

“How much further - Three Years On” - Documentary TV series story summary

1. Kupres/S.Kupres (7’31”)

December 2000

The elementary school in Novo Selo, close to Kupres, has been rebuilt. The teacher hopes that in the coming years there will be more pupils. At the moment there are only five. Many pre-war inhabitants have returned but the problem is that out of around 50 young people there are only a few girls, as Goran Zubić says.

Three years later(December 2003)

Goran Zubić is married, has a son and a job in the forestry company. There are more and more children in school every day and the problems the returnees are faced with are the same as those the rest of BiH is facing: lack of work and future prospects are the main reasons for which the young people want to leave Novo Selo and move to town.

2. Bosanski/Srpski Brod - village of Koraće (8’00”)

December 2000

“Love is more important than water and electricity and everything else...”, we were told by Ivan and Mirela Zeba, a young married couple, returnees to the Brod municipality. While Mirela does the daily housework, her husband Ivan works as an RS policeman. Together, they are trying to start a new life on the ruins of their old life.

Three years later (December 2003)

Mirela and Ivan Zeba are still the only returnees in Koraće: they live in their own house, which they have rebuilt in the meantime, they have a little daughter called Antoana who is two, Ivan works as a policeman in Brod and Mirela is unemployed. They are afraid that they could remain the only returnees in the village, but their motive for staying in Koraće is to be their own bosses in their own house.

3. Rudo - village of Dorići (7’20”)

Decembar 2000

Ismet Dorić and Miloš Varešić live in Dorići near Rudo. Ismet has returned to Dorići from Sarajevo, because that is where he feels best, regardless of the difficult living conditions. He would not remain in Sarajevo even if, as he says, they were to “give me the whole city”. Miloš Varešić thinks the same of Rudo, and he would return to Sarajevo “sooner rather than later”.

Three years later (December 2003)

Ismet has already got used to life in Dorići. Life is slowly coming back to normal and now the inhabitants of Dorići are faced with the everyday problems of rural living. Miloš Varešić did not live long enough to come back to Sarajevo, he died in 2000. His son Rajko has returned to Sarajevo and he lives in his father’s house.

4. Janja (6’48”)

December 2000

Galib Alihodžić returned to his hometown Janja, and he found the family of Mladenka Vujić from Visoko living in his house. Galib and Mladenka soon agreed that, until the Vujić family finds another solution, they would live together in the same house.

Three years later (December 2003)

Mladenka Vujić has moved out of the Alihodžić family's house, together with her son Miladin. Although their neighbours were nice when they went to visit their devastated house, the Vujić family does not want to return to Visoko. In the meantime, they got a land plot from the Bijeljina municipality and they started building their own house. At the moment they live in a shed next to the foundations of their new home.

The Alihodžićs lead a peaceful pensioners' life in Janja. Mladenka visits them regularly...

5. Banja Luka (7'25")

Decembar 2000

The "Ivan Goran Kovačić" school serves as an elementary school and a collective centre for displaced persons at the same time. The elderly give way to children's demands, and the children, deprived of a gym, do not have much understanding for the difficulties of the refugee life. Forced cohabitation changes the habits of both. For Pero Bošnjak, life in a collective centre could only be compared to the story "An the Bottom" by Maxim Gorky.

Three years later (December 2003)

Pero Bošnjak has returned to his house in Palanka from the collective centre. His wife Dragica died and Pero now lives on his own. He is happy to be in his home and says: "I wish more people had returned earlier. Those who returned earlier now have far better conditions, they live far better."

The collective centre in the "Ivan Goran Kovačić" elementary school still exists, and its last occupant, Bosa Kopenja, is preparing to return to Jajce.

6. Trebinje (7'55")

Decembar 2000

For a long time Trebinje was a "black hole" on the map of returns in BiH. The story about the first inhabitants of Trebinje who have returned to their town: Emira and Izet Čapin are among the first returnees...

Three years later (December 2003)

Emira and Izet, despite the problems they were faced with upon return, have not given up their intention to spend the rest of their lives in Trebinje.

7. Gradiška (7'40")

December 2000

The picture of a Kozara mother in a crowd of fleeing refugees, with two small children and a tiny bundle in her hands, in the cold, in the dangerous year of 1942, went around the globe. Now, after so many decades, Branko Tepić, the boy from the picture, happens to be in the same situation as his mother. Thinking out loud, Branko wonders: "Why does history repeat itself, and why is it not possible for at least one generation in the mountainous Balkans to live a life worth a human being".

Three years later (December 2003)

The situation of the Tepić family is typical of displaced Serbs from Croatia living in BiH: they cannot enter into possession of their property in Croatia, and they have had to abandon other people's property in BiH. Their status as Croatian citizens has been only partly resolved. In BiH they live on one pension. Despite everything, they would like to return to Sisak, because, as Branko says: "Bosnia is our stepfather, and Croatia our stepmother".

8. Goražde (6'10")

December 2000

Ševal and Džemila Hajvaz, parents of the Goražde triplets, one of whom died a week after delivery, have another heavy battle before them – they have to leave the apartment they occupy at the moment. They cannot return to their destroyed house in Čajniče.

What awaits them and how will they move on? In spite of all the difficulties, the two of them have hopes of a better future...

Three years later (December 2003)

After eviction, the Hajvaz family decided to leave Goražde and, as they say, "take their life into their own hands" and look for happiness somewhere else. Ševal received a severance package from the army, bought a plot of land in the vicinity of Sarajevo and started building a house. He has an off-and-on job which enables him to feed the children and provide them with an education. The Hajvaz family has not given up their return to Čajniče, but in Sarajevo they see better conditions for their children's education and for employment.

9. Višegrad (7'00")

December 2000

The inhabitants of the refugee settlement in Višegrad are Serbs from central Bosnia. Their wish was to start a new life in Garča – a settlement which has been under construction for years. However, time passes, people are leaving, they look for their happiness across the ocean, some have died, and some want to return to their pre-war homes.

Three years later (December 2003)

Vasilj Jovanovic returned to his apartment in Sarajevo from a collective center. His life follows a regular routine: he purchased his apartment, children go to school.

Milosava Popovac does not wish to return to Sarajevo. Milosava still lives in a collective center hoping to move into the village of Garča one day.

10. Banja Luka (7'12")

December 2000

After several years of living a refugee life, the Gunic family returned from Germany to Banja Luka. The Gunices did not return to their own house but to a house 5 or 6 meters away from it. The Gunices' house is occupied by Milko Vranes, a DP from Travnik. The Gunices have been issued a decision by the court on property return but Milko does not wish to move out until adequate accommodation is found for him.

Three years later (December 2003)

The Gunices fought for their home that they had been looking at from across the street for years. They moved into their house and opened a shop. They hope they will be able to get new furniture to replace what was taken away from their house and that their pre-war neighbors will return.

11. Mostar - Santic Street (7' 52")

December 2000

Ghostly and totally ruined Santiceva Street still divides Mostar. The reconstruction of Santiceva Street would make its pre-war residents of all ethnicities return, after which this street would join rather than divide two sides of Mostar. However, forces who find it in their interest if the situation remains unchanged do nothing for former residents of Santiceva Street, who, despite many failed promises, keep hoping for a better future and a return to their homes.

Three years later (December 2003)

Santiceva street is being renovated, building by building it is being finished, but not at the pace its residents would like. The residents of Santiceva Street are persistent in their wish to live at their pre-war addresses – some have turned this dream into reality, others have not.

12. Jegin Lug (8'33")

December 2000

Stevan Tomic left Jegin Lug in 1992 and took residence at Kozluk. Stevan wants to return to his birthplace but is unable to do so for two reasons. After the war, municipal authorities built a settlement at Jegin Lug for Srebrenica DPs, which is the reason that the Serb indigenous population do not wish to return.

During a visit to Jegin Lug, Stevan talked to Srebrenica DPs concluding that their presence was not a problem for him to return, but his destroyed home surely was.

Three years later (December 2003)

There are more and more returnees at Jegin Lug. Srebrenica residents hope that their homes will be renovated and they will return home, and until that time they wish to be treated in the same way as the indigenous population. Stevan was allocated building material and will start renovating his house soon. He is grateful – although, as he says, “the material I was allocated is not enough to build a house”.

Nijazija Ibrisevic moved from Jegin Lug to Ilijas, to his sister's house. He hopes their houses in Srebrenica will be renovated as the houses of returnees in Jegin Lug have been renovated and that he would be able to return to Srebrenica in spring.

13. Bjelave-Tjentiste (7'31")

December 2000

Brother and sister Kasim and Sanela are orphans living at “Ljubica Ivezić” Orphanage in Sarajevo. They are visiting their property and what remains of their home at Tjentiste for the first time after eight years. They are not quite certain they wish to return there, and do not know what is in store for them after they complete school as they can stay in the Orphanage until they come of age. Kasim is 16 and Sanela 17.

Three years later (December 2003)

Kasim and Sanela are still at the “Ljubica Ivezić” Orphanage. Their house at Tjentiste is destroyed. No one returned to the village and they do not intend to either. Sanela's dream of becoming a florist has come true. She found work with the JP “Park” Sarajevo and received her first salary. Kasim goes to school. The orphanage administration is trying to find a durable solution for their residence – until then Kasim and Sanela will remain at the orphanage.

14. Banja Luka (8'00")

December 2000

BL municipal authorities directed Sefika Slipac, during the war, to vacate the apartment to which she had an occupancy right. The apartment was allocated to Milan Pejic and his wife Rada Vjestica. In the meantime, triplets were born to the couple. Six years later, the apartment was returned to Mrs Slipac while the Pejic-Vjestica family was evicted.

Three years later (December 2003)

Sefika Slipac lives in her apartment. Sefika's lawyer thinks she should sue the city of Banja Luka for illegal eviction from the apartment during the war, but Sefika does not want to do that. She wishes to spend the rest of her life at peace and with dignity.

The Pejić-Vjestica family live in Zoran's parent's apartment, in the same street where Šefika Slipac lives.

15. Mostar (7'20")

December 2000

Dragan Zovko, a citizen of Mostar, a waiter by profession, left his house at Bijelo Polje at the beginning of the war and went to the western part of Mostar. Now he wants to go back, but his house is now occupied by a Bosniak family from Gacko. Because of the difficult situation of this family, Dragan does not insist on an eviction, but, to the contrary, he insists that the family stay in his house until an adequate solution is found for them.

Three years later (December 2003)

Nezir Zulović moved out of Dragan Zovko's house. He bought a building plot and is building a house in Mostar. He does not intend to return to Gacko for the time being. He sees a future for his children in Mostar. The Zulovices are on good terms with Dragan Zovko, who has returned to his house.