

34

15/5-00

FUNDING & DONOR RELATIONS



Moldavia (86)

Operations in the Republic of Moldova

- Strengthen the capacity of the Government to address migration issues and promote awareness and understanding of refugee law
- Monitor and protect persons of concern to UNHCR (particularly against *refoulement*) and help find durable solutions for them, including voluntary repatriation and integration assistance to vulnerable IDPs from Trans-Dniestria.
- Promote an effective NGO network, and sensitize the judiciary and the general public to the rights of asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs and stateless persons.

The legal status of asylum seekers remains precarious and many semi-integrated former students attempt to move in an irregular manner to Western Europe when their residence permits or documents of statelessness expire. It is estimated that up to 2,500 foreigners (mostly students) from as many as 30 countries may consider applying for refugee status once a functioning asylum procedure is established. At the end of June 1999, 252 individuals had approached UNHCR for protection against *refoulement* (compared to 153 at the end of January). Most continue to reside illegally in the country as existing aliens and citizenship legislation does not permit legalization of their stay. Where applicable, resettlement or family reunification was pursued.

The Moldovan authorities have acknowledged the need to introduce a system to manage irregular migration. In March, a Parliamentary Working Group adopted a set of recommendations that should lead to the drafting of legislation and a special hearing on the issue, scheduled for July. Given Moldova's policy focus on integration into European structures, there is growing interest in the *Acquis Communautaire*. UNHCR organized several seminars on refugee law, citizenship issues, etc. in the capital and the districts, with participation of Ministries, border guards, procurators and judges. UNHCR provided the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UN Department) and the State Chancellery with equipment to strengthen their management capacities. Pending the creation of appropriate government structures and the registration of asylum seekers, UNHCR exercises its mandate and provides basic protection and assistance to *bona-fide* asylum seekers.

Promoting tolerance and ensuring access of children to primary education remain top priorities. Counselling was provided with a view to regularizing residence and naturalization. Undocumented persons of concern were issued protection letters that are generally respected by the authorities. Through NGOs, UNHCR provided social and medical assistance. Funds were allocated to rehabilitate facilities in hospitals in the capital, providing treatment to persons of concern to UNHCR. Repair of one school has also started.

In 1998, UNHCR was requested by the Government to identify solutions to the problem of displacement from Trans-Dniestria. In close coordination with the OSCE Mission and UNDP, the priority is to promote a safe and dignified return of IDPs, and to support the efforts to reintegrate those who are unable to return home. In view of reports of continued human rights violations in Trans-Dniestria, UNHCR monitors any irregular movements. UNHCR provided assistance for the reconstruction of two schools in the region during 1999.

UNHCR remains attentive to the problem of formerly deported persons (FDPs), including the question of their repatriation, and matters related to statelessness and naturalization. A political scientist completed a UNHCR-commissioned survey on FDPs. A survey on IDPs, started in 1998, was finalized.

Operational/Financial Constraints

Constraints hampering progress in capacity building and migration issues include limited attention by the Government and Parliament to these issues, and lack of national resources.

Objectives and priorities as formulated above will continue during the second half of the year.

BUDGET (in USD)

General Programmes		Special Programmes	
Initial	Revised	Initial	Revised
453,400	462,715	200,000	74,353