

OHR Reconstruction and Return

RRTF: Report December 1997

Outlook for 1998

“Resources, repatriation and minority return”

December 1997

2. RRTF Strategy 1998

Based on its 16 October Reflection meeting in Geneva, and subsequent inputs from Task Force members, the RRTF has decided on the following strategy framework:

2.1. Strategic Objectives

- Large-scale repatriation from abroad (> 100,000) contingent upon
- Substantial breakthroughs in minority returns of repatriating refugees and displaced persons (> 50,000 by mid-year) with priority attention given to politically significant areas (such as Sarajevo, Central Bosnia, and the Northwest, including the Western Republika Srpska)
- Alternative solutions for displaced persons affected by repatriation and return.

2.2. Tactical Approach

To achieve these objectives, the RRTF will follow a three-track integrated approach:

Track 1: The “Cluster Area” concept based on regions with significant repatriation potential will be maintained as a focus for reconstruction resources in order to create a “pull effect.” This approach was adopted by the RRTF in 1997. Recent assessments of actual return patterns and donor requirements suggest that it is a viable concept and will be continued, with major geographical revisions. Given the continued uncertainty about how many refugees plan to return where in 1998, the most realistic approach remains targeting resources at “cluster areas” from which large numbers of refugees left and which are open to their return, aiming for a pull-effect. This track is designed to achieve more than 100,000 returns from abroad.

Track 2: Minority returns need to be brokered in strategically important areas, notably Sarajevo, the North-West including Banja Luka, Central Bosnia, and Brcko, and in existing “Open Cities”. This is required to resolve the space problem (everybody is living in somebody else’s home), and achieve significant refugee return. Determined pressure from competent actors such as the [UNHCR](#) and the OHR is required to convince recalcitrant communities. This is intended to achieve 50,000 minority returns of repatriating refugees and displaced persons, by mid-year.

Track 3: Provision of flexible funding to support unanticipated repatriation or minority return breakthroughs. No matter how carefully the international community assesses the return potential to different regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there may still be positive developments in 1998 which cannot be foreseen with any certainty at this moment. The availability of a significant amount of international resources to support such breakthroughs is crucial. This is an essential “back stop” for the international community’s return-related reconstruction programming. This track covers both the UNHCR “Open Cities” approach and potential new cluster areas.

2.3. The RRTF Role

The role of the RRTF is to provide resource allocation guidance in support of the above tactical approaches and maximise returns for the limited economic resources available from the international community. The RRTF's key tasks include:

- Creating a “pull” effect for voluntary repatriation and minority return (Track 1); and
- Promoting minority return to strategically important areas and ensuring that mechanisms exist to target resources to these and other locations in response to brokered breakthroughs (Track 2); through
- Providing location-specific recommendations to donors for resource allocation within the cluster areas and co-ordination and planning of an integrated reconstruction approach in support of repatriation and minority return. (All Tracks)
- Providing policy guidance to donors and other actors on how to manage the political and economic implications of large-scale reconstruction and refugee return, e.g. relocation issues, housing allocation, capacity building and the use of aid as leverage, i.e. advice on issues related to conditionality. (All Tracks)
- Promoting the full implementation of the confidence building measures set out in [Annex 7](#), in support of other forums such as the Human Rights Task Force and the work of the Commission for Real Property Claims (CRPC), as appropriate, including the repeal of discriminatory legislation. (All Tracks)

2.4. Peace Implementation Council Implications

The draft conclusions for the Bonn Conference of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) on the RRTF reflect this thinking. They intend to give the OHR, UNHCR and other RRTF member institutions the support required to carry out these tasks effectively.

- The appointment of a Deputy High Representative for RRTF Matters and the creation of a specific support department within the OHR are intended to enhance the leadership and capacity of the RRTF as a key requirement for successful [Annex 7](#) implementation.
- The recommendation that a donors' conference be held in early 1998 reflects the need for RRTF recommendations to be factored into resource allocations for the coming year. The PIC call for contingency reserves reflects Track 3 requirements.
- The recommendation that governments second field-level staff underscores the need to strengthen RRTF member capacities, mainly in the field where minority return breakthroughs are brokered and technical assessments made.
- Finally, the PIC conclusions emphasise the need for minority return to Sarajevo. This reflects Sarajevo's special position because of its historical legacy and capital status, its return potential and its designation as an RRTF cluster area.

2.5. New RRTF Structure

To fulfil its role, the RRTF is restructuring. High-level RRTF meetings will be called at regular intervals (quarterly or as needed) to make policy and strategic decisions. In between these meetings, reinforced Regional RRTFs will work within the designated cluster areas (see sections [3](#) and [4](#)) to achieve the operational tasks outlined above. The OHR Deputy High Representative for RRTF Matters will co-ordinate preparations for the High-Level meetings, support Regional RRTFs with political interventions as and when required, and set up RRTF working groups on specific issues requiring address before the next High Level meeting. The Deputy High Representative will also assume primary responsibility for bringing about a closer integration of Entity-level authorities and displaced

person associations into the RRTF's work (see "Organisational framework for the RRTF support to the return process in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Annex 1).

[Back to Index](#) | [Continue](#)

Office of the High Representative Reconstruction and Return Task Force