



Second Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo

INTRODUCTION

1. The joint report published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on 26 July 1999 constituted a preliminary overview of the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo covering events up to 19 July 1999¹. Given the volatile environment, UNHCR and OSCE field staff have continued to identify, monitor and assess the position of various minority populations, such material providing the basis for this update.
2. The murder of 14 Serb farmers while harvesting in Lipljan municipality on 23 July 1999 focussed world attention on the serious predicament faced by certain minority communities in Kosovo. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Commander of the international security presence known as KFOR issued strong statements condemning this brutal act and the international community's will to secure the safety of all inhabitants of Kosovo regardless of ethnicity.

OVERVIEW

3. Although the security conditions in some areas have improved or at least stabilised, the overall situation remains tense. Movements of persons from minority groups, particularly the Serb and Roma, out of Kosovo continue. Fear is usually the major factor, but increasingly concerns about lack of access to humanitarian assistance, medical facilities, education, pensions and employment are causing displacement. Exclusion from such facilities and opportunities are either the direct result of lack of freedom of movement brought on by the security

¹ This joint UNHCR/OSCE monitoring and reporting initiative is the result of action taken by the Ad Hoc Task Force on Minorities chaired by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Humanitarian Affairs.

situation or a consequence of real or perceived discrimination in the delivery of public services which are now predominantly, if not exclusively, Albanian-run.

4. Apart from movements out of Kosovo, the trend of relocating within Kosovo to perceived safer areas has continued. As a result, mono-ethnic enclaves of various sizes (often guarded by KFOR) are building up, inhabitants of which may be reasonably secure within their confines. However, even some of these areas are becoming prone to attack from the outside despite KFOR's activity. The development of these enclaves seems to be attracting some returns of minorities to Kosovo, but in many instances this is to another place of displacement. Concerns have been expressed about whether such returns are indeed voluntary and in full knowledge of the prevailing conditions. Some movements may not be returns as such but visits to assess whether conditions are ripe for permanent return.
5. Another movement that continues to have an impact on the situation of minority groups is the return of the displaced Albanian community. The majority of those who sought refuge in neighbouring countries have now returned, whilst repatriation from third countries has started. Given the level of destruction in Kosovo this movement may well increase pressure on minority communities to leave in order to free up housing stock for returnees. The additional impact of the steady influx over the last months of Albanians from the southern provinces of Serbia is yet to be seen.
6. As stressed in the preliminary assessment, the situation for ethnic communities varies significantly depending on the locality. For example, the position of Serbs in the Serb-dominated municipalities of Leposavic, Zvecan and Zubin Potok continues to be dramatically different to that of Serbs elsewhere in the province. This also demonstrates the fact that in certain locations Albanian communities may be in a position of minority and accordingly face insecurity as a result.² "Minority" is not used in this report in its technical or legal sense, rather to describe groups of persons belonging to a certain ethnic/national group who are in a minority situation in a particular location (usually municipality or village), regardless of their status elsewhere in the province or country.
7. In terms of key areas, the predicament of the Serbs in Orahovac remains of great concern, particularly with the rise in tension over the last few weeks with the planned arrival of Russian troops. The violence in Gnjilane district is particularly disturbing and the situation for the few Serbs left in Pristina city still requires close attention despite an apparent improvement in security over the last few weeks.
8. Obtaining accurate population statistics continues to be a challenge given the volatile environment and difficulties of access to some communities. The figures given below are, in general, estimates, compiled from a variety of reliable sources: UNHCR, OSCE, KFOR, and key UNHCR implementing partners. In certain circumstances information has only been forthcoming from community leaders, but this is clearly indicated. The figures for the present population should not be

² For example, see paragraphs 20-21.

seen as conclusive. In the main, it has not been possible to confirm pre-war population data and so in order to indicate roughly the scale of recent movement, reference has had to be made to the last census in 1991 which is considered as reasonably accurate for at least the Serbian community. In some cases, estimates made in 1998 by UNHCR based on this census have also been quoted.

9. Despite attempts to cover the situation in as much detail as possible, manpower constraints and a rapidly-evolving environment means that this report should only be read as indicative, rather than exhaustive, of the situation of the various minority communities as at 25 August 1999.

Ethnic Serbs

10. The numbers of Serbs in **Pristina** city has continued to drop from the 5,000 thought to reside there at the time of the preliminary assessment to between 1,000-2,000 persons. (The 1998 population was estimated by UNHCR at around 20,000.) Many of those remaining are elderly and infirm. The population is mostly found in the centre and the south of the city in the areas of Dardania (about 170 families), Ulpijana and, to a lesser extent, Sunny Hill. Those in the north of the city (approximately 115 persons) are far more isolated. At the beginning of August 1999 the situation of this vulnerable community seemed to deteriorate significantly with a rise in violent incidents and a general risk of intimidation and harassment. Unfortunately, the brutal killing on 15 August 1999 of a 78-year old Serb in her home was not an isolated incident. A pattern has arisen of Serbs being forced to sign over rights to their property in standard contracts before fleeing. In many cases Albanians have moved in within minutes of the departure. KFOR has registered persons at risk in its patrols, set up emergency telephone lines, reinforced doors to homes, lain in waiting for attackers and in some cases provided 24-hour guard. It would seem that such strategies have met with some success as the number of serious incidents reported to KFOR has fallen since mid-August 1999. This may also be connected to a diminishing Serb population unwilling to wait until they are physically attacked.
11. Of the 85 villages in Pristina municipality, five are mixed Albanian-Serb: Devet Jugovica (70% of 1,000-1,500 population is Serb), Lebane (50 Serbs, 300-500 Albanians), Trudna (only one Serb family), Kisnica (300 Serbs i.e. 50% of the community). In addition there are several exclusively Serb or mixed Serb-Roma villages: Donja Brnjica (1,500 Serbs), Gornja Brnjica (500), Kojlovica (8), Slivovo (30), Vidaci (6), Milinci (4), Laplje Selo (about 1,500 Serbs and 150 Roma), Preoce (about 750 Serbs and 50 Roma), Caglavica (2,220 Serbs and 50 Roma) and, most significantly, Gracanica which houses around 5,000 Serbs (and about 40 Roma). Although there is a steady outflow of Serbs from this area, the overall population has increased slightly because of the flow of Serbs displaced from other parts of the province. For example, 100 Serbs recently fled the village of Kisnica whereas about 100 displaced Serbs are thought to have arrived in Gracanica and Caglavica over the last month.

12. The fact that many Serbs in this municipality live in exclusively Serb villages offers them a degree of protection but incidents nevertheless occur. Particular tension exists in Devet Jugovica, Donja Brnjica and Gornja Brnjica whose population include many who worked for the previous Serb administration and in the case of Devet Jugovica whose leader is former MUP. The residents of these villages had been warned to leave by the end of August 1999 by a gang of Albanians who claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of a local Serb on 10/11 August 1999. Following a shooting attack on 12 August 1999 against the village of Gornja Brnjica, KFOR arrested several Albanians. The inhabitants of Laplje Selo, Preoce and Caglavica share a similar profile and, like the above, appear to be fairly well-armed. They often come under gunfire from passers-by and when they venture out into the fields. In Kisnica there have been grenade attacks as well as shooting incidents.
13. The handful of Serbs who continue to remain in **Podujevo** town and in the surrounding villages are guarded closely by KFOR. None of the three Serb families who lived in **Glogovac** municipality before the conflict but fled Kosovo in June 1999 have returned.
14. In **Obilic** municipality, 3,600 Serbs remain in Milosevo, Babin Most, Plemetina, Crkvena Vodica, Janina Voda and the main town itself. In Obilic town, from which many Serbs have left over the past few months, the Serb population seems to have stabilised at about 1,500. Significant numbers are also found in Crkvena Vodica, Plemetina and Babin Most, in the case of the latter including some recently returned. In Milosevo only 32 Serbs remain (all other minorities having left after the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces). Albanian communities in the area are returning and relations between the two groups remain tense. Although the overall security situation is reported to be stable, with Serbs feeling reasonably protected by KFOR within their villages, their freedom of movement is restricted. Since the beginning of August 1999 no killings or abductions in Obilic municipality have been reported to KFOR. The most serious incidents have been two grenade attacks on Serb cafés in Obilic town on 7 and 16 August 1999 inflicting minor injuries on seven people. More recently, two grenades were thrown towards Serb houses in Crkvena Vodica wounding two people. Incidents of verbal harassment and intimidation continue with reports of Albanian shop owners refusing to serve Serb customers.
15. In **Kosovo Polje** municipality, Serbs are now only found in the mixed communities in the main town and Bresje village, and in the three mono-ethnic villages of Batuse, Kuzmin and Ugljare. At present the total Serb population is considered to be around 5,000, whereas the estimated 1998 population was about 9,000. The security situation in this municipality has improved during the reporting period, although arson attacks still occur daily, and the number of Serbs leaving has diminished. The remaining population contains a disproportionate number of elderly persons or single mothers, with Bresje as the only community with a more mixed age group. Bresje also seems to suffer the most from security incidents. Serbs fleeing Lipljan, Mitrovica, Pec, Djakovica, Prizren, Urosevac and Pristina appear to be taking shelter in Serb areas of Kosovo Polje, often in the houses of local Serbs who have left. For example, 440 displaced Serbs are housed

in a secondary school in Bresje. Around 200 displaced Serbs arrived from other parts of Serbia in August 1999 in order to take up offers of employment at the railway station.

16. Around 10,000 Serbs are estimated to reside in the Albanian-dominated **Lipljan** municipality. The town itself is almost half Albanian, half Serb with a small number of Roma. The rest of the Serb population is still mostly found in Serb villages in the north of the municipality (with the exception of Gracko in the south). Serbs are also found in the mixed villages of Suvi Do, Vrelo, Rabovce and Janjevo. Despite the murder of fourteen Serbs from the village of Gracko on 23 July 1999 and the shooting of two other Serbs on 3 August 1999, the security situation appears to have stabilised over the last few weeks. Serbs in or in the vicinity of mixed villages seem at greater risk. The Serb villages of Rabovce and Gracko could also still be vulnerable as they are surrounded by Albanian communities. On the other hand, Albanians in the majority Serb areas may also face danger, for example when using the roads through Dobrotin, Donja Gusterica and Gornja Gusterica to reach their home villages. (Albanians also seem to have problems in Vrelo, even though they are the majority ethnic group there.) The impact of recent returns of Albanians to the mainly Serb villages of Suvi Do and Lepina has yet to become clear. Lipljan town itself is tense but peaceful given the significant KFOR presence while the village of Janjevo continues to be an example of peaceful multi-ethnic coexistence.
17. Most Serbs in this municipality wish to stay. After the Gracko incident about 30-40 Serbs left Lipljan town, but apart from that there have only been small movements of Serbs from the mixed villages in the south of the municipality to the Serb-dominated settlements in the north. A major concern for the community now is the absence of any educational facilities for their children.
18. In **Mitrovica** town, relations between the Serb-dominated northern sector (approximately 12,000 Serbs, including many internally displaced) and the Albanian-populated southern side (including 8,000 Albanians displaced from the north) remain poor. The overall number of Serbs present seems to have remained the same since mid-July 1999. Most of the 350 Serb families that had lived in the southern part of town have left for the north or other parts of Serbia. The only Serbs that remain are concentrated in the neighbourhood next to the Orthodox church where, despite constant KFOR protection, their security situation has deteriorated – increasingly violent incidents are being reported. Similarly, the security situation of the scattered 2,000-2,500 Albanians in the northern side has also worsened since the firing of rockets from the south on 10 August 1999 (provoking the flight of 300 Albanians to the south as a result of revenge attacks). Since KFOR reinforced its presence in the north by deploying soldiers on all street corners, Albanians are now receiving threatening telephone calls.
19. The international community has continued to work towards de-segregation of this town. On 20 August 1999, with the assistance of KFOR and the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), some Albanians displaced by the 10 August incident were able to return to their homes in the north. However, before further returns can be promoted important pre-conditions relating to

security, respect for human rights, freedom of movement and procedures for property restitution should be in place.

20. The situation for Serbs in **Leposavic** (which remains almost entirely Serbian³) continues to be calm, none of the Albanians who left having returned. (The three Albanian villages of Ceranja, Kosutovo and Saljska Bistrica are still empty; all the houses were burned or looted during the conflict, and most of the villagers moved to Mitrovica.) However, the body of a Serb male abducted on his way from Mitrovica to Zvecan was discovered on 26 August 1999.
21. Many houses were destroyed during the conflict in the three Albanian villages of Boljatin, Zaza and Lipa, in the Serb majority municipality of **Zvecan**⁴. In spite of this, many of the Albanian population (estimated pre-war at 420) have returned to their villages since the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces. However, because of shelter difficulties in an area of such high altitude, some villagers have left once again. Like the Albanian inhabitants of Zvecan, the 800 Albanians that have returned to the heavily destroyed Albanian village of Cabra in Serb-dominated **Zubin Potok** municipality feel safe within their village, as long as KFOR continues with foot patrols. However, they have concerns about travelling outside of their village for fear of the surrounding Serb communities. Community leaders indicate a current Serb population of 11,000 (including 1,000 displaced persons) for this municipality. However, the accuracy of this figure is brought into question by the 1991 census, in which only around 6,200 Serbs were registered for this area.
22. In **Vucitrn** and **Srbica** municipalities, the Serbs remain concentrated in villages where they represented a majority before the conflict. In Vucitrn, 100 Serbs remain in Banjska, 30 Serbs in Slatina, with 400 Serbs in the purely Serb villages of Gojbulja and Miroce. In Srbica, 100 Serbs remain in the village of Suvo Grlo with another 180 Serbs in Banja, both of these being mixed villages. Eight Serbian nuns also remain in Device monastery. With the number of Albanians in the mixed villages increasing, the security situation for Serb minorities has deteriorated and they rely on KFOR protection, including escorts if they leave their villages. Recent incidents include the murder of two Serbs in Gojbulja on 27 July 1999, the killing of a Serb in Banja on 21 August 1999 and the kidnapping of a Serb in Banjska the next day. In addition, there have been several shooting incidents involving both ethnic groups, and several Serb houses have been set on fire. Despite these recent incidents, and a general increase in tension between Serb and Albanian communities, no Serb departures have been reported recently. On the contrary, convoys of returning Kosovar Serbs from other parts of Serbia, organised by the Yugoslav Red Cross, arrive twice a week in this area, although there are doubts about how well-informed such persons are about conditions in Kosovo.

³ According to community leaders the current Serb population is around 16,000 (including 1,400 displaced). However, the 1991 census gave a figure of about 14,300.

⁴ The Serb population is estimated at 16,000 (including 3,000 displaced) by community leaders but this could be inflated given that the 1991 census figure was around 7,600.

23. In **Gnjilane** town, the Serb community of 3,400 persons (4,000 estimated in the preliminary assessment) is now restricted to one main neighbourhood. The Serb residents in mixed villages are diminishing by the day, moving to other parts of Serbia or the exclusive Serb villages. Serbs from other municipalities have also taken shelter in the four main Serb-only villages of Silovo (about 1,200 persons), Partes (1,700, including 400 displaced), Pasjane (2,300, including 40 displaced) and Donja Budriga (1,900, including 200 displaced). The mixed villages are Pones (665 Serbs), Koretiste (1170), Cernica (690), Gornji Livoc (170), Straza (500), Stanisor (420), Gornje Kusce (1,335), Gornji Makres (195) and Kmetovce (445).
24. The number of attacks against the Serb community has risen in an alarming fashion over the last month, driving many Serbs from their homes and impeding freedom of movement for those still in the municipality. The Serb communities feel that they are victims of an organised campaign to expel them, in the form of repeated threats, cutting of phone lines, assaults, forced eviction, arson, burning of crops and murder. According to the Orthodox Church, 17 Serbs have been murdered since the arrival of KFOR. The community is also particularly concerned about the number of recent kidnappings of Serbs in the area and have peacefully protested about this issue on several occasions. Over 20 cases of missing or abducted persons in Gnjilane have been confirmed by OSCE. The risks faced by these communities, despite the efforts of KFOR, is illustrated by a grenade attack on a Serb home on 25 August 1999 just after a KFOR foot patrol had passed by.
25. Since the publication of the preliminary assessment, KFOR presence has been established in neighbouring **Novo Brdo** municipality. According to the former Serb Mayor, there are currently about 2,680 Serbs in the municipality spread out mostly in isolated Serb-only villages with some in the mixed villages of Bostane (approximately 160 Serbs), Izvor (440), Jasenovik (115), Zebince (260), Labljane (50), Manisince (110), Novo Brdo (95), Prekovce (270), Trnicevce (110), Plavica (70) and Zebince (260). As in Gnjilane, freedom of movement for Serbs is greatly curtailed with individuals leaving their villages coming under attack. Continued insecurity has caused some to flee; for example, the entire village of Klobukar is now empty.
26. Most of the previously Serb-dominated villages in the north-western part of **Kamenica** municipality are now empty of Serbs. However, Serbs continue to remain in other predominantly Serb villages in the area (Busince, Ajnovce, Firiceja, Pancelo, Tomance, Mali Ropotovo, Ranilug, Glogovce, Donje Korminjane, Drenovce, Berivojce, Rajanovce, Bozevce). Of the 1,200 (out of an estimated pre-war population of 1,850) who were still in Kamenica town in mid-July 1999, a small number are thought to have departed. Many of these appear to be families increasingly concerned about lack of schooling and healthcare facilities. Moreover, some Serb families from Bozevce and Rajanovce are also reported to have left for other parts of Serbia.
27. Security concerns continue to play a major role in these events. Shootings take place almost on a daily basis, most victims being Serbs; for example a Serb man was killed in Ranilug on 3 August 1999. Moreover, house burning and

kidnappings persist. Illegal street blockades have been put up by both Albanians and Serbs to prevent others from entering into their “enclaves”. Freedom of movement is virtually non-existent for the Serbs, and KFOR escort required even to go shopping in Gnjilane. Nevertheless, in August 1999 four incidents were reported on the Kamenica-Gnjilane road where Albanians targeted Serb vehicles passing through Dobrcane. Four Serbs were killed and four others injured as a result.

28. In **Vitina** municipality, Serbs remain in Binac, Grncar, Klokot, Mogila, Podgorce, Pozaranje, Vrbovac, Vrnavokolo and Vitina. The total Serb population is estimated at 4,900. However, departures of Serbs from mixed villages (Binac, Mogila, Vitina town) continue, despite a 24-hour KFOR presence in the vicinity of Serb enclaves. Following the murder of four Serbs in July 1999 in Zitinje, all 450 Serbs fled from this mixed village on 1 August 1999 to Gnjilane municipality; their houses were subsequently burned despite KFOR’s permanent presence. Moreover, according to a Serb Orthodox priest in Vitina, many Serbs have left Pozaranje or Podgorce for Grncar and Vrbovac. All in all, more than 100 Serbs are reported to have moved to Vrbovac in the past few weeks, increasing its Serb population to more than 800. Apart from Zitinje, there have been major incidents in other villages recently. For example, a mortar attack on 17 August 1999 on the village of Klokot killed two and wounded six others. By comparison, the security situation in Vitina town has been stable recently. Nevertheless, there have been a few isolated incidents, such as grenade attacks and episodes of shooting.
29. The Serb population in **Urosevac** town continues to be limited to 34 households. In the municipality itself, there are one or two isolated Serbs in the villages of Gatnje, Zaskok and Plesina. As a result, KFOR has established a permanent presence near Serb houses. 39 Serbs, most of whom are elderly, remain in the town of **Stimlje**. The departure of Serbs from these areas has decreased in the last month and the overall security situation has improved. However acts of intimidation, including threats, forced evictions and kidnappings, continue to be reported. None of the Serbs from **Kacanik** municipality have returned.
30. **Strpce** continues to be a Serb-dominated municipality (the Serb population is estimated at 9,000) with some mixed villages, such as Vica. Serbs from Prizren have taken refuge in the collective centres found in the main town and Brezovica (managed by the Yugoslav Red Cross), whilst some Serbs from this municipality seem to have sought safety in the seminary in Prizren. None of the 500-strong Serb population of **Suva Reka** appear to have returned.
31. Serbs from **Prizren** municipality continue to take refuge in the seminary in Prizren town – the current population is about 200. Eight elderly Serbs were killed in Prizren town in August 1999 alone, while house burning and intimidation of Serbs continue. The number of Serbs in Prizren town is thought to have dropped from about 300 in mid-July 1999 to about 150.
32. About 2,500 Serbs continue to live under close KFOR protection in the upper part of **Orahovac** town, 850 of which are displaced from near-by villages or the lower part of the town. Tensions between those originally from Orahovac and those

displaced have risen recently, partly given the differences of opinion over whether to leave Kosovo or whether to remain. The atmosphere has also become increasingly charged as a result of the arrest by KFOR of three Serbs for alleged war crimes on 20 August 1999 and recent blockades by the Albanian community to prevent the deployment of Russian troops. A Serb community of about 1,080 also remains in nearby Velika Hoca village under the protection of KFOR. This community is increasingly concerned about limited freedom of movement, medical care and basic utilities.

33. A grenade attack on 19 August 1999 against the Orthodox church in **Djakovica** town which shelters a small community of Serbs left two KFOR soldiers wounded. In **Decani**, the only Serbs who remain continue to be the handful who have taken refuge in the seminary which is under 24-hour KFOR protection. Only eight are left, two of whom intend to move to other parts of Serbia in the near future.
34. In **Pec** municipality, the largest Serb community continues to reside in the Serb-dominated village of Gorazdevac, with a few Serbs scattered in Pec town, Orasje, Brezanik and Milovanac. Despite a mortar attack on Gorazdevac on 10 August 1999 killing one Serb (and leading to the flight of six others), its population has been increasing in the past few weeks - the current estimate is 440 persons (compared to the pre-war figure of 1,100), including many displaced. Every week Kosovar Serbs are reported to return with KFOR escort to Gorazdevac from Suvo Polje, Montenegro, and Kraljevo, Serbia. Some return with the intention to stay, while others return to check the conditions of their property and the current security situation. For example, on 21 August 1999, 135 Kosovar Serbs arrived from Kraljevo in Serbia. According to the Yugoslav Red Cross, a total of 2,000-3,000 Kosovar Serbs intend to return to Kosovo via Gorazdevac.
35. In Pec town, about 50 Serbs, including monks and nuns, remain in the Patriarchate under 24-hour KFOR protection. From the approximately 30 Serbs that used to live in the village of Orasje before the war, only four elderly men remain. No acts of intimidation or harassment against Serbs have been reported in Pec town, Orasje or Brezanik, although Serb villagers complain about lack of freedom of movement outside their villages. In Milovanac, the one remaining Serb family suffered a grenade attack on 21 August 1999.
36. Most of the estimated 6,000 Serbs who lived in Klina municipality before the conflict appeared to have left by mid-July 1999. A handful of Serbs, including some nuns, remain in the monastery of Budisavci under 24-hour KFOR protection. A Serb priest and another Serb male disappeared on their way from Budisavci town to the monastery on 19 July 1999.
37. In **Istok** municipality, the number of Serbs in the mixed village of Crkolez seems to have stayed around 100-150 persons. They continue to receive constant KFOR protection but nevertheless Serb buildings were burned on 21 and 22 August 1999 and there appears to have been a rise in shooting incidents. KFOR troops investigating arson attacks came under fire. The 300 Serbs estimated to live in Suvo Grlo village benefit from 24-hour KFOR patrols but feel threatened and have

limited freedom of movement. Tensions in Suvo Grlo between the Serb and Albanian neighbourhoods are extremely high. Numerous other villages in the municipality which used to house Serb communities are empty. It is thought that some Serbs are still living in scattered households in the region close to Mitrovica.

Roma

38. The Roma population in Kosovo is far from cohesive, comprising various groups with different allegiances, linguistic and religious traditions.⁵ What they do have in common, unlike many Roma elsewhere in Europe, is a generally settled rather than nomadic lifestyle and a marginalised position in Kosovar society. The present treatment of Roma communities depends to some extent on their previous relations with the local Albanian community. Allegations that some Roma took part in criminal acts with Yugoslav forces (often under duress) or in “opportunistic looting” seems to have blackened the name of others who were innocent of such acts.
39. The residual Roma population in urban **Pristina** is now thought to number about 50; all the Roma were considered to have departed at the time of the last report. One family which returned home to the centre of the city with UNHCR assistance was subjected to grenade attacks wounding a 12-year old girl. As described in paragraph 11, several Serb villages in the Pristina municipality have Roma as a minority population. Roma are also found in the predominantly Albanian villages of Businje (70 Roma) and Zlatare (5). The total number of Roma in the municipality (excluding Pristina) is estimated at between 300-600.
40. The Roma population in **Kosovo Polje** town is thought to number around 1,500-2,000 (compared to the 1998 estimate of 3,500), many of whom had temporarily taken shelter in the Roma camp in Obilic. Many of the Roma from this municipality are thought to have left for other parts of Serbia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), whilst some Roma from other areas have taken refuge there. The remaining Roma community is concentrated in specific neighbourhoods where they appear to have relative freedom of movement

⁵ The so-called ‘ethnic Roma’ clearly identify themselves as Roma and use Romany as their mother tongue, although they can also speak Albanian and/or Serbo-Croat. They have a proud cultural tradition and links with Roma communities in other countries. By contrast, the Ashkaelia (who are Albanian-speaking), have always identified themselves as Albanian and lived close to the latter community. Nevertheless they are treated as slightly separate by the ethnic Albanians. Another community who distance themselves from the ethnic Roma are the Egyptians (considered by some observers to be Ashkaelia) who speak Albanian but claim to have come originally from Egypt. It is thought that their ancestors may have followed Alexander the Great from India to Egypt where they settled for a period before venturing to Europe. Whatever their origins, they are perceived by the Albanian community to be Roma for whom a separate identity was created about ten years ago by the Belgrade regime in order to promote the image of a multi-ethnic, rather than Albanian-dominated, Kosovo. Both the Ashkaelia and Egyptians follow the Muslim faith. Finally, there are the Cergari Roma who follow the Orthodox faith, speak Serbo-Croat (although they may also be able to converse in Romany) and have a nomadic lifestyle, travelling usually between Serb-populated areas. This group was closely aligned to the previous Serbian administration and as such tends to be shunned by other Roma. There are also some Catholic Roma found near the Croat communities in Lipljan.

(such as access to the market). If further Roma arrive from the rest of Kosovo this could have a significant impact on the security of the minority communities presently there. The Roma population in **Podujevo** municipality is still estimated at around 850. No major incidents involving them have been reported.

41. In **Obilic** municipality, about 2,000 Roma remain in Krusevac, Plemetina, Obilic town, Crkvena Vodica and Janina Voda. The Roma community camp in Krusevac still numbers about 1,200 people; however, many of the Roma in the camp have expressed the wish to return to their previous homes in Kosovo Polje in the near future. In the village of Plemetina there are still two Roma quarters consisting of about 450 to 500 people. Less than ten families have left the village since the end of the conflict, and about twenty Roma from other areas (such as Kosovo Polje) have sought refuge there. Most of them worked in the factory in Obilic, but have been unable to return out of fear. Like other Roma in the municipality, they report a deep sense of resentment against them on the part of the Albanian community based on allegations of having collaborated with the Serbs during the war. Although KFOR has deployed a unit in Plemetina, the Roma state that they still feel unsafe and are particularly scared of leaving the village. Burning of Roma houses, intimidation and verbal harassment by Albanians continue. The Roma community in Obilic town numbers about 200. Small Roma communities in Crkvena Vodica, and in the neighbouring village of Janina Voda remain even though most of their houses were burned after the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces.
42. About 1,400 Roma are scattered throughout the municipality of **Lipljan** usually in Albanian areas - in the main town, Vrelo, Rabovce, Janjevo (mixed Albanian/Serb/Croat), and in the villages of Medvece, Magura and Mali Alas (with Albanians). Significant numbers have left over the last few weeks, for example 170 persons from Dobrotin and 120 persons from Medvece. Of the 40 Roma families originally in Magura, only one remains – many of these families are thought to be among the 130 displaced Roma found in Vrelo. Many of those that have left are thought to have gone to the Roma camp in Obilic or to former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Reasons for departure range from security concerns to access to food. Indeed, the Roma community in Vrelo and Medvece may well leave in the near future if their access to humanitarian assistance is not improved, despite the good relationship with the Albanian leadership there. The Roma in Janjevo benefit from the generally tolerant environment in this ethnically mixed village. Irrespective of the general stabilisation of security in the municipality, the Roma in Magura and Mali Alas are still in a rather precarious position.
43. Only a very small number of Roma continue to live dispersed in the northern part of **Mitrovica** town. The Roma displaced in **Leposavic** and **Zvecan** municipalities seem less and less accepted by the local Serb population. On 22 August 1999 the 500 Roma accommodated in the collective centre in Leposavic came under pressure to leave in order to make space available for Kosovar Serbs returning from other parts of Serbia. Similarly, in Zvecan the Serb “Mayor” is putting great pressure on the 270 internally displaced Roma to vacate the school which they currently occupy. Most of them moved to Zvecan in June 1999 from the Roma neighbourhood in Mitrovica town following the withdrawal of the Yugoslav

forces. Their houses were burned a few days later by Albanians. Despite earlier indications that they were keen to return to Mitrovica, security and shelter concerns seem now to be dissuading them from such a move.

44. In **Vucitrn** municipality only 70 Roma from the pre-war population of about 1,700 remain in Vucitrn town, most of them having left by the middle of July 1999. By contrast all of the 165 Roma of Priluzje village remain, their security having improved following talks with their Albanian neighbours facilitated by KFOR and UNHCR.
45. The Roma community in **Gnjilane** town is still concentrated in three neighbourhoods. In mid-July 1999 this community was estimated at 530 persons, but now only 445 persons are thought to remain. Like the Serbs they have faced an increase in attacks. On 26 August 1999 forty of them fled to other parts of Serbia following the abduction and beating of two of their group. The Roma community in Bostane village in **Novo Brdo** is now thought to number about 45 (40 in preliminary assessment). Close to 100 Roma remain in **Kamenica** town, few having departed recently for other parts of Serbia. However, given the deteriorating security situation in this municipality more are likely to leave in the near future. Of the 500 Roma who lived in **Vitina** town before the conflict, an estimated 300 are reported to remain.
46. Between 3,500-4,000 Roma are thought to live in **Urosevac** town, primarily in three particular neighbourhoods. They still face some acts of intimidation, looting and arson. On 4 August 1999 two Roma were abducted by Albanians and questioned about the profile of their community. Other Roma are found in a few predominantly Albanian villages: Tankosic (14 Roma), Stari Miras (21), Kosare (35) and Zaskok (9). KFOR has increased its patrol of Roma areas but the situation is still tense in at least one part of Urosevac town. Roma continue to leave but in small numbers and, indeed, some Roma appear to have returned from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It should be noted that many Roma in this area define themselves as Albanian. At least 200 Roma live in **Stimlje** town, 200 in neighbouring Djurkovce and 150 in Vojinovce. In **Kacanik**, only one Roma family now remains but they seem to be well-integrated into the community.
47. About 50 Roma left the village of Landovica in **Prizren** municipality after Albanians had opened fire on some of them in mid-August 1999. They have taken refuge in Dushanove in Prizren town. However, the established Roma community there is very concerned about its own security situation. Given an attempted abduction of two Roma two weeks ago, plus daily stoning incidents, KFOR has been requested to provide increased protection. In Lesane village **Suva Reka**, only five Roma families remain, others having left with the Serbs. No security problems have been reported.
48. In **Orahovac** municipality, verbal and physical assault aimed at the Roma population continues. For example on 25 August 1999 three Roma who were taking part in demonstrations against the planned deployment of Russian troops in

the area were kidnapped by Albanians. After intervention by local community leaders the men were released but only after they had been severely beaten.

49. In **Djakovica** town, the 450 Roma who had sought refuge next to the cemetery in the Berkoci neighbourhood left for Montenegro on 24 August 1999 rather than moving to the alternative site set up in order to provide them with better living conditions and KFOR security. Another 4,000-5,000 Roma still remain in six neighbourhoods in the town, benefiting from increased KFOR patrols. Their security situation has improved since the departure of the Roma community displaced at the cemetery.

50. In **Pec** municipality, scattered Roma families continue to remain in the villages of Orasje, Svrke, Brezanik, Vitromirica and in Pec town. From the 60 Roma families living in Orasje before the war, only twelve families remain. In the village of Svrke, only one Roma family and 50 Egyptians⁶ (as the Roma in this area tend to identify themselves) remain. According to local sources of information, 70 Roma remain in Brezanik and nine in Gorazdevac. In Vitromirica and Pec town, figures for Roma community are difficult to establish since many Roma define themselves as Albanians. However, according to estimates by a Roma representative in Pec, around 20 families continue to remain in Pec town. Although generally good relations are reported between the Egyptians and the Albanians in Svrke, there is a generally hostile attitude on the part of the Albanian population towards the Roma population in Pec municipality. However, no major security problems have been reported.

51. Although many of the Roma from **Istok** have fled, several mixed villages still have a Roma community and it is thought that a few individuals remain in Istok town itself.⁷ Zac village is thought to have had a pre-war Roma population of about 250 which is now reduced to 160, six or seven families having just left in the last month (supposedly to ascertain the situation in Montenegro). KFOR is protecting several Roma houses where this community, which identifies itself as Egyptian, congregates. The number of incidents suffered by this community has diminished over the last month, as a result of KFOR's presence, but their freedom of movement seems to be limited (although there is some indication that trips are made during the day to outlying homes). The Roma communities in Suvi Lukavac (40 persons), Drenje (100), Kasica (15-20) and Kovrage (60) all benefit from regular KFOR patrols. It would appear that the community in Kovrage are fairly well-integrated.

52. Several Roma communities remain in **Klina** municipality; the largest group of about 160 persons lives in a concentrated neighbourhood in Ciganska Mah, just outside Klina town. There are also several scattered Roma communities of about six to ten families in Klina town itself, Jagoda, Budisavci, Vidanje, Stupelj and Rudice, many other Roma having fled the municipality in the weeks after the departure of Yugoslav forces. Incidents of looting, arson and harassment against

⁶ Please see footnote 5.

⁷ Postscript: On 2 September 1999 four members of a Roma family in Dragoljevac, Istok were murdered.

these Roma communities continue to be reported. Two Roma women were shot and wounded in Stupelj village on 23 August 1999.⁸

Croatian/Bosnian Serbs

53. Since the last report, UNHCR has continued to identify and counsel the remaining Croatian and Bosnian Serb refugee population. 192 have been relocated to other parts of Serbia where they will await the processing of their voluntary repatriation or resettlement applications. Another 11 have taken up the offer of the Patriarchate of Pec to take refuge in Montenegro until a durable solution is found.
54. 632 Croatian/Bosnian Serbs are known still to be present in Kosovo in Pristina, Kosovo Polje, Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Zvecan, Strpce, Prizren and Pec municipalities.

Gorani

55. This community consists of persons of Slav ethnicity from the Gora region who, unlike the Serbs, follow Islam. They are distinct from the group described as Muslim Slavs (see below). Despite their shared religion, their relationship with ethnic Albanians is not always easy given their ethnic and linguistic links with the Serbs, as well as their political attitudes.
56. The situation for Gorani in **Gora** municipality remains unchanged. Limited freedom of movement and increasing intimidation and harassment of Gorani by ethnic Albanians continue to be major concerns. Only a few Gorani appear to remain in **Pristina** city. Approximately 100 Gorani reside in **Gnjilane** municipality. They report good relations with the Albanian community with whom they suffered at the hands of Yugoslav forces.

Muslim Slavs

57. This group consists of Serbo-Croat-speaking Slavs who are associated with the “Muslim nationality” created within the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Although many of them describe themselves as Bosnian/Bosniak, this does not necessarily mean that their ancestors were from that geographical area but rather that Bosnians are seen as the successors to the old Muslim nationality group. In reality, these communities originate from a variety of regions, including modern-day Bosnia and Sandzak. Although some are dispersed within towns, most of them live in predominantly Muslim villages. Within the Muslim community, there is a distinct group of Torbesi, found mainly in the Prizren and Orahovac areas.

⁸ Postscript: On 30 August 1999, a Roma man was beaten to death in Rudice, Klina.

58. There has been a steady departure of the Muslim population from **Pristina** city as a result of incidents of intimidation and harassment leaving a community of about 3,000 from an estimated 1998 total of 4,000. Apparently they have moved to Bosnia, southern Serbia or the north of Montenegro. In the rest of Pristina municipality another 5,000-6,000 Muslim Slavs are thought to reside.
59. The number of Muslim Slavs in **Mitrovica** municipality, mainly in the north, appears to have remained the same (about 1,750). Ten Muslim Slav families living in **Vucitrn** were exposed to threats and attacks by Albanians from surrounding villages at the end of July 1999. They left for Leposavic and other parts of Serbia shortly afterwards but other Muslim Slav families decided to remain after KFOR had agreed to provide 24-hour protection.
60. About 200 Muslim Slavs continue to reside in the surroundings of Lesak, **Leposavic** municipality. According to villagers, there are no problems between their community and Serbs. However, during the conflict, most of the young Muslim Slavs left the village for Novi Pazar, Serbia where the Muslim Slav community is larger and better organised.
61. The situation for Muslim Slavs in **Prizren** municipality has significantly deteriorated. There has been a rise in intimidation and the recent killing of an elderly couple has caused panic among the community. This poor security situation, in addition to the lack of employment opportunities for Muslim Slavs and the unsolved question of which languages are to be used in school classes starting in September, is causing many families to consider leaving for Bosnia.
62. In **Pec** municipality Muslim Slav communities remain in Pec town, Vitimirica, Orasje and Brezanik. According to estimates from community leaders, the overall number of Muslim Slavs seems to have risen to about 4,500, a rise of 500 since mid-July 1999. Of these, 2,000 are in Pec town, with returns expected in the near future. In Vitimirica, the current population is around 2,300, as compared to 2,700 before the war, according to the Mother Teresa Society. This community is also expected to grow. In Orasje, from the 20 families of Muslim Slavs that were reported to live in the village before the war, eleven families remain whereas 165 Muslims are still in Brezanik. Although relations with the local Albanians appear to be good in Pec town, Brezanik and Orasje, a few cases of intimidation, theft and looting have been reported in Vitimirica and Orasje supposedly at the hands of Albanian groups from outside the region.
63. Few Muslim Slavs remain in **Klina** municipality. Only one Muslim Slav family is thought to have returned to Klina town from Montenegro recently. The situation of the 500-600 Muslim Slavs in Dobrusa village in **Istok** municipality, which they almost exclusively inhabit, has improved as a result of increased KFOR patrolling. Acts of looting against them are on the decrease recently, although they are still viewed with suspicion by Albanians in the villages to the south of them. However, Albanians from this village are reported to have been targeting the Muslim Slav population of about 80 persons in the near-by village of Kasica. In Karaul, where about 100 Muslim Slavs constitute about half of the population, the situation is reasonably calm, although the fact that some Albanians have

occupied the homes of absent Muslim Slavs could create problems if the latter return in the near future.

Turkish

64. The long-established Turkish community in Kosovo continues to use Turkish as its mother tongue, although most of its members also speak Albanian and Serbo-Croat. In the 1974 Constitution of Kosovo (repealed in 1989 by the federal government) Turkish was recognised as the third official language of the Province. The Turkish community is politically organised, represented mainly by the Turkish Democratic Union and enjoyed access to primary and secondary education in its mother tongue. Many members of the Turkish community left for Turkey or were otherwise displaced by the recent conflict. However, some families are now returning to Kosovo.
65. In **Pristina** city about 3,000 of the estimated original 5,000 Turkish population are dispersed throughout town and are on fairly good terms with the Albanian population, although they report concerns about the impact of the general levels of violence on their freedom of movement. Community leaders state that Turks are returning with Albanians from countries that hosted them during the conflict under the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme and that another 3,000 Turks are estimated to be living in the rest of the municipality.
66. Turkish communities are scattered throughout **Mitrovica**, **Vucitrn** and **Zvecan** municipalities. Over 260 families have registered with the local Turkish Democratic League. No security incidents involving this Turkish population have been reported.
67. According to community leaders, about 1,950 Turks live in **Gnjilane** municipality, 1,500 in the main town with the rest in the village of Dobrcane. These figures may be somewhat inflated given that the 1991 census only gave 780 as the number of non-Albanians/Serbs/Roma in the area.
68. A sizeable Turkish community (estimated at over 10,000 by community leaders) remains in **Prizren** town where Turkish is also spoken by the Albanian population as a result of Prizren's significance under the Ottoman Empire. There have been some reports of Turks in this area being told to speak Albanian when in public. Mamusa village in the municipality is almost entirely Turkish (estimated population 5,000). There are also some Turkish communities dispersed in **Pec** town.

Croats

69. About 450 Croats still remain in Janjevo village in **Lipljan** municipality. Although relations between the various ethnic groups in this village remain generally good there appears to have been an increase in tension between the

Albanian and Croat communities, with some Croats reporting threats against them. Two Croats from **Pristina** have now taken refuge in Janjevo after having been physically assaulted. They consider themselves to have been the last Croats in Pristina.

70. Croats are still in Letnica and Vrnavokolo villages in **Vitina** municipality, while about another 80 live in Sasare. These communities continue to be subjected to looting, threats and house-breaking, allegedly by Albanian gangs from Ljubiste.

Cerkezi

71. This group arrived in Kosovo from the Kafkaz mountains in Russia more than eighty years ago and settled in Milosevo in **Obilic** municipality. The Cerkezi are Muslims and speak Albanian, Serbo-Croat and Cerkish. Although in their culture and traditions they seem closer to Albanians than to Serbs, they have traditionally maintained good relations with both communities. During the conflict they were expelled to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and some of their houses were burned by Serbs. It appears that all of the 100 Cerkezi have returned to Milosevo (in mid-July 1999 two families were thought to have gone to Russia). Unfortunately, it seems that as a result of their expulsion during the conflict their relationship with their Serb neighbours has suffered.

ACTION TAKEN BY UNHCR AND OSCE

72. Given the alarming deterioration in the situation for many minority communities over the last two months, UNHCR and OSCE have been actively engaged in monitoring and devising initiatives that will allow those still present to remain in an environment where their human rights are fully respected, and promoting conditions which will eventually allow those displaced to return in safety and dignity. In order to maximise the capabilities of the international community, the Ad Hoc Task Force on Minorities chaired by the DSRSG for Humanitarian Affairs has met on a weekly basis to plan and co-ordinate action.

73. Action taken:

- Review of security strategies

UNHCR/OSCE have worked with KFOR to identify individuals or communities which require increased physical protection. In some areas KFOR has deployed a 24-hour presence. In addition, UNHCR has explored with KFOR creative methods of increasing the security and confidence of isolated, vulnerable persons, such as funding a KFOR programme to repair and reinforce the doors of minority homes in Pristina. UNHCR/OSCE helped to establish a hotline for lead agencies to KFOR on minority protection.

Assisted transfer/family reunion to other areas in Kosovo/the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) for those particularly at risk is effected by UNHCR only as a last resort in the absence of a local solution.

- Enhanced UN civilian policing presence/capacity

UNHCR/OSCE have repeatedly called for the early deployment of the United Nations International Police (UNIP) and have worked with the international police to identify locations for priority policing. For example, UNIP took over the security of the Roma camp in Obilic in the reporting period.

- Calls for political pressure on Albanian leaders to take responsibility for preventing continued harassment and violence.

UNHCR/OSCE have, as part of the UNMIK structure, reiterated the need for clear action on the part of the Albanian leadership to stop the cycle of revenge. On a local level, both agencies have been involved in dialogue with local Albanian and other community leaders in order to diffuse the situation in their particular area.

- Expansion of mediation/reconciliation activities at local level

OSCE/UNHCR have facilitated dialogue between community leaders in various locations. Such efforts are to be sensitively but vigorously pursued even at this early stage. In some instances, mediation has already borne fruit, for example the return of some Roma families to Landovica village in the Prizren area.

Apart from facilitating dialogue, UNHCR and OSCE will also promote other confidence-building measures, such as 'go and see' visits to allow displaced individuals to visit their homes, setting up of community centres, gradual integration of child-play schemes in mixed communities, etc.

- Ensuring access of minority communities to humanitarian assistance and medical treatment

Given the limited freedom of movement of many minority communities plus a fear of approaching Albanian-run institutions, many persons are denied access to markets, shops and hospitals. Accordingly, UNHCR has designed a special distribution network for humanitarian aid for needy minority groups, drawing where possible on community structures. In parallel with efforts being made to ensure that public medical facilities are non-discriminatory, UNHCR Field Offices have set up interim systems using dedicated non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local doctors to provide medical care for minority groups in their area.

As a general strategy, UNHCR aims to ensure that careful targeting of assistance may emphasise the benefits of a multi-ethnic existence, for example through rapid shelter assistance for Albanian communities who live close to minority groups whose homes have not been destroyed.

- Securing access of minority communities to educational facilities and employment opportunities

The ability to participate in the employment market is critical to the long-term prospects for minority communities in Kosovo. Many of them, particularly Serbs, used to be employed in state-run institutions and are now therefore jobless. In the current climate, apparent discrimination in the job market and limited freedom of movement effectively has forced many persons from minority communities out of the job market and into dependency on humanitarian assistance.

As for education, this is a critical matter given that the scholastic year is about to commence. Recently, growing concern has been expressed by minorities about this issue, placing it as a key factor behind whether they will leave in the next few weeks. For those children, such as Serbs, some Roma and Muslim Slavs, whose first language is not Albanian, instruction in the public schools about to re-open may not be feasible in all locations. Again security issues would also prevent many children attending Albanian-run schools. Therefore, apart from long-term work required to ensure an integrated schooling system where children of all backgrounds are welcomed and receive adequate instruction, in the short-term steps need to be taken for schooling in the coming months.

- Improving communication and freedom of movement for minority communities

The physical and psychological isolation of many communities and indeed individuals has a tremendous impact on the viability of their being able to remain. UNHCR is taking practical steps to improve the situation for some particularly-affected communities; for example in Orahovac it hopes to provide on a regular basis a satellite phone for the Serb community to call relatives and in Gnjilane buslines are planned to allow Serb communities to visit each other and facilities, such as markets.

- Promotion of fully-functioning criminal justice system

Not only should this act as a deterrent to criminal acts against minorities but should raise confidence in minority communities that action is taken against their persecutors. OSCE has assisted in the identification of a multi-ethnic judiciary that are hearing cases in interim courts set up by UNMIK. Both OSCE and UNHCR have been involved in discussions on the establishment of a representative and transparent Commission for the long-term selection of the Kosovo judiciary.

The frustration on the part of the Albanian community about crimes against them going unpunished needs also to be addressed. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) will only be able to pursue the most egregious violations. A mechanism needs to be set in place to record and, in due, course investigate other human rights abuses.

- Legal protection of minorities

UNHCR/OSCE will take a pro-active approach in establishing a domestic legal framework in the interest of the protection of minorities in Kosovo. The Council of Europe Framework for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Minorities contain important guidelines in this respect. Non-discrimination policies and particular protection measures in the education, language and cultural areas are key to sustainable minority protection. The network of legal aid and information centres set up by UNHCR will provide practical assistance to minority groups in securing their full rights.

UNHCR/OSCE
6 September 1999