

Returnee Monitoring Study

Minority Returnees to the Republika Srpska - Bosnia and Herzegovina



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

UNHCR conducted a Returnee Monitoring Framework (RMF) study in the Republika Srpska (RS) between 5 January and 3 March 2000. A total of 194 interviews were carried out, covering 30 villages or towns within 12 municipalities, with minority returnees to the RS who had either fully returned or were in the process of return.

The purpose of the this study was to gauge the national protection afforded to minority returnees to the RS, the living conditions of returnees, as well as the positive and negative factors which affect the sustainability of return. For example, interviewees were asked questions about security, schools, pensions, health care, etc.

Through the 194 interviews, UNHCR was able to obtain information on 681 persons. Broken down by ethnicity, there were 657 Bosniacs, 13 Bosnian Croats, and 11 Other which included Serbs in mixed marriages, people of mixed ethnicity and several people of other nationalities who had immigrated to BH before the conflict. 20% of the study group was over 60 years old (elderly), 54% was between the ages of 19-59, 20% was school age (7-18 years), and 6% was 0-6 years old.

2. ISSUES

a. Security

Despite the occurrence of occasional security incidents (such as verbal harassment, threats, mines and grenade attacks), 72% of returnees expressed trust in the local police, although a number of returnees stated that they wanted to see more minority police officers in their area and that they were disappointed that perpetrators of crimes were rarely found and arrested.

b. Pensions and Health Insurance

i. Pensions: 49% of the households which participated in the study had a household member receiving a pension, usually from the Sarajevo or Mostar Pension Funds, illustrating the great need for the recently signed Agreement on the Respective Rights and Obligations Regarding the Implementation of Pensions and Disability Insurance which should now regulate inter-Entity pension and disability insurance.

ii. Health Insurance: Physical and economic access to health care were causes for concern for interviewees, whether it was an issue of being able to afford health care or the fact that most of the returnee villages did not have health care facilities in their immediate vicinity. Many of the interviewees stated that they only go for medical treatment in the Federation.

c. Property and Public Services

i. Property: Most of the study returnees were to rural communities, there were few available urban returnees in comparison. Many families maintained homes in both the Federation and the RS for a variety of reasons, including pension issues, education, and uninhabitable accommodation. Some interviewees were living in "collective houses"

which they shared with other neighbours who were in the process of return. Problems were cited with regard to the quality of some of the newly (re)constructed homes.

ii. Public Services: Approximately a third of the rural communities visited did not have electricity at the time of the study, since their electrical networks had been destroyed during the conflict. Most of the villages were still collecting water from wells, as some had done before the conflict, and none of them had been reconnected to phone lines, although not all had been connected to the phone system prior to the war. Interviewees who had returned to urban centres reported being asked to pay the bills of previous occupants.

d. Residence Registration and Identification Cards

70% of the interviewees had retained their Federation identification cards. Some of the reasons cited were accessibility to pensions, education and the lack of essential public services in their return communities.

e. Education

85% of the school age returnee children and adolescents who were part of the study were attending school in the Federation. Only 5% were attending schools in the RS. Much of this is due to the lack of available schools in their communities (most of which were destroyed during the war) and the RS curriculum.

f. Employment

5.5% of the interviewees or spouses were employed, only one of whom was employed in the RS. The lack of employment was a major issue for interviewees; 39% of the interviewees listed employment as one of their chief concerns.

g. Primary Concerns

The key areas of concern expressed by returnees were employment, pension and health issues, education, reconstruction and public services, security, public transportation, the acquisition of agricultural machinery and the tracing of missing family members.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Undeniably, those minorities who have returned or are in the process of returning to their homes of origin in the RS are being closely watched, not only by the international community, but most importantly by displaced persons waiting or debating to return. This is why it is essential for, not only the local authorities and communities to cooperate and support the return process, but it is also critical that the international community maintain or increase their contribution to the reconstruction effort; this especially as BH is experiencing the first major and realistic minority return season. Continued efforts must be undertaken to avoid the funding gaps and assure that all returnees have adequate housing for the coming winter.

As the study illustrates, the return process constitutes more than the physical act of moving back into a pre-conflict home. There are numerous obstacles and fears which returnees have to overcome and cope with during and after the return process which will

determine if their return is sustainable, such as unemployment and financial insecurity, lack of educational facilities, poor living conditions and limited funds for reconstruction. The study suggests that the removal of the physical obstacles can soothe the psychological ones.

The primary responsibility of local governments to support the return process cannot be emphasised enough. While they may not necessarily have the financial means to support returns, they certainly play a key role in establishing the political climate in which those returns take place, and have an obligation to remove the discriminatory political and administrative obstacles which minority returnees sometimes encounter.¹ Without the political will and co-operation of the local authorities, minority returns could not occur, regardless of the financial or security support of the international community.

In closing, the international community has invested generously to create conditions conducive to return, especially for minority returnees. While the international community has committed itself to this unique task of rebuilding Bosnia and Herzegovina, it cannot and must not ignore the work which still remains in order to reverse some of the consequences of "ethnic cleansing".

¹ See Annex 7, chapter 1, of *The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

RETURNEE MONITORING STUDY IN THE REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

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I. INTRODUCTION

UNHCR conducted a Returnee Monitoring Framework (RMF) study in the Republika Srpska (RS), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), between 5 January and 3 March 2000. A total of 194 interviews were carried out, covering 30 villages or towns within 12 municipalities, with minority returnees to the RS who had either fully returned or were in the process of return.

The purpose of the this study was to gauge the national protection afforded to minority returnees to the RS, the living conditions of returnees, as well as the positive and negative factors which affect the sustainability of return. This report is not meant to be an in-depth study on each of the addressed issues. For example, interviewees were asked questions about security, schools, pensions, health care, etc. Instead the aim of the study is to provide an overview of the issues which most often affect returnees. Table I.1, found below, has been divided into Western, Northern, Eastern and Southern BH regions, and illustrates the age and sex breakdown of interviewees and their family members to gain a better understanding of the profile of returnee groups to specific villages and towns.

Through the 194 interviews, UNHCR was able to obtain information on 681 persons. Broken down by ethnicity, there were 657 Bosniacs, 13 Bosnian Croats, and 11 Other which included Serbs in mixed marriages, people of mixed ethnicity and several people of other nationalities who had immigrated to BH before the conflict.

20% of the study group was over 60 years old (elderly), 54% was between the ages of 19-59, 20% was school age (7-18 years), and 6% was 0-6 years old, although these groups were disproportionately spread out between the Federation and the RS. This type of overview can immediately indicate where some of the problem for the interviews lay. For example, the fact that most (54%) of the study group adults (over 60 and 19-59 years) were located in the RS, when the opposite was true for school age children and adolescents (49 or 37% school age children and adolescents in the RS vs. 84 or 64% in the Federation), indicates that there might be specific obstacles to return for children, such as the availability of schools, which is discussed later.

Although the data from Table I.2 is contained in the Table I.1, in Table I.2 it is summarised to better indicate the overall breakdown of age and gender between the two Entities. 53% of the study group was made up of women vs. 47% of men. To some extent this difference can be explained by the fact that interviewees had male family members who were killed or went missing during the conflict, in particular in Zvornik municipality, where 1,943 persons were reported missing between 1992 and 1995. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as of 3 May 2000, there are still 17,397 persons missing from the BH conflict whose fate has not been clarified.

Table I.1: RS MINORITY RETURNEE OVERVIEW

Western BH													
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Total Person	Female				Male				B	B C	O**
			60+	19-59	7-18	0-6	60+	19-59	7-18	0-6			
Bosanska Dubica Municipality													
Dubica	1	3	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Family in Fed/Abr*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Novi Grad Municipality													
Donji Agici	2	4	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gornji Agici	1	3	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hodzici	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Suhaca	9	26	4	10	1	-	5	6	-	-	29	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Prijedor Municipality													
Biscani	7	12	1	5	-	1	2	3	-	-	25	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	13	-	2	3	-	-	3	4	1	-	-	-
Hambarine	4	10	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	12	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ljubija	4	5	2	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kozarac	1	6	-	2	-	-	-	2	1	1	6	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rizvanovici	1	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prijedor Town	10	24	5	9	1	-	1	6	2	-	15	2	8
Family in Fed/Abr	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stara Rijeka	4	5	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	6	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	45	125	20	40	7	1	16	30	9	2	101	13	11

* Family members living in the Federation or living abroad

**O = "Other" includes Serbs in mixed marriages, people of mixed ethnicity, and people of other nationalities

Northern BH													
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Total Person	Female				Male				B	B C	O *
			60+	19-59	7-18	0-6	60+	19-59	7-18	0-6			
Zvornik Municipality													
Klisa	39	113	9	39	14	-	5	28	14	4	134	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	21	-	5	3	1	-	7	3	2	-	-	-
Motovo	11	27	1	9	1	-	1	11	2	2	45	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	18	-	5	3	2	-	3	2	3	-	-	-
Setici	25	50	5	18	2	2	2	17	2	2	107	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	57	-	16	14	4	-	6	14	3	-	-	-
Sib	8	13	1	1	-	1	1	8	-	1	38	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	25	-	8	8	-	-	4	4	1	-	-	-
Subtotal	83	324	16	101	44	10	9	84	42	18	324	-	-

Eastern BH													
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Total Person	Female				Male				B	B C	O *
			60+	19-59	7-18	0-6	60+	19-59	7-18	0-6			
Cajnice Municipality													
Milijeno	13	23	11	2	-	-	7	3	-	-	31	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	8	1	2	1	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
Han Pijesak Municipality													
Nevacka	12	32	5	9	1	2	2	8	3	2	58	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	26	2	7	6	2	-	6	3	-	-	-	-
Pale Municipality													
Bogovici	4	7	1	1	-	-	4	-	-	1	13	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	6	2	1	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
Sokolac Municipality													
Banja Lucica	8	17	5	4	1	-	4	3	-	-	19	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	37	121	25	28	10	4	16	24	10	4	121	-	-

Southern BH													
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Total Person	Female				Male				B	B C	O*
			60+	19-59	7-18	0-6	60+	19-59	7-18	0-6			
Berkovci Municipality													
Dabrica	6	11	1	3	-	-	3	4	-	-	30	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	19	2	8	1	-	-	7	1	-	-	-	-
Ljubljana	2	3	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	7	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	4	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Gacko Municipality													
Kula	4	4	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	10	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	6	1	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Nevesinje Municipality													
Donja Bijenja	2	3	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gornja Bijenja	4	13	2	3	-	1	2	3	2	-	20	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	7	1	3	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Kljuna	3	5	1	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	12	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	7	1	3	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Postoljani	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	4	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Presjeka	3	4	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	10	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	6	1	1	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Sopilja	3	6	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	8	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Trebinje Municipality													
Trebinje Town	1	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	5	-	-
Family in Fed/Abr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	29	111	15	31	5	2	16	36	5	1	111	-	-
TOTAL	194	681	76	200	66	17	57	173	66	25	657	13	11

	Republika Srpska	Federation/ Abroad	Subtotal
Females 60+	65	13	78 / 11%
19-59	130	68	198 / 29%
7-18	22	45	67 / 10%
0-6	7	10	17 / 2%
Subtotal	224	136	360 / 53%
Males 60+	57	1	58 / 9%
19-59	120	52	172 / 25%
7-18	27	39	66 / 10%
0-6	13	12	25 / 4%
Subtotal	217	104	321 / 47%
TOTAL	441 / 65%	240 / 35%	681

III. ISSUES

1. SECURITY

For many persons, security is considered a significant factor which explains why minority returnees to the RS have not occurred yet in larger numbers. Much has been done to guarantee the safety of minorities by the international community, in particular the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) and the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) International Police Task Force (IPTF), as well as local police. Given the nature of the conflict in BH, it is imperative to provide not only adequate security, but also a sense of security and support to minority returnees, especially in so called "hard line" areas.

In some areas such as Kula, Gacko municipality, serious security incidents continued to take place for some time, including one on 30 November 1999, when an NGO vehicle hit a partially armed anti-tank mine where the Mine Action Centre did not have any records of mines; 4 people were injured. Other incidents that have occurred since September 1999 in Kula include reports of automatic gunfire, grenades launched at homes from a 60mm mortar, as well as the discovery of fresh mines in and around destroyed homes. As a result, SFOR set up a permanent presence in Gacko town in February 2000. No arrests have been made by local police for any of the incidents that have taken place in Gacko municipality. In addition, there were reports in November 1999 that the local grocery shops refused to sell to the returnees; one shop that had been selling bread to the returnees was blown up – sending a clear message to the rest of the shop owners and community, as well as the returnees. There were also two other villages which reported the presence of mines laid during the conflict, Ljubljana in Berkovici municipality and Milijeno in Cajnice municipality

Based on UNMIBH (IPTF) reports, between 1 March 2000 and 18 May 2000, there were approximately 73 reported, but not necessarily confirmed, security incidents in the RS directed against minority returnees or between minority returnees and Serbs. These incidents range from written and verbal harassment to explosions and shootings.

Interviewees were asked if they had ever had a need to call the local police since return, if they trusted the local police and felt the need for UNMIBH (IPTF) assistance. Encouragingly, 72% of interviewees stated they felt they could trust the local police. Interviewees repeatedly expressed their satisfaction with the professionalism and attention paid to them by the local police forces. In Klisa village, Zvornik municipality, interviewees related how local police spent the night in special containers upon the initial returns of minority returnees. Other interviewees stated that police came by often to check on them and to ask them how things were going.

This is not to say that the local police forces are considered perfect by all the interviewees. Interviewees also stated that despite their professionalism, they would feel more secure once the police force included minority police officers. Others stated that even though they were on good relations with the police, they did not fully trust them, especially when it came to investigating security incidents since suspects were rarely caught. Interviewees were asked to give examples of security incidents they had reported and the tables below list some of the past problems and concerns they had.

Table S.1: Local Police and UNMIBH (IPTF) Confidence

Western BH				
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Local Police confidence	IPTF confidence	Security Concerns
Bosanska Dubica Municipality				
Dubica	1	-	1	A temporary occupant tried to intimidate returnees. Unsure of police impartiality, feel safer knowing IPTF monitor the local Police.
Novi Grad Municipality				
Donji Agici	2	2	1	Approached the Local Police to assist them to repossess their tractors
Gornji Agici	1	1	1	Unsure of police impartiality.
Hodzici	1	1	-	
Suhaca	9	6	2	Intimidation upon return (in March 1999, Serbs were threatening to cut their throats); grenade thrown at home in May 1999 by Serb; rocket fired at home.
Prijedor Municipality				
Biscani	7	4	2	Upon return in June 1999, the returnees were harassed by drunk people, but no harassment lately. Worried that during holidays they could be subject to more harassment
Hambarine	4	4	1	Shots fired by unknown person.
Ljubija	4	4	- (no ans)	One family required police assistance for eviction.
Kozarac	1	1	-	Prevented from working on land by Serb DPs.
Rizvanovici	1	-	-	
Prijedor Town	10	8	5	One family received harassing phone calls upon arrival and asked police for assistance; during an eviction, evictee threatened returnees
Stara Rijeka	4	3	-(no ans)	
Subtotal	45	34	13	

UNMIBH (IPTF) has addressed the issue of minority police in BH in several ways. First, through their "Road Show" project, which began in November 1999, they are in the process of registering police staff (those with police as well as administrative powers) throughout BH. They estimate there are roughly 20,000 police staff and as of May 2000, have registered approximately half of the police staff. In this way they have a comprehensive picture of who is working for the police stations, including ethnic make up of police staff.

Additionally, UNMIBH (IPTF) signed an agreement with the Entity authorities on 9 May 2000, which regulates the re-employment of voluntarily returning police officers to each Entity, in particular minority police officers. This "swap" has been instituted as an additional measure to increase the number of minority police and works on the basis of a one to one exchange policy; for every police officer that goes to work in the RS, one

should go to the Federation. The objective is to have exchanged 200 officers by September 2000, although the actual exchanges had not begun as of the end of May 2000.

Northern BH				
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Local Police confidence	IPTF confidence	Security Concerns
Zvornik Municipality				
Klisa	39	29	25	Over the Orthodox Christmas period, returnees could hear shooting from Serb villages where people were celebrating. Made people very nervous and children were afraid.
Motovo	11	10	-	
Setici	25	20	14	
Sib	8	4	5	
Subtotal	83	63	44	

Second, UNMIBH (IPTF) has established a BH-wide minority recruitment program to train minority police officers for eventual placement in the police forces of communities where they would be part of the ethnic minority. According to UNMIBH (IPTF), there are 57 minority police officers out of 6,867 police officers working in the RS.² Another 39 minority officers are expected to graduate from the Police Academy in July 2000 and will be deployed throughout the RS at that time. Another group of minority police officers are expected to complete the Police Academy in October 2000 and again in early 2001. At this point, the only two ways of working as a police officer in BH is either to be an existing officer or go through Police Academy school.

Eastern BH				
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Local Police confidence	IPTF confidence	Security Concerns
Cajnice Municipality				
Milljeno	13	12	11	Trees were being stolen from their property. People sang songs to intimidate them and made signs that they will kill them. During Orthodox Christmas, Serbs were shooting guns and celebrating, but a returnee said she was afraid of stray bullets and slept under her bed. Some feel unwelcome in town, people insult them, spit on them. Feel more vulnerable because they are so few. Some of the wells were mined.
Han Pijesak Municipality				
Nevacka	12	5	7	Feel more safe with IPTF.
Pale Municipality				
Bogovici	4	3	2	Verbal harassment.
Sokolac Municipality				
Banja Lucica	8	7	6	People afraid to go into town in RS for shopping
Subtotal	37	27	26	

² IPTF Banja Luka, 12 May 2000.

About 55% of interviewees expressed confidence in UNMIBH (IPTF). This should be interpreted to reflect the high level of confidence that interviewees felt for local police since many of them did not distrust UNMIBH (IPTF), many simply stated they did not feel overly dependent on them for security as they trusted the local police. On the other hand, there were also returnees who felt more confident about reporting security incidents or problems to UNMIBH (IPTF) than to the local police.

Returnees repeatedly expressed their gratitude for the frequent UNMIBH (IPTF) and SFOR patrols that came through their towns to check on them and see how they were doing. This international presence gives them a greater sense of security. These patrols are especially appreciated during Orthodox holidays when certain celebrants are more likely to drink too much, exercise poor judgement and "celebrate" in ways which frighten and intimidate rural and isolated returnee communities, such as firing automatic weapons into the air (Klisa), forming convoys to drive through town (Prijedor), etc.

Southern BH				
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Local Police confidence	IPTF confidence	Security Concerns
Berkovici Municipality				
Dabrica	6	1	5	
Ljubljana	2	2	1	Heavily mined area, but there have been no mine accidents yet.
Gacko Municipality				
Kula	4	1	4	6 grenades fired at village, auto. gunfire near collective house, fresh mines, an NGO vehicle hit mine, other acts of intimidation
Nevesinje Municipality				
Donja Blijenja	2	1	1	
Gornja Blijenja	4	3	4	Returnees have recognised that some of their old neighbours still have the tractors they looted from them at the beginning of the war - some have asked for police assistance to reclaim, but the police took no action.
Kljuna	3	3	1	
Postoljani	1	-	1	
Presjeka	3	3	2	
Sopilja	3	1	3	Would like to get multi-ethnic police force.
Trebinje Municipality				
Trebinje Town	1	-	1	Have received threatening phone calls and approached IPTF for help.
Subtotal	29	15	23	
TOTAL	194	139 / 72%	106 / 55%	

What some interviewees did complain about was intimidation from people they would come across in the municipal centres, but who were not usually neighbours. Some interviewees stated they had been spat upon or verbally abused when they went into town (see Cajnice municipality). While these are not necessarily actions in which one can involve the local police, they nevertheless undermine the fragile sense of security that returnees must build upon for their return to be sustainable.

2. PENSIONS AND HEALTH INSURANCE

Given the high percentage of elderly returnees, health insurance and pensions are closely tied together for beneficiary returnees since many of them receive health insurance as a pension benefit. Interviewees were asked if they had health insurance and whether there were any household members who were entitled to receive a pension, and whether or not they were receiving it.

a. Pensions: Acknowledging that there is a high level of unemployment, it is easy to see how entire families can be dependent on the pension of a single family member. 49% of interviewees or a household member were earning some type of pension, which illustrates the importance of this issue not only for the study group, but for minority returnees to the RS in general who may have been receiving their pension in the Federation. 39% of the interviewees were receiving their pension from the Sarajevo or Mostar Funds, two of the three funds in BH which administer pensions. Many of the interviewees had their homes of origin along the IEBL. The types of pensions interviewees were receiving included primarily work pensions and family pensions, but there were also some recipients of disability benefits who were included in this category.

Table H.1: Health Insurance and Pensions							
Western BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Int. w/ Health Ins	Int. w/ Pensions	Mostar Fund	Sarajevo Fund	BLK Fund	Pensions Abroad
Bosanska Dubica Municipality							
Dubica	1	1	1	-	-	1	-
Novi Grad Municipality							
Donji Agici	2	1	1	-	1	-	-
Gornji Agici	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hodzici	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suhaca	9	-	5	1	2	-	2
Prijedor Municipality							
Biscani	7	2	4	-	4	-	-
Hambarine	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ljubija	4	4	4	-	-	2	2
Kozarac	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rizvanovici	1	1	1	-	-	-	1
Prijedor Town	10	8	8	-	4	4	-
Stara Rijeka	4	2	4	-	1	-	3
Subtotal	45	20	28	1	12	7	8

Of the interviewees receiving pensions, in the Federation the pensions paid were no more than a 120KM per month, while RS pensions received by interviewees were significantly lower at approximately 80 KM /month.³ As we can see below, only 7 of the 96 (4%) beneficiaries in the study were collecting their pensions from the Banja Luka fund despite having worked in territory covered by the Banja Luka Fund. 43% of

³ See UNHCR, *Daunting Prospects, Minority Women: Obstacles To Their Return And Integration*, April 2000.

interviewees or household members collected a pension from the Sarajevo or Mostar Funds or from abroad.

As stated above, there are three legally recognised Funds within BH charged with providing pension and invalidity insurance; Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka.⁴ Before May 2000, there was no law or agreement regulating relations between the Federation Funds and the RS Fund, which negatively affected the return process.⁵ However, in March 2000, the Agreement on the Respective Rights and Obligations Regarding the Implementation of Pensions and Disability Insurance was drafted and as of the end of May 2000, the Agreement awaits official publication.

This Agreement regulates inter-Entity pension and disability insurance and ensures access to pensions for more people by deciding which Funds should pay out pensions and, where responsibility should be shared, how joint contributions are to be made by the Funds. The Agreement also includes provisions for the exchange of data between the three Funds. This exchange will open the door for the RS to have access to data which indicates the appropriate pension amount to be paid proportional to the contribution paid. Furthermore, for the first time it creates the possibility of a harmonised Entity pension legislation and the adoption of a BH pension and disability law which would supersede the Agreement as well as provide for other issues not included therein. A BH pension and disability insurance law should regularise co-operation between the various pension funds within BH and the rights for pension and disability insurance for persons who work for state level bodies, as this category is not covered by pension and disability insurance. This harmonisation and data exchange is the first step to ensure that all pension beneficiaries within BH have equal pension rights. Governments of both Entities gave approval to the Fund directors, who have signed the Agreement.

Meanwhile, the two, unharmonized Entity laws, which are still in force, currently regulate the rights for pension and invalidity insurance (i.e. the right to invalidity and retirement pensions) in BH.⁶ Although regulating the same legal issue in the same state, neither of these two laws contain any provision regulating pension/invalidity rights for a person who moved from one Entity to another. In other words, there is no inter-Entity regulation of the pension rights of persons displaced from their Entity of origin. This loophole is currently exploited by both sides to avoid paying pensions to individuals who will additionally burden the respective pension funds.⁷

⁴ According to Art. 5, in conjunction with Art. 153 of the *Law on Pension Invalidation Insurance* (FBH Official Gazette, no. 29/98), there are:

a/ The Social Fund for Pension and Invalidation Insurance of BH (hereinafter the Sarajevo Fund) and
b/ The Institute for Pension and Invalidation Insurance Mostar (hereinafter the Mostar Fund).

Both Funds have their own statutes regulating the work of these institutions (FBH Official Gazette, nos. 2/99 and 3/99).

c/ The competent body, according to the RS Law, is the Public Fund for Pension and Invalidation Insurance of the Republika Srpska (hereinafter the Banja Luka Fund).

⁵ This section includes excerpts from the OSCE/UNHCR brief "How to Ensure that Returnees have Access to Pensions," 11 October 1999.

⁶ It is the Federation *Law on Pension Invalidation Insurance*, published in the FBH Official Gazette, no. 29/98 of 23 July 1998, and in the Republika Srpska, it is *The Law on Pension Invalidation Insurance*, published in the RS Official Gazette, nos. 27/93, 4/94, 14/94, 10/95, 27/95, and 22/96.

⁷ There is the "Agreement on the Realization of the Rights from the Pension and Invalidation Insurance in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina," that was reached between the Sarajevo and Mostar Funds and which only covers the Federation. Although, this Agreement was signed in June 1999, it was published in the FBH Official Gazette, no. 39, of 23 September 1999. However, according to legal experts from the Mostar and Sarajevo Funds this Agreement is not applied due to infrastructure obstacles, such as the non-

There are a number of unregulated areas which allow the Funds to ignore many groups of returnees in general, since the two main eligibility criteria to obtain a pension are (a) permanent residence and b) last place of insurance. These two criteria sometimes refer to two different places. These criteria pose a special problem for returnees who have worked in the Entity in which they were displaced and afterwards returned to the Entity of his/her origin and registered for permanent residence there.

Once the aforementioned Agreement is put in effect, pensions can then be paid by a fund other than the Entity in which a beneficiary resides.

Thus, it is easy to see why residence registration is such an issue of concern for returnees since, until harmonisation of the pension fund legislation occurs, some returnees can effectively lose the one source of income that they and their families are receiving if forced to register their residence in the RS. Despite the fact that many returnees expressed their happiness to be back home, they stated that they will return to the Federation if forced to choose between RS residence registration and receiving their pension. This highlights the timeliness of the Agreement, when return is at such a critical point.

Northern BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Int. w/ Health Ins	Int. w/ Pensions	Mostar Fund	Sarajevo Fund	BLK Fund	Pensions Abroad
Zvornik Municipality							
Klisa	39	31	18	-	15	-	3
Motovo	11	6	4	-	4	-	-
Setci	25	21	10	-	10	-	-
Sib	8	6	1	-	1	-	-
Subtotal	83	64	33	-	30	-	3

b. Health Insurance⁸: An additional benefit of receiving a pension is that it entitles the recipient to health care coverage; thus, no pension means no right to pension health care insurance when one is not otherwise insured. Losing one's pension can not only cripple a family financially, but pensioners then also lose their right to health care insurance. Unfortunately, the aforementioned Agreement does not provide or resolve the issue of health insurance. There is no single provision at the BH or Entity level which provides for the payment of contributions for health insurance to be done by the Fund in one Entity to another. Therefore, these pensioners who fall in this inter Entity "gap" will be *de jure* deprived of their right to pension health insurance/care, although their right to pension payments will be secured.

While the respective laws in both Entities on health insurance provide health coverage to various groups of persons including employees, apprentices, self-employed persons, farmers, pensioners and registered unemployed persons,⁹ based on regular contributions made by employers/bodies or individuals, the current level of health care in BH is far

co-operation of the bank and PTT systems between the Mostar and Sarajevo regions. It is hoped that these issues will be regulated upon adoption of the OHR-drafted Federation *Law on Pension and Invalidation Fund Organization*.

⁸ Portions of this section were taken from UNHCR, *Daunting Prospects, Minority Women: Obstacles to their Return and Integration*.

⁹ Art.10 of the RS *Law on Health Insurance* (RS Official Gazette, nos. 18/99) and Art.19 of the Federation *Law on Health Insurance* (FBH Official Gazette, no. 30/97).

from at an acceptable level.¹⁰ The health coverage for displaced persons and refugees is regulated by virtue of the respective Entity laws on displaced persons and refugees.¹¹

Because there is no system of transfer of payments from one area to another, and from one Entity to another, persons may be required to pay the full amount for services in one area, and not in another. It is not only a question of geographical limitations to one's insurance coverage, but the insurance body (the one that insures a person) must make the contributions to the appropriate fund. Given the current poor economic climate in BH, some employers and public bodies have failed to make payments to the health fund. In such an event, an insured person will have to pay the full cost of the health services.

However, despite possible eligibility for some returnees to RS health insurance, there are additional factors why returnees may not want to obtain medical care in the RS. For some, there is fear of discrimination by medical staff. Of the returnees who have sought or regularly seek medical attention, many stated they only go for medical treatment in the Federation. One illustrative example of this justifiable concern is the fact that in one municipality, the "hard liner" mayor also happens to be the director of the local hospital and many returnees stated they were aware of his extremist views and suspected him of participation in atrocities during the conflict.

In addition, there is also the issue of accessibility of care between the RS and Federation hospitals, both of which suffer from a lack of resources. In 1998, the health expenditure per capita in the Federation was 188 DM, while in the RS it was 98 DM. According to a 1999 survey, average hospital spending for patients in BH is about 200 DM, varying between 220 DM for uninsured patients and 196 DM for those with insurance.¹² If one combines the information provided above with the factors that unemployment in the RS is higher and salaries generally lower, one can conclude that economically obtaining health care in the RS can be more difficult than in the Federation.

Eastern BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Int. w/ Health Ins	Int. w/ Pensions	Mostar Fund	Sarajevo Fund	BLK Fund	Pensions Abroad
Cajnice Municipality							
Milljeno	13	12	6	-	6	-	-
Han Pijesak Municipality							
Nevacka	12	11	6	-	6	-	-
Pale Municipality							
Bogovici	4	4	3	-	3	-	-
Sokolac Municipality							
Banja Lucica	8	7	5	-	5	-	-
Subtotal	37	34	20	-	20	-	-

One possible solution to the issues of RS medical care is the placement of *ambulantas*, or health clinics, in or near minority returnee communities, so returnees have easy and

¹⁰ *A Social Assessment of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, World Bank Report (April 1999).

¹¹ RS Law on Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in the Republika Srpska (RS Official Gazette, no. 33/99) and Federation Law on Displaced-Expelled Persons and Repatriates in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (awaiting publication in the FBH Official Gazette at the time of writing this study). Some Cantonal Laws on Social Welfare cover displaced persons and refugees and entitle such persons to health care.

¹² Know How Fund and Health and Life Sciences Partnership, *1998 Health Resource Accounts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the 1999 Health Expenditure and Perceptions Survey*.

immediate access in case of an emergency. Some communities, like Klisa and Setici, in Zvornik municipality, have access to *ambulantas* in nearby villages which were not destroyed as they serve a mixed population. Many of the returnees, especially elderly returnees, expressed the need for *ambulantas* in their areas or at least regular doctor's visits to the village to check on their health concerns from time to time. In Pridvorci, Nevesinje municipality, UNHCR constructed an *ambulanta* within 2-5 km of most of the minority returnee villages at the request of the municipality. However, the medical staff should come from Nevesinje Hospital and although it is supposed to be open 2 days a week, UNHCR staff state they rarely, if ever, see it open, which indicates a lack of support from the municipality. Ultimately, it is necessary for the RS to create a way to ensure basic health care coverage for all residents, which goes beyond the need of conveniently placed *ambulantas*.

Southern BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Int. w/ Health Ins	Int. w/ Pensions	Mostar Fund	Sarajevo Fund	BLK Fund	Pensions Abroad
Berkovici Municipality							
Dabrica	6	5	3	3	-	-	-
Ljubljaniica	2	1	2	1	-	-	1
Gacko Municipality							
Kula	4	4	3	3	-	-	-
Nevesinje Municipality							
Donja Bljenja	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Gornja Bljenja	4	1	1	-	-	-	1
Kljuna	3	2	2	2	-	-	-
Postojani	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Presjeka	3	2	2	2	-	-	-
Sopilja	3	2	2	2	-	-	-
Trebinje Municipality							
Trebinje Town	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	29	20	15	13	-	-	2
TOTAL							37.7%

Recommendations:

1. While the Agreement is an excellent step towards resolving the pension obstacles for many returnees, the respective authorities are called upon to enact an appropriate legal framework to ensure access to pensions (a revision of current Federation laws; adoption of a new law in the RS in line with the BH Constitution and human rights standards; adoption of a state level law regulating basic pensions rights, including health insurance, and co-operation between the three funds).
2. Support the (re)construction of *ambulantas*, or in the interim, arrange for regular doctors' visits to isolated minority returnee villages without evident *ambulanta* support.
3. Encourage and support the Entities to set up a system of basic health care coverage for all residents.

3. PROPERTY AND PUBLIC SERVICES

The resolution of property issues is almost always the first concrete step to return for many returnees. The property issues of returnees often depend on the "type" of area to which they are returning; urban or rural. For returnees to urban areas, the property issues are more likely to focus on the implementation of property laws and reinstatement into property, while in rural areas the concerns are more likely to concern reconstruction of homes and infrastructure, such as public services. As villages were destroyed during the war, so were many of the public services, in particular electricity, water and telephones for the few villages that had telephone access. These are factors which affect the quality of life for returnees, especially if they are expected to leave current homes where they have access to such services, in exchange for promises or hope that their returnee community will be reconnected. In this section we will discuss property and public services issues jointly as public services are important factors which make homes and communities "liveable".

Property							
Western BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Home of orgin	Collective House	Rental	Live in relatives' home	Family in Fed / Abr	Available Pub Serv.
Bosanska Dubica Municipality							
Dubica	1	1	-	-	-	-	none
Novi Grad Municipality							
Donji Agici	2	2	-	-	-	-	none
Gornji Agici	1	-	1	-	-	-	none
Hodzici	1	1	-	-	-	3	none
Suhaca	9	9	-	-	-	3	none
Prijedor Municipality							
Biscani	7	2	5	-	-	13	none
Hambarine	4	4	-	-	-	2	Some Elect
Ljubija	4	3	1	-	-	-	Elect
Kozarac	1	1	-	-	-	-	Elect, some H2O
Rizvanovici	1	1	-	-	-	-	Elect.
Prijedor Town	10	9	-	1	-	-	All services
Stara Rijeka	4	3	-	-	1	1	Elect
Subtotal	45	36 / 80%	7 / 16%	1 / 2%	1 / 2%	22	

Northern BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Home of orgin	Collective House	Rental	Live w/ relatives	Family in Fed / Abr	Available Pub Serv.
Zvornik Municipality							
Klisa	39	34	1	-	4	21	Some elect
Motovo	11	9	-	-	2	18	None
Setici	25	16	-	-	9	57	None
Sib	8	6	-	-	2	25	None
Subtotal	83	65 / 78%	1 / 1%	-	17 / 21%	121	

a. Property:

i. Returns to home of origin, collective homes, rentals and living with relatives:

Approximately 77% of the interviewees had returned to their homes of origin, the highest percentages being in Western, Eastern and Northern BH. In Southern BH, the percentage was significantly lower, with only 38% of interviewees in this area having returned to their home of origin, while a much higher percentage, 62%, were living in "collective homes". For the purposes of this study, a "collective home" is a partially reconstructed home, usually one winterised room with numerous beds and a stove and no running water or electricity, which members of the returnee community share whilst they work on their property and/or wait for their homes to be reconstructed. In one collective house in Gacko Municipality, 37 men were sharing a house with no electricity or running water.

Another important point to recognise is the number of family members, from the same household, living in the RS versus the number of family members who stayed behind in the Federation. As mentioned in the registration section, there are various reasons why families continue to occupy homes in both Entities. There were only 194 family members in the RS, where 241 family members remained in the Federation. Some interviewees explained that they had private family property in the Federation, i.e. private homes, or staying with relatives, where others admitted that they continued to occupy the homes of other displaced families. Many interviewees expressed their strong desire to return and that it was their right to do so, but they were still waiting for a number of issues to be resolved and stated they did not intend to completely return until those issues were settled; mainly pensions, education, reconstruction and access to public services.

ii. Urban vs. rural returns: With the exception of Trebinje Town and Prijedor Town (a total of 11 interviewees), the majority of interviewees were in rural areas where the communities, infrastructure and homes had been completely destroyed, preventing anyone from living in these areas, including Serb displaced persons, thus avoiding the issue of removal of occupants, evictions, etc. Obviously, in destroyed communities there is little competition for accommodation.

In Prijedor town, there were 10 interviewees. 7 out of the 10 went through an administrative procedure to reclaim their apartment, one had family who stayed in the flat throughout the war, and the last 2 interviewees' homes were empty and had not been declared abandoned so they were able to move back in directly without going through an administrative procedure.

There was one case of an interviewee in Prijedor town whose family privately owned two homes before the war and, although they had received a decision on their repossession claims in August 1999, no eviction had been carried out as of January 2000. The illegal occupants had been offered the option of sharing one of the homes so the interviewee's family could at least move into one of the homes, but they refused. Instead, the interviewee family had been forced to rent accommodation pending the eviction of the illegal occupants.

Out of the group of 10 in Prijedor town, only one interviewee stated that an eviction had been carried out with the assistance of the local police. This may indicate the reluctance of the authorities to carry out evictions and reinstate people when their homes are

illegally occupied, as we saw in the case of the aforementioned interviewee with the same problem, thus preventing people from returning to their homes of origin.

In the more rural areas, owing to the fact that the majority of the homes were either completely destroyed or uninhabitable, most interviewees did not file claims for repossession. Of those who had actually filed a claim for repossession, some moved back into their homes before they had received a reply about their claim for repossession, which they are legally entitled to do. In particular, of the interviewees who had applied in Prijedor municipality villages, none had received replies to their claims. Most of the interviewees who had filed in Nevesinje municipality told a similar story.

Those who did not file claims stated they had simply moved back as soon as the homes were completed or had moved back to clean up their property in the hope that reconstruction assistance would be forthcoming. None of the interviewees reported having problems for not filing their claims for repossession.

iii. Quality of the reconstructed homes: While interviewees consistently expressed their gratitude to the international community for their assistance in reconstructing their homes, a number of interviewees pointed out construction flaws in newly built homes. In particular, of the homes which were newly built, meaning essentially nothing remained of the pre-war house, leaky roofs were a cause for complaint. In particular, in Presjeka village, Nevesinje municipality, one elderly couple showed interviewers puddles of water which had leaked in from the roof and collected in a frozen pool inside the house. In another part of the house, there was a very large patch of dampness in a corner of the single winterised room where the couple lived and consequently the sofa located in that corner of the room had been soaked through. The couple stated that several of their neighbours had a similar problem. They neither had the financial resources nor the physical ability to fix the roof themselves. Nevertheless, other villages in Nevesinje Municipality (Donja Bijenja, Gornja Bijenja, Kljuna and Postoljani) which were built by another agency, were pointed out as having been well built. Interviewees in, Banja Lucica, Sokolac municipality also complained of water damage from leaky roofs, which were evident to interviewers, and wood ceilings that were beginning to warp. On the other hand, interviewees in Nevacka, Han Pijesak municipality, stated that even though some of the wood ceilings were beginning to warp, the roofs were doing well.

Eastern BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Home of origin	Collective House	Rental	Live w/ relatives	Family in Fed / Abr	Avail. Pub Serv.
Cajnice Municipality							
Milijeno	13	13	-	-	-	8	Most have elect
Han Pijesak Municipality							
Nevacka	12	12	-	-	-	26	none
Pale Municipality							
Bogovici	4	4	-	-	-	6	Some elect
Sokolac Municipality							
Banja Lucica	8	8	-	-	-	2	none
Subtotal	37	37 / 100%	-	-	-	42	

As for homes which had been partially destroyed and were reconstructed, in Setici village, Zvornik municipality, an interviewer noticed in one of the homes that there

were gaps around the window and chimney, and even in the damaged walls, which had been stuffed with newspaper by the elderly, widowed interviewee woman who was trying to keep out the cold.

Southern BH							
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Home of orgin	Collective House	Rental	Live w/ relatives	Family in Fed / Abr	Available Pub Serv.
Berkovici Municipality							
Dabrica	6	3	3	-	-	19	None
Ljubljana	2	2	-	-	-	4	None
Gacko Municipality							
Kula	4	-	4	-	-	6	None
Nevesinje Municipality							
Donja Bijenja	2	-	2	-	-	1	Elect
Gornja Bijenja	4	-	4	-	-	7	None
Kljuna	3	-	3	-	-	7	None
Postoljani	1	1	-	-	-	4	None
Presjeka	3	1	2	-	-	6	None
Sopilja	3	3	-	-	-	2	None
Trebinje Municipality							
Trebinje Town	1	1	-	-	-	-	All services
Subtotal	29	11 / 38%	18 / 62%	-	-	56	
TOTAL	194	149 / 77%	26 / 13.5%	1 / .5%	18 / 9%	241	

b. Public Services:

i. Electricity: As seen from the chart above, only the two urban areas had all public services available to returnees. All of the communities had electricity before the conflict. At best, some of the more rural communities presently had electricity to at least part of the village (9), but the majority of villages did not (19). However, work towards reconnecting many of them with electricity is scheduled to recommence in the first half of 2000. The electrical and water systems for Nevacka, Han Pijesak municipality was completed in early June 2000. In Setici, Zvornik municipality, USAID has plans to repair the electrical and water systems. In Kljuna, Presjeka, Donja Bijenja, Postoljani and possibly Gornja Bijenja, the *Danish Refugee Council* (DRC) will be restoring a low wattage electrical network. Several interviewees, especially in Gacko and Nevesinje Municipalities, stated that the villages had been given generators, but that the returnees did not have the money to buy the fuel to keep them going.

Electricity not only provides light and energy for the returnees, it can also be invaluable in providing a sense of security and preventing the perception of isolation which many interviewees state they felt. In Kula village, Gacko municipality, where returnees reported several aforementioned security incidents, several of which took place under cover of nightfall, interviewees stated that if they could at least light up the immediate vicinity of the collective house they were living in, they would not only feel safer, but an outdoor light would also provide a deterrent for any individuals looking to cause trouble. In addition, for those returnees, sometimes living alone in isolated villages where they may not leave for weeks at a time, the simple act of turning on a radio helps make them feel reconnected to the outside world. Interviewees throughout the RS repeatedly requested assistance with electrical reconnection.

ii. Water: In many of these communities, water was collected from wells or stored in water tanks before the conflict. Some homes were preparing to connect to the water system in their area when the war broke out and had begun plumbing installations, but many of these were looted during the conflict. Some of the communities stated that they

used to have more wells from where they collected water before the war, but that they were destroyed or mined, forcing people to walk long distances to collect water. In Sokolac municipality, Banja Lucica village, returnees had to walk 1.5 km to get to the well, including a 71 year old interviewee who lived alone. In the winter months, these long, icy walks can be treacherous and dangerous, especially for elderly returnees. Since the time the study was conducted, the homes in this village have been connected to the water supply, but there are many villages which remain without water. In Milijeno village, Cajnice municipality, two of the village wells were mined during the conflict, which still prevents use. Some of the aid agencies will repair wells in the villages where they are working, such as DRC in Nevesinje municipality. However, the demining of communities must wait for the co-ordination of the *BH Mine Action Centre*.

iii. Telephones: None of the villages visited had been reconnected to telephone lines, and some of them had never been connected to the telephone lines even before the conflict. However, phone connection takes on a completely different significance at this crucial return time. Keeping in mind the isolation of some of these villages, the fact that most interviewees had no transportation, not even bus lines, the significant number of elderly and the fact that there are generally no nearby health services, there is little returnees could do in case of a security threat or health emergencies. In Banja Lucica, Sokolac municipality, several interviewees related how a fellow returnee had fallen very ill and needed medical assistance, but was not able to get help until an NGO worker who came to visit the returnees took the person to the health centre.

iv. Payment of public services for previous occupants: This issue is actually only applicable to Prijedor town and Trebinje town since they were the only areas where the public services were not completely destroyed. In Prijedor town, 9 interviewees had returned to their home of origin and 4 (44%) of them reported difficulties with public services. All 4 stated that they were asked to pay the electric bills of previous occupants, including one elderly, disabled woman who was asked to pay 600 KM in bills, but instead paid 100 KM to the municipality for a certificate proving she had not been living at the property at the time, which she then gave to the electric company to release her from liability for the incurred debt. One of the 4 was also asked to pay the water bill of the previous occupant. The other interviewees did not clarify if they had actually paid the bills.

The one interviewee in Trebinje did not report difficulties in reconnection or payment, although the fact that we only had one known interviewee should indicate that this issue will need additional monitoring as more returnees go back to Trebinje. Since the interviews were conducted, other minority families have returned to Trebinje, and several have reported to UNHCR that they were requested to pay the charges of previous occupants.

On 30 July 1999, OHR issued a decision which stipulated that the PTT may not hold pre-conflict subscribers responsible for debts incurred when their dwelling was inhabited by someone else, and there is now a maximum 50 KM administrative charge for the reconnection of services for pre-conflict subscribers. Pre-conflict subscribers who have returned must have taken advantage of this decisions by 25 January 2000, or within three months of moving into their pre-conflict home, otherwise they are considered new subscribers. Although similar decisions have not been issued for other public services, it is apparent that this continues to pose a problem for other returnees.¹³

¹³ UNHCR's Legal Aid and Information Centres are assisting clients with claims.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure the reconstruction of public services for returnee communities as these enhance the sustainability of return and can also be seen as security measures, for reporting incidents or medical emergencies, especially in winter, when mobility is limited.
2. The international community should ensure that local authorities support measures which would clear pre-conflict subscribers of liability for debts incurred by persons who occupied returnees' property before their return.
3. Ensure that donors require reconstruction agencies to use RRTF approved tri- or quad-partite agreements for the reconstruction and repair of homes. These agreements include provisions which ensure that "quality of work" guarantees made by sub-contractors to reconstruction agencies are extended to beneficiaries. UNHCR Legal Aid Centres could be used to assist in the enforcement of these agreements.
4. Prioritise reconstruction for villages where returnees have been conducting cleaning and/ or repairs to their property, but note that special efforts should be made for elderly or single female headed families who are not always able to return to do so, despite their desire to return.
5. Promote and implement mine clearance programmes in and around affected villages.

4. RESIDENCE REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION CARDS¹⁴

Residence registration and the acquisition of identification cards (ID cards) are a precondition for having access to health services, as well as being legal obligations for citizens.¹⁵ In general, only returnees who deregistered their residence upon "departure" from the RS (many of whom did not deregister during the conflict) need to reregister if they return to their pre-conflict addresses. This also applies to those who have returned to their municipality, but not their pre-conflict home and are living with friends or relatives, although it is advisable they make the police aware of their presence at the temporary address.

Residence Registration and Identification Documents of Interviewees						
Western BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Int w/ RS resid. Reg.	Family mem. In Fed/abr.	Int. w/ RS ID	Int. w/ Fed ID	Invalid ID
Kozarska Dubica Municipality						
Dubica	1	1	-	1	-	-
Novi Grad Municipality						
Donji Agici	2	1	-	-	2	-
Gornji Agici	1	1	-	1	-	-
Hodzici	1	-	3	-	1	-
Suhaca	9	5	3	2	7	-
Prijedor Municipality						
Biscani	7	1	13	1	4	-
Hambarine	4	3	2	2	1	1
Ljubija	4	4	-	3	-	1
Kozarac	1	1	-	1	-	-
Rizvanovici	1	-	-	-	1	-
Prijedor Town	10	7	-	7	2	1
Stara Rijeka	4	-	1	-	2	2
Subtotal	45	24 / 53%	22	18 / 40%	20 / 44%	5 / 11%

An ID card is issued by the Public Security Station (PSS) where a person has her/his permanent residence. An ID card certifies a person's citizenship of the "Srpska Republika of Bosnia and Herzegovina," her/his birth date, and permanent residence. While interviewees were also asked about access to public documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, pension records and cadaster, or property, records, which are normally held in the records of one's municipality of origin, they generally had no problems in this area, although not all had actually made the effort to approach their municipality of origin or instead obtained them from their municipalities-in-exile.

¹⁴ The following is summarised from the *UNHCR Registration of Repatriates in the Republika Srpska and Entitlement to Identity Documents, Food Assistance and Medical Care*, UNHCR April 1999.

¹⁵ See the *Law on Residence* (RS Official Gazette, no. 27/93) and the *the Law on Identification Cards* (RS Official Gazette, nos. 14/92, 19/92, 27/93, and 13/96).

Many of these documents are linked in one way or another. For example, to obtain an ID card, one may have to show proof of residence registration, a birth certificate and a citizenship certificate. For access to medical assistance for those who are insured, one must have a health booklet which requires an ID card and registration with the PSS, if applicable. Thus, problems may develop for returnees who are denied access to residence registration and documentation.

Northern BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Int w/ RS resid. reg.	Family mem. in Fed/abr.	Int. w/ RS ID	Int. w/ Fed ID	Invalid ID
Zvornik Municipality						
Klisa	39	16	21	10	27	2
Motovo	11	2	18	2	9	-
Setici	25	13	57	7	17	1
Sib	8	0	25	1	6	1
Subtotal	83	31 / 37%	121	20 / 24%	59 / 71%	4 / 5%

While interviewees were asked if they had registered their residence with the local PSS, the more telling figure is the number of interviewees who had obtained RS ID cards. Western and Northern BH interviewees had the highest percentage of RS ID cards, 40% and 24% respectively. Most interviewees, about 70% in total, still had Federation ID cards. Only 13% of the interviewees in Western BH had Federation ID cards compared to 97% of the interviewees in Southern BH.

There were various explanations given by interviewees for the fact that many of them did not have RS ID cards. Many of these reasons should be viewed as real obstacles to return. A high proportion of the returnees are pensioners with their pensions in the Federation administered by the Sarajevo or Mostar Pension Funds. The consequences of pensioners registering their residence in the RS and obtaining RS ID cards, thus transferring their pensions to the Banja Luka Fund, is discussed in the pensions section. Another reason interviewees state they kept their Federation ID, was that their children were currently living and/or attending school in the Federation because the schools in their communities were destroyed and/or they were afraid to send their children to schools in the RS. Many interviewees also stated that the lack of essential public services, in particular electricity, health and transportation services, in combination with the often isolated nature of the homes and communities of origin made return currently unsustainable. These problems combined create "part time returnees"; returnees who lived in their homes of origin part time, as well as the Federation, while they improved their homes and/or waited for sustainable return conditions in their homes and communities of origin. Each of these issues will be discussed further in their corresponding section. There were also some interviewees who stated that they intended to obtain RS ID cards in the Spring.

Eastern BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter Total	Int w/ RS resid. reg.	Family mem. in Fed/abr.	Int. w/ RS ID	Int. w/ Fed ID	Invalid ID
Cajnice Municipality						
Milijeno	13	-	8	-	11	2
Han Pijesak Municipality						
Nevacka	12	-	26	-	9	3
Pale Municipality						
Bogovici	4	1	6	1	3	-
Sokolac Municipality						
Banja Lucica	8	-	2	-	6	2
Subtotal	37	1 / 3%	42	1 / 3%	29 / 78%	7 / 19%

Southern BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Int w/ RS resid. reg.	Family mem. in Fed/abr.	Int. w/ RS ID	Int. w/ Fed ID	Invalid ID
Berkovici Municipality						
Dabrica	6	-	19	-	6	-
Ljubljana	2	-	4	-	2	-
Gacko Municipality						
Kula	4	-	6	-	4	-
Nevesinje Municipality						
Donja Bijenja	2	-	1	-	2	-
Gornja Bijenja	4	-	7	-	4	-
Kljuna	3	-	7	-	3	-
Postojani	1	-	4	-	1	-
Presjeka	3	-	6	-	3	-
Sopljja	3	-	2	-	3	-
Trebinje Municipality						
Trebinje Town	1	1	-	1	-	-
Subtotal	29	1 / 3%	56	1 / 3%	28 / 97%	-
TOTAL	194	157 / 29%	241	60 / 21%	156 / 70%	16 / 8%

Recommendations

1. It is essential for returnees to obtain proper documentation. However, the way to insure that they will approach the local authorities and apply for RS ID cards, is to create the conditions in their communities and homes of origin which promote sustainable return, such as pensions and infrastructure repair, i.e. schools, public services, etc.

2. The international community should increase awareness about the need for returning displaced persons to deregister from their temporary residence and inform municipal bodies dealing with displaced persons and refugees about their departure. At the same time, an information campaign is necessary to inform returning displaced persons and refugees about their obligation to register as returnees with MROs (Municipal Information Offices in the Federation) or OMIs (Municipal Departments for Refugees and Displaced Persons in the RS), as stipulated in the adopted legislation on displaced persons and repatriates.¹⁶

¹⁶ In the Federation this legislation is called the *Law on Displaced Persons-Expelled Persons and Repatriates in the Federation of BH* (Official Gazette of the FBH, no. 19/2000), which entered into force on 3 June 2000. The RS legislation is called the *Law on Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in the Republika Srpska* (Official Gazette RS, no. 33/99), which entered into force on 4 December 1999.

5. EDUCATION

For many families, the questions of where their children will attend school are critical ones which keep many families physically separated; some family members remain in the Federation so their children can attend school, while others stay in the RS to work on their home of origin, look after livestock, cultivate the land, etc.

As one can see below, 85% of the study group children were attending school in the Federation, which reflects the great need for schools in returnee communities. The fact that 90% of the school age children were currently attending school despite the obstacles shows a deep commitment by the interviewees to ensure that their children get a proper education. The remaining 10% who were not "in school" was mostly made up of children who were possibly either about to start or had just finished their education, which may represent that even a higher percentage of the school age children are "in school."

While the table shows that 85% of the school age children are in school in the Federation, at first glance this gives the impression that this also indicates the number of school children who are members of "split" families. However, in some villages located very near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), interviewees were sending their children to Federation schools, despite the fact that the whole family was living in the RS. In Klisa and Setici villages, Zvornik municipality, returnees were paying 25 KM a month to transport their children to school in the Federation. These also happen to be the villages with the greatest number of school age children.

Table E.1: Education				
Western BH				
Town or Village	No. of school age children	RS School	Fed School	No school
Bosanska Dubica Municipality				
Dubica	-	-	-	-
Novi Grad Municipality				
Donji Agici	-	-	-	-
Gornji Agici	-	-	-	-
Hodzici	2	-	1	1 (1982)
Suhaca	4	1	-	2 (1982) & 1 no answer
Prijedor Municipality				
Biscani	8	-	8	-
Hambarine	-	-	-	-
Ljubija	-	-	-	-
Kozarac	1	1	-	-
Rizvanovici	-	-	-	-
Prijedor Town	3	3	-	-
Stara Rijeka	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	18	5 / 28%	9 / 50%	4 / 22%

Education also affects other issues such as residence registration. Parents are reluctant to de-register from municipalities in the Federation where their children are attending school because then they will have to send their children to schools in the RS. Many parents simply felt that it was too soon for this and were taking more of a wait and see

approach. Seemingly to confirm some parents concerns, according to UNMIBH (IPTF) reports, on 11 March 2000, an unknown person with a machine gun and a hand grenade went to a school near Donja Bijenja, Nevesinje municipality, threatening to kill all Muslims, but was restrained by local police. Another reason for concern a parent gave was that they were afraid that their children might behave badly towards other ethnic groups and vice versa. In addition, parents stated they were not happy with the curriculum being taught in the RS.

In Kozarac village, Prijedor municipality, interviewees stated that the pre-conflict school had been used as a detention camp during the conflict and parents were understandably not interested in sending their children there. Instead they made arrangements for their children to be temporarily taught at another building within the community.

Northern BH				
Town or Village	No. of school age children	RS School	Fed School	No school
Zvornik Municipality				
Klisa	32	-	27	2 abroad, 1 (1982), 1 (1993), 1 not in school
Motovo	8	-	8	-
Setici	35	-	34	1 (1993)
Sib	13	-	12	1 (1993)
Subtotal	88	-	81 / 92%	7 / 8%

Despite the reluctance of many parents to send their children to RS schools, parents with children in RS schools stated that school directors, in Trebinje town (Trebinje municipality) and Bogovici village (Pale municipality) had approached them to offer support and express their assurances that their children would be well treated by teachers and other pupils. The family in Trebinje reported having no problems with the school, while the family in Bogovici village stated that their child did not experience problems in school, but instead suffered verbal harassment on the way to and from school. When the bus that transported him broke down, the parents placed him in a full time institution in the Federation as they no longer had accommodation in the Federation and this was the only way their son would be able to regularly and safely attend school.

Eastern BH				
Town or Village	No. of school age children	RS School	Fed School	No school
Cajnice Municipality				
Milljeno	3	-	2	1 (abroad)
Han Pijesak Municipality				
Nevacka	12	-	11	1 (1983)
Pale Municipality				
Bogovici	2	-	2	-
Sokolac Municipality				
Banja Lucica	2	-	2	-
Subtotal	19	-	17 / 89%	2 / 11%

Southern BH				
Town or Village	No. of school age children	RS School	Fed School	No school
Berkovici Municipality				
Dabrica	2	-	2	-
Ljubljanska	-	-	-	-
Gacko Municipality				
Kula	1	-	1	-
Nevesinje Municipality				
Donja Bijenja	-	-	-	-
Gornja Bijenja	4	-	4	-
Kljuna	-	-	-	-
Postojani	1	-	1	-
Presjeka	1	-	1	-
Sopilja	-	-	-	-
Trebinje Municipality				
Trebinje Town	2	2	-	-
Subtotal	11	2 / 18%	9 / 82%	-
TOTAL	136	7 / 5%	116 / 85%	13 / 10%

Recommendations:

1. Repair and reconstruction of school buildings in returnee municipalities must be a priority for all ongoing and future reconstruction programmes, which addresses the fear of many parents to send their children to school outside their community.
2. The main obstacle, i.e. the curriculum issue, must be solved as soon as possible to permit sustainable return and enhance the reconciliation process.

During the interview of many parents to send their children to RS schools, parents with children in RS schools stated that school buildings in Trebinje and Gacko municipalities and village (the main village) had deteriorated them to extent that they are not safe for their children. Some of them stated that they and express their concerns that their children would be well served by teachers and other people. The families in Trebinje reported having no problems with the school while the families in Bogovci village stated that their child did not attend school, but instead attended private education on the way to and from school. When the bus that transported him broke down the parents placed him in a private institution in the location as they no longer had accommodation in the Federation and this was the only way that they would be able to continue their child's education.

Town or Village	No. of school age children	RS School	Fed School	No school
Berkovici Municipality				
Dabrica	2	-	2	-
Ljubljanska	-	-	-	-
Gacko Municipality				
Kula	1	-	1	-
Nevesinje Municipality				
Donja Bijenja	-	-	-	-
Gornja Bijenja	4	-	4	-
Kljuna	-	-	-	-
Postojani	1	-	1	-
Presjeka	1	-	1	-
Sopilja	-	-	-	-
Trebinje Municipality				
Trebinje Town	2	2	-	-
Subtotal	11	2 / 18%	9 / 82%	-
TOTAL	136	7 / 5%	116 / 85%	13 / 10%

6. EMPLOYMENT

39% of interviewees stated that employment was one of their primary concerns, ranking it higher than security or reconstruction assistance. This is an issue which touched many of the interviewees and kept their families separated between the Federation and RS. It not only separated spouses and children, but also elderly interviewees whose adult children normally lived with them, but who would not return because they were employed in the Federation and could not count on finding employment in the RS, thus undermining the support network of some elderly returnees. However, employment is a problem that exists throughout BH, regardless of status or ethnicity. According to some analysts, unemployment is expected to remain high, especially as companies privatise and employers restructure. BH formal unemployment is estimated at 40%, with slightly higher unemployment in the RS.¹⁷

EM.1: Employment						
Western BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Employed in RS	Employed in Fed.	Un-employed	Home-makers	Retired
Bosanska Dubica Municipality						
Dubica	1	-	-	-	-	1
Novi Grad Municipality						
Donji Agici	2	-	-	2	-	-
Gornji Agici	1	-	-	1	-	-
Hodzici	1	-	-	1	-	-
Suhaca	9	-	-	9	-	-
Prijedor Municipality						
Biscani	7	-	-	2	3	1
Hambarine	4	-	-	4	-	-
Ljubija	4	-	-	-	4	-
Kozarac	1	-	-	1	-	1
Rizvanovici	1	-	-	-	-	1
Prijedor Town	10	1	-	1	3	5
Stara Rijeka	4	-	-	1	1	2
Subtotal	45	1	-	22	11	11
Northern BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Employed in RS	Employed in Fed.	Un-employed	Home-makers	Retired
Zvornik Municipality						
Klisa	39	-	2	21	14	2
Motovo	11	-	-	7	1	3
Setici	25	-	3	13	8	1
Sib	8	-	2	5	-	1
Subtotal	83	-	7	46	23	7

Table EM.1 reflects not only the number of employed interviewees, but also employed spouses. 76.5% of interviewees and spouses were unemployed or homemakers. An additional 18% were retired and most likely receiving Federation pensions, which were generally not more than 120KM per month. Only 5.5% of interviews or spouses were employed. The one person who was employed in the RS was working for an

¹⁷ The Economist Intelligence Unit, "Bosnia and Hercegovina; Country Report," 1st Quarter, 2000.

international organisation. The rest of the employed study group were working in the Federation. While this may indicate discriminatory hiring practices in the RS, considering the fact that a large part of the RS returns have taken place within the last year, it more likely reflects employment that interviewees have had for some time. Very few interviewees made indications that they had looked for work in the RS since return stating that they knew there were no jobs available. In Nevesinje, the timber and textiles factory that was the primary employer in the area before the conflict was still functioning, but now instead of employing 350 people full-time, it employs 150 on an irregular, and part-time basis. On a positive note, UNHCR Trebinje reports that they are aware of two technically skilled minority returnees who have found employment since the study was conducted.

Eastern BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Employed in RS	Employed in Fed.	Un-employed	Home-makers	Retired
Cajnice Municipality						
Milijeno	13	-	-	2	5	6
Han Pijesak Municipality						
Nevačka	12	-	2	2	6	2
Pale Municipality						
Bogovici	4	-	-	-	1	3
Sokolac Municipality						
Banja Lucica	8	-	1	1	2	4
Subtotal	37	-	3	5	14	15

A number of returnees living in rural areas who had been engaged in farming before the conflict requested assistance with obtaining agricultural equipment, or micro-credit loans, so they could resume farming again. Additionally, other interviewees stated that the main reason they remained on their property was to take care of the livestock that had been given to them. The livestock act as anchors fixing the returnees to their homes of origin. While farming will not provide a complete solution to the issue of employment, it does provide returnees with some means to provide food for their families.

There are no quick and easy solutions to the economic problems of BH. Within the framework of the Stability Pact, The European Commission and the World Bank have been tasked with the special mandate to co-ordinate matters related to economic recovery, reform and reconstruction in the South East Europe Region, including BH. According to the World Bank, it is expected that small and medium sized companies in the private sector will be the driving force for sustainable income and growth in the region. The World Bank, along with several other international organisations, are currently working on measures which would encourage this type of economic growth, such as the creation of an effective legal framework for private sector development and the acceleration of privatisation and structural reform in the financial and enterprise sector.¹⁸ However, it will be some time before BH citizens will begin to reap the benefits of these efforts.

¹⁸ The World Bank, *The Road to Stability and Prosperity in South Eastern Europe: A Regional Strategy Paper*, 1 March 2000.

Southern BH						
Town or Village	No. of Inter	Employed in RS	Employed in Fed.	Un-employed	Home-makers	Retired
Berkovci Municipality						
Dabrica	6	-	-	4	1	1
Ljubljana	2	-	-	1	-	1
Gacko Municipality						
Kula	4	-	-	1	-	3
Nevesinje Municipality						
Donja Bijenja	2	-	-	1	-	1
Gornja Bijenja	4	-	-	2	1	1
Kljuna	3	-	-	-	1	2
Postoljani	1	-	-	1	-	-
Presjeka	3	-	-	-	1	2
Sopilja	3	-	-	1	1	1
Trebinje Municipality						
Trebinje Town	1	-	-	1	-	-
Subtotal	29	-	-	12	5	12
TOTAL	194	1 / .5%	10 / 5%	95 / 49%	53 / 27.5%	35 / 18%

Recommendations:

1. Support income generating activities (livestock, agricultural tools/machinery) and establish small scale credit loan schemes.

7. PRIMARY CONCERNS

In the study questionnaires, interviewees were asked about their primary areas of concern, which allowed them to emphasise those issues which also or especially troubled them, but which may not have been included in the questionnaire. Interviewees were able to give more than one response.

Most of these issues raised were touched upon in their respective sections, in particular, employment (39%), public services (21%), pension and health issues (19%), education (18%), security (14%), and agricultural machinery (10%). However, it is important to note the level of concern that each of these issues generates, in particular employment.

Table PC.1: Primary Concerns								
Western BH								
Town or Village	Educ.	Employment	Reconst- -ruction	Public Services	Transp.	Security /FOM	Agricul. machine	Health/ Pension
Bosanska Dubica Municipality								
Dubica	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Novi Grad Municipality								
Donji Agici	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Gornji Agici	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Hodzici	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suhaca	1	4	1	1	-	2	-	2
Prijedor Municipality								
Biscani	1	2	3	-	-	1	-	-
Hambarine	1	4	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ljubija	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Kozarac	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rizvanovici	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prijedor Town	-	6	-	-	-	3	-	4
Stara Rijeka	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	3
Subtotal	3	18	12	1	-	7	-	10

The additional issues of concern which interviewees referred to included reconstruction assistance, transportation, as well as a few issues which were not included in the tables, but were either particular to a certain area or less frequently mentioned. These issues include tracing of missing family members, concern for the future of the children, ability to shop for supplies and return of other displaced persons and refugees.

a. Reconstruction Assistance: In some areas, demand for reconstruction assistance has outpaced reconstructed properties. In Zvornik municipality, UNHCR estimates that there is a reconstruction gap of 3,500 homes based on the difference between the number of people who are in the return process and the number of homes planned for reconstruction. Prijedor municipality is another area where returns are exceeding available reconstruction assistance. Both were considered "hard line" municipalities where returns were expected to be the slowest. While all minority returnees should obtain reconstruction assistance, this is not the reality, due to factors such as dwindling funds and the relatively high cost of reconstructing completely destroyed homes versus the lower cost of repairing partially destroyed homes. Those who will be most adversely affected are those who continue to delay return or those who return home too late in the

return season, after available funds have been allocated. The best way for returnees to ensure that they will obtain reconstruction assistance is by demonstrating a commitment to return, through residence in a collective house or maintaining a regular presence in their return community (keeping in mind the difficulties that this may present for some elderly or single female headed households¹⁹).

b. Transportation: Returnees in some of the more isolated villages were requesting assistance with access to public transportation, in particular bus transportation. For some returnees, it is a 5 hour walk to buy supplies. Some of the villages had been serviced by bus lines before the conflict and one could sometimes still see the old bus stops. In Nevacka, Han Pijesak Municipality, bus lines have resumed. Conversely, in Nevesinje municipality, the old bus routes have been taken over by private companies who do not consider it economically feasible to extend a bus route to the returnee villages given the relatively small number of returnees.

The winter of 1999/2000 proved to be an especially harsh winter in BH with exceptionally high snowfall and low temperatures. This meant that some of the returnee villages were completely cut off, as vehicles were not able make it in or out to check on returnees or deliver supplies. In Nevacka, Han Pijesak municipality, and Banja Lucica, Sokolac municipality, SFOR attempted to fly in food supplies via helicopter for stranded returnees. In situations like this, it is necessary for agencies to co-ordinate to provide additional support for returnees. Even when nearby villages were being visited by municipal snow ploughs, some returnee villages complained they were being passed over by the municipalities.

Northern BH								
Town or Village	Educ.	Employment	Reconst -ruction	Public Services	Transp.	Security /FOM	Agricul. machine	Health/ Pension
Zvornik Municipality								
Klisa	6	14	4	6	1	3	-	6
Motovo	6	8	7	2	-	-	-	-
Setici	3	12	5	7	-	-	-	4
Sib	3	3	4	5	-	1	-	2
Subtotal	18	37	20	20	1	4	-	12

Eastern BH								
Town or Village	Educ.	Employment	Reconst -ruction	Public Services	Transp.	Security /FOM	Agricul. machine	Health/ Pension
Cajnice Municipality								
Milljeno	2	5	2	2	6	8	1	2
Han Pijesak Municipality								
Nevacka	7	4	1	5	6	2	2	7
Pale Municipality								
Bogovici	1	-	-	1	2	-	3	-
Sokolac Municipality								
Banja Lucica	1	2	-	4	5	2	3	3
Subtotal	11	11	3	12	19	12	9	12

c. Tracing of missing family members: In Zvornik municipality, it seemed that disproportionate number of families, in contrast to the interviewee families in other municipalities, were missing family members, almost always men who had disappeared during the conflict. From these four villages alone, there were approximately 133

¹⁹ UNHCR, *Daunting Prospects, Minority Women: Obstacles To Their Return And Integration*.

persons, mostly men, who are considered missing. As stated earlier, ICRC reports that in Zvornik municipality, 1,943 persons were reported missing between 1992 and 1995. Some families in the study maintained hope and bravely insisted that they were still in prison somewhere although they had not heard from them since the beginning of the conflict. Families stated that they had reported missing family members to the ICRC, but there was still no information available for them. It was evident that some women, who broke down crying interviews, were still traumatised from the loss of their family members, especially elderly women who had lost both husbands and sons and who were now living alone in small villages. This tied with their struggle to survive and their dependence for assistance on friends and surviving family members presented a very bleak picture.

Southern BH								
Town or Village	Educ.	Employment	Reconst- -ruction	Public Services	Transp.	Security /FOM	Agricul. machine	Health/ Pension
Berkovici Municipality								
Dabrica	1	3	2	2	1	-	3	2
Ljubljaniica	-	-	2	1	-	1	1	-
Gacko Municipality								
Kula	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-
Nevesinje Municipality								
Donja Bijenja	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
Gornja Bijenja	-	1	3	3	1	-	2	-
Kljuna	-	3	3	1	-	1	-	-
Postoljani	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
Presjeka	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	1
Sopilja	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
Trebinje Municipality								
Trebinje Town	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	2	10	16	8	2	5	11	3
TOTAL	34/18%	76/39%	16/23%	14/21%	22/11%	28/14%	30/10%	37/19%

Recommendations:

1. Secure additional funds to meet the needs, such as reconstruction, of the increased number of returnees.
2. Encourage local authorities and bus companies to renew bus lines to returnee villages.
3. Identify potentially vulnerable or traumatised refugees, for example those with missing relatives, and co-ordinate available support, including psycho-social services.

CONCLUSIONS

Undeniably, minorities who have returned or are in the process of returning to their homes of origin in the RS are being closely watched, not only by the international community, but more importantly by displaced persons waiting or debating to return. For this reason it is essential, not only for the local authorities and communities to co-operate and support the return process, but it is equally critical that the members of the international community increase their contributions to the reconstruction effort; this especially as we experience the first major and realistic minority return season. Continued efforts must be undertaken to avoid the funding gaps and assure that all returnees have adequate housing for the coming winter.

As the study illustrates, the return process constitutes more than the physical act of moving back into a pre-conflict home. There are numerous obstacles and fears which returnees have to overcome and cope with during and after the return process which will determine if their return is sustainable, such as unemployment and financial insecurity, lack of health and educational facilities, poor living conditions and limited funds for reconstruction. The study suggests that the removal of the physical obstacles can soothe the psychological ones.

The primary responsibility of local governments to support the return process cannot be emphasised enough. While they may not have the financial means to support returns, they certainly play a key role in establishing the political climate in which those returns take place, and have an obligation to remove the discriminatory political and administrative obstacles which minority returnees sometimes encounter.²⁰ Without the political will and co-operation of the local authorities, minority returns cannot occur, regardless of the financial or security support of the international community.

The international community has, over the past four years, invested generously to create conditions conducive to return. With the most encouraging results we are witnessing this year and in anticipation of further increases of registered minority returnees, the commitment of the international community is very much required. This commitment will be crucial throughout 2000 and 2001 in order to achieve the successful return of refugees and displaced persons.

²⁰ See Annex 7, chapter 1, of *The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

IV. ANNEX 1

Pre- and Post-Conflict Municipal Ethnic Make-up²¹

Western BH								
RMF Municipalities	Pre-conflict ethnic make-up according to 1991 census				Post-conflict ethnic make-up estimates			
	Bosniac	Croat	Serb	Other	Bosniac	Croat	Serbf	Other
Kozarska Dubica	6,440	488	21,728	2,950	3,500	200	28,000	-
Novi Grad	14,040	403	25,101	2,121	350	-	21,205	-
Prijedor	49,351	6,316	47,581	9,295	2,800	2,930	55,000	42
Northern BH								
Zvornik	48,102	122	30,863	2,208	300*	-	30,000	-
Eastern BH								
Cajnice	4,024	5	4,709	218	100	-	8,371	-
Han Pijesak	2,543	7	3,674	124	124	-	4,070	-
Pale	4,364	129	11,284	578	52	-	28,000	-
Sokolac	4,493	19	10,195	176	63	-	14,500	-
Southern BH								
Berkovici**	1,183	781	2,194	48	70	-	3,500	-
Gacko	3,858	29	6,661	240	50	17	12,382	-
Nevesinje	3,313	210	10,711	214	150	-	18,000	-
Trebinje	5,571	1,246	21,349	2,830	153	332	36,424	-

*These are full time returns. In Zvornik Municipality, 20,000 families are estimated to have accessed their pre-war homes; which can mean anywhere from that they have only gone for an assessment visit to that they have begun cleaning up their property. 6-12,000 families are considered to be in the process of return.

**Pre-conflict, Berkovici was part of Stolac municipality, which is now in the Federation.. These figures are estimated based on the pre-conflict population of the villages which now make up Berkovici municipality.

f These estimates include displaced persons and are based on municipality figures and/or UNHCR estimates.

²¹ Figures on post conflict ethnic make-up are estimates only as no official census has taken place since 1991.

V. ANNEX 2

Return dates of RMF Interviewees

Return Date Breakdown					
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000*
Western B&H	1	2	9	33	0
Northern B&H	0	0	0	83	0
Eastern B&H	0	0	0	36	1
Southern B&H	0	0	0	29	0
Subtotal	1	2	9	181	1

*Between 1 January and 3 March 2000.