area of Skopje), but did not prevent an escalation of the humanitarian crisis mainly related to the large-scale movement and displacement of population. The village of Aracinovo (with more than 10,000 inhabitants) was entirely abandoned, and heavy fights around the village triggered another large wave of people on move." (ACT 5 July 2001)

Renewed violence near Tetovo resulted in displacement of hundreds (November 2001)

- UNHCR warned of further displacement unless progress was made in implementing the peace agreement
- Renewed violence in the Tetovo region caused the displacement of hundreds

- The Macedonian president held the ANA, the New Liberation Army of Albanians, responsible for new attacks

“The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees today warned of further population displacement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) unless significant progress was urgently made in implementing the 13 August peace agreement.

"Macedonia is heading dangerously close to a turning point," High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers said in New York. "There must be no further delays in the political peace process, particularly on the amnesty issue, if the country is to avert further displacement of its people."

Lubbers, in UN Headquarters in New York to discuss mainly the Afghanistan issue, expressed grave concern over the outburst of violence last weekend near the FYROM town of Tetovo which prompted hundreds of villagers to flee their homes.

[...]

Tensions rose over the weekend in northern Macedonia when government forces and former ethnic Albanian rebels clashed in the village of Trebos, near Tetovo, leaving three policemen dead. Seven Albanians were arrested. Many shops and schools remain closed in Tetovo. Fearing further violence, about 1,000 villagers reportedly fled the village of Ljuboten, north of Skopje, where intense security operations took place just before the August peace agreement.

The situation remains tense around the village of Semsovo in the Tetovo region, with state forces stationed in nearby villages. Most of the women and children have left the village, afraid of sporadic gunfire which only ceased on Wednesday with the arrival of European monitors who set up an overnight presence in the village." (UNHCR 15 November 2001)

The Macedonian president held a new rebel group responsible for new attacks:

"The president named a formation known as the ANA as one group responsible for new attacks.

"We are also seeing the so-called ANA, the New Liberation Army of Albanians -- they are standing behind the new terrorist activities," Trajkovski said, speaking in English.

"Even after the weapons were collected and the terrorists disbanded, terrorist groups still exist" he said." (AFP 19 November 2001)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

National figures

IDP figure is hard to estimate and varies greatly through time (September 2001)

- Frequent movement of IDPs to and from their homes alters the IDP number greatly
- Another complicating factor were returning refugees from Kosovo who did not return to their home villages

“Because of the frequent movement of displaced persons to and from their homes during the course of the fighting, the number displaced at any one time could vary greatly. There were no recorded internally displaced persons in Macedonia at the beginning of the year.

[...]

Many people have been displaced for short periods of time, frequently returning to their homes after clashes have subsided. [...] Further complicating the count of internal displacement was the occurrence of large numbers of people fleeing to Kosovo-about 76,000, many of whom (an estimated 19,000) returned to Macedonia, but not always to their original homes (mostly to Skopje).” (USCR September 2001)

Total IDP number as of August 2002

- The official IDP number as of August 2002 was 7,421 persons
- Many estimated the real number of IDPs to be around 10,000, due to the fact that many have not returned yet while not counted as displaced any more

The American Red Cross reported:

“The total number of IDPs in Macedonia currently is 7,421 persons. However this number may slightly increase in the next few weeks because there are still IDPs who are in the process of receiving a registration card.

Many estimate the real number of IDPs to be around 10,000. This is due to the fact that many have not returned to areas out of fear for their safety; yet the international community has given the ‘go ahead’ and no longer considers these people to be internally displaced.

Registration of IDPs is return related:

Most of the IDPs cannot return to their homes because:

1. the houses themselves are very badly damaged or completely destroyed (category III and IV on the UNHCR scale).
2. they are not satisfied with the security situation in the regions where they are from, and are afraid to go back.

These two criterias were also recognized by the Macedonian Government, MRC and other NGOs, so the re-registration process was based on them (only persons meeting these terms were re-registered as IDPs).” (ARC 16 August 2002)

Development of total IDP number from May 2001 till July 2002

- Following are IDP numbers at several moments during the conflict, as reported by several agencies, such as WFP, UNMIK, RFE/RL, UNHCR, ICRC, ACT, IFRC, and the Government of Germany

July 2002

“MRC/ICRC has just completed new re-registration of all IDP's and came out with figure of around 6,500 IDP's (1,500 in collective centers and the rest in private accommodation - host families.” (MCIC 12 August 2002)

“According to information provided by the Skopje bureau of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 24 July, there are still 5,762 internally displaced persons in Macedonia, MIA news agency reported. About 4,000 persons are accommodated with families, while the rest live in hotels or student dormitories.” (RFE/RL 26 July 2002)

March 2001

“16,401 internally displaced, down from 70,000 in August and September of last year, out of which 56 percent are ethnic Albanian, 34 percent ethnic Macedonian and 10 percent other minorities.” (UN OCHA 8 March 2002)

December 2001

“The Macedonian Red Cross reported that as of 12 December, 20,200 IDPs were registered for assistance; of these, the great majority are staying with host families and approximately 3,000 are accommodated in 17 collective centres.” (WFP 28 December 2001)

“The Macedonian Red Cross, which is conducting a registration exercise, estimates the number of IDPs to be 20,000, including 2,500 residing in collective centres.” (WFP 14 December 2001)

October

“The Macedonian Red Cross reports that 53,800 people are internally displaced with 50,250 staying in host family accommodations and 3,550 in collective centres. The increase in the above numbers is due to the agency's re-registration of their beneficiaries, and does not reflect further displacement.” (UNMIK 18 October 2001)

“As of 1 October, 41,200 people were still reported to be displaced, according to the Macedonian Red Cross - a significant drop from the 70,000 previously reported.” (WFP 5 October 2001)

September

“The Macedonian Red Cross estimates the number of IDPs in FYRoM at 74,200. The registration of IDPs by the Red Cross Movement has been suspended in order to allow verification of the registered caseload.” (WFP 21 September 2001)

“Officials of the Macedonian Red Cross said in Skopje on 5 September that the number of internally displaced persons now stands at 75,878, dpa reported. Some 47,148 are from the Tetovo region, 16,266 from Kumanovo, 8,278 from Skopje and Aracinovo, and 4,186 from Skopska Crna Gora.” (RFE/RL 6 September 2001)

August

“The Macedonian Red Cross said that since the conflict in FYROM started in February, it had registered 70,728 internally displaced persons - 66,871 in host families and 3,857 in collective centres.” (UNHCR 28 August 2001)

“As of 22 August, the number of IDPs stood at some 60,000.” (WFP 24 August 2001)

“Some 5,000 persons displaced as a result of the fighting during last week have been registered by the Macedonian Red Cross, making the total number of displaced persons within the country 53,000.” (UNHCR 14 August 2001)

“As of 3 August, the Macedonian Red Cross reported the registration of 47,420 IDPs that are registered within various Red Cross branches around the country. The large majority is accommodated with host families, while some 2,950 persons are lodged in 14 collective centres.” (WFP 10 August 2001)

“Currently in Macedonia there are 47,400 registered internally displaced people, most of them come from the northwest part of the country.” (IFRC 6 August 2001)

July

“As of 20 July, the Macedonian Red Cross (MRC) reported the registration of 31,673 IDPs as a result of the conflict that started in February. Approximately 1,400 persons are lodged in five collective centres, while the large majority is accommodated with host families.” (WFP 27 July 2001)

“While the Government supported by international community is searching for a durable political solution, some 50,000 ethnic Albanians and Macedonians remain displaced within Macedonia, seeking shelter with relatives or friends as well as in the recently established collective centers in the area of the capital Skopje. [...]

Additionally, there are IDP’s still not registered and also around 15,000 people in great needs because they are trapped in the villages.” (ACT 5 July 2001)

June

“Ruud Lubbers, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, estimated that as of 20 June 2001 circa 80,000 people had had to leave their homes in Macedonia due to the conflict. According to UNHCR figures some 48,000 of these people have fled to Kosovo.” (Government of Germany 22 June 2001)

May

“The Macedonian Red Cross has registered almost 6,000 people displaced by the latest clashes between government forces and ethnic Albanian fighters. With those still homeless from the clashes in March and April, the total of registered displaced people countrywide is 8,170. Most of the displaced have been taken in by host families.” (IFRC 25 May 2001)

The crisis showed a peak of 84,669 IDPs in August 2001; table with total IDP numbers by month (March-November 2001)

- In the first phase of the conflict some 22,627 people were displaced (March 2001), who returned when fighting stopped
- The registration process by the MRC stopped at the beginning of September 2001
- In November 2001, a re-registration process was conducted which put the IDP number at 25,000

"With the first phase of armed activities in Skopska Crna Gora region, north of the capital, the number of registered IDPs from the villages affected was **22 627** people in the month of **March [2001]**. Most of the IDPs fled towards two main destinations Skopje region and Kosovo, where they change their status to a refugee.

The situation calmed down during **April** resulting with **2 169** IDPs registered by the MRC. Situation got worse beginning of May when 14 719 people have been registered. As the events developed to more serious outbreak of violence, so was the numbers of IDPs rising. In order to be more illustrative here is a table breakdown of registered people March till October:

Month	No of registered
March 2001	22 627
April 2001	2 169
May 2001	14 719
June 2001	35 497
July 2001	54 683
August 2001	84 669
September 2001	-29 285 (= 54 000)
October 2001	3 272 (returnees from Kosovo); 49 000 registered

Please note that the IDPs registered in March were assisted and later went home. The numbers as of April are cumulative. One should also mention that registration process stopped beginning of September. Security situation in some of the crisis areas improved and many IDPs have return back. Therefore reduced number of 54 000 in September. [...]

October distribution figures revealed total of 49 271 IDPs, out of which 3 398 accommodated in collective centers. Beginning of November throughout the whole month a re-registration process was conducted in order to obtain updated figures on the actual state. There were around 25 000 IDPs registered in November." (E-mail from IFRC Macedonia to NRC Geneva 7 December 2001)

Geographical distribution

Number and locations of IDPs (August 2002)

- In August 2002, 7,421 people were still internally displaced
- A total of 5,447 persons were sheltered with host families, while 1,974 were accommodated in collective centres

15.08.2002		IFRC/ICRC/MRC	
IDP in HF	PERSONS	Family	Host Family
Municipality			
Bitola	22	5	5
Vinica	6	3	3
Gostivar	13	3	3
Veles	208	21	20

Kavadarci	2	1	1
Kicevo	1	1	1
Kocani	7	3	3
K.Palanka	0	0	0
Kumanovo	2,756	608	603
Ohrid	2	1	1
Prilep	0	0	0
Radovis	3	1	1
Resen	7	2	2
Kratovo	2	1	1
Struga	3	1	1
Strumica	0	0	0
Tetovo	849	176	178
Gevgelija	0	0	0
Skopje	1,566	238	238
Sub - total	5,447	1065	1061

IDPs in Collective Centres

SK Region	Persons	Family	KU Region	Persons	Family	
Ranka Milanovic	95		Hotel Kristal	155		
T.Stefanovski -Senic	138		Hotel Kuba	167		
Partenije Zografski	116		Internat	61		
CC Zdravko Cvetkovski	131		Dom za stari	18		
Dimitar Vlahov	42					
Cicino Selo	115					
Stiv Naumov	461					
Megashi	22			401	0	
Hotel Pelagonija	282					
Olimpisko selo	136					
25 Maj	34					
Gerontoloski	1					
	1,573	0		Sub Total		1,974
Total of IDP population with RC cards				7,421		

(IFRC 15 August 2002)

Areas of origin of remaining IDPs (August 2002)

"most of the IDP's population are from Kumanovo region, Tetovo region and Skopska Crna Gora." (IFRC 15 August 2002)

"Most of the IDPs are from villages near the city of Tetovo, while the rest are from Aracinovo (village near Skopje) and Lipkovo area (community with few villages near Kumanovo)." (ARC 16 August 2002)

Number and locations of IDPs (May-July 2002)

- In July 2002, only 6,500 IDPs remained, 1,500 of whom stayed in collective centers
- In May 2002, 16,351 people were still internally displaced
- A total of 13,837 persons were sheltered with host families, while 2,514 were accommodated in collective centres

July 2002

“MRC/ICRC has just completed new re-registration of all IDP's and came out with figure of around 6,500 IDP's (1,500 in collective centers and the rest in private accommodation - host families.” (MCIC 12 August 2002)

May 2002

Total May 14th 2002			
Municipality	Persons	Family	Host Family
Berovo	0	0	0
Bitola	109	33	33
Veles	1	1	1
Vinica	10	4	4
Gevgelija	33	10	10
Gostivar	305	78	69
Debar	346	54	54
Kavadarci	14	5	5
Kicevo	21	6	5
Kocani	18	7	7
Kratovo	2	2	2
K.Palanka	1	1	1
Krusevo	6	3	3
Kumanovo	4,281	878	823
Ohrid	119	35	26
Prilep	171	44	34
Radovis	3	1	1
Resen	17	4	3
Sv.Nikole	22	6	6
Struga	34	9	8
Strumica	43	16	14
Tetovo	3,547	1,180	1,085
Skopje	4,734	942	844
Sub - Total	13,837	3,319	3,038

Note

Some of the IDPs from Skopje & Kumanovo area are accommodated in Collective centres as follows: (This number is part of the total number of registered IDPs)

CC Ranka Milanovic	105	Hotel Kristal	160
CC Tome Stefanovski – Senic	163	Hotel Kuba	167
CC Partenije Zografski	122	Dolno Konjare	53
CC Zdravko Cvetkovski	138	Dom za stari	19

CC Dimitar Vlahov	47	Dojran Holiday camp	0
CC Cicino Selo	154	Crven krst Dojran	65
CC Stiv Naumov	673	Negorci	30
Children embassy Megashi	22	Polin Dojran	0
Hotel Pelagonija	352		
Olimpisko selo	186		
25 Maj	58		
1 Maj	0		
Total No of IDPs in CC	2,020		494
Total No of IDPs in CC			2,514
Total No of IDPs in Host Families			13,837
Total No of IDPs			16,351

(MRC 14 May 2002)

In May 2002, a de-registration exercise for IDPs was carried out

“The process of de-registration, conducted by the MRC, is ongoing, and decreasing of IDP number is expected. Only persons with damaged houses cat.3&4 will be eligible for IDP status.” (Aidmacedonia 9 May 2002)

“Due to this, already two collective centres in Dojran were closed and only CCs in Negorski Banji, Gevgelija and MRC camp in Dojran are left open.” (Aidmacedonia 4 April 2002)

Number and locations of IDPs (January 2002)

- In January 2002, 13,432 IDPs were hosted in 2765 host families, and 2,871 IDPs were sheltered in 18 collective centers
- The grand total of assisted persons was 21,104 IDPs

IFRC/ICRC MRC

IDP in HF	Persons	Family	Children*	Host Family**
Municipality	Dec. 01			
Berovo	0	0	0	0
Bitola	99	31	3	30
B.Makedonski	60	20	2	19
Valandovo	0	0	0	0
Veles	2	2	0	2
Vinica	10	4	1	4
Gevgelija	1	1	0	1
Gostivar	363	87	16	70
D.Hisar	0	0	0	0
Debar	343	55	22	50
Delcevo	0	0	0	0
Kavadarci	7	3	0	3

Kicevo	14	4	1	4
Kocani	18	7	1	7
Kratovo	0	0	0	0
K.Palanka	1	1	0	1
Krusevo	6	3	0	3
Kumanovo	4,589	938	166	820
Negotino	0	0	0	0
Ohrid	122	36	3	27
Prilep	162	41	1	32
Probistip	0	0	0	0
Radovis	3	1	1	1
Resen	19	5	2	4
Sv.Nikole	26	7	4	7
Struga	41	11	3	10
Strumica	52	18	3	15
Tetovo	3,525	1139	82	999
Stip	0	0	0	0
Skopje	3,969	763	159	656
Sub - Total	13,432	3177	470	2765

IDP in Collective centres

	Persons	Family	Children*
CC Ranka Milanovic	107	34	3
CC T.Stefanovski – Senic	150	46	1
CC Partenije Zografski	120	36	4
CC Zdravko Cvetkovski	135	43	2
CC Dimitar Vlahov	48	14	2
CC Cicino Selo	151	40	11
CC Stiv Naumov	710	204	15
Megashi	22	6	4
Hotel Pelagonija	517	154	8
Olimpisko selo	304	86	8
25 Maj	57	17	4
Hotel Kristal	160	57	2
Hotel Kuba	158	52	7
Dolno Konjare	62	26	0
Dom za stari	21	13	1
Makedonka Dojran	29	13	1
Negorci	34	12	2
Polin Dojran	86	22	1
Sub - Total	2,871		

Total of IDP population with RC cards	16,303
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Micro/series displaced NOTE 3 months programme Jan/March 2002	
Municipality	Persons
Tetovo	4,378
Skopje	423
Sub – Total	4,801

Grand total of assisted persons	21,104
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* Children under 2 years

** Number of host family

(E-mail from the IFRC Information Centre for Refugees to NRC Geneva 17 January 2002)

Most of the IDPs are housed with host families, while a minority is sheltered in collective centers (October 2001)

- IDPs were accommodated in collective centers, the first being opened in July 2001 with a total of 21 in August 2001
- IDPs were also accommodated in host families, with a peak of 68,812 in September 2001

"Accommodation in collective centers

As needs rose to accommodate huge numbers of displaced people, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare identified possible institutions within the country. Seeing that most of the IDPs were from the north west and north east part of the country, initial priority was given to use all available facilities in Skopje and its surroundings. Therefore most of the 21 collective centers as there were operative during the peak were in Skopje region. However, Red Cross summer resorts and other suitable institutions around the country offered accommodation for the displaced.

The first collective center was opened in July 2001 when some 1 298 people found shelter in the beginning of the month, rising to 2 946 at the end of the month. End of August there were 3 857 persons accommodated in 21 collective centers, while similar is the number of 3398 reported for October in 19 collective centers.

Accommodation in host families

IDPs were/are also accommodated in host families. When numbers of the displaced were highest during the month of August, some 60 662 IDPs were residing with host-families, rising to 68 812 beginning of September, and some 50 250 beginning of October." (E mail from IFRC Macedonia to NRC Geneva 7 December 2001)

“High majority of IDPs are settled in with host families (in most cases with relatives). This is also the case with IDP's in Macedonia (ethnic Macedonians from affected areas moved to their relatives in Skopje, Kumanovo and other towns in the South-East of the country).” (USCR September 2001)

Displaced fleeing violence in Tetovo fled mainly to local villages or to Skopje (July 2001)

- Fighting around Tetovo displaced thousands, who mainly fled to family in Skopje, or to villages in the region of Tetovo

“They are among 350 inhabitants of the village of Lesok who have fled and taken refuge in Zilce, following intense fighting over the past week near the flashpoint northwest town of Tetovo between ethnic Albanian guerrillas and government forces.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says 8,000 Macedonian Slav people have fled their villages overall, fearing for their lives as ethnic Albanian rebels fight for what they say are minority rights.

Most took refuge with their families in the capital Skopje, while others went to villages around Tetovo, the biggest Albanian town in Macedonia.” (AFP 27 July 2001)

Fighting around Aracinovo displaced thousands (June 2001)

- Fighting around Aracinovo displaced more than 10,000 people

“Following the arrival of ethnic Albanian armed groups in Aracinovo, several thousands of people are reported to have left Aracinovo and nearby villages. [...] The Macedonian Red Cross branches of Sindjelic, Ilinden and Momin Potok in Skopje city has registered around 2100 people who left Aracinovo and the surroundings over the last three days.” (ICRC 15 June 2001)

“The cease fire brokered on Sunday, 24th of June, prevented an escalation of military conflict (at least for a short time and limited to the area of Skopje), but did not prevent an escalation of the humanitarian crisis mainly related to the large-scale movement and displacement of population. The village of Aracinovo (with more than 10,000 inhabitants) was entirely abandoned, and heavy fights around the village triggered another large wave of people on move.” (ACT 5 July 2001)

Ethnic violence around the city of Tetovo created some 20,000 IDPs (March 2001)

- Fighting in the Skopska Crna Gora and Tetovo regions caused the displacement of some 20,000 people, fleeing mainly to Skopje

“Following the recent violent incidents in Macedonia near the border with Yugoslavia, several hundred inhabitants of Albanian origin have fled the villages of Tanusevci, Malina Mala, Gosince and Brest to seek refuge in safer areas of Macedonia or in neighbouring Kosovo.

About 500 of them have been taken in by relatives in various places between Skopje et Kumanovo, and especially in the village of Aracinovo, where they are experiencing considerable hardship.” (ICRC 9 March 2001)

“The ICRC and the Macedonian Red Cross registered around 20,000 internally displaced people from the Skopska Crna Gora (north of Skopje) and Tetovo areas in the northern part of the country. Approximately 14,000 of them were registered in Skopje, and the rest in other parts of the country.” (ICRC 11 April 2001)

“Around 1300 families in FYROM have taken the displaced people into their homes.” (ICRC 30 March 2001)

Disaggregated figures

In March 2002, some 30 percent of the IDP population was ethnic Macedonian

“16,401 internally displaced, down from 70,000 in August and September of last year, out of which 56 percent are ethnic Albanian, 34 percent ethnic Macedonian and 10 percent other minorities.” (UN OCHA 8 March 2002)

Majority of displaced are women, children and elderly people, while over half of the displaced were ethnic Macedonian (March-September 2001)

- The IDPs are mainly women, children and elderly
- In September 2001, out of the 70,000 IDPs some 60 percent were ethnic Macedonians

“The displaced are mainly women, children and elderly people who left their villages in haste for fear of the fighting, while the menfolk stayed behind to watch over their homes and livestock.” (ICRC 9 March 2001)

“The Macedonian Red Cross has registered at least 70,000 people displaced within the country, 60 percent of whom are ethnic Macedonians.” (UNHCR 25 September 2001)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Displaced mainly fled to host families (mostly relatives), but are also sheltered in collective centers (March-September 2001)

- The majority of IDPs are sheltered with host families, while a minority is sheltered in collective centers
- Poor IDPs left villages in a poor condition, while town-dwellers mainly left with vehicles and personal belongings
- Some IDPs returned to the city during the day for work, and went back to the host families in the evening

“High majority of IDPs are settled in with host families (in most cases with relatives). This is also the case with IDP’s in Macedonia (ethnic Macedonians from affected areas moved to their relatives in Skopje, Kumanovo and other towns in the South-East of the country). [...]

Only a small number of people (around 800), mostly from Aracinovo, are settled in five collective centres in Skopje.” (ACT 5 July 2001)

“By mid July, collective centers had been established in eight locations to accommodate displaced people-six in the Skopje area and two in Kumanovo. Most, however, found shelter with relatives and friends.” (USCR September 2001)

“The conditions of the displaced vary from poor people fleeing villages in a rather poor condition to town-dwellers who were mainly able to leave with vehicles and personal belongings. Reports from displaced from Tetovo suggest that some people are returning to the city during the day to work and returning in the evening to their host families.” (ICRC 24 March 2001)

Displacement occurred according to ethnic patterns (July 2001)

- In July 2001, ethnic Albanians were leaving Skopje while Macedonians left Aracinovo and Tetovo, showing a process of ethnic homogenisation
- UNHCR expressed concern about the ethnic separation, posing potential difficulties for return

“As a consequence of these incidents and because of the towering distrust between Macedonians and Albanians, there is an emerging process of ethnic homogenisation: Albanians are leaving Skopje, Macedonians are leaving Tetovo. Those Macedonians who decided to stay in Tetovo are threatening to establish so-called "self-defence committees".” (PC 11 July 2001)

“UNHCR is deeply disturbed by reports that Macedonian Slavs are fleeing ethnic Albanian areas of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a development that recalls some of the darkest days of the past decade in the Balkans.

Eric Morris, UNHCR's special envoy for the region, said the refugee agency has been concerned about the possible separation of ethnic populations in FYROM since the beginning of the conflict earlier this year.

'Our fear has been that one ethnic community would go in one direction, toward the state security forces, and the other community would go the other direction, in search of security on the other side,' said Morris, who has recently visited several villages in the affected areas of northern FYROM. 'This is now happening in some places. It was not my feeling that 'ethnic cleansing' was the intent of the conflict, but if there's going to be a separation of the population, the consequences could be the same. It can spiral out of control. And if a community believes it was forcibly expelled, enormous barriers will be created for any eventual return.'

Morris, who was at UNHCR's Geneva headquarters on Tuesday, said he was particularly disturbed by the recent departure of Macedonian Slavs from the towns of Aracinovo, northeast of Skopje, and from Lesok, north of Tetovo. He recently visited both towns." (UNHCR 24 July 2001)

Cease-fires were secured to evacuate trapped villagers (May 2001)

- ICRC secured cease-fires to evacuate villagers
- Most people preferred to stay out of solidarity, fear, or were forced by the armed groups

"The ICRC was able to secure three ceasefires from both sides in the conflict in order to reach the affected villages, namely Slupcane and Vaksince, where it arranged for the evacuation of vulnerable persons and delivered much-needed medical supplies.

It will continue to try to gain access to these villages to offer, in its role as neutral intermediary, the opportunity for people to leave if they wish and to respond to immediate humanitarian needs." (ICRC 18 May 2001, 'ICRC Update No.6')

"Most people are reluctant to leave their homes either because they fear coming into contact with the Macedonian authorities or because they express a strong sense of solidarity to stay together in their homes. It cannot be excluded, although this was not directly articulated to the ICRC by the villagers, that they are may be under pressure to stay from elements within their community, including from members of the armed groups." (ICRC 10 May 2001)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

General

AI reported on human rights abuses perpetrated by both sides of the conflict (August 2002)

- The Macedonian police reportedly used torture and ill-treatment of ethnic Albanians
- The NLA also ill-treated civilians and drove ethnic Macedonians out of their homes in attempts at ethnic cleansing

"The evidence from the Tetovo region indicates that the police routinely used torture and ill-treatment of ethnic Albanians both as a means of interrogation and, as many victims believed, of reprisal for actions by the NLA," the report stated.

"The NLA, which initially targeted the police and army, committed human rights abuses by abducting and ill-treating civilians and by driving ethnic Macedonians out of their homes in an apparent attempt at 'ethnic cleansing'."

[...]

Violations of humanitarian law by the NLA include:

- abductions of civilians. The whereabouts of some civilians remain unknown and Amnesty International fears some may have been victims of unlawful killings;
- injuries to civilians;
- displacement of civilians, the majority being ethnic Macedonians but also of other ethnic groups including Roma, Turks and Serbs."

(AI 15 August 2002, "Impunity threatens lasting peace")

HRW reported separation and torture of IDPs by Macedonian police forces (May 2001)

- Macedonian forces allegedly separated out ethnic Albanian men fleeing clashes, and interrogated some, to gain information on the rebels
- Many ethnic Albanians decided not to flee out of fear for the Macedonian forces
- Human Rights Watch stated that the ill-treatment violates international human rights law, and in the most severe cases amounts to torture
- The rebels claimed that one of the main reasons for its armed rebellion is the failure of the Macedonian government to address police abuse and discrimination against ethnic Albanians

"Macedonian forces are systematically separating out ethnic Albanian males fleeing fierce fighting in northern Macedonia, and severely beating some of the men at police stations, Human Rights Watch said today. In the most severe cases documented by Human Rights Watch, the ill-treatment appears intended to extract confessions or information about the National Liberation Army (NLA) and amounts to torture. The fear of violence at the hands of the Macedonian police is also stopping many ethnic Albanians from fleeing to safety into government-controlled territory.

'Ethnic Albanian men fleeing the fighting in Macedonia face severe ill-treatment by the police,' said Holly Cartner, executive director of the Europe and Central Asia division of Human Rights Watch. 'We have

documented serious beatings and torture of ethnic Albanians at the Kumanovo and Skopje police stations in the last week. The victims we interviewed have the bruises and injuries to back up their claims of abuse.'

On May 22, Macedonian forces launched an offensive against ethnic Albanian fighters of the NLA who had seized control of villages located in the vicinity of the northern Macedonian town of Kumanovo. An estimated fifteen thousand civilians remain in the NLA-controlled territory, sparking concerns of significant civilian casualties if the fighting continues. Since the beginning of the renewed offensive, Macedonian forces have separated out men from the civilians fleeing the fighting and have severely beaten some of them.

Human Rights Watch researchers have documented cases of severe beating at the Kumanovo police station, located in the region where the latest fighting is taking place, as well as at the Skopje police station, located in the capital city of Macedonia. Some of the tactics involved hundreds of blows to the soles of the victims' feet—a torture technique known as *falanga* which causes severe pain and swelling and can lead to kidney failure—as well as extended beatings on the hands, buttocks, arms, and heads of the victims. The men interviewed by Human Rights Watch indicated that they had heard the screams of many other beating victims at the police stations, suggesting that the scope of such abuse may be widespread and condoned at the police stations.

Human Rights Watch said that the ill-treatment violates international human rights law, and in the most severe cases amounts to torture.

Many of the ethnic Albanians are reluctant to talk to international observers because they fear further retaliation from the Macedonian police, and have in some cases been warned by their abusers not to discuss their maltreatment. [...]

On Tuesday, May 29, Human Rights Watch researchers observed a group of approximately thirty-five ethnic Albanian men from the village of Matejce who were separated from their female relatives and taken into the police station at Kumanovo.

[...]

"Ethnic Albanian men remaining in the villages under NLA control fear ill-treatment and torture at the hands of Macedonian forces," commented Cartner. "There is little doubt that this fear is one of the reasons why so many ethnic Albanian men are refusing to leave their homes in the conflict zone."

Police forces have also abused ethnic Albanian civilians this past week during raids against suspected NLA sympathizers in Tetovo, the scene of earlier fighting between the NLA and government forces. Human Rights Watch researchers documented the cases of ten ethnic Albanian men who were beaten during police raids in the villages of Dzepeiste and Poroj on May 25. During the raid on the Dzepeiste home of Naser Junizi, a schoolteacher and village leader accused by the Macedonian government of assisting the NLA, police commandos beat Naser Junizi, two of his brothers, his sixty-eight-year-old father, and his eighteen-year-old son. Police also entered the Poroj compound of the Saiti family, kicking and breaking three ribs of thirty-six-year-old Rami Saiti and attacking his seventy-three-year-old father and seventeen-year-old cousin before apparently realizing they had entered the wrong home and rapidly leaving.

[...] The NLA has claimed that one of the main reasons for its armed rebellion is the failure of the Macedonian government to address police abuse as well as other forms of discrimination against ethnic Albanians.

Although the Macedonian police appear responsible for the majority of beating cases, Macedonian military forces have also been implicated in beatings. Macedonian military troops appear responsible for the beating of a family of seven in the village of Runica, in which many houses were reportedly burned down by Macedonian troops on May 21, 2001." (HRW 31 May 2001)

Some 22,000 people were trapped in villages during fighting (July-August 2001)

- In July 2001, some 22,000 people were trapped in villages in the Kumanovo, Tetovo and Aracinovo regions, steadily fuelling the IDP number as they flee
- The number of affected civilians, also including already displaced people, rose to 100,000 by August 2001

“Most preoccupying in humanitarian terms is the situation of civilians living near the two main distinct lines where the fighting has been concentrated. That is:

- in a string of villages to the west of the town of Kumanovo. Around 15,000 villagers remain in this area, many of them in the village of Lipkovo;
- in the mountainous area above Tetovo, where exchange of fire still takes place on an almost daily basis. Between 3,000 and 5,000 civilian residents are believed to be affected. Access to this area for humanitarian organizations remains extremely difficult for security reasons.
- There has also been fighting between these two fronts, for instance around the villages of Aracinovo and Radusa. An estimated 2,000 civilian residents are affected.

There is a steady trickle of displaced from among the resident population, either as a result of spontaneous movement or small-scale ICRC-assisted evacuations, giving rise to a continuous increase in the number of IDPs.” (ICRC 27 July 2001)

August 2001:

“The civilians who remained in areas directly affected by the conflict are still living in very difficult conditions. These are mostly in the Albanian-populated areas along the border with Kosovo - in the Kumanovo, Tetovo and Skopska Crna Gora areas - which were caught up in the fighting between the National Liberation Army (NLA) and the Macedonian armed forces. Problems faced include the destruction of civilian housing and damage to other property, and injuries to civilians. Around 100,000 people have been affected to date, including those who fled their homes and were registered as internally displaced persons at some time since the beginning of the conflict. While the exact number of residents currently affected is not known, estimates vary between 60,000 and 80,000 (about 20,000 in Lipkovo, including returnees, 8-10,000 in Shipkovic, and around 40,000 in Tetovo/Jazince).

[...]

The number of vulnerable residents requiring urgent assistance is likely to rise when people start returning to their villages, once they are confident that it is safe and that the ceasefire is holding.” (ICRC 28 August 2001)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

General

Humanitarian needs of the IDPs and returnees (July-August 2002)

- The most urgent needs of displaced and host families were for food, hygiene and health
- Returnees face similar needs
- Typical cases concern displaced without return prospects, who do want to go back but are not on the priority list for shelter reconstruction

"There is a need to support them [the displaced] and their host families as well as those in collective centres – specifically for food, hygiene and health. Returnees also have similar needs. There are also special needs regarding water supplies in some regions (Kumanovo and Tetovo) and agricultural support." (ACT 25 July 2002)

Example:

"[...] for many of these displaced persons, the situation is quite desperate. [...] displaced person, an older gentleman from a nearby collective center. He is 50 years old, has been living in this collective center for over a year, has no job and cannot return home since it was completely burned down; yet, he is not on the priority list to have it replaced. In the meantime, he cannot provide for his family and is quite ashamed. He is not looking forward to remaining in this collective center for another year but has no options. This can be considered a very typical case." (ARC 16 August 2002)

IDPs expressed concern about conditions during the winter (September 2001)

- IDPs stated that they would be unable to cope in the current shelters if winter arrived
- Representatives of the IDPs said collective centers required repair and heating fuel, while the displaced needed clothes and host families deserved cash assistance

"Displaced people in the Kumanovo region on Monday expressed concern that they will be unable to cope in their temporary homes when winter comes. At a meeting with officials and relief agencies, representatives of Macedonian and Serb internally displaced people (IDPs) urged the government to quickly improve conditions in four collective centres and for host families in Kumanovo. The IDP representatives said dormitories require repairs and heating fuel. The IDPs need clothes and shoes, having left their villages in haste last May. Administrators of the collective centres want an increase in the daily expense cash given each IDP and the removal of a tax on it. They said that with the coming winter, life will become more difficult. The IDPs also said families hosting them deserve cash assistance." (UNHCR 4 September 2001)

Displaced protested and planned to turn radical if ignored (August 2001)

- Displaced Macedonians blocked a road and threatened to turn radical if the NATO and the West further ignored them

- The displaced were from the Tetovo, Kumanovo, and Aracinovo regions, which are mainly Albanian

"Displaced Macedonians blocking the main road to the neighbouring Serbian province of Kosovo are planning to "turn radical" if NATO and the West continue to ignore them, a protest organiser said on Friday.

[...]

In sweltering conditions, some 300 to 400 displaced Macedonians have been manning the blockade, a mix of trucks and piles of sand, in three to four shifts a day for the last week.

The families come from the mainly-Albanian regions around Tetevo and Kumanovo and from Aracinovo on the outskirts of the capital Skopje, from where they say some 67,000 Macedonians have been displaced.

[...]

Many of the families fear NATO operation Essential Harvest, which is aimed at collecting rebel arms, could lead to a freeze on territorial positions already seized by the guerrillas." (AFP 24 August 2001)

General needs of displaced depend on location of displacement (July 2001)

- Displaced sheltered in collective centers were in the most difficult situation
- IDPs housed with host families have easy access to food, hygiene and medical supplies
- In a worse position are people who moved in with relatives in rural areas and people still in affected areas
- A problem for the population is access to drinking water, the supply of which is greatly reduced

"Only a small number of people (around 800), mostly from Aracinovo, are settled in five collective centres in Skopje. These people are in the most difficult situation. This mainly because the supply lines are functioning normally and IDP's in host families (which moved on time and with their own means) have easy access to food, hygiene and medical supplies.

In slightly worse position are the people who moved in with their relatives in remote rural areas (probably not registered) and people still inside the affected areas (mostly in the village of Lipkovo) where only 2 convoys (with 15 trucks of humanitarian aid) have entered so far, to assist around 15,000 local people there.

Another problem for the population is access to drinking water. The biggest crisis was due to the complete lack of water in the regular water supply system of the city of Kumanovo, which is supposed to provide 100,000 people with drinking water. The problem was solved (at least temporarily) with the re-opening of regular water system (from the point controlled by extremists), with no alternative solutions on horizon.

The supply of water was significantly reduced also in Tetovo (1/3 of the regular quantity) by the physical damage to the system. The quantity is enough to meet only the minimum needs of the city while some areas of the city do not have access to water at all. The Skopje area is not threatened so far and it is not expected to become a problem." (ACT 5 July 2001)

General needs of civilians trapped in villages (July-August 2001)

- Civilians trapped in villages by fighting faced health problems and lacked food and clean water
- Although a peace agreement was signed in August 2001, civilians living in areas affected by the conflict still experienced food, water, medical, and hygiene needs

"Delegates on-the-spot in the most affected villages of Vaksince and Slupcane say the situation continues to deteriorate for the civilians who have been seeking refuge in their cellars now for more than nine days. Some health problems linked to overcrowding, poor hygiene and difficulties in reaching clean water supplies are beginning to emerge among the civilians, although there were no indications that they had reached epidemic levels. Villagers also warned that they were surviving on limited food supplies." (ICRC 18 May 2001, 'ICRC Update No.7')

"The main humanitarian needs assessed by the ICRC are related to the deteriorating physical conditions. Health problems due to the overcrowding of people in claustrophobic, damp conditions are emerging and many say they are worried about getting access to clean water. The people are managing to survive on limited food supplies and whilst the ICRC has received no direct urgent request for food, they warn that their stocks could soon run out." (ICRC 23 May 2001)

August 2001:

"The civilians who remained in areas directly affected by the conflict are still living in very difficult conditions. These are mostly in the Albanian-populated areas along the border with Kosovo - in the Kumanovo, Tetovo and Skopska Crna Gora areas - which were caught up in the fighting between the National Liberation Army (NLA) and the Macedonian armed forces. Problems faced include the destruction of civilian housing and damage to other property, and injuries to civilians. [...]

Even after the signing of a peace agreement, it will be some time before food, medical and energy supply lines are re-established and hygiene and other conditions return to normal. In the coming weeks therefore, the civilian population will thus continue to have the same urgent material needs as during the fighting." (ICRC 28 August 2001)

Health

Health system is fragile and needs of IDPs are at risk (November 2001)

- Damaged health facilities, electrical and water supplies coupled with displacement and travel restrictions reduced health capacity
- The needs of displaced strained the already fragile health system
- Communicable diseases pose significant risks to displaced living in host families and collective centers
- UNICEF assessed the psychosocial state of displaced families, showing that 85% spend their time in thinking, grieving, worrying, and that 55% have health problems

"Damage to health facilities, electrical and water supplies coupled with displacement and travel restrictions on medical personnel has reduced health capacity, resulting in increased vulnerability of both the remaining and the returning population in conflict areas. At the same time, the needs of high-risk groups such as IDPs and refugees further strained the already fragile health infrastructure. Drug availability has also been reduced and immunisation rates have dropped to as low as 20% in some of the conflict-affected areas. In addition, communicable diseases, especially Tuberculosis pose a significant risk to those living in overcrowded conditions common in host families and collective centres. Moreover, ethnic tension has heightened concerns that not all population groups are afforded equal access to health services." (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.16)

"During October, WHO in close collaboration with the MOH conducted a rapid assessment of primary health care capacity, needs and priorities in conflict areas. The results of the assessment confirmed significant disruption to the health system, impacting delivery of both preventive and curative health services as a result of relocation of staff, damage to health facilities and communication problems. Based on assessment results WHO is working with health authorities to prioritise rehabilitation of health facilities and deploy mobile teams to address urgent health needs in conflict affected areas." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

"Although the fighting in the Tetovo and Kumanovo districts and villages near Skopje has not caused huge numbers of war-wounded, the situation has put considerable strain on the health services available. This affects the ease with which both residents and IDPs can gain access to health services meeting their everyday needs." (ICRC 28 August 2001)

UNICEF conducted a psychosocial analysis of IDP families:

"UNICEF presented Dr. Kos's, UNICEF's consultant, psychosocial analyses of IDP survey:

- 33.3% of families have no income at all
- 77% of families have been directly exposed to armed conflicts
- 85% spend their time in thinking, grieving, worrying
- 59% of the families considered material help as most important
- 55% have health problems

(National Humanitarian Coordination meeting 1 November 2001)

Nutrition

Macedonia's agricultural sector seriously weakened by conflict (November 2001)

- In many conflict areas, farmers could not plant or harvest the fields, because they either had been displaced or because of unexploded ordnance
- This agricultural deficit could result in food insecurity and food aid dependency

"The conflict has had a devastating impact on the country's agricultural sector, which had already been weakened by the break up of Yugoslavia and the EU's decision to ban livestock exports. In many of the conflict-affected areas, farmers could not plant or harvest their fields as they had either been displaced from their homes or faced the threat of unexploded ordnance. Crop production has also been adversely affected by three years of drought, which have brought water reserves to dangerously low levels. FAO estimates that the yields of staple and fodder crops in 2001 will be 25 to 30% lower than average. Without targeted support the agricultural production deficit in drought and conflict-affected areas will result in increased food insecurity, a growing dependence on food aid and the loss of farming livelihoods." (UN-OCHA November 2001, pp.15-16)

Shelter

Shelter situation is characterised by host family fatigue (November 2001)

- The majority of the displaced was sheltered with host families (30-60 displaced a household), but delayed return caused host family fatigue

“The majority of IDPs have been accommodated with host families, who have extended overwhelming hospitality. However, as return to homes has been delayed and host families are increasingly affected by the conflict, a widespread host family fatigue is contributing to heightening tensions.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.17)

"A safe refuge is much appreciated, but also very crowded. Almost every family in Arachinovo hosts guests - strangers usually - with sometimes 30, to as many as 60 per household. Before fleeing, many of the displaced spent three to four weeks in their basements to hide from the violence." (ARC 13 June 2001)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Displaced have access to (disrupted) education system (December 2001)

- All displaced are included in the education system in the areas of refuge
- The education process was disrupted because of damaged structures, insufficient school space in hosting communities and a lack of material and personnel

"As for access of education, all IDPs are included in the education system in the new areas where they have fled. The Info-Office within the Red Cross of Macedonia is the main site where IDPs, but also refugees and social cases turn for assistance." (E-mail from IFRC Macedonia to NRC Geneva 7 December 2001)

"The education process has been disrupted as a result of damaged structures in conflict areas, insufficient school space in hosting communities and a general lack of essential material and human resources. Security concerns within schools and a threat of parallel systems are also of concern and are linked to increased ethnic tensions including harassment of students who form the minority within their schools and/or communities." (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.17)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Many displaced lost their homes and all of their possessions, including livestock and crops (July-December 2001)

- Assessment of property damage was difficult in affected areas due to fighting, but witnesses told of heavy destruction to homes and infrastructure
- Damage was also done to the agricultural sector, with livestock dead and crop production lost
- Overall damage assessment by the government gave an estimation of 350 millions USD
- Many properties in conflict areas were destroyed, and great numbers of displaced lost their houses and all of their belongings

“Damage to the community infrastructure in the affected areas can not be assessed at the time being due to the ongoing military activities. However, according to media reports and witnesses from the villages, the first impression is that there has been heavy destruction to private homes and other infrastructure in the villages where extremists were positioned. This is due to the military tactics of the Macedonian forces, who carried out long and heavy shelling of the villages, after ensuring that the civilian population had left the village. Villages from the first phase of the conflict in March (e.g. Tanusevci and Gracani, with app. 300 houses) have been level to the ground. More than [sic!] half of the houses in the other villages in the current conflict area (Vaksince, Slupcane, Matejce in Lipkovo area - app. 1,200 houses; Aracinovo in Skopje area - 2,000) have been destroyed.

Serious damage has also been done within the agriculture sector. Most of the livestock was left in the affected villages, when people fled from their homes. All livestock is now lost: either killed by shelling, or dead because of lack of food. This is causing additional danger in the area - pollution of the air, earth and water from the animal corpses. Further damage to agriculture is due to the loss of crop production: either from deliberate fire in the fields or because access to the fields for harvest is not possible.

Damage has been assessed in the areas where there were riots by ethnic Macedonians (twice in Bitola and in Skopje). Around 40 shops and 50 houses of Muslims (ethnic Albanians, but also many Macedonians, Bosnians and Gorani people) were burnt down in Bitola, while 17 shops were damaged in Skopje (more than [sic!] half of them owned by ethnic Macedonians).

Overall damage assessment by the Macedonian Government gives an estimation of 350 millions USD (including the effect of the crisis on the economy of the country).” (ACT 5 July 2001)

"Seeing that the crisis regions were affected with serious armed conflict including heavy weaponry, there are many destroyed properties. Great numbers of IDPs have lost their houses and all of their belongings as they were burned or robbed. In the aftermath of the conflict many international and domestic agencies conducted the assessment of the level of destruction and started its activities of repair." (E-mail from IFRC Macedonia to NRC Geneva 7 December 2001)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Obstacles to return were different according to ethnicity of displaced persons (August 2002)

- Displaced faced difficulties in returning, mainly because of damage to houses, the security situation, or age or health reasons
- Most ethnic Albanians do not return because of damage to houses, while ethnic Macedonians face insecurity as an obstacle to return
- Despite funding, reconstruction of houses is very slow, creating tensions in relation to return
- Impunity towards persons guilty of human rights abuses installed fear in displaced persons and formed a barrier to return

“The remaining IDP's were fitting three basic criteria:

1. their houses are damaged (category 3 or 4)
2. they cannot return because of security reasons (still not demined area, threats from other local population,...)
3. they are old, disabled persons

In practice, most of the ethnic Albanians (app. 2/3 of the total IDP number) are not returned because of the destroyed houses, while ethnic Macedonians, Serbs and Roma are not returning because of the lack of security (especially in villages of Aracinovo and Matejce. Displaced ethnic Albanians are mostly from Lipkovo area.

Priority is reconstruction of houses and [...] there is funding for all remaining houses, but the works are progressing problematically slow, which is rising tension in relation to the return.” (MCIC 12 August 2002)

IFRC Macedonia specifies the second reason of non-return further:

1. Not able to go home because the house is damage 3 and 4 category (total destroyed)
 2. Not able to go home because of security reason (If the person is minority in the village or if somebody from the family was in the military services from one of the sides)
 3. Medical issue
- (IFRC 15 August 2002)

AI gave another reason besides the above-mentioned:

"While the 2002 Law on Amnesty alleviated these concerns for ex-NLA members, deserters and draft evaders, it did not address fears that human rights abusers on both sides of the conflict were still at large and a barrier to safe returns." (AI 15 August 2002, "Dark days in Tetovo", p.24)

Humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance continued to be essential for return (May 2002)

- Humanitarian programs facilitated the return of displaced through reconstruction and rehabilitation programs
- However, full return was not established yet as a consequence of political, economic and humanitarian insecurities
- A key humanitarian concern was the threat of unexploded ordnance and mines, as well as damage to homes

“Since the signing of the Agreement, more than 150,000 of the 170,000 displaced have returned home. Humanitarian programs have facilitated this return by rebuilding homes and providing basic household inputs; repairing schools and providing books and school materials; rehabilitating and equipping clinics; providing seeds, fertilizer and feed for livestock; working with doctors, teachers and other professional to address health access and psychological stress; and financing community projects to meet urgent infrastructure needs and build confidence between ethnic groups.

The emergency however, has not entirely passed and return is not yet fully sustainable. Some communities remain divided, ethnic and crime related violence continues and families inside and out of the former crisis area are without jobs and struggling to meet their basic needs. With elections coming and contentious issues such as the census, revised citizenship legislation and financing for decentralization on the agenda, continued support for political progress is as important as ever.

To tackle the remaining obstacles to return and move communities past the current fragile peace, continued humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance is also essential. A key humanitarian concern is the ongoing threat of unexploded ordnance and mines, which is impacting access to reconstruction and agriculture programs as well as the redeployment of mixed police patrols. The remaining repair and reconstruction of damaged and destroyed homes needs also to get underway quickly in order to capitalize on current favorable weather conditions and ensure people can return to their homes before winter. In addition, expectations for tangible improvements in daily living conditions are growing and stabilization will increasingly be tied to socio-economic improvements. Short term investments in agriculture, small business revitalization, health and education are therefore, needed to bridge gaps before longer term development programmes and investment projects come fully on line.

Just over US \$ 41 million is needed to cover humanitarian priorities in FYROM, including US \$ 14.5 million to rebuild the remaining 900 structurally damaged homes, US \$ 2.9 million to rid the country of the main unexploded ordnance and mine problem and US \$ 23.5 million to support continuation of humanitarian programs prioritized in the 2002 United Nations Consolidated Appeal (CAP).

If people are unable to go home for fear of mines or lack of shelter, or have no way of providing for their families once they have returned, there is a real risk that continued progress on the Framework Agreement will stall. Resources for these programs are needed now to re-energize the peace process by ensuring the obstacles to return and lasting peace are removed.” (UN OCHA 2 May 2002)

Displaced ethnic Macedonians returning to Lipkovo asked for temporary colonies (April 2002)

“Since the efforts of the displaced ethnic Macedonians and Serbs from the Lipkovo region to pay a visit to their homes have been ending unsuccessfully, they asked from the mayor of Kumanovo municipality to provide them a location where a temporary colony would be built.” (Aidmacedonia 15 April 2002)

Despite political breakthrough, return was inhibited because of a lack of access and security, and problems with water and electricity (November 2001)

- The Framework Agreement created improved security, sparking large scale return, but 53,000 displaced decided to stay until the security and humanitarian conditions improved
- The presence of rebels, checkpoints, as well as mines impeded the promotion of a safe return
- Return is unlikely for the majority until major repairs have been done to homes and public structures and agricultural livelihoods and services have been rejuvenated, during the Spring and Summer of 2002
- Uneven health and education services, and problems with water and electricity service also inhibited a sustainable return
- Ethnic Albanian communities were far more likely to return to their villages after a short period of displacement than Slavic Macedonians

“The 13 August 2001 Framework Agreement endorsed by the leaders of the four Government Coalition parties and the presence of NATO troops, charged with the collection of voluntarily surrendered weapons by ethnic Albanian armed groups (EAAG), resulted in an improved security situation, that in turn sparked large scale spontaneous returns at the end of the summer. [...] While some were able to go home, an estimated 53,000 IDPs wait mainly in the larger urban centres of Skopje, Tetovo and Kumanovo until the security and humanitarian conditions in their communities of origin improve. [...]

While the overall security situation has improved, conditions in conflict-affected areas remain volatile, particularly in the rural areas north of Tetovo, Kumanovo and Skopje (Crna Gora). The perceived continued presence of EAAG, random checkpoints and the threat of mines and UXOs continue to restrict the humanitarian community’s ability to promote the safe, sustained return of a significant number of displaced persons to their communities of origin.

Several political obstacles – including a legal provision for the agreed amnesty for demobilised EAAG and continued disagreement on changes to the preamble of the constitution – are also frustrating progress on return and recovery. The re-entry of Macedonian Police forces into EAAG strongholds and the limited role of NATO’s ‘Taskforce Fox’ raise further concern over the ability of the international community to maintain the fragile peace that currently exists.

The international community continues to apply pressure to resolve the ongoing political divisions and remains hopeful that the Parliament will ratify the Ohrid Agreement by the end of October. However, without political progress, conflict is likely to resume. In either case, the majority of the remaining IDPs are unlikely to return to their homes until substantive work on rehabilitation including support for rebuilding homes and public structures and rejuvenation of agricultural and other livelihoods and services can be undertaken during the Spring and Summer of 2002.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.13)

“However, lack of access and security, uneven health and education services, disruption of agricultural activities, and problems with water and electricity service continue to inhibit sustainable return.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.4)

“Finally, an estimated 11,000 homes were damaged as a result of the conflict, impeding the rapid return of displaced persons.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.17)

“Ethnic Albanian communities have been far more likely to return to their villages after a short period of displacement than Slavic Macedonians, who generally have not returned.” (USCR September 2001)

“As a result of the intensive shelling which took place in several conflict areas, safety concerns - especially in relation to Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs) - represent a substantial impediment to return of displaced persons and stabilising affected communities. Fortunately, the UXOs appear to be concentrated in specific areas and is limited to basic ordnances. Similarly, landmines, primarily antitank mines appear to have been concentrated on roads and were laid sparingly, mainly for roadblock purposes and for protection of armed group positions. Currently, there is no evidence of the presence of antipersonnel mines. While only a small number of mine/UXO incidents have been reported, the presence as well as the threat of mines and UXOs are a significant security concern for returnees and remains throughout the conflict areas and in particular, an estimated 30 villages where a significant threat has been identified, hampering return of IDPs and refugees, as well as delivery of humanitarian assistance. (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.95)

Although nearly half returned to the Tetovo region, many ethnic Macedonians refused to return without an escort of Macedonian troops (October 2001)

- By October 2001, almost half of the displaced ethnic Macedonians returned to the Tetovo region
- The government organised go-see visits for IDPs to promote return to the Tetovo region
- Macedonians stated that they did not feel safe unless accompanied by their own troops and police

“A significant number of displaced ethnic Macedonians have returned to their homes in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’s Tetovo region, where they are in the minority. Up to 40 percent of the displaced Macedonian population has gone back to villages in the region 40 kms west of Skopje. It was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting in the six-month ethnic Albanian insurgency. Returns in the Tetovo region, such as the mixed villages of Tearce, Neprosteni, Odri, Dobroste and Lesok, are considered one of the crucial elements in the peace process reached in August.” (UNHCR 19 October 2001)

“The government has been organising go-see visits for IDPs to promote returns to the Tetovo region, which is heavily populated by ethnic Albanians, but apprehensions persist. UNHCR has been visiting the region regularly in a bid to help build confidence in the 13 August peace agreement and allow the return of both refugees and displaced people.” (UNHCR 12 October 2001)

However, the displaced were still reluctant to return, unless accompanied by troops:

“Another thorny issue is the return of displaced people to their homes. Macedonians say they do not feel safe unless their own troops and police accompany them. But Albanians fear the return of the military might leave them open to retaliation, and would prefer ethnically-mixed security forces.” (IWPR 16 October 2001)

Return pattern was dictated by the security situation in the region (September 2001)

- UNHCR expressed its concern that return would be impeded by insecurity
- Ethnic Albanians stated that return to the Kumanovo region was impossible because of police checkpoints on the road
- Many ethnic Macedonians returned to their villages only during the day and left again before the night out of security concerns

“While UNHCR supports the right of all displaced people to go home, we are concerned that many of the returnee families return only to find that they cannot move into their original residences because of security concerns. Leaders of some 6,000 ethnic Albanian internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kumanovo, for

example, say they cannot return to their villages up in the hills because of police checkpoints on the road.” (UNHCR 11 September 2001)

“Most of the displaced ethnic Macedonians from predominantly ethnic Albanian areas venture out to their villages during the day only, as they fear for their safety during the night.

A displaced ethnic Macedonian family with small children told UNHCR that they had gone back to their home in a village of Ljuboten, scene of an intense security operation just before the peace agreement was signed on 13 August, but decided to leave after spending three nights at home. They said they heard gunshots in the village during the night. Another displaced Macedonian family said they did not have high hopes for returning before winter. They said they would return only after the redeployment of Macedonian security forces.” (UNHCR 14 September 2001)

Organised by the government, ethnic Macedonians returned to the ethnic Albanian Aracinovo region (September 2001)

- In September 2001, the government organized the return of ethnic Macedonians to an ethnic Albanian area adjacent to Aracinovo
- UNHCR expressed its belief that the safe return of displaced ethnic groups in regions where they are in the minority is crucial to the peace process
- The government also announced plans for the return of displaced Macedonians to some villages in the Tetovo region, 60 kms northwest of Skopje

“Around 300 ethnic Macedonian internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the FYROM village of Brnjaci went home today in the first government-organized return to an area largely populated by ethnic Albanians. The Brnjaci residents were taken by bus from collective centers in nearby Skopje, where they had been staying for the last three months, for the 20-minute trip to their village. Brnjaci is adjacent to the town of Aracinovo, where up to 10,000 ethnic Albanians had earlier gone back. Around 70 residents returned to Brnjaci earlier.

UNHCR believes the safe return of displaced ethnic groups in regions where they are in the minority is crucial to the peace process in the country after a six-month conflict. Early this month, UNHCR organized a bus shuttle to enable the Brnjaci residents to visit their homes, which showed little damage from the fighting. On Sunday, the government announced it was time for the IDPs to return to Brnjaci, saying students returning to schools will use the collective centers, with UNHCR support.

The government has also announced plans for the return of displaced Macedonians to some villages in the Tetovo region, 60 kms northwest of Skopje. A secure environment in many areas is yet to be established.” (UNHCR 18 September 2001)

More than half of the displaced fleeing fighting at Aracinovo returned home by August 2001

- Over 5,000 displaced returned to Aracinovo by August 2001, but many ethnic Macedonians were reluctant to return
- UNHCR emphasised that steps had to be taken to allow ethnic Macedonians displaced from overwhelmingly ethnic-Albanian populated areas to return to their villages in safety

“More than half of the 10,000 residents who fled fighting at Aracinovo, a largely ethnic Albanian village just outside the capital of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), have returned since Sunday. Of the 5,000 who have gone back to the village, about 2,500 are staying overnight, while the rest are cleaning their houses during the day. Few of the estimated 250 ethnic Macedonians families residing in the village have indicated willingness to return. They only go back to pick up their belongings.

Aracinovo was heavily devastated in June during intense fighting between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian rebels.

[...]

It is particularly important to stabilize the ethnic Macedonian community, which is in a minority situation in Aracinovo. All efforts must be made to help them return to their homes.” (UNHCR 3 August 2001)

Ethnic division threatens return, says UNHCR:

"The High Commissioner stressed that the "security dilemma" must be resolved for all Macedonians. He emphasised that steps had to be taken to allow ethnic Macedonians displaced from overwhelmingly ethnic-Albanian populated areas to return to their villages in safety. While ethnic Albanians are a minority in FYROM as a whole, in many areas in the north of the country it is the ethnic Macedonians who are in the minority.

Lubbers warned that prolonged displacement of FYROM's ethnic communities could jeopardise the chance for return and reconciliation. "We believe that the longer the refugees and the displaced persons stay away from their homes, the more bitter and radicalised they are becoming and the deeper the ethnic divisions in the country are growing," he wrote." (UNHCR 7 August 2001)

Majority of displaced fleeing violence in Tetovo region returned by the beginning of April 2001

- By April 2001, many displaced fleeing fighting in the Tetovo region in March 2001 returned home

“The week of 2 April was marked by a complete cessation of military activities in the Tetovo region, following an offensive launched into hillside villages by the Macedonian army on 25 March and completed on 31 March. Today Tetovo town is once again bustling with people and traffic, the shops have reopened and commercial activity has resumed. A significant number of the 20,000 displaced people who were registered by the Macedonian Red Cross in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of fighting in the Tetovo region have returned to their homes.” (ICRC 11 April 2001)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Access was restricted in conflict areas, due to checkpoints and unexploded ordnance (July 2001)

- Humanitarian access was restricted in conflict affected areas, due to checkpoints and curfews
- The delivery of humanitarian assistance was seriously constrained by the presence of unexploded ordnance and mines
- UNHCR warned against the use of humanitarian access as a political tool

“Access is restricted in the areas of military conflict. Macedonian security forces hold checkpoints on all connecting roads to the affected areas (Lipkovo municipality near Kumanovo, Sipkovicica near Tetovo, Aracinovo and Kondovo around Skopje). There is a curfew in Kumanovo and Tetovo (23:00 - 05:00 hours next day) and occasionally in other towns (like Bitola, where riots took place). In the rest of the country, there is no restriction of movement. All roads are open for traffic, including Skopje-Tetovo-Gostivar and the highway from Yugoslavia to the border with Greece.” (ACT 5 July 2001)

“The presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and to a lesser extent mines is a major constraint on IDP and refugee returns as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Although concentrated in specific areas, the problems of UXO represent a significant threat in an estimated 30 conflict-affected villages.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.19)

UNHCR warned against the use of humanitarian access as a bargaining asset:

"UNHCR also warns against the use of humanitarian access as a political tool. In the past couple of weeks there has been a series of retaliatory blockades as the government or NGOs organised humanitarian convoys to either ethnic Macedonian or ethnic Albanian villages. Also, access to electricity and water is increasingly becoming a bargaining chip in some of the affected villages around Tetovo and Kumanovo." (UNHCR 10 August 2001)

In order to give humanitarian aid or evacuate, the ICRC had to request cease-fires (May 2001)

- In order to gain safe access, before each delivery of food, medical supplies or evacuation run, the ICRC had to request a cease-fire

"As the Red Cross struggles to bring aid and conduct evacuations, the situation is growing desperate. In previous visits, at least two trapped villagers have been found dead. The conflict is making the ICRC's job particularly difficult. In order to gain safe access, before each delivery of food, medical supplies or evacuation run, the ICRC must request that the warring parties halt the fighting." (ARC 15 May 2001)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

General

Attention: web-link to detailed information on IDP aid by NGO and international organisation, specified by sector

The following link contains detailed weekly information on humanitarian aid by NGOs and international organizations, specified by the following sectors:

- food,
- health,
- shelter,
- agricultural activities,
- water supply and sanitation,
- schools and education,
- humanitarian demining,
- protection and human rights,
- psychosocial activities, and
- post-crisis rehabilitation.

<http://www.aidmacedonia.org.mk/aid/aid.htm>

UN response 2002, Consolidated Appeal

The United Nations-plans for 2002, general

- Emphasis will be given to groups who are a minority within their communities, mixed villages and, to isolated villages
- Food, accommodation and other assistance will be given to families who have not returned to their villages, followed by return assistance during the spring and summer of 2002
- Primary goal is to provide assistance and protection to the residual refugee caseload and to conflict-affected groups including internally displaced persons, host families, returnees and remainees
- Another goal is to sustain the reintegration of the displaced populations into the affected areas

“Humanitarian activities will focus on an estimated 100,000 IDPs and returnees and vulnerable families within conflict affected communities as well as the approximately 5,000 refugees remaining from the Kosovo crisis while maintaining a high level of response preparedness for any new displacement. Approximately 260,000 inhabitants in the conflict affected villages will also indirectly benefit from community stabilisation [sic!] and confidence building activities.

Within conflict-affected areas, particular emphasis will be given to groups who are a minority within their communities, mixed villages and, as soon as security and movement permits, to isolated villages that have

been cut off as a result of the conflict. Communities that have suffered significant conflict related damage and need urgent assistance to rebuild homes, public infrastructures such as health facilities and schools and to re-establish social support mechanisms will also be prioritised. Families who have not returned to their villages as a result of security concerns or whose homes have been significantly damaged or destroyed will continue to need accommodation, food and other basic assistance throughout the winter months, followed by return assistance during the spring and summer of 2002.

[...]

Goals of the UN with regard to the target population:

- The primary goal of the UNCT [UN Country Team] in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to the residual refugee caseload and to conflict-affected groups including internally displaced persons, host families, returnees and remainees. [...]
- Undertake confidence-building and stabilisation activities, in support of *the Framework Agreement* to promote inter-ethnic tolerance and the enactment of constitutional and other legislation, with corresponding enforcement mechanisms, to protect individual and minority rights. [...]
- Facilitate the timely, safe and dignified return of refugees and displaced persons, as stipulated in *Annex C of the Framework Agreement*, through emergency assistance to returnees, mine and UXO clearance, basic support for essential public services and rehabilitation of infrastructures and private dwellings in the affected areas. [...]
- Sustain the reintegration of the displaced populations into the affected areas through infrastructure rehabilitation, economic recovery, capacity building and empowerment of local government structures. [...]

(UN-OCHA November 2001, pp.13-15)

The United Nations-plans for 2002, specified by sector

- WFP conducted a food needs assessment to determine the negative impact of the conflict on food security and livelihoods, and to plan for future food requirements after WFP assistance ends in December 2001
- FAO will help about 30,000 drought and conflict-affected farm families resume their livelihoods
- UNICEF and WFO will continue to support the health system and address the psychosocial effects among conflict affected populations
- UNHCR will continue to coordinate humanitarian shelter-repair activities in close collaboration with the EC, support host family structures, provide return kits to displaced, and provide firewood
- UNICEF will continue to ensure access to a safe learning environment and a quality education for all children, especially those affected by the conflict
- UNHCR will facilitate IDP and returnee access to legal and protection services through expanding the existing legal network and organising information campaigns

Food

WFP is conducting a food needs assessment to determine the negative impact of the conflict on food security and livelihoods, especially in rural areas, and to plan for future food requirements after WFP assistance ends in December 2001. Based on the results of this assessment, key partners are expected to formulate and support an integrated range of activities relevant to the changing context of the crisis. This will allow future food aid donors the flexibility to shift planned and resourced assistance for IDPs to support returnees and affected communities where needed.

[...]

Agriculture

FAO's proposed emergency agricultural assistance programme will help about 30,000 drought and conflict-affected farm families resume their livelihoods and thereby achieve self-reliance. To this end, FAO will: provide essential agricultural inputs to conflict and drought-affected farmers; repair tractors damaged by the conflict; build up the disaster mitigation and preparedness capacities of the Government and civil society; and provide coordination support and technical assistance to humanitarian partners engaged in emergency agricultural activities. Assistance will be provided in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, UN agencies, NGOs, the private sector and other relevant humanitarian partners. In particular, FAO will work closely with UNDP, which will provide complementary support to employment generation, micro-enterprise development and area-based economic development in the affected rural areas.

Health

WHO leads emergency health coordination providing crucial links between the Ministry of Health and humanitarian health agencies and together with UNICEF will assist the national health services in coping with the additional needs that have arisen from the conflict. At the same time, WHO will continue to strengthen disease surveillance systems and outbreak controls and UNICEF will support and monitor immunisation coverage and the mother and child healthcare outreach networks such as the patronage nursing system. Finally, WHO's "Peace Through Health" initiative will serve as a neutral medium for reconciliation and confidence building, emphasising re-integration of health professionals into the national health system.

Another profound consequence of the conflict has been the dramatic increase in psychosocial effects among conflict affected populations, as highlighted in the UNICEF-led vulnerability assessment. In order to restore the psychosocial well being of children and their families, UNICEF has established a Psychosocial Working Group to coordinate urgent psychosocial response mechanisms including mobile outreach teams and an SOS telephone hotline. IOM will complement this support through the implementation of formal and informal activities and will facilitate access to psychosocial activities for interested youth by providing transport services in rural areas. Complementary to these direct inputs, UNICEF aims to strengthen the capacity of the network of 30 Centres for Social Work, which provide outreach counselling services to families with children at risk. At the same time, WHO support multi-disciplinary teams of professionals who have completed a yearlong WHO psychosocial training, to establish support groups for individuals suffering from trauma and stress." (UN-OCHA November 2001, pp.15-19)

"Assistance to the HIV/AIDS national prevention programme in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

IOM in cooperation with the National Committee for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, WHO and UNICEF will develop a programme targeting the mobile population. Activities include awareness raising among returnees, refugees, IDPs and youth; training; establishment of anonymous counseling services; the establishment of voluntary, anonymous, free of charge HIV testing and pre and post testing counselling; implementation of school health education programme." (UN OCHA 20 January 2002)

"Shelter / Non-Food Items

[...] UNHCR will continue to coordinate humanitarian shelter-repair activities in close collaboration with the EC, which will lead the reconstruction efforts. Working closely with local and international NGO partners activities in the shelter and host families sectors will aim to support host family structures through the provision of household and non-food items. At the same time, UNHCR will provide return kits comprised of household and shelter repair materials to support the return of families to areas that have been assessed as adequately safe. Kits will address the initial basic need of families returning to residences that

have sustained damage or loss during the conflict, complemented by follow on housing repair inputs. Firewood will also be provided to assist vulnerable returnee families address their winter needs. Finally, UNHCR will provide funding for Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to assist affected communities with minor infrastructure repair to speed the process of recovery.

Education

[...] To ensure access to a safe learning environment and a quality education for all children, especially those affected by the conflict, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in assessment, coordination, planning and response, including reforms to improve education quality and relevance within a multi-ethnic environment. UNICEF interventions will include the provision of temporary spaces (tents/containers), school supplies and furnishings, support to youth programmes and community and family learning and empowerment programmes, peace-building and human rights curricula and inclusive learning practices. Advocacy for mine/UXO clearance will also be undertaken.

Urgent school rehabilitation/reconstruction needs are currently being assessed and as education is a primary concern for both communities, rapid rehabilitation or reconstruction of damaged facilities will continue to be undertaken to ensure access to education and also to build confidence and promote community stabilisation - not merely for the children who attend these schools - but for their parents and communities as a whole.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, pp.15-19)

“As the lead agency in the shelter sector, UNHCR will also continue to fund, coordinate and advocate the provision of community services to refugees, returnees and IDPs, with a view to assisting vulnerable individuals, especially children, youth, women and the elderly, through psychosocial, educational, recreational and vocational training activities.

[...]

To ensure equal access to quality education and to improve learning conditions for all children, UNICEF will continue to provide additional textbooks, school materials for students and teachers, furniture and teaching equipment for schools. Refurbishment of schools and temporary facilities will be supported to cope with additional placement needs for displaced children and those in conflict areas where school facilities have been damaged or destroyed.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF has introduced child rights, peace and conflict resolution lessons in primary schools. The programme aims to establish inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding among youth from different ethnic groups through the revision of curricula, training of teachers, and support to community-based children and youth centres. Tolerance and equal participation will further be promoted through continued support to inclusive education and interactive learning programmes.” (UN OCHA 20 January 2002)

“Protection/Human Rights/Rule of Law

To promote community stabilisation and confidence, aimed at facilitating return while also providing protection to ethnic minorities, the UNCT will maintain a robust presence in return and conflict-affected areas. The UNCT will also advocate for strengthening of existing human rights bodies particularly municipal-level Ombudsman offices. To facilitate IDP and returnee access to legal and protection services, UNHCR will expand the existing legal network, particularly in affected areas and will organise information campaigns to provide essential information on home communities and the availability of humanitarian assistance to assist displaced persons make informed decision regarding return. Complementary inputs will be provided through UNDP’s local government reform project to support the decentralisation process and work to ensure equitable participation of all ethnic groups in order to promote the reintegration of refugees and IDPs into ethnic diverse communities.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, pp.15-19)

“Child protection

To protect children from violence, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, deprivation and neglect, UNICEF will support community-based services at the local level aimed at strengthening the protective environment of the family as well as support government partners to improve policy and legal protection measures. UNICEF will increase its technical capacity to conduct vulnerability assessments of displaced, remainees, returnees, refugees and other conflict affected populations. To create a stabilizing, normal environment for children, youth and their parents and to ensure an appropriate psychosocial response, support will be provided to expand psychosocial mobile teams and establishment of psychosocial support services in UNICEF-supported family centres, schools and youth centres, training of professionals and support to recreational activities. Support will also be provided to build capacities within government, civil society and the Ombudsperson for Children to monitor child rights violations through further development of a database to collect and analyze information on vulnerability indicators for children and their families.” (UNICEF, 11 February 2002)

Summary of UNHCR's lead role regarding return, confidence building and stabilisation (January 2002)

- UNHCR has the lead role in the return, confidence building and stabilisation process as outlined in the Framework Agreement
- The 2002 objectives of UNHCR are to develop and maintain a significant field presence, to implement an emergency assistance programme for returnees and affected population, and to continue working with the Government

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has assumed the lead role in the return, confidence building and stabilisation process as outlined in Annex C of the Framework Agreement: *“All parties will work to ensure the return of refugees who are citizens or legal residents of Macedonia and displaced persons to their homes within the shortest possible timeframe, and invite the international community and in particular UNHCR to assist in these efforts.”* Priority activities during this crucial period of transition are focused on a significant field presence to assess the security, protection and humanitarian needs in villages where people have expressed a desire to return. UNHCR along with other actors intends to maintain a level of contingency and preparedness in order to respond to any renewed displacement.

At present, the UNHCR strategy has a threefold aim:

1. to maintain a constant monitoring and protection presence in the conflict affected areas in order to instil confidence and follow up on the return movement;
2. in coordination with the Government and other international actors, to support the process of return through implementation of stabilisation and confidence building measures, as stipulated in the Annex C of the Framework Agreement;
3. to assist returnees, through the provision of basic assistance to returnees and the affected population and maintain a contingency response capability to effectively address any renewed displacement.

[...]

Objectives

The 2002 objectives of UNHCR in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are:

1. To develop and maintain a significant field presence in order to build confidence, ensure freedom of movement, monitor protection aspects of the spontaneous return and, when the security situation permits, facilitate and promote return to the affected areas, in line with Annex C of the Framework Agreement.
2. To implement an emergency assistance programme for returnees and affected population, involving the distribution of relief items, emergency repair of individual houses and confidence

- building projects that benefit the whole community in affected areas, while maintaining a contingency and response capacity to deal with any potential or renewed displacement.
3. To continue working with the Government on citizenship and documentation issues; promote durable solutions for refugees through repatriation, local integration or resettlement (for selected eligible individuals); continue to protect and assist refugees; provide targeted support to refugee women, children, adolescents, the elderly and vulnerable persons.” (UN OCHA 20 January 2002)

UN response in 2001

IDP-related activities of UNICEF (May 2002)

- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health, and provided health supplies and vaccines
- With UNICEF support, national NGOs are providing psychosocial activities to children and families of all ethnicities that have been either displaced or are hosting displaced individuals

“Early Childhood Development

- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to strengthen outreach networks and medical mobile teams throughout the conflict-affected area and in communities hosting IDPs in addition to maintaining its countrywide early childhood development programs. Proposed early childhood development activities include provision of essential medicines and mother and child health equipment and services, immunisation campaigns, community-based health promotion and health education programmes, the promotion of breastfeeding, safe motherhood practices and expansion and enhancement of early learning and stimulation programmes.
- With available funds UNICEF concentrated efforts on providing essential medicines and health supplies, including 10 emergency health kits for 100,000 people for three months, five physician and five public nurse kits, consumable medical materials, 200,000 sachets of oral re-hydration salts, basic clinical equipment, paediatric drugs, Infant Starter Kits and other medical supplies to hospital units, health centres and pharmacies. UNICEF also supplied essential mother and child health equipment to facilities for mothers-to-be in conflict-affected area and host communities. For IDPs living in collective centres, UNICEF delivered hygiene items in coordination with the Red Cross and conducted health education classes for IDPs, women and young people in the six summer centres in Kumanovo and Skopje.
- UNICEF provided vaccines for immunisation of refugee children lodged in collective centres. WHO, in co-ordination with UNICEF, assessed the health status of the conflict affected population through a Rapid Health Assessment survey.

Child Protection / Human Rights / Rule of Law

- UNICEF has concentrated on the coordination and implementation of psychosocial activities following a country wide vulnerability assessment of IDP and host families. With UNICEF support, national NGOs are providing psychosocial activities to children and families of all ethnicities that have been either displaced or are hosting displaced individuals.
- UNICEF also provided winter clothing packages to some 3,000 children hosted in collective centres and other institutions during the winter period.” (UNICEF 29 May 2002)

The UN response: protection (September-November 2001)

- After the Framework Agreement, UN agencies increased their field presence to promote return
- Freedom of movement throughout the conflict area has been facilitated by UNHCR supported bus services

"Protection

To support spontaneous returns which began shortly after the signing of the Framework Agreement, UN agencies significantly increased their field presence throughout the conflict affected areas. The presence of field teams have assisted in building confidence and stabilising tense communities. Of the 102 conflict affected villages, UN teams have visited 90 villages, with the remaining dozen inaccessible due to mines or other security threats. Aiming to further support returns, UNHCR has also been lobbying the government to include draft deserters and draft evaders in amnesty legislation. In addition, field activities have recently been enhanced through UNHCR satellite offices in Tetovo and Kumanovo, which were established in October.

Freedom of movement throughout the conflict area has been facilitated by UNHCR supported bus services, which began in late August. Currently, 9 bus lines are operating in the Skopje, Tetovo and Kumanovo areas to provide needed transport to students, teachers, doctors and other workers. IOM is also facilitating transportation for 226 IDPs in Kumanovo by providing monthly tickets to facilitate access to schools and jobs." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

The UN response: shelter repair (September-November 2001)

- UNHCR coordinated self-help repairs for 3,162 houses, while it itself funded and managed repairs for 1,671 houses and distributed more than 8,000 return kits
- UNHCR also supported small infrastructure projects in conflict affected areas

"Shelter Repair

UNHCR is supporting the Ministry of Transportation and Communication reconstruction strategy by coordinating self-help repairs for 3,162 houses with minor (category 1) to moderate (category 2) repair. Working with NGO partners, the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation, the International Rescue Committee and Shelter Now International, UNHCR itself is funding and managing repairs for 1,671 houses, 10% more than its original target number within the same budget. Approximately 80% of these materials have been delivered to beneficiaries with completion of the programme expected by mid December, 2 weeks ahead of schedule. To complement shelter repairs, UNHCR has also distributed more than 8,000 return kits which includes tools, plastic sheeting, mattresses, blankets, cooking sets and jerry cans to families returning to homes that have been damaged.

UNHCR is also supporting small infrastructure projects in conflict affected areas. Working closely with its umbrella partner, Oxfam, a total of \$322,695 for 18 projects has been allocated during the past three months. The majority of the projects (13) are for school repair but also included rehabilitation in 2 collective centres, 3 water and sanitation projects, and rehabilitation of 1 clinic and 1 community centre. The 18 projects are being implemented by 9 NGO partners and 1 Municipality. Projects will benefit conflict affected populations in the Kumanovo (9), Crna Gora (5), Tetovo (8) and Gostivar (1) areas." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

The UN response: Water Environmental Sanitation (September-November 2001)

- UNICEF leads the WES coordination group, ensuring preparedness and providing technical support
- In December 2001, UNDP launched a project focusing on the rehabilitation of the water supply system in Kumanovo, which was overstretched by the influx of 70,000 IDPs

"Water Environmental Sanitation (WES)

UNICEF leads the WES coordination group, ensuring preparedness for emergency response and providing technical support to assess WES intervention.

[...]

In December, UNDP will launch a project funded by the Italian Government that will focus on the rehabilitation of the water supply system in Kumanovo, which has suffered severe disruptions during the recent conflict. Pressure on the Kumanovo water system was further exacerbated by the influx of 70,000 IDPs. The project will additionally support emergency needs of the IDPs through several Italian NGOs specialising in humanitarian assistance." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

The UN response: health (September-November 2001)

- WHO and UNICEF provided for essential medicines and supplies to help re-established primary health care to IDPs and host communities in affected areas and in collective centres

"Health

Working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH), WHO is coordinating activities in the health sector including ensuring adequate health services and supply of essential medications. To address additional needs resulting from the conflict, WHO has supplied medical kits including chronic diseases, epidemic response, pneumonia and mental health. UNICEF was also provided essential medicines and supplies including emergency health kits, oral re-hydration salts, basic clinical equipment, paediatric drugs and infant starter kits to help re-established primary health care to IDPs and host communities in affected areas and in collective centres.

Health care services have been expanded through doctor - nurse teams provided in cooperation with the International Rescue Committee. Teams are working closely with existing health facilities in Kumanovo, Gazi Baba and Aracinovo. In addition, WHO has established 3 temporary pharmacies in the Bit Pazar, Gjorce Petrov and Gazi Baba areas of Skopje to address additional needs of IDPs." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

The UN response: education (September-November 2001)

- UNICEF distributed nearly 30,000 textbooks and school kits to displaced children, as well as school furniture and teaching kits
- With support from a variety of donors, 8 schools have been rehabilitated and 40 were in the process of being repaired

"Education

A priority concern for the humanitarian community has been to ensure that disruption to education as a result of the conflict is minimised. To facilitate restarting of schools, UNICEF has distributed nearly 30,000 textbooks and school kits to displaced children. School furniture and teaching kits have also been provided where needed. UNICEF is also assessing the impact of the conflict on school attendance and have identified 15 schools (with another 6 where information is not available) which are not functioning as a result of damage or access problems.

Through the education working group coordinated by UNICEF, 77 schools in the conflict areas were prioritised for emergency repair and rehabilitation. With support from a variety of donors including USAID, ECHO and UNHCR QIPs funding, 8 schools have been rehabilitated and 40 are in the process of being repaired. Additional donor funds are needed in order to repair the remaining schools. UNICEF has also provided temporary school tents in Aracinovo while the primary school is being reconstructed." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001

The UN response: psychosocial support (September-November 2001)

- UNICEF conducted a psychosocial and host family vulnerability assessment
- The WHO provided for trained professionals who were supporting self help groups to address psychosocial needs of IDPs
- UNHCR was also supporting psychosocial activities for IDPs in Kumanovo and Tetovo as well as a variety of interventions through local NGOs

"Psychosocial Support

In cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, national institution and NGOs, UNICEF coordinates psychosocial activities to address conflict related mental health needs of children and their families. In September, UNICEF conducted a psychosocial and host family vulnerability assessment and based on assessment results, developed a strategy, including additional outreach services, a SOS telephone hotline and recreational activities. Psychosocial support is also provided through 4 teams of WHO trained professionals who are supporting self help groups to address psychosocial needs of IDPs. Training on PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) for primary health care doctors has also been organised by WHO in collaboration with the MOH.

Throughout the crisis, psychosocial support has been provided through UNICEF supported Family Centres in Kumanovo, Skopje and Tetovo. During the height of the crisis, stress coping summers centres were also established in Tetovo and Skopje to address the needs of IDPs and host communities. UNHCR, through its implementing partner, the American Refugee Committee is also supporting psychosocial activities for IDPs in Kumanovo and Tetovo as well as a variety of interventions through local NGOs."

The UN response: winterisation (September-November 2001)

- UNICEF, UNHCR and UNDP addressed winter needs for IDPs and return communities, by providing winter clothing, firewood, and repairing heating systems in collective centres

"Winterization

Working closely with several NGO partners, UN agencies are addressing winter needs for IDPs and return communities. UNICEF is providing winter clothing for IDP and refugee children in collective centres as well as children in institutions. UNHCR is providing complementary inputs including undergarments and bed linens. Through CESVI, UNHCR is also providing 26,000 cubic metres of firewood for some 10,000 families in return areas, as well as a number of vulnerable IDPs. Selected schools and clinics in the conflict areas are also benefiting from firewood.

In November, UNDP responded to a Government appeal for financial support for the repair and installation of heating systems in four collective centres hosting IDPs. With the onset of winter, UNDP is committed to expediting this emergency intervention, with a target date of mid-December for completion of the works." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

The UN response: economic recovery / community support (September-November 2001)

- UNDP was administering a grant from the Council of Europe Development Bank to facilitate the safe return of displaced persons and to provide economic relief to affected municipalities

"Economic Recovery / Community Support

[...] UNDP is also administering a Government grant from the Council of Europe Development Bank dedicated to facilitating the safe return of displaced persons in their home and providing economic relief to affected municipalities. The first phase of the project, focusing on provision of basic supplies for the IDPs, will be completed by mid-December." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

The UN response: agriculture (September-November 2001)

- FAO provided inputs to facilitate a quick resumption of agriculture activities in conflict and drought affected areas

"Agriculture

Agricultural and livestock production was seriously disrupted as the majority of the fighting took place in agriculture areas. Working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO has provided inputs to facilitate a quick resumption of agriculture activities in conflict and drought affected areas. Winter wheat seeds and fertiliser is currently being distributed to 12,667 families in Gostivar, Tetovo, north Skopje, Kumanovo, Sveti Nikole and Stip. The 1,375,000 US\$ project is funded by the US OFDA and FAO. To mitigate the effects of conflict related agricultural loss, a second project, totalling 1,180,000 US\$ financed by the Dutch and Norwegian governments is providing animal feed to vulnerable livestock farmers including IDPs, returnees and host families." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

The UN response: food (September 2001-May 2002)

- WFP led a well established food aid coordination group, which collated and disseminated information on country wide food aid assistance
- The office of WFP closed by the end of May 2002, while the ICRC continued with food distribution for all IDPs who had registration cards from the Red Cross

"Food

WFP leads a well established food aid coordination group, which collates and disseminates information on country wide food aid assistance. To assess the negative impact of the conflict on food security and livelihoods, especially in rural areas and to plan for future aid requirements over the winter, WFP in close cooperation with Action Against Hunger (AAH) conducted a food needs assessment during September and October. Results of the assessment will be used to target food assistance to vulnerable families within conflict affected areas." (UN-OCHA 3 December 2001)

WFP closed its office in May 2002:

"The office of the World Food Program will be closed by the end of May. The distribution of food for the IDPs, host-families and socially threatened persons will continue through ECHO until July. The distribution of food for the IDPs will continue until November." (Aidmacedonia 27 May 2002)

"The International Committee of the Red Cross continues with the distribution of food for all IDPs who have registration cards from the Red Cross." (Aidmacedonia 10 June 2002)

Housing repair programmes were implemented, while ethnic Albanian newspaper spoke of discrimination in aid allocation (October 2001)

- In October 2001, UNHCR began its programme for the repair of 1,400 houses in Lipkovo, Vaksince, Radusa and Aracinovo
- Members of the Albanian minority complained that an unfair share of the aid was directed at Macedonian communities

"As security conditions continued to improve in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNHCR this week began delivering shelter materials for the repair of 1,400 houses damaged during the six-month ethnic Albanian insurgency.

Eleven trucks delivered the materials at Lipkovo, Vaksince, Radusa and Aracinovo villages -- 10 to 40 kms northwest of Skopje -- at the start of UNHCR's \$1.3 million emergency shelter repair program. Other agencies have a similar program for another 4,000 houses. The materials include doors, windows, ceramic blocks, tiles, glass, timber battens and planks and cement. They will be used in repairing houses with minor damage described as category one and two under a classification system based on UNHCR's previous shelter rehabilitation programs in Kosovo, Bosnia and Croatia. Rebuilding of severely damaged houses -- category three and four -- will be undertaken by the European Union. UNHCR had earlier distributed plastic sheeting and tools for urgent use of returnees in a number of villages." (UNHCR 26 October 2001)

"UNHCR has begun daily delivery of 20 truckloads of shelter repair kits to families whose homes have been damaged. A total of 1,600 repair kits will be delivered by mid-December. More than 7,000 humanitarian aid packages have been delivered to benefit over 30,000 returnees, and 17 quick impact projects designed to repair schools and community buildings are underway. Up to 26,000 cubic -meters of firewood is also being delivered to schools, clinics and vulnerable families." (UNHCR 15 November 2001)

An Albanian language weekly's journalist claimed that ethnic Macedonians received an unfair share of aid:

“The ruined Albanian village of Drenoc, close to the town of Tetovo, has a ghostly appearance. The scars of war are clearly evident - burnt houses, empty shops and broken glass - and few people remain.

It's a familiar picture all over Macedonia, but now foreign aid is on the way to repair the damage wrought by the conflict that raged between Albanian guerrillas and government forces for most of this year.

Members of the Albanian minority, however, complain that an unfair share of this aid is being directed at Macedonian communities.

[...]

The authorities say it will take substantial financial aid from developed countries to rehouse those uprooted during the conflict. A first assessment by the EU-funded government agency, the Coordinating Group for Crises Management, TKMK, puts the figure at 20 million US dollars.

The TKMK chief, Ilija Filipovski, says priority would be given to ethnically-mixed areas and areas considered safe.

Albanian analysts say what this really means is that Macedonians will be given preference over their community. They claim Albanian-inhabited places like Tanushe, Selca, Breza and Llaca have been sidelined.

The town-planning adviser in Tetova commune, Skender Palloshi, concurred, asserting that the TKMK hasn't even bothered to assess badly hit Albanian villages in mountainous areas around Tetovo. In Drenoc, many Albanians found shelter with relatives nearby or fled to Kosovo. The Macedonians escaped to Skopje. The former complain that the plight of the latter is loudly reported in the media while they receive very little attention.” (IWPR 16 October 2001)

UNHCR facilitated the return of displaced (August 2001-April 2002)

- UNHCR conducted emergency housing repairs, monitored return areas, adopted confidence-building measures, issued identity documents, and promoted inter-ethnic dialogue
- UNHCR was cautious not to encourage return to areas where security assessments were not carried out, and where conditions for safe return were not yet established
- In October 2001, UNHCR established bus routes and was part of its efforts to help build confidence in the peace process and allow the return of refugees and internally displaced people
- With the completion of the housing repair programme by the end of June 2002, the total number of houses repaired was thought to be 4,500
- In 2002, UNHCR continued with other activities to help the return displaced

August 2001

"UNHCR's planned activities in support of return include emergency housing repairs, monitoring of return areas, confidence-building measures, issuing identity documents, and promoting dialogue between ethnic communities in mixed villages. UNHCR's mobile teams are already working in areas where the security situation improved slightly over the past 48 hours, such as Aracinovo near Skopje, and Kumanovo.

At the same time, UNHCR will continue to be cautious not to encourage return to areas where security assessments have not been carried out, and where conditions for safe return have not yet been established." (UNHCR 17 August 2001)

October 2001

"UNHCR opened a new bus line today linking the ethnic Albanian village of Selce to the the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's second largest town of Tetovo in a program to promote freedom of movement across volatile ethnic lines and checkpoints. The bus will transport workers and students from Selce, a village of 3,200 ethnic Albanians, to Tetovo, 60 km west of Skopje. Selce is located 10 kms northwest of Tetovo, where heavy fighting broke out during the six-month ethnic Albanian insurgency in the country.

"To facilitate freedom of movement, UNHCR has added three new bus routes this week to the six currently operating in the Skopje and Kumanovo areas. Evening buses for students run between Skopje and Radusa, as well as between Kumanovo and Lojane. Another new busline links the village of Grusino, near Kumanovo, and Skopje. UNHCR will operate these routes until commercial buses can resume normal operations." (UNHCR 15 November 2001)

"The program is part of UNHCR's efforts to help build confidence in the peace process and allow the return of refugees and internally displaced people." (UNHCR 26 October 2001)

April 2002:

"The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Skopje is currently carrying out the repair of 1,300 units in its emergency shelter repair programme for 2002, aiming at rehabilitating houses in damage category 1 and 2 (slight damage). In 2001, 3,167 houses were repaired by UNHCR and its partners under the emergency repair programme. With the completion of the programme by the end of June 2002, provided that donors are forthcoming, the total number of houses repaired will be brought to 4,500. This represents a clean balance sheet with practically no leftovers under category 1 and 2 (houses with slight damage).

This week, material for repair of slightly damaged houses was distributed to Lavce and Drenovec in the Tetovo region and to Aracinovo in the Skopje region. Distribution will be completed in 12 villages in the former crisis areas next week, providing necessary repair to 607 houses in damage category 1 and 2 by the end of April.

'UNHCR is anxious to see that also the remaining groups of displaced persons can return. Damage to their housing is one of several obstacles these people face, and we are calling for donors' support so that houses in categories 3 and 4 (heavy destruction) can be completed by specialised reconstruction agencies', says Amin Awad, UNHCR Representative in Macedonia.

UNHCR continues with other activities to help the return of people who became displaced as a result of last year's seven month-conflict in Macedonia. Family returnee kits are being distributed to returnees. With the aim to promote confidence building, and to help revitalise the communities affected by the conflict, a number of community based Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) are being implemented throughout the affected areas. Tailored assistance is given to vulnerable returnees and IDPs, in particular elderly, children and women, through psychosocial, educational, recreational, and vocational training activities. Special attention is given to disabled persons.

Of more than 170,000 people who fled their homes during the seven months conflict last year, some 150,000 have returned. Some 16,800 internally displaced persons remain displaced within the country, while between 5,000 and 8,000 refugees remain in Kosovo." (UNHCR 12 April 2002)

UNICEF gave mine awareness information, distributed hygienic items, and provided stress-coping support (June 2001)

- UNICEF organised a mass distribution of mine awareness leaflets along the road to Aracinovo and in IDP collective centres and other key distribution points, prior to return of IDPs
- UNICEF also distributed hygienic items including toothpaste, detergent and Infant Starter Kits, to more than 100 IDPs living in the two collective centres
- Less than two weeks after opening, the UNICEF-sponsored summer centres were attended by more than 1,100 IDP and local children of ethnic Macedonian and Albanian backgrounds

“UNICEF to give "roadside" mines and munitions awareness information starting 1 July

With the expectation that displaced persons begin to return to Aracinovo--last week's hotspot--this coming Monday, UNICEF is organising a mass distribution of mine awareness leaflets along the road to Aracinovo and in IDP collective centres and other key distribution points. Dissemination of the material will begin on Monday, July 1st. The Macedonian military has entered the village and report that roads are mined and UXOs pose a particular danger. The village has been badly damaged from shelling.

Distribution of hygienic items to internally displaced

UNICEF again today distributed hygienic items including toothpaste, detergent and Infant Starter Kits, to more than 100 IDPs living in the two collective centres--Dimitar Vlahov and Cicino Selo--that opened earlier this week. UNICEF continues to conduct site visits to all six of centres on a daily basis and provide such items as needed.

Providing Stress-Coping Support

UNICEF is expanding its "summer centres" in Kumanovo for children affected by the crisis to Skopje and Tetovo, areas that also have thousands of displaced. The summer centres provide health education, psychosocial support, mine awareness, sports and recreation, and creativity activities.” (UNICEF 29 June 2001, UNICEF Emergency Situation Report)

“UNICEF-supported interventions:

- Provision of essential medicines to affected villages in Lipkovo municipality.
- Provision of medicines to Kumanovo Health Centre for IDPs, including consumable materials (syringes, tongue depressors) and 10,000 doses of ORS for prevention of dehydration.
- Provision of water tanks to 6 kindergartens in Kumanovo.
- Co-ordination assistance to NGOs working in Kumanovo.
- Development of mine awareness materials (to be distributed).
- Provision of outreach psychosocial support through the UNICEF-supported Family Centre in Kumanovo.
- Establishment of 3 summer centres for IDP families in Kumanovo.
- Distribution of hygiene supplies to IDPs in Skopje Collective Centres.”

(UNICEF 29 June 2001, ‘UNICEF’s response to the IDP crisis in Macedonia’)

“UNICEF gained access today to IDP children and their families in Kumanovo for the first time in more than one week due to improved security conditions. Less than two weeks after opening, the UNICEF-sponsored summer centres are attended by more than 1,100 IDP and local children of ethnic Macedonian and Albanian backgrounds.” (UNICEF 2 July 2001)

International response

European donors pledged funds for de-mining and reconstruction activities to enable the return of displaced (July 2002)

- European funds were earmarked to remove obstacles which were inhibiting return, such as the presence of unexploded ordnance and mines, as well as damage to houses

“The Ohrid Agreement ended seven months of escalating hostilities and set the agenda for political reform to enhance minority rights. Annex C of the Agreement also provided a commitment from the international community to work together with the Government to return all persons displaced as a result of the conflict to their homes in the shortest possible time period.

Recent pledges from European donors will push forward this commitment at a very crucial time. Funds have been earmarked to remove obstacles which are directly inhibiting return including the presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and mines and shelter needs as a result of severely damaged homes.

The European Commission (EC) through the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) will provide 1.9 million Euros, which will be complemented by 130,000 Euros from the Government of Norway to enable deployment of international de-mining teams under the guidance of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS). Intensive de-mining activity will be undertaken by experienced NGOs - Care International and Handicap International - to rid the country of the main UXO / mine threat during the next 5 months. At the same time, complementary capacity building support for the Civil Protection Unit will support the Government in assuming responsibility for residual UXO / mine information and clearance needs.

A total of 14.2 million Euros has also been committed by the EC (3.6 million), and the Dutch (4.5 million), German (3 million) Italian (3 million) and Austrian (100,000) governments to rebuild some 1,000 structurally damaged or destroyed homes. Reconstruction activities will be undertaken by the International Management Group (IMG) together with implementing partners identified by the EAR.

With this generous support now secured, focus will turn to ensuring timely implementation of de-mining and reconstruction activities to enable as many of the remaining 17,000 internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their homes before winter sets in.” (UN OCHA 22 July 2002)

Humanitarian agencies drew up a framework for the transition from relief to recovery (March 2002)

- The process of defining a transition framework for the change from relief to development was initiated on 29 January 2002
- Obstacles to stability and security were identified as structurally damaged homes, access to services, lack of basic infrastructure, presence of UXOs and mines, continued security concerns, freedom of movement, and loss of livelihood due to closure of small businesses
- Programme priorities during the transitional period will include physical security, human security, strengthening of national structures / institutions for the provision of social services, as well as the provision of basic infrastructure

“The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has changed dramatically over the past 12 months. Tenuous peace has replaced armed conflict. Emergency relief activities are phasing out and being replaced with rehabilitation initiatives. Development strategies are resuming.

Aware that new circumstances require new approaches, national and international stakeholders began a new collaboration in January 2002. Representatives of the United Nations, NGOs, donors, the central and municipal government, political and security monitoring missions, the European Union and professional and business associations met in one-on-one sessions to discuss the current critical period of transition and to identify ways to link short term humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to longer term development priorities. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator then brought relevant stakeholders together in a series of roundtable discussions and committee meetings to cross-fertilize ideas identified in bilateral meetings. The aspirations of the local population were also incorporated through information gathered during rapid village assessments and field monitoring missions.

[...]

IV. Transition Process

The process of defining a framework to support the transition from relief to development was initiated on 29 January 2002 [...]. The proposed period for the transition will initially be to the end of 2002. Work will be ongoing, incorporating findings from the assessment and programme committees and taking account of developments within the country, particularly those concerning the implementation of the Framework Agreement. As such, the "Transitional Framework" is a living document that will be responsive to political developments such as the upcoming census, elections, implementation of the law on amnesty, and the decentralization process as well as to the changing needs of the people of FYROM.

[...]

VII. Transition Activities

To ensure that short term relief and rehabilitation activities are consistent with development priorities a logical starting point for prioritizing assistance during this critical transition phase has been the initial identification of the root causes of the conflict. While the underlying causes continue to be debated, ethnic grievances combined with severe economic dislocation that has occurred since the country obtained independence are widely viewed as key factors. The manifestation of this is illustrated in increasing unemployment, irregular trade activities and weak institutions.

To support return of the remaining displaced, transition activities must also work to overcome obstacles that continue to impede stabilization and security within the former conflict area. Through village profiles compiled by field monitoring teams the main obstacles have been identified as: 1) structurally damaged homes, (especially damage category 4 that requires reconstruction), 2) access to services, especially health and education; 3) lack of basic infrastructure (water, electricity, and sanitation); 4) presence of UXOs and mines; 5) continued security concerns; 6) freedom of movement; and 7) loss of livelihood due to closure of small businesses.

The significant progress that has been made on supporting the return of displaced persons and stabilizing communities must continue and be reinforced by activities that are directed at the underlying structural causes of the conflict as well as at ongoing sources of insecurity. With this in mind, programme priorities during the transitional period will include:

- 1) Physical security, including freedom of movement and governmental reform, particularly of the police and the judiciary;
- 2) Human security, including shelter, food and the means to earn a livelihood;
- 3) Strengthening of national structures / institutions for the provision of social services, especially in the area of health and education; and
- 4) The provision of basic infrastructure such as water, electricity, and sanitation facilities." (UN OCHA 9 March 2002)

Table indicating past, present, and future humanitarian actions as annex to the Transition Framework (March 2002)

SECTOR	NEEDS
Protection / Human Rights / Rule of Law (UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, IOM, NGO partners)	Access to legal and protection services; Lack of legal Adoption of relevant legislation; Confidence building / reintegration; Freedom of movement; Child protection; Counter trafficking
Mine Action (UNMAO, ITF, UNICEF, ICRC)	Mine awareness, training; Mine/UXO assessment and clearance; Information management; Build local capacity with Ministries of Defence and Interior
Shelter / Water & Sanitation (UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, EAR, NGO partners)	Repair/reconstruction (over 6,000 houses); Infrastructure rehabilitation; Access to potable water; Rehabilitation of water supply and sewage systems; Household and non-food items, return kits; Accommodation
Health (WHO / EPRP, UNICEF, ECHO, NGO partners)	Access to health services; Rehabilitation of health facilities (85% in need of repair and maintenance, 32% in need of reconstruction); Shortage of drugs and medical equipment; Shortage and uneven allocation of health personnel; Capacity building, training; Communicable diseases control;
Education (UNICEF, ECHO, NGO partners)	Access to education; Shortage of education materials and school furniture; School repair and reconstruction (78); Confidence building
Psychosocial Services (UNICEF, WHO / EPRP, NGO partners)	Conflict-related stress (estimated 85% of IDPs suffer from grief and anxiety, 77% had been exposed to armed conflict, 7% had been victims of violence); Training
Food (WFP, UNHCR, ICRC, NGO partners)	Food needs for vulnerable groups and IDPs as a result of the conflict.
Agriculture (FAO, NGO partners)	Loss of agriculture production (60%) in conflict areas, and livestock (15% for cattle and 30% for sheep); Shortage of seeds, fertilisers, and farming equipment; Access to fields mostly due to presence of mine/UXO; Confidence building
Economic Recovery / Community Support (UNDP, UNHCR, IOM, NGO partners)	Loss of economic and employment opportunities - unemployment; Income generation; Build capacity of local governments and civil society; Economic decentralisation; Vocational training; Confidence building

SECTOR	PROGRAMMES		
	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
Protection / Human Rights / Rule of Law (UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, IOM, NGO partners)	UNHCR field offices established in Tetovo and Kumanovo	Regular field visits and interviews with people:	Continue with the same programmes

		<p>Information on return; Legal counselling (through Legal NGO Network); Monitoring population movement; Advocacy on behalf of IDPs and refugees; Support the government to address legal, civil, and human rights issues; Bus lines: currently 9 bus lines are operational; Monitoring of the status of children, their rights, and vulnerability; Support for the government's National Child Rights Commission; Promote reconciliation and confidence, and reintegration of health professionals into the national health system - Peace through Health programme ; Assist victims of trafficking (migrant women and children) - Counter Trafficking programme</p>	
<p>Mine Action (UNMAO, ITF, UNICEF, ICRC)</p>	<p>UNICEF/UNMAS technical assessments of the presence of UXO and landmines, and identifying and mapping high risk areas; Established coordination</p>	<p>Identifying and mapping high risk areas; Mine and UXO clearance; Technical support and equipment to the Civil</p>	<p>Continue with the same programmes</p>

	structure; Established Information Management System for Mine Action database; 6 mine clearance teams deployed in the conflict-affected areas; 8 villages cleared of UXO/mines	Protection Office; Mine awareness campaigns and presentations for affected population; Printing and dissemination of mine awareness leaflets; Support for establishment of government Mine Action Office; Training of national teams of ten people in Slovenia	
Shelter / Water & Sanitation (UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, EAR, NGO partners)	Established coordination structure; Support the Ministry of Transportation and Communication reconstruction strategy by coordinating self-help repairs for 3,162 houses (cat 1 & 2); Repair of 3,162 houses (cat 1 & 2); Reconstruction of 430 houses (cat 3 & 4); 8,000 return kits; Support for 18 small-scale infrastructure projects; Firewood (26,000 cu.metres) 3 projects (water purification system, water tanks, garbage containers); Assessments: Collective Centres Heating Assessments; Rapid Village Assessment; Hosting Potential Assessment; Damage Assessment	Rapid village assessments on housing damage (including social and technical); Distribution of returnee kits, household, and non-food items; Quick Impact Projects (QIPs); Housing and infrastructure reconstruction; Rehabilitation of water system, and improvement of water supply and sewage systems; Rehabilitation of electricity supply network	Repair of 730 houses (cat 1 & 2); Reconstruction of 350 houses (cat 3 & 4); Monitor and support rehabilitation of priority water & sanitation projects
Health (WHO / EPRP, UNICEF, ECHO, NGO partners)	Completed Rapid Health Assessment (health capacity, needs, and priorities); Medical kits, essential	Support the government in development of health policy and upgrade health	Continue with the same programmes with increasing focus on long-term rehabilitation and

	<p>medicines and supplies, basic clinical equipment, infant starter kits; Temporary pharmacies (3); Mobile medical teams</p>	<p>care provision; Capacity building; training and professional skill development; Rehabilitation of health facilities; Provision of drugs, medical consumables, and, equipment; Immunisation - provision of vaccines; Mother and child health care - provision of basic supplies and medications</p>	<p>development; Prevention activities for HIV/AIDS, substance abuse</p>
<p>Education (UNICEF, ECHO, NGO partners)</p>	<p>Distributed textbooks (20,000), school kits (14,000), school furniture (650 desks, 1,300 chairs); Rehabilitation of damaged schools</p>	<p>Support the Ministry of Education and Science to ensure safe access to quality primary education; Repair and rehabilitation of schools; Provision of school material; Peace-building, reconciliation, and human rights promotion into primary schools curricula; UNICEF Peace education and conflict resolution project under development; Support youth development, promote basic employment skills and health lifestyles</p>	<p>Repair / reconstruction of 29 schools; Community awareness programmes on importance of education for all; Teacher training on identification, reporting, and referral of children experienced conflict-related stress</p>
<p>Psychosocial Services (UNICEF, WHO / EPRP, NGO partners)</p>	<p>Established coordination structure; Vulnerability Assessments of Displaced and Host Families; Training on</p>	<p>Operational mobile teams and SOS help lines; Multi-sector training of trainers programme in psychosocial</p>	<p>Continue activities</p>

	post traumatic stress disorder for primary health care doctors	assistance techniques is being developed; Recreational activities; Psychosocial support through family centres and NGO programmes	
Food (WFP, UNHCR, ICRC, NGO partners)	Food Needs Assessment of Conflict-affected Areas; Food aid to vulnerable residents and IDPs	Food aid to 34,000 conflict-affected residents per month (July 2001-March 2002); Food aid to IDPs until they are able to return to their homes	It is envisaged that need for food aid will diminish during the first half of 2002 as peace and stability returns to the country
Agriculture (FAO, NGO partners)	Established Coordination structure; Livestock Needs Assessment; Distribution of winter wheat seeds and fertiliser to 12,700 families in the conflict and drought-affected areas; Animal feed to 23,000 vulnerable livestock farmers	Support the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management to mitigate the consequences of the conflict for affected farmers and to contribute to confidence building; Distribution of maize seed and fertilisers, and animal feed; Upgrade agricultural practices including support for farm advisory services	Provide potato seeds in addition to maize seeds and fertilisers, and animal feed; Emergency veterinary health programme.
Economic Recovery / Community Support (UNDP, UNHCR, IOM, NGO partners)	Provide economic relief to affected municipalities, facilitate return of IDPs by providing basic supplies	Capacity building - expert advice to advance legislative reforms, promote transparency and accountability; Youth employment support programme -	Expand programmes

		provides employment opportunities for young adults; Training in computer technology for municipal workers and for unemployed; Confidence building, community building, and income generation - QIPs, IOM Confidence Building Initiative	
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(UN OCHA, 9 March 2002)

WFP highlighted main problems of food distribution to IDPs (January 2002)

“During the [Food Sector Coordination] meeting, the following problems were identified and discussed:

- Some beneficiaries have been double-registered
- Some beneficiaries are not registered but should qualify to receive food aid
- Some IDPs who have returned home continue to receive food aid
- Local NGOs (most notably El Hilal) do not coordinate their occasional food distributions with the Food Aid Coordination Committee.

The attendees agreed that the criteria and procedure to de-register IDPs must be defined and implemented as soon as possible.” (Aidmacedonia 31 January 2002)

The European Commission funded emergency aid for housing repair and host family support (November 2001-June 2002)

- Macedonian constitutional amendments were a condition for EC aid for repair of infrastructure and housing and financial support for host families
- The European Union funded a project providing cash assistance to host families, in which payments would be made twice at three-month intervals

"Speaking during today's General Affairs Council, External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten [...] announced the start of the implementation of a €12 million emergency aid package. [...]"

Last week's vote in the Parliament of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on a new constitution marks an important step in the political evolution of the country. The adoption of these constitutional

amendments, which implement commitments taken in the August 2001 Lake Ohrid Framework Agreement, was one of the conditions attached by the Commission to a new package of support measures for the country. Now that this condition has been met the Commission is in a position to sign the financing agreement for the €12 million package and to begin implementation of the aid immediately.

The new aid package will focus on repair and reconstruction of local infrastructure and housing and financial support for families hosting internally displaced people. It will consist of:

- Restoring the electricity supply to more than 100,000 people in the areas of Aracinovo, Kumanovo and Tetovo (additional allocation of €4.5 million)
- Repairing/rehabilitating around 500 houses in the former conflict areas to make them habitable for the coming winter, so that around 3,500 people will be able to return home. A contract for €1.4 million will be signed this week so that work can begin immediately (overall allocation of €2 million)
- Repairing local infrastructure starting with the water system in Kumanovo. A contract for €70,000 worth of works is under preparation and works will start soon (allocation of €1.5 million).
- Assessment of damage to religious buildings in Lesok and Neprosteni
- Aid to families hosting internally displaced people. Agreements for disbursement of the allocation of €3.3 million for this purpose are ready for signature.

Background:

In addition to this emergency assistance under the CARDS programme for the Western Balkans, the Commission has already adopted two packages of urgent assistance for FYROM under its Rapid Reaction Mechanism, worth €2.5 million and €10.3 million respectively. The implementation of these programmes is already well underway. Contracts have been signed for the provision of housing reconstruction totalling €2.25 million. 68 houses have already been completed, and work is progressing fast on a further 55 houses. Work to restore electricity supply in Aracinovo, Tetovo and Kumanovo is also underway. The Commission has already signed an initial contract worth €5.5 million for that purpose. Further activities under the Rapid Reaction Mechanism include the funding of de-mining operations and measures to restore inter-ethnic confidence." (EC 19 November 2001)

Cash assistance for host families was provided by the EU

"The European Agency for Reconstruction and FYROM's Ministry of Labour and Social Policy announce the start of the European Union-funded project to provide cash assistance to host families providing shelter to internally displaced persons and refugees. Each family which has hosted more than one IDP/refugee for a period over two weeks is eligible for a monthly cash disbursement of 4.600 MKD (about €75) for the period of January 2002 - June 2002.

The payments will be made twice at three-month intervals. The first quarterly payment for January, February and March will be disbursed starting 19th April, while the second quarter payments (April, May and June 2002) will be made in July 2002.

[...]

The project is managed by the European Agency for Reconstruction, which is now responsible for the management of the main European Union assistance programmes in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The cash assistance to host families providing shelter to IDPs and refugees project is part of the 2001 €6.5 million Emergency Assistance Package to support the implementation of the 13th August 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement." (EU 15 April 2002)

Update of housing repair situation as of June 2002:

"In a letter addressed to the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Euro-Commissioner Chris Patten submitted information on the activities of the European Agency for Reconstruction.

So far, a total of 875 houses (of all categories) have been reconstructed. Several hundred houses are expected to be reconstructed until the end of July, for the purpose of which 4.1 mil. Euros will be invested. A total of 13.6 mil. Euros have so far been spent for renewal of power supply networks in the regions of Skopje, Kumanovo and Tetovo. In the past period, 2.700 host families (families that accommodated internally displaced persons) were assisted with 75 Euros a month.

The European Agency for Reconstruction prepared a project worth 575.000 Euros aimed at solving the water supply problems in Kumanovo. Until the end of this year, the Agency will allocate 3.6 mil. Euros for reconstruction of 200 severely damaged houses, whereas approximately two million Euros will be provided for de-mining.” (Aidmacedonia.org 21 June 2002)

European Agency for Reconstruction manages main EU assistance programmes (January 2002)

- The EAR's Emergency Assistance Package has two main aims, namely to reconstruct conflict-affected areas, as well as support confidence-building measures
- Activities focus on rebuilding houses, rehabilitating electricity supply networks, cash support to host families, advice and training for the police force, de-mining, media support, and the water supply in the Kumanovo area

“As of January 2002, the European Agency for Reconstruction has been given the task of managing the €26 million EU Emergency Assistance Programme for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Programme itself was launched by the European Commission in September 2001. The Agency has opened an operational centre in Skopje, and will subsequently assume management responsibility for other current, previous and future EU assistance programmes, as from March 2002.

On 10th December 2001 the European Council extended the Agency's official mandate, to cover the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On 28th December 2001 the European Commission conferred on the Agency the management responsibility for the Emergency Assistance Programme as from 1st January 2002, with other programmes (past, present and future) to follow on 1st March 2002.

[...]

The Emergency Assistance Package has two main aims. First, the reconstruction of conflict-affected areas; second, support to confidence-building measures to bolster the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 13th August 2001. The assistance package comprises four main areas of activity:

Rebuilding of 750-800 houses by Spring 2002 (€4.5 million). Contracts to rebuild houses have been signed with:

- the Italian NGO Movimondo for work in Tearce municipality near Tetovo (Tearce, Prsherce, Slatino, Leshok, Neproshteno) as from September 2001
- the UK NGO Children's Aid Direct for work north-west of Kumanovo (Matejce, Opae) as from October 2001
- the Greek NGO European Perspectives for work in Aracinovo, as from December 2001.

To date, nearly 60% of the total target has been reached. Contracts have also been signed with the Italian NGO Intersos to clear mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) from houses chosen for subsequent rehabilitation, and with the German procurement company Prompt to monitor standards of building materials and performance.

Rehabilitation of electricity supply networks by March 2002 (€10.5 million). The Tetovo area has now had its electricity supply completely restored through emergency 'patching' of the network. Aracinovo has

now had all of its street lighting restored, and 80% of its households reconnected to the electricity supply network. The Kumanovo area has seen good progress made in reconnecting houses in Opae and Slupchane. Contracts have been signed with the Macedonian Electricity Company ESM, and with the supervising engineer ENEL from Italy.

Cash support to host families (€3.25 million). A programme will provide cash support to families housing refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country, the latter being identified and registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR.

Advice and training for the police force (€1.7+ million). An initial €1.7 million has been allocated to a programme to bring senior EU police officers to the country to advise on best policing policy and techniques. Training courses will also be offered to policemen and women. An additional €1.7 million may be made available for further actions.

Further activities will focus on:

- de-mining
- media support
- the water supply in the Kumanovo area.” (EU 28 January 2002)

European Commission donated funds for aid to remaining displaced (February 2002)

- The aid comprised actions in the fields of nutrition, water and sanitation, health, education, as well as support to the agricultural sector

“The European Commission has allocated €5.5 million for basic assistance to refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and other vulnerable groups in FYROM as well as to vulnerable minorities in Kosovo. In FYROM, following the signing of the Framework Agreement in August 2001, tens of thousands of displaced people were encouraged to return to their homes. However, an estimated 30,000 IDPs and refugees have yet to return and their numerous needs still have to be addressed. [...] In FYROM, the projects include continuing to provide further support for humanitarian actions in the fields of nutrition, water and sanitation, health and education. The continuation of food assistance will be carried out in close co-ordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and ECHO partners, targeting IDPs, returnees, residents in the conflict-affected areas and up to 5,500 social case families. This action is foreseen to continue until summer 2002.

Support will also be provided to the agricultural sector (livestock food) to facilitate a return to normal agricultural activities in the spring. Emergency rehabilitation of schools and health facilities will take place throughout the year.” (ECHO 5 February 2002)

The International Office for Migration planned for the provision of health programmes (November 2001)

- IOM planned to assist the national HIV/AIDS prevention programme, which also targets IDPs
- IOM planned to support the expansion of psychosocial activities within the existing service framework, to include displaced and returning population

“Assistance to the HIV/AIDS national prevention programme in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (US\$ 290,000)

IOM in cooperation with the National Committee for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, WHO and UNICEF will develop a programme targeting the mobile population. Activities include awareness raising among returnees, refugees, IDPs and youth; training; establishment of anonymous counselling services; the establishment of voluntary, anonymous, free of charge HIV testing and pre and post testing counselling; implementation of school health education programme.

[...]

Support and Enhancement of existing psycho social activities (US\$ 300.000)

In close coordination with UNICEF, IOM will support the expansion of psychosocial activities within the existing service framework, to include displaced and returning population. Activities include theatre, social integration activities as well as transport to the interested young beneficiaries living in rural areas.” (UN-OCHA November 2001, p.61)

European Commission donated funds for emergency aid to IDPs (September 2001)

- The EC donated funds for aid concerning the distribution of food parcels to some 45,000 additional IDPs, as well as hygiene parcels for 6,000 families who are hosting displaced people

“The European Commission has earmarked an additional €1 million in emergency aid to help people who have been displaced as a result of the conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This new decision will benefit 45,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 6,000 families hosting them. The aid will be channelled through the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) which comes under the responsibility of Commissioner Poul Nielson.

Since the beginning of the crisis, ECHO has put in place programmes to help the victims of the crisis in FYROM, by providing food to 25,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) and undertaking emergency rehabilitation of communal services (such as schools) in areas affected by the conflict.

This new decision finances the distribution of food parcels to some 45,000 additional IDPs, as well as hygiene parcels for 6,000 families who are hosting displaced people in FYROM.

With this decision, ECHO's contribution to respond to the humanitarian needs in FYROM since the beginning of 2001 amounts to €4.9 million.” (EC-ECHO 11 September 2001)

ICRC/IFRC

ARC and the Federation distributed hygiene parcels to IDPs and families (July 2002)

“Internally Displaced People have been assisted with the same normative for hygienic parcels as for refugees in collective centers and host families. The American Red Cross has been serving the IDP's and

their families during December 2001, January and February 2002. The Federation (with ECHO support) took over that responsibility for the months of March and April. Afterwards the American Red Cross will resume their previous commitment. The normative that was established by the American Red Cross is also being used by the Federation:

Family 1-4 members	1 parcel
Family 5-8 members	2 parcels
Family 9-12 members	3 parcels

Necessary aid items and assistance were provided in a timely manner to the local Red Cross branches in the country and distributions were carried out successfully.” (IFRC 4 July 2002)

ICRC launched new distribution programme for villagers and returnees (March 2002)

- The ICRC launched a new distribution programme in the Skopska Crna Gora region, enabling reconstruction to take place
- It is handing out food parcels, flour, hygiene products and baby parcels

“The ICRC has recently launched a new distribution programme in the Skopska Crna Gora region for people living in villages affected by last year's conflict. During December 2001, the ICRC provided assistance to help vulnerable groups through the winter months. The new relief effort is intended to ensure people have enough food and other resources, so that both inhabitants and returnees can concentrate on reconstruction. In turn, this will create conditions allowing people displaced from villages directly affected by the fighting to return home in safety.

On 7 and 8 March, the ICRC distributed supplies to 180 people in the remote mountain villages of Malina Mala and Brest. Over the coming days, the organization will distribute aid to some 520 people from the same region who either remained during the fighting or returned recently.

The ICRC is handing out food parcels, flour (bought from local Macedonian suppliers), hygiene products and baby parcels. The aid will help people in isolated villages who have no reserves to fall back on. "The ICRC will maintain a regular presence in the area, carrying out on-the-spot assessments, and also stands ready to provide ad-hoc assistance when the displaced people return to their villages," announced Katja Lorenz, head of the ICRC's Kumanovo office.

Last week, the ICRC completed similar distributions to over 3,900 people in Tetovo and almost 200 in Skopje. For almost a year, it has also been distributing food every month to centres housing some 3,000 displaced Macedonians.” (ICRC 14 March 2002)

Summary of ICRC activities for displaced during the conflict (February 2002)

- ICRC, being the main humanitarian actor, provided relief to 120,000 IDPs, evacuated some 1,200 reunited around 200 families and supplied medical items
- In September 2001, the ICRC decided to stop the registration and subsequent assistance for newly displaced and would focus on a needs-based rather than a blanket geographical approach
- All those already registered continued to receive assistance, either from the ICRC, or, in the case of longer-term displaced, from Intersos/ECHO

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was the main humanitarian actor during the six-month conflict between the FYROM security forces and the NLA. Its activities included [inter alia]:

1. providing relief mainly on a monthly basis to more than 120,000 displaced and resident populations.
2. evacuating more than 1,200 vulnerable people to safety from the conflict-affected areas
3. reuniting around 200 separated families from the Tetovo area after the sudden population movement in July
4. supplying more than 26 hospitals and clinics with basic medical and surgical supplies.

[...]

In the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Orhid peace agreement which brought a formal end to the fighting, the ICRC has been committed to responding to humanitarian needs which still prevailed as a direct result of the conflict. These included bringing food supplies to communities which were still cut off because of the erecting of either police/army checkpoints or the continuing presence of NLA fighters in the conflict-affected regions, continuing to assist displaced people, trying to establish the fate of missing people and warning affected civilians about the dangers of unexploded ordnance and mines.

Relief activities

Through its constant presence in the conflict affected regions the ICRC has been able to observe a steady stabilisation of the situation following the end of the fighting - especially in terms of access to food supplies. For this reason it has scaled down its relief activities. This is in line with its world-wide mandate to assist and protect people **directly affected by conflict**.

Last autumn, once the emergency was over, the ICRC carried out a comprehensive re-registration process to establish who exactly was still genuinely displaced. It proceeded to handover to ECHO-funded humanitarian organisations who now assist the remaining 13'000 displaced people still in host families. ICRC continues to assist 3'000 displaced people hosted in collective centres and for the winter period, 5'000 conflict affected persons mostly from sensitive areas in and around Tetovo.

During the last quarter of 2001, the ICRC also ran a major programme for the resident populations of conflict-affected villages - either those who never left or recently returned to their homes. Around 50,000 people, both ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, have benefited from monthly food assistance because of the disruption of their regular supply routes. The constant presence of ICRC delegates in these areas - especially to particularly isolated communities - was also an important reassuring factor for these people.

This programme ceased at the end of November as the negative effects of the conflict have considerably improved. However, recognising the fact that many vulnerable groups are facing difficulties this winter, the ICRC has worked closely with other humanitarian actors, specifically Action Against Hunger, which have begun assistance programmes. This is to try to ensure a dovetailing of assistance. As part of an effort to prepare people for winter, the ICRC also distributed around 40,000 blankets to displaced and resident populations. It stands ready to provide ad-hoc emergency assistance in case of any new population movement." (ICRC 1 February 2002)

In September 2001, the ICRC adapted its relief programme to the changed humanitarian situation:

"The ICRC is in the process shifting its relief strategy in order to complement the evolving situation in the country. Following discussions with the Macedonian Red Cross and the Macedonian government, the ICRC has decided to stop the registration and subsequent assistance for newly displaced. This is a reflection of the ICRC's assessment that as the fighting has recently come to a halt, there is no subsequent displacement of people who are fleeing their homes as a *direct result* of hostilities.

Instead, the ICRC's relief policy will now focus on a needs-based rather than a blanket geographical approach (in which all displaced from certain directly affected villages are automatically eligible for assistance). All those already registered will continue to receive assistance, either from the ICRC, or, in the case of longer-term displaced, from Intersos/ECHO. Meanwhile, anyone able to prove that they are newly displaced as a result of damaged housing, physical threats or lack of local access will be considered for registration on an individual assessment basis.

[...]

The commitment to continue to assist people still housed in temporary collective centres is ongoing. ICRC teams are regularly visiting collective centres in order to keep progress on developments there and maintain an important dialogue with the displaced, as well as supplying the regular relief assistance.” (ICRC 19 September 2001)

ICRC conducted mine/uxo awareness programme, benefiting displaced wanting to return (December 2001)

- Unexploded ordnance and mines posed a serious threat to potential returnees
- In August 2001, the ICRC launched the UXO/Mine Awareness Programme targeting civilians most affected by the threat - that is the resident, refugee and displaced populations from villages in the former conflict areas
- Around 50,000 leaflets were distributed to refugees and displaced as they came to collect their monthly ICRC food assistance at the Macedonian Red Cross, while the ICRC also visited all the directly affected villages and gave presentations in all of the collective centres

"The significant amount of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and to a lesser extent, mines, left behind in the wake of the conflict between the Macedonian security forces and the NLA poses a serious threat to thousands of civilians living in or planning to return to their villages.

After fighting broke out in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia between Macedonian security forces and the National Liberation Army, the ICRC decided to assess the threat posed by mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) and to define an appropriate strategy for dealing with it. The assessment, which was carried out by the ICRC's regional mine/UXO-awareness specialist in April and July 2001, was initially limited to the Tetovo region but was later extended to other conflict areas. Subsequently, the ICRC decided to launch a mine/UXO-awareness programme for the communities most at risk.

Through its UXO/Mine Awareness Programme launched in August, the ICRC has targeted civilians most affected by the threat - that is the resident, refugee and displaced populations from villages in the former conflict areas. This was done through the distribution of leaflets and posters as well as a series of presentations conducted by ICRC UXO/Mine Awareness Instructors. In a second phase, the ICRC has trained a network of around 35 MAIs from the Macedonian Red Cross and the local communities who are continuing to conduct UXO/Mine Awareness presentations.

The ICRC's programme is considered complementary to those conducted by the authorities and other organisations which focus on UXO/Mine clearance and assistance to UXO/Mine victims. Information on locations and incidences is systematically gathered by the ICRC and shared with the UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO). Meetings are also regularly held with the actors involved in other aspects of the issue to try to ensure a holistic approach to the problem. The ICRC's programme is acknowledged by the authorities and the UN as fully covering the needs in the area of UXO/Mine awareness.

The Problem

A wide range of ammunition was used during the recent conflict. Due to the reported use of old or low quality ammunition, it is estimated that the ratio of unexploded ordnance is higher than the average in other theatres of conflict.

Assessments conducted by ICRC experts have revealed that the biggest threat to the population lies in unexploded ordnance - both in terms of quantity and because their exact locations are largely unknown. Whilst there have been incidents and sightings of antitank mines, they present less of a threat to civilians because their locations are known and thus precautions can be taken to minimise incidences. Whilst there is no documented evidence yet of the widespread laying of antipersonnel mines, this cannot be entirely excluded. The threat is confined to people living or about to return to areas where the fighting took place - namely the areas of Tetovo, Kumanovo and surroundings of Skopje.

The threat thus differs significantly from that facing post-conflict communities in other parts of the Balkans where antipersonnel land mines, unexploded ordnance and cluster bombs are the main problem. It was therefore important that the message and material developed in Macedonia reflects the reality of the situation here.

The ICRC Response

In order to avoid generating unnecessary alarm among the general population, the ICRC decided to develop a community-based approach, targeting the populations *directly affected* by the threat, meaning the **resident** population who had decided to stay as well as the **refugee** and **displaced** populations who had left the conflict zones.

A geographical priority list was established by the ICRC in order to ensure that those most at risk, or about to return to risk areas were the first to be reached.

The first UXO/Mine presentations, for example, were given for the resident and displaced population from Aracinovo and Brnjarci. The Lipkovo region was also considered an important priority because of the significant amount of unexploded ordnance left behind from the fierce fighting which took place there.

The programme, which was launched at the end of August, aims at conveying a message which goes beyond simply raising awareness about the *existence* of the threat, but to equip civilians with the knowledge that will enable them to *adapt their behaviour* and learn to live with the threat until the relevant clearing operations have been conducted.

Essentially, civilians, including importantly children, who are often most at threat because of their natural curiosity, are taught how to **recognise** UXO and mines, **warned** against approaching or touching them and encouraged to **notify** them immediately to the competent authorities.

In the **first phase**, around 50,000 leaflets, designed in-country to adapt to the Macedonia context, were distributed to both the **refugee population** in Kosovo (through the ICRC in Kosovo) and the **displaced population** as they came to collect their monthly ICRC food assistance at the Macedonian Red Cross. The ICRC also visited all the directly affected villages, helping community officials to identify local instructors (MAIs) and at the same time conducting presentations to the **resident populations** most at risk. The ICRC UXO/Mine team also gave presentations in all of the collective centres where displaced people are accommodated.

The **second phase**, the training of a network of MAIs from the Macedonian Red Cross and local community representatives has also been completed, and the programme is currently in its **third phase** - the conducting of presentations by the MAIs, with monitoring and support from the ICRC.

How each target group was reached

[...]

Displaced population - There were more than 70,000 internally displaced people inside Macedonia at the end of the conflict. All collective centres were visited MAIs, whilst those staying with host families received a leaflet when arriving at the Macedonian Red Cross to collect their monthly ICRC relief assistance. MRC instructors are also conducting presentations in their respective branches for displaced persons in host families." (ICRC 7 December 2001)

MRC assisted and counseled displaced in health, property and educational issues through the Skopje Information Centre (November 2001)

- The Information Centre assisted refugees and displaced in referrals and direct assistance related to appropriate locations for assistance, housing problems, medical problems, educational issues, and counseling
- The center dealt with IDPs issues in the months of March, May, June, July and August 2001

"Basic information about attaining rights and benefits will be provided to refugees and other vulnerable groups who either come to or call Skopje information centre. Referrals to agencies and various governmental and non-governmental organizations will be made when appropriate.

The Federation-funded Information Centre of the MRC continues to assist refugees and vulnerable IDPs, in referrals and direct assistance. The Center is well known and holds a solid reputation in the community. The Information Centre was established in 1992 following the Bosnian refugee crisis. With a caseload of around 50 persons a day the centre refers these persons to appropriate locations for assistance, solves housing problems, medical problems, and deals with educational issues, and in extreme cases arranges for counseling. [...] The following are the numbers of assisted persons January-August and the respective services offered:

- Interviews conducted with refugees: 2,847, and 2,997 with IDPs.
- Telephone calls concerning refugee issues: 3,521 and approximately 3,006 IDPs matters.
- Psycho-social support provided to 117 refugees and 154 IDPs.
- Medical assistance was provided to 1,024 refugees and 1,976 IDPs.
- Assistance with Educational issues was provided for 505 refugees and for 20 IDPs, registered only in the months of May and August.
- Other miscellaneous services were provided to 967 refugees and to 2,191 IDPs.

The center dealt with IDPs issues in the months of March, May, June, July and August. The numbers in regard to the IDPs below are for these aforementioned 5 months." (IFRC 14 November 2001)

ICRC-plans for IDP assistance from September 2001 onwards (August 2001)

- ICRC planned to continue to meet the needs of some 30,000 IDPs in host families and 7,000 IDPs in collective centers, through food assistance
- Broader needs of the IDPs, such as schooling for children, psychosocial counselling, and leisure activities, were to be addressed by other national or international bodies
- ICRC also planned to distribute basic medicines to ambulancias caring for 60,000 IDPs living in host families and 7,000 in collective centers

“Over the coming months, the ICRC plans to:

- continue to meet the urgent and basic needs of all IDPs during the first phase of their displacement. For planning purposes, this emergency phase is calculated as lasting three months, during which adapted food assistance will be provided to around 30,000 IDPs living in host families and up to 7,000 in collective centres each month. The ICRC will also distribute individual hygiene parcels and baby parcels on a quarterly basis.

In preparation for after the emergency phase, the ICRC has taken steps to ensure a smooth handover of beneficiaries to other organizations. The United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) has been approached and has agreed to assist the IDPs with a monthly food ration, once their pipeline is ready.

The broader needs of the IDPs, such as schooling for children, psychosocial counselling, and leisure activities, are to be addressed by other national or international bodies. In parallel, UN agencies will be able to assess long-term rehabilitation needs and have time to initiate them without being under pressure to cover immediate basic needs.” (ICRC 28 August 2001)

It also stated its plans for health assistance to IDPs:

“Over the coming months, the ICRC plans to:

- distribute basic medicines to ambulancias caring for 60,000 IDPs living in host families and 7,000 in collective centres, covering their health needs for a period of 4-6 weeks
- in the case of the return of these IDPs and of the 50,000 refugees (mostly from Kosovo), the ICRC will distribute these medicines, after an evaluation of the needs, to ambulancias taking care of the resident population and the returnees, until the Ministry of Health is able to re-establish the normal supply
- provide hospitals and other medical facilities with sufficient first-aid materials and medical supplies, should there be further outbreaks of violence.”

(ICRC 28 August 2001)

ICRC brought food to civilians in Lipkovo and evacuated most vulnerable (August 2001)

- The ICRC delivered food aid to civilians in Lipkovo, which was said to contain up to 10,000 villagers
- The ICRC remained concerned about the plight of residents of other villages which were similarly cut off, and planned to visit and aid villagers in the Tetovo region

“This week the ICRC delivered much-needed food aid to civilians in the village of Lipkovo who have been in a precarious situation for many weeks now since being cut off from their regular supply lines.

Four trucks carrying wheat flour, baby parcels, candles and family parcels containing additional food and basic emergency supplies arrived in the village Tuesday morning after the ICRC received security guarantees from both sides. During the same visit, the team evacuated 16 vulnerable people who were to be reunited with their families in Kumanovo.

While the ICRC had visited Lipkovo on a number of occasions since the outbreak of fighting in the Kumanovo region to deliver medical supplies to the clinics and evacuate people, it had not previously

received direct requests to bring food to the area. During recent visits, however, local representatives of the civilian population, who estimate that between 10,000 and 15,000 people could still be in Lipkovo, asked the ICRC for help after warning that their food stocks were running dangerously low.

The ICRC remains concerned about the plight of residents of other villages which are similarly cut off. A trip is planned this week to the village of Sipkovic, in the hills above Tetovo, where civilians have been isolated for months now. The ICRC also plans to bring food assistance to Vratnica, in the Tetovo area, where supplies are reportedly having difficulty getting through following recent clashes in the area." (ICRC 9 August 2001)

Summary of ICRC activities on behalf of IDPs as of July 2001

- Displaced families received full food rations, hygiene parcels, baby parcels and a blanket when they registered with the MRC
- Since March 2001, the ICRC/MRC assisted around 60,000 IDPs
- Till the end of 2001, the ICRC aimed to provide assistance to up to 30,000 IDPs living in host families and 7,000 in collective centres each month

"The ICRC is the main humanitarian actor involved in supporting IDPs in FYRoM. All assistance is currently provided through the registration and distribution process, mainly through the Macedonian Red Cross (MRC). Displaced families receive full food rations (individual food parcels plus 12 kg of flour), hygiene parcels, baby parcels and a blanket when they register with the MRC. In subsequent months they receive half-ration food parcels, as they have had time to develop their own coping mechanisms.

Since March 2001, the ICRC/MRC relief programme has assisted around 60,000 IDPs (22,000 from the first phase of the conflict around Tetovo in March, and 38,000 from the second phase of the conflict around Kumanovo).

The internally displaced are predominantly ethnic Albanians, who generally receive strong support from their community and are housed with host families. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) has identified social institutions and hotel facilities sufficient for 7,000 IDPs. At present, there are around 1,000 ethnic Macedonian IDPs living in such collective centres.

Over the next six months the ICRC aims to provide adapted food assistance to up to 30,000 IDPs living in host families and 7,000 in collective centres each month. The IDPs will also receive individual hygiene parcels, and baby parcels on a quarterly basis.

The organization will also closely monitor and follow the situation so as to be able to react to a new crisis giving rise to further population movements. An additional contingency stock will be prepared for 60,000 persons, comprising full food rations, individual hygiene parcels, baby parcels, blankets, candles, jerrycans, buckets, and mattresses." (ICRC 27 July 2001)

ICRC continued to evacuate and assist displaced from the Tetovo region (July 2001)

- The ICRC gave food and other emergency aid to displaced fleeing the Tetovo area
- The ICRC office in Tetovo received urgent requests from civilians wishing to be evacuated, but the security situation did not allow visits to the area

“On 25 July the ICRC distributed food and other emergency aid to civilians who had fled their homes in the Tetovo area following the recent upsurge in fighting between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian armed groups.

In Skopje, the ICRC made two relief deliveries during the day to about 450 displaced people from the villages of Tearce, Lesok and Nprosteno who are housed in a temporary shelter in the city. In a separate mission an ICRC team, together with workers of the Macedonian Red Cross, travelled to Zilce to take food, hygiene and baby parcels to some 500 people from the same villages near Tetovo. This follows an assessment mission carried out the previous day, when delegates who arrived in Zilce within hours of the new influx found the displaced families in a state of distress, many of them having left all their belongings behind.

Around 1,800 people from the Tetovo area were registered by the Macedonian Red Cross in the first 48 hours following the outbreak of fighting and all of them will soon receive relief supplies donated by the ICRC and distributed by the National Society.

The ICRC office in Tetovo continues to receive urgent requests from civilians wishing to be evacuated from villages affected by the clashes. Several attempts were made to reach the area on Tuesday 24 July, but the team had to turn back for security reasons. Later in the day delegates were able to evacuate five people from Tearce, including one who was seriously injured. The ICRC will continue to try, as a matter of urgency, to reach trapped civilians as soon as the security situation allows.” (ICRC 25 July 2001)

MRC distributed registration cards to IDPs, entitling them to free medical care and medicines (June-July 2001)

- IDPs were registered by the MRC (whose registration card is recognised as the only valid document for humanitarian assistance by NGO's) and were receiving basic food assistance
- With the card, the IDPs received food and non-food items, as well as free medical care and medicines

“The Macedonian Red Cross continues to register people displaced by the latest clashes between government forces and Albanian fighters and, together with the Federation, to provide them with food, hygiene and baby parcels. In the past week, the Red Cross branches have registered almost 10,000 people in need of immediate assistance. This brings the total of displaced people countrywide to 27,707. It was a week [21 June 2001] in which clashes continued, but ceasefires allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross to evacuate 330 civilians from two villages in the ICRC's biggest single evacuation since the conflict began.” (IFRC 21 June 2001)

“High majority of IDPs are settled in with host families (in most cases with relatives). This is also the case with IDP's in Macedonia (ethnic Macedonians from affected areas moved to their relatives in Skopje, Kumanovo and other towns in the South-East of the country). They are registered by the Macedonian Red Cross (whose registration card is recognised as the only valid document for humanitarian assistance by NGO's) and are receiving basic food assistance.” (ACT 5 July 2001)

“The office offers practical advises concerning the needed documentation to be eligible for humanitarian assistance. With the card issued the IDPs not only receive their regular portion of relief food and non-food items, but are also entitled to free medical care and medicines. Most of the IDPs are not able to return to their employment site, which makes them highly dependent of the humanitarian aid. It is also a place for psychosocial support and advising possibilities, as well as ad hoc assistance concerning medicines, education etc.” (E-mail from IFRC Macedonia to NRC Geneva 7 December 2001)

American Red Cross gave health lessons to displaced (June 2001)

- The ARC held separate weekly women's and men's preventative health sessions in a center in Aracinovo
- Women's sessions, for example, covered healthy pregnancy and family planning

"The American Red Cross holds separate weekly women's and men's preventative health sessions in a center in Arachinovo where newly arriving families are registered daily by the Macedonian Red Cross. The medical staff was originally hired to run a Red Cross clinic in the village of Malina Mala and serve five villages near the Kosovo border. Just as it was opening fighting broke out, and mined roads have made it unsafe for workers or patients to return. The doctors and nurses instead opened the preventative health education program, which helps the same intended clientele, but in Arichinovo where they have migrated.

The women arrive at their health session cloaked in pastel scarves and thick polyester coats buttoned to the ground on this 80-degree Fahrenheit day. They can't read, and lessons are taught with pictograms drawn by the nurses and doctors. Animated, the health workers begin with a story of Hatique who takes good care of herself, and Miruche who smokes, drinks too much coffee, watches a lot of TV and doesn't bathe. Both women are pregnant. The story ensues, followed by suggestions for following Hatique's routine of daily self-care.

A recent lesson was about healthy pregnancy and family planning. Most of the women have several children already and don't want to have more, at least not now when their future is so uncertain. None had heard of pregnancy tests, and few could afford to buy them." (ARC 13 June 2001)

The Red Cross evacuated civilians trapped by fighting in Kumanovo-Lipkovo region (May 2001)

- A cease-fire allowed the ICRC to reach thousands of villagers trapped in Vaksince, Slupcane, Orizare, Lipkovo and Lojane by fighting and evacuate most vulnerable ones
- Tens of thousands of people remained stranded by the crossfire - mostly elderly men, women and children who were either unable or unwilling to leave despite government pleas to evacuate

"A cease-fire finally allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Monday (May 14) to reach five Macedonian villages where thousands are huddled in cellars, trapped by an ongoing conflict. The trip - one of the most successful since the fighting began - permitted the humanitarian organization to deliver much needed aid to the vulnerable civilians. However, the Red Cross is concerned about their livelihoods as the fighting continues.

Government troops and ethnic-Albanian forces agreed on a temporary cease-fire to allow Red Cross workers to deliver the aid and evacuate villagers in the north of the country. At least 100 people were evacuated, mostly women, children and elderly men, who have been cowering in basements since May 3.

The civilians - including two wounded children - were taken out in Red Cross vehicles and taxis and transferred to relatives in Kumanovo and the Macedonian capital, Skopje.

The Red Cross also evaluated further the humanitarian needs of the trapped and brought in medical supplies and hygiene products to the hundreds of villagers still left in the area. [...]

Thousands of civilians have been caught in the crossfire for nearly two weeks in the villages of Vaksince, Slupcane, Orizare, Lipkovo and Lojane. The villages are located 25 kilometers (16 miles) north of the capital, Skopje.

[...]

In many villages, civilians, too afraid to leave their homes, have no way of getting food, water or medicines. Community clinics are dependent on the Red Cross for supplies to treat patients. Some of the deliveries take place in a rush during brief lulls in fighting. They leave little time for the Red Cross to meet the vast needs.

Although an estimated 8,000 ethnic Albanians have fled to Kosovo, tens of thousands of people remain stranded by the crossfire - mostly elderly men, women and children who are either unable or unwilling to leave despite government pleas to evacuate." (ARC 15 May 2001)

"Saturday's visit (26.05) was the tenth time ICRC had entered the affected area. So far, since the crisis began more than three weeks ago ICRC has evacuated 375 civilians from Slupcane, Vaksince, Lipkovo, Otlja and Orizari." (ICRC 31 May 2001)

ICRC activities for the displaced in the Skopska Crna Gora, Tetovo, and Kumanovo region (March-May 2001)

- ICRC distributed food and baby kits in the Skopska Crna Gora region
- During the Tetovo crisis, the ICRC distributed emergency relief items to displaced and evacuated trapped villagers
- During the Kumanovo crisis, the ICRC evacuated civilians from Slupcane, Vaksince, Lipkovo, Lojane, Otlja and Orizari, delivered surgical supplies, brought relief supplies, and supplied the MRC with relief items

"Skopska Crna Gora

When the first clashes occurred in Skopska Crna Gora, the ICRC was immediately on-the-spot in Aracinovo and Lipkovo and Kumanovo municipalities, where several hundreds of people who had fled the fighting had gathered. Distributions of individual food parcels and baby kits were distributed by the ICRC with the support of Macedonian Red Cross (MRC).

Tetovo Crisis

As fighting broke out, thousands of people fled the town as a preventive measure fearing an escalation of the hostilities. The Macedonian Red Cross eventually registered around 22,000 people displaced from Tetovo who were scattered in the locations of all 28 branches of the MRC. Every single registered person received emergency relief, including food parcels, blankets, hygiene parcels and wheat flour donated by the ICRC.

The ICRC was the first international humanitarian organisation to gain access to the villages above Tetovo where thousands of civilians, both displaced from neighbouring villages or inhabitants, were facing difficulties after being stranded without electricity and cut off from their supplies for more than two weeks whilst the fighting took place around them.

In the space of two weeks, ICRC visited extensively the hills above Tetovo, bringing food and basic relief items to those people in need - eventually 300 baby parcels, 2300 food parcels, 100 hygiene parcels, 70 metric tonnes of wheat flour and 2400 candles. At the same time, around 50 vulnerable persons, mainly women, children and elderly were evacuated by the ICRC to Tetovo to be with their relatives or admitted to hospital. The resident population of Tetovo who were directly affected by the fighting also received help from the ICRC

[...]

As a result of the Tetovo events, the following items were distributed by the ICRC with support from the Macedonian Red Cross:

- 29,000 food parcels, 2,000 baby parcels, 25,000 blankets, 6,500 hygiene parcels, 10,000 mattresses
- 2,800 kitchen sets, 2,500 candles, 500 meals ready to eat, 220 metric tonnes wheat flour

Kumanovo events

The ICRC is currently the only international humanitarian organisation to be able to access the affected villages in the Kumanovo region. Every visit is done only after obtaining firm security guarantees from both sides.

Sunday's visit was the eighth time the ICRC has entered the affected area. So far, since the crisis began more than two weeks ago it has:

- Evacuated 336 civilians from Slupcane, Vaksince, Lipkovo, Lojane, Otlja and Orizari.
- Delivered substantial surgical supplies to Kumanovo Hospital, enough for 100 wounded, as a precautionary measure. Distributed surgical equipment for war wounds, water purification tablets as well as essential drugs (on behalf of UNICEF*) to clinics in Vaksince, Slupcane, Lipkovo, Otlja and Lojane
- Brought relief supplies, including 100 baby parcels, 170 (one per family of five) hygiene kits and 1000 litres of water to Vaksince, Slupcane, Llojane and Lipkovo
- Supplied the Macedonian Red Cross with relief items including food parcels, blankets, mattresses and hygiene parcels for the around 2000 displaced people in Kumanovo - both for people still in the town following the first events, and for newly displaced persons from villages close to the affected area." (ICRC 23 May 2001)

NGO response

Attention: web-link to detailed information on humanitarian aid, specified by NGO

The following link contains the minutes of the NGO Humanitarian Coordination meetings, summarizing NGO aid, inter alia to IDPs.

<http://www.aidmacedonia.org.mk/humaninf/ngo24.htm>

MCIC implemented rehabilitation program for displaced and other vulnerable groups (July 2002)

- Focusing on displaced and returnees, MCIC planned to undertake activities on water supply and sanitation in rural areas, reconstruction of public infrastructure, re-vitalisation of agriculture, distribution of food and (non)food items, and confidence building through co-ordination and information sharing

"The main **goal** is to contribute to maintaining the peace in the country by supporting communities in their return to "normal life". They need assistance to regain their livelihoods and become self

sufficient. Special priority will be given to supporting the return of persons who are still displaced.

The **objectives** of the programme are the following:

- to support communities by improving public infrastructure;
- to enable restoration of individual agricultural production;
- to contribute to the provision of food and non food products;
- to provide relevant information in order to assist the return of IDP's.

Target region includes the regions of Kumanovo, Skopje and Tetovo, or the north western part of Macedonia. The assistance will be directed to rural or marginalized places/villages in and around conflict areas, which are not sufficiently covered by regular assistance; as well as collective centres.

For access to returnees and internally displaced persons, regular co-ordination will be established with local and foreign NGOs, UN agencies and the Government. The activities will be implemented through local NGO partners in the respective regions.

[...]

The beneficiaries will be selected according to the following priorities:

- internally displaced persons who want to return to their homes;
- returnees to the conflict areas, according to the level of vulnerability;
- internally displaced persons in the collective centres.

[...]

Within the framework of this application, MCIC will undertake activities in the following sectors:

- water supply and sanitation in rural areas;
- reconstruction of public infrastructure;
- re-vitalisation of agriculture;
- distribution of food and (non)food items;
- confidence building through co-ordination and information sharing.

Water supply and sanitation in rural areas

This project is a part of the larger MCIC program "Water supply for communities". It entails provision of financial and technical support towards construction of water systems, which improve the water supplies in the communities. Financial support will be provided for:

- reconstruction of already existing, old water supply/sanitation systems.
- completion of the construction of new, already started water supply/sanitation systems.
- completion of the construction of existing water supply/sanitation systems.
- construction of new water supply/sanitation systems.

This project will focus on the crisis areas and up to 10 applications will be reviewed. The table below indicates possible target locations:

TARGET AREA					
Community	Municipality	Partner	No. of beneficiar.	Nationality	Status
1. Village of Bukovic	Saraj (Skopje)	Major and village committee	1,622	Albanians	Identification
2. Village of Ratae	Jegunovce (Tetovo)	Major and village committee	451	Macedonians	Formulation
3. Village of Tudence	Jegunovce (Tetovo)	Major and village committee	437	Macedonians	Formulation
4. Village of	Vratnica	Major and	600	Macedonians	Identification

Beloviste	(Tetovo)	village committee			
5. Village of Matejce	Lipkovo (Kumanovo)	Village committee	4,906	Alban. 88% Serbs. 10,5% Macedon. 1,5%	Identification
6. Village of Poboze	Cucer Sandevo (Skopje)	Major and village committee	800	Serbs 50% Maced. 50%	Formulation
TOTAL:			8,816		

Reconstruction of infrastructure

MCIC will work on the renewing of public infrastructure in the target regions - where they were active during 2001, through repair/reconstruction of schools, ambulances, etc, which are in the interest of the community (e.g. municipal and NGO).

MCIC received a number of requests for repairs to infrastructure from the crisis areas - Tetovo area: villages of Jegunovce, Tearce, Ratae, Beloviste; Skopje area: villages of Laskarce, Bukovich, Blace; Kumanovo area: villages of Otlja, Lopate, Orizare.[...]

Agriculture revitalisation

The second area of intervention will be revival of agriculture, aimed at reducing the unemployment and poverty rates in the country.

The activities will be as it follows:

- distribution of livestock feed (FAO had a program during the winter, but funds were not provided for half of the planned needs);
- distribution of seeds and fertilisers;
- provision of egg-laying hens;
- compensation for livestock losses by providing a cow per family;

MCIC will undertake the distributions of livestock feed, seeds and fertiliser, chickens and cows, as well as the food parcels, where needed. MCIC has previous experience of these activities, mostly from the work in Kosovo during 1999-2001.

Livestock feed

MCIC will distribute livestock feed to the families returning to their original homes. Families with at least one cow/horse or 5 sheep and less than 5 cows/horses or 20 sheep will be eligible for assistance. Focus will be on the most vulnerable families (poor, social cases, single mothers, families with many children and families with disabled people) who have very little support if any from other humanitarian organisations.

[...]

Seeds and fertilizer

A similar approach will be used for the fodder distribution. While the livestock distribution is planned for the summer period, assistance with seed materials and fertiliser, will be related to the autumn planting season.

Poultry

A set of 5 egg-laying hens and 50 kg. of concentrated food, will be distributed to each selected family. This should provide 4-5 eggs/family/day.

As for the fodder, beneficiaries will be returnee families and priority will be given to social cases in the villages (families without livestock will also be covered by this assistance).

Cows

Selected families will receive 1 cow and 500 kg. concentrate feed. The focus of this activity will be the poor mountainous villages in the Tetovo and Skopska Crna Gora area. Villages will be selected on the basis of ethnic balance (e.g. two with predominant ethnic Albanian population and two with Macedonian population).

Beneficiaries, besides the social criteria (priority to poor families, social cases, single mothers, families with many children and families with disabled people), will be selected if they meet the following conditions:

- they have kept cows before and
- they have adequate shelter to keep cows.

Provision of food and non food items

MCIC will distribute food and non-food items according to the needs of the target group. Food will be provided through the following forms:

- basic food items (flour, milk, sugar, meat, etc), which will be distributed in areas where greatest needs are identified. MCIC does not aim at satisfying all beneficiaries; the aim is to identify those who do not have access to other assistance (Macedonian Red Cross);
- fresh food (oranges). In co-operation with "Solidarity" an NGO from Greece, MCIC will provide assistance for socially endangered persons in Macedonia. The aid consists of fresh fruit - oranges, donation of the Greek Government. The aid will be distributed to persons who do not have access to fresh fruit: IDPs, (in host families and collective centres), families in crisis areas, social institutions, pensioners' homes, students' dormitories, prisons and socially endangered persons assisted through local partner NGOs.

Depending on needs, MCIC will also engage in distribution of non-food items especially for persons who are still displaced but have the intention of returning to their homes. These items include:- mattresses, blankets, bed sheets, small repair tools, hygiene parcels and kitchen sets amongst others. This activity is important for supporting the return of IDPs - not only have houses been destroyed but all the contents have been looted or destroyed.

Confidence building through co-ordination and information sharing

MCIC will devote more attention to gathering, producing and distributing information pertaining to the situation in the country.

[...]

Implementation timetable

No.	Activity	1-6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Assessments	x						
1	WatSan		x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Re(construction of public infrastructure		x	x	x	x		
3	Revitalisation of agriculture		x	x	x	x	x	
4	Food and non-food items distribution		x	x	x			
5	Confidence building (co-ordination and information)		x	x	x	x	x	x
	Reporting							x

(ACT 25 July 2002)

NGO role in the humanitarian field in Macedonia (December 2001)

- NGOs and the agencies related to the UN and the Red Cross and Crescent Movement provided the greatest part of the response
- The Macedonian government took care of about 3,000 displaced people at the collective centers and was also in charge of the short and long-term water supply in Kumanovo and Tetovo
- Reparation and reconstruction aid mainly came from foreign agencies and NGOs

“NGOs and the agencies related to the UN and the Red Cross and Crescent Movement provided the greatest part of the response.

The national NGOs were probably the key-distributors of humanitarian aid to the regions of crisis, especially to those with limited access. (chart 1)

Chart 1. Aid from national NGOs, June – December (source: NGO humanitarian coordination)

NGO\municipalities	Amount/Price	Kumanovo	Tetovo	Skopje	Others	Total
MCIC	78/2	130/16	88/21	26/8	21/10	343/57
El hilal	-	411/177	118/49	99/41	10/4	638/2711
Other NGOs	-	331/18	-	80/36	-	411/54
Total	78/2	872/211	206/70	205/85	31/14	1392/382

These data refer to tons of food/thousands of items hygienic products. The figures are given by municipalities (only a part of the villages has been included). Other NGOs are: Natira, Mother Teresa, Jeta, Merhamet, Klasje na dobrinata, SAZM, Flora.

[...] In the first two months, the aid for the displaced people in the families was completely provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and it was further provided by three agencies (Intersos, Italy; MPDL, Spain; Action Against Hunger-AAH, France) receiving support from the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO). The World Food Program (WFP) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) provided humanitarian aid for the returnees.

Chart 2. The overall aid in food

Agency	Total (tonnes)
National NGOs	1,392
Intersos	2,192
AAH	1,127
MPDL	413
WFP/UNHCR	416
ICRC	4,326
	9,866

The Government took care of about 3,000 displaced people at the collective centers (budget facilities) and it was also in charge of the short and long-term water supply in Kumanovo and Tetovo. The aid for reparation and reconstruction of conflict damages, with some rare exceptions (such as the field sanitation in Aracinovo) comes from the foreign agencies and the NGOs. In the year 2001, about 80% of the damaged

houses have been repaired. The reparation of 1st and 2nd category (small) damages was done by the MCIC and two agencies financed by the UNHCR and other agencies financed by the German, Danish and other governments, and the reparation of the 3rd and 4th category damages (significant damages and destroyed houses) was done by several agencies, among which the International Management Group, European Perspectives and others, supported by the EU and USAID, the Dutch, Greek and other governments. Several NGOs provide cattle food and other aid.” (Aidmacedonia.org 1 June 2002)

CAD was funded by the EU to repair homes (October 2001)

- Children's Aid Direct signed a contract with the EU to conduct rehabilitation work to 320 homes in the Tetovo and Kumanovo regions
- The rehabilitation would encourage people to return, provide shelter throughout the winter, give the population the opportunity to rebuild their communities

“International aid agency Children's Aid Direct has signed a contract with the European Union to begin rehabilitation work in the conflict-affected northern areas of Macedonia.

Under the £780,000 (1.25 million euro) agreement, 320 homes in the Tetovo and Kumanovo regions will be rehabilitated. Repairs will range from minor works to structural damage and will benefit both Macedonian and Albanian families. The six-month project runs from Friday, 5 October.

[...]

Ron Langford, Children's Aid Direct's Country Representative for Macedonia, said: "We are delighted to have signed this contract - it is very important for the 320 families we will be assisting. By rebuilding their homes, they will then be able to begin to rebuild their lives.

[...]

"The work needs to be done in order to encourage people to go back to their own homes in the villages. It will provide shelter for them throughout the coming winter and means they can rebuild their communities. Educational facilities such as student accommodation and special needs and primary level boarding schools are currently being used as temporary housing and until people can move back into their own homes this temporary accommodation can not be used for its intended purpose." (CAD 19 October 2001)

CRS assisted displaced families in collective centers (August 2001)

- Catholic Relief Services-Macedonia distributed basic supplies to 15 collective centers in the Skopje and Kumanovo regions, which included hygienic and non-food items

"In Macedonia, tens of thousands of people have left their homes and over 50,000 are scattered throughout the country. In response, CRS/Macedonia has begun distributing basic supplies to 15 collective centers in the Skopje and Kumanovo regions. To date, the following items have been sent to the displaced families in these centers:

- Baby food
- Diapers
- Towels
- Sheets
- Soaps
- Plastic baby tubs
- Other hygienic and non-food items

CRS/Macedonia is working closely with the Macedonian Red Cross to help meet these families' ongoing needs." (CRS 17 August 2001)

ACT Appeal for assistance to IDPs (to be implemented by MCIC) (July 2001)

- In March 2001, MCIC distributed food for 3,000 displaced families in the Tetovo region, 120 in Lipkovo and 70 in Aracinovo
- ACT planned aid for some 20,000 IDP's in host families and collective centers, and some 15,000 people inside affected conflict areas
- The aid would entail food & non-food distribution, emergency water supply and sanitation, emergency preparedness, information, and peace building and conflict resolution measures

ACT's implementing partner MCIC (Macedonian Center for International Cooperation) distributed food to displaced:

"During the first outbreak of violence in March, MCIC responded in several ways:

- humanitarian assistance: distribution of food parcels to 3,000 families in the Tetovo area, 120 in Lipkovo municipality and 70 families displaced from Aracinovo village"
- (ACT 5 July 2001)

In its appeal, ACT planned further assistance for IDPs:

"Number and Type Of Targeted Beneficiaries

Some 20,000 IDP's in host families and collective centres.
Some 15,000 people inside affected conflict area.
Possible other.

Criteria for Beneficiary Selection

Beneficiaries will be selected according to the following priorities:

1. IDP's in rural or other marginalized areas, (not)registered by Macedonian Red Cross and with a difficult access to any kind of assistance;
2. Civilian population inside the conflict area;
3. IDP's in collective centres / camps.

Municipalities to be included are ones with large numbers of IDP's and with effective local implementing partners present and active there. Villages or districts will be selected on the basis of the recommendation by local implementing partners, with the emphasis on unattended or under attended areas.

[...]

Description of Assistance

MCIC will undertake activities in following areas:

1. Food & non-food distribution
2. Emergency water supply and sanitation
3. Emergency preparedness
4. Information
5. Peace building and conflict resolution measures

As the crisis is still in acute phase, most of the activities planned are with high degree of flexibility, in order to allow for a quick response in changing circumstances.

1. Food & non-food items distribution

MCIC will provide food and hygiene items, as well as other non-food items, according to the needs of the specific target groups.

Food provision will be organized as it follows:

- distribution of food parcels and baby food: intended for IDP's in host families and host families themselves. MCIC recognizes the needs of all beneficiaries cannot be met, therefore, aims to find those that are not accessed by other agencies' interventions (ICRC/MRC). Distribution will be based on humanitarian standards for food distribution.
- emergency food supply (water, juices, milk, fruits), will be distributed if massive displacement of people appears during the implementation period;
- basic food (flour, oil, sugar, meat, etc.), will be distributed to collective centres;
- complementary food (fresh fruits and vegetables, etc.), will be distributed to the civilian population inside the conflict area in addition to the basic food supplies.

One of the most immediate needs identified in the field, and addressed in the coordination meetings, is hygiene items. MCIC will prepare hygiene parcels that will be distributed to all target groups mentioned above (covered by food distribution).

Additional items will be provided to IDP's in collective centres for relaxation and socialisation purposes (ball, chess, domino sets, etc).

MCIC, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and in coordination with ICRC and MRC, will identify bottlenecks in the provision of basic food & hygiene aid. MCIC will prepare material aid reserves ready for emergency distribution.

2. Water supply and sanitation

MCIC seeks to meet the above needs through the following:

- providing water tanks;
- constructing wells.

Water tanks will be provided for the institutions of vital importance (like hospitals) that do not have enough water to meet even their most immediate needs. Also, this solution may be used in the communities where there has been a lack of water for a longer period due to the crisis (e.g. upper parts of the city of Tetovo) or in the communities accommodating larger numbers of IDP's. Water tanks will be located in those places for a certain period of time, until some longer-term solution is found. MCIC will provide regular refill of tanks with water (once or twice per day, according to the needs).

Construction and maintenance of alternative water supply systems (like wells) for vital institutions (like Kumanovo and Tetovo hospitals) should overcome the current lack of water, but also provide durable solutions for independent water supply. MCIC approach is to provide permanent solution, that will be useful not only in the current crisis but also in the future. This is especially valid in the case of Kumanovo hospital, which is the main health facility in the affected region. It is likely that with the continuation of the crisis in that area, its role will be emphasised even further where normal functioning of the water system is essential.

[...]

4. Information

MCIC will pay particular attention to collation, preparation and dissemination of information related to the crisis, to various recipients.

Type of information that will be prepared by MCIC will cover the following areas:

- security situation (areas of military conflicts; restrictions of movement; curfews; mine fields, expected demonstrations, etc.);
- humanitarian situation (updates on number of IDP's and refugees, identified priority needs, agencies involved, assistance provided, etc.);
- analyses and comments which refer to security and political aspects as well as the citizen concept, the non-governmental organisational aspects in general which are close to the work of MCIC.

MCIC will provide regular flow of information on the situation for partners, as well as to the general public in the country and abroad.

Part of the activities will be direct assistance to IDP's (dissemination of information on humanitarian situation), through: info-line (0800), web site and paid announcements in daily newspapers.

Other assistance to IDP's in this field, will be provided by publishing Informative brochure about the rights and obligations of IDP's, with some useful contact information." (ACT 5 July 2001)

Islamic Relief assisted 300 displaced families (June 2001)

- Islamic Relief assisted 300 displaced families through the distribution of food and non-food (hygienic) items

“Islamic Relief has:

Begun to implement a US\$26,250 relief program to assist 300 displaced families inside Macedonia through its local partner, Jeta (an NGO based in the Macedonian capital of Skopje)

[...]

The table below shows the food and non food (hygienic) items that are being distributed to beneficiaries in Macedonia, through Islamic Relief's local partner, Jeta.

Article	Quantity	Per	Total quantity
Flour	8 kg	Person	12000 kg
Sugar	1 kg	Person	1500 kg
Oil	1 Liter.	Person	1500 l.
Rice	1 kg	Person	1500 kg
Milk	2 Liters.	Person	3000 l.
Macaronis	1 kg.	Person	1500 kg
Soap	1 piece	Person	1500 Pc
Diapers	30 pieces (if)	Baby	2000 pieces
Toothpaste	1 piece	Person	1500 pieces
Toothbrushes	1 piece	Person	1500 pieces
Blankets	1 piece	Two persons	750 pieces
Salt	1 kg	Family	1500 kg
Beans	1 kg	Person	1500 kg
Detergent	3 kg	Five members	500 kg
Women's Hyg. Prep.	10 pieces (if)	Woman	2000 pieces
			“

(IR 14 June 2001)

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