

**INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS
from the PRIZREN AREA of KOSOVO
and METOHIJA: awaiting return for
three years**



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CONTENTS	
<i>I INTRODUCTION</i>	1
<i>II RESEARCH GOALS</i>	5
<i>III RESEARCH METHODS</i>	6
<i>Instruments</i>	6
<i>Sample</i>	7
<i>Procedure</i>	8
<i>IV RESULTS</i>	9
Structure of the Prizren area IDPs 2002-sample according to the age, education, profession, marital status and family size	9
A. <i>Living conditions and financial status of IDPs from the Prizren area: two years later</i>	14
B. <i>Mental health status of the Prizren area IDPs: two years later</i>	17
C. <i>Position of the Prizren area IDPs on return to their home area: two years later</i>	26
<i>V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	31
References	34

I INTRODUCTION

After the formal ending of the 1998-1999 Kosovo conflict and cessation of NATO bombardment of FR Yugoslavia in 1999, a great number of Serbs and other non-Albanians from the Prizren area fled their homeland and were displaced and expelled to other parts of Serbia and to Montenegro. According to the earlier reports of the respective estimates of certain international organisations (UNHCR, ICRC), about 200 000 persons were forcibly displaced into the parts of Serbia outside Kosovo and Metohija. In the UN OCHA Office report from April 2002 it was stated that 231 000 IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija live in Serbia and Montenegro (WWW document, URL: www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/ocha-yug-26apr.pdf). According to the current official estimations of the Coordination Centre of FRY and of the Republic of Serbia regarding Kosovo and Metohija (WWW document 2002, URL: http://www.serbia.sr.gov.yu/coordination_centre/), from the total number of about 280 000 internally displaced persons and expellees from the Kosovo and Metohija region, some 30 000 (or around 11%) originates from the Prizren area.

Although their formal status is different from the status of the refugee population (for details see Playe, 2000), IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija have practically a lot of things in common with the refugee population. Main characteristics of the population of internally displaced persons from Kosovo are:

- Direct exposure to one of the so-called catastrophic stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) – forcible mass exile from homeland and in relation with that the loss of financial stability, labour status, network of formal and informal social relationships or, in other words, the state of being regionally, socially and psychologically uprooted. (Vlajković, 2000a; Milosavljević, 2000);
- exposure to a great number of stressors before the actual forcible displacement (Vlajković, 2000b);
- feeling of lost identity, because the "questions of `who we are´ are often intimately related to the questions of `where we are´" and "home´ places are organised and represented in ways that help individuals to maintain self-coherence and self-esteem, to realise self-regulation principles"(Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p.29);
- strong feeling of insecurity, i.e. "dependence on the will and interest of others" (Milosavljević, 2000, p.23);
- traumatisation by living in a new environment during the hard process of adaptation to the new environmental conditions, interwoven first with sorrow because of the

losses, and later with the necessity to bring crucial decisions regarding the future life (Vlajković, 2000b).

Besides all this, in the last two years IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija were faced with the transition changes of the current system in their own country, disappearance of old institutions and creation of new ones, i.e. the so-called birth of "democracy" on the ruins of war, previous regime and international isolation.

For almost four years of their life in exile the **I**nternally **D**isplaced **P**ersons from the Prizren area of Kosovo (hereinafter identified as **PrIDPs**) have dwelled in a vicious circle between the wish to return to the homeland and awareness that the return is not objectively possible at the present time. The non-existence of clear legislative and, which is far more important, guaranties for personal safety of the returnees to Kosovo and Metohija really applicable on the field, the climate of insecurity that is still a part of everyday life in places they were exiled from, actual impossibility to freely access property, openly manifested reluctance of the extremists within the Albanian majority to accept tolerance and reconciliation with the returnees, are obstacles for the return of the non-Albanian population to their homeland that they were forced to leave almost four years ago. The right to return, which is not only a wish of the great majority of them but also one of their basic human rights, is at present only a fictional right. The situation in Kosovo and Metohija has not been changing in a direction favourable for them: this area is under the international administration of UNMIK, with very limited freedom of movement for the non-Albanian population that lives in strictly protected enclaves. This is how the U.S. Committee for Refugees describes the current situation in Kosovo:

"Despite failing to show significant popular support among ethnic Albanians in Kosovo during October 2000 municipal elections...ethnic Albanian militants mounted well-organized acts of violence and intimidation against minorities. Violence and threats were directed particularly at would-be minority returnees to Kosovo... The threat of violence continued to prevent the return of most displaced Serbs and other minorities, including Roma, Ashkalis, and "Egyptians" (RAE) to their homes in Kosovo... With an estimated unemployment rate of more than 60 percent, and continuing crime, political instability, and ethnic polarization, Kosovo was slow to recover from the full-scale armed conflict of 1999. Both ethnic Albanian and ethnic Serb militants strove to consolidate the ethnic divisions that they had created after the deployment of NATO troops, called KFOR (for Kosovo Force)...."(cited from the URL: <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/europe/yugoslavia.htm>)

In 2000 IAN Research Team conducted a research on the sample of 1630 PrIDPs, with the main purpose to provide useful information on socio-demographic, educational and professional characteristics of the Prizren area IDPs, on their living conditions, aid

needs, mental health status, and their position on return to the homeland (Tenjović, Knežević, Opačić et al. 2001). Data obtained through this research showed favourable educational and professional structure of the PrIDP population, as well as a high business competence and marked readiness for credited entrepreneurship in this group of expellees. On the other hand, the data clearly showed rather unfavourable living conditions of the PrIDPs in exile (high rate of unemployment, feeling of complete dependence on humanitarian aid with, at the same time, very prominent dissatisfaction with the received humanitarian aid). It also revealed a disastrous status of their mental health (prevailing sense of deteriorating current mental health condition compared with their mental health condition prior to exile, extremely high level of intrusive component of posttraumatic response syndrome and very pronounced symptoms of anxiety, paranoid ideation and somatisations).

Since October 2000, after the fall of the Slobodan Milošević regime, together with the creation of democratic institutions after a decade of isolation, FR Yugoslavia has been struggling for the quickest possible recovery into the international community. A new system that is gradually being established in Serbia is, in a way, a great chance for opening new possibilities for repatriation, i.e. return to homeland with the assistance of the international community, or integration of internally displaced persons into the new environment.

Every type of assistance, both in possible reaching a decision to return to the homeland and in reaching a decision to permanently remain in the new environment and integrate into it, includes good knowledge of the current status and personal views of the group that the assistance is intended for. Two years have past after the previous research conducted by the IAN research Team (supported by Danish Secretariat for Peace and Stability /FRESTA/ and European Commission) whose goal was to find out more about living conditions and mental health status of IDPs from the Prizren area. This time period is long enough for the changes to occur in specific populations such as the population of PrIDPs. Hence, the main purpose of the investigation, whose results are reported in this text, was **a)** to explore current living conditions of the Prizren area IDPs (PrIDPs), their current mental health status and their personal views regarding return to home area and **b)** to compare current data with the data gathered two years ago within the same population. It was not possible, however, to gather data by examining exactly the same persons as two years ago. Instead, we have decided to use a new sample that would be as similar as possible regarding the important characteristics to the sample from the year 2000 (and that could be rightly assumed to represent the population of those PrIDPs who are literate and older than 14). In this way we wanted to reach timely and accurate information on possible changes in the living conditions, mental health status and position regarding the return to home area

that might have occurred during the past period among the PrIDP population.

II RESEARCH GOALS

Research goals, in compliance with its main purpose, were the following:

- A. To explore current living conditions and financial status of the PrIDPs and to compare current data with the data obtained from the sample of the same population two years ago;
- B. To screen the Prizren area displacees' current mental health status and to compare current data with the results obtained from the sample of the same population two years ago;
- C. To examine the Prizren area displacees' position on return to home area and to compare current data on that issue with the data gathered from the sample of the same population two years ago.

III RESEARCH METHODS

Instruments

The data were gathered employing the same questionnaires and inventories as two years ago (Tenjović, Knežević, Opačić et al. 2001) except that the general questionnaire was modified by exclusion of some questions and by inclusion of several new questions related to the PrIDPs` position on return to homeland. Therefore, the following instruments were included in the research:

1. General Questionnaire designed by the IAN research team provided data on the sociodemographic characteristics of the examinees (gender, age, nationality, marital status, number of family members, number of children, type of the place of origin /town-village/), their educational level, occupation and employability (working ability), their current financial and living conditions (employment, monthly income per family member, type of accommodation in exile, need for humanitarian aid, satisfaction with the humanitarian aid received, self-estimate of current living condition), and their current mental health status (need to talk with a professional due to psychological difficulties, use of tranquillisers, self-estimate of current psychological condition). The separate section of the general questionnaire was designed to explore examinees' views related to return and to the factors that have impact on decision making process about the return to home area (interest for events in the home area, most frequently used sources of information about homeland, frequency of visits to the homeland, maintenance of contacts with persons of the same as well as other nationalities who live in the place of origin of the displacees, personal readiness to return, conditions required for return, having a plan to return in the near future, estimation of the importance of certain conditions the fulfilling of which could facilitate the process of reaching a decision on return to homeland).

2. Life event check list (LECL), designed by the IAN research team, is employed for assessing the extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events. It comprises a list of 17 extremely stressful life events. The examinee checks each event according to the following scale: "It happened to me", "I have witnessed it", "I have learned from somebody else's experience", "I am not certain" or "It is irrelevant for me".

- 3. Impact of event scale (IES)** (Horowitz, Wilner & Alvarez, 1979) a self-report instrument for assessing severity of posttraumatic distress. The examinee checks each item on a four-point scale ("not at all", "rarely", "sometimes", "often"), indicating in that way how frequently he had the experiences described by the item during the last seven days. The responses to each item are measured by 0 ("not at all"), 1, 3 or 5 ("often") for the frequency categories, respectively. The scores of intrusion, avoidance and total score of posttraumatic distress are obtained as a sum of measured responses.
- 4. Symptom check list- SCL-90-R** -a self-report inventory comprising 90 items for the assessment of current psychological symptom pattern, current distress and global psychopathological status (Derogatis, 1983). The examinee rates each item on a five-point scale (from "not at all" to "extremely") according to the degree of distress during the last seven days. The nine symptom dimensions (Somatisation, Obsessive-Compulsive, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Depression, Anxiety, Hostility, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid Ideation and Psychoticism) and certain global indices of distress can be derived from responses to the items. In this research Global Severity Index (GSI) was employed as a measure of global distress or psychopathological status.
- 5. NEOFFI personality inventory** - is composed of 60 items (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The examinee responds by choosing one answer on a five-point scale (from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). NEOFFI was used in this research for the assessment of five personality traits describing personality in accordance with the currently most widely accepted Big-Five personality model: *Neuroticism*, *Extraversion*, *Openness*, *Agreeableness* and *Conscientiousness* (Digman, 1990).

Sample

To enable comparison with the data obtained on the PrIDPs two years ago, the sampling plan included gender, education level and nationality as the stratification factors. The IAN team members randomly selected sample units during the regular field contacts with internally displaced persons from the Prizren area, paying great attention to stratification factors in the sampling plan. With regard to the purpose of this research and the fact that the data were gathered through questionnaires, only persons over 14 were included in the sample.

The final sample selected in that way consisted of 391 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Prizren (and the surrounding

villages), 177 (45,3%) females and 214 (54,7%) males, aged between 15 and 77 (Median Age= 42; Mean Age= 42,33; Standard Deviation= 15,12). Almost all examinees, 377 (96,4%) of them, were of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality. There were 10 persons (2,6%) of other nationalities, while 4 persons (1,0%) did not give data on their nationality. In the sample there were 310 persons (79,3%) who lived in urban areas before the displacement, 80 (20,5%) examinees fled from villages, and for 1 examinee there is no data whether he/she lived in a town or a village.

The sample structures according to age categories, educational level, profession, marital status and family size are presented in the *Results* section of this paper.

Procedure

The IAN team gathered the data from October to December 2002. The questionnaires were handed out to the selected IDPs older than 14 who were requested to fill them in. The examinees were asked to answer all the questions as sincerely as possible since their responses would be very useful in providing better-quality assistance to them or any other people who might in future find themselves in the similar position. All the examinees filled in the General Questionnaire by themselves or with the help of an examiner (if needed), while the questionnaires IES, LECL, IES, SCL-90-R and NEOFFI were filled up only by the examinees able to do it by themselves. At the end of the General Questionnaire, the examinees were informed in written form that, if they felt the need to talk with a professional, they were free to contact IAN counselling agencies offering free psychological assistance.

IV RESULTS

By this research it was planned to contrast the data obtained from the PrIDPs sample used in this research (hereinafter identified as "**2002-sample**") with the data gathered in the year 2000 on the sample from the same population (hereinafter identified as "**2000-sample**"). Therefore, at the beginning of this section we will give a more detailed presentation of the sociodemographic characteristics of the 2002-sample contrasting them with the comparable data from the 2000-sample.

Structure of the Prizren area IDP 2002-sample according to the age, education, profession, marital status and family size

The 2002-sample structure according to the age categories, educational level, profession, marital status and family size are presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. In these tables, in a separate column named "*% in the 2000-sample*" the percentages are given as the indicators of the relative representation of certain categories in the sample of 1630 PrIDPs examined in 2000. Considering the size of this sample, these percentages can be recognised as reliable estimates of the representation of certain categories in the whole population of displaced persons from the Prizren area who are literate and older than 14. The fact is, also, that the statistical testing of the homogeneity of distributions using the Chi-square test on the samples of this size practically always leads to "statistically significant differences" among distributions. Therefore, instead of the statistical significance, the Cramer's V-coefficient was used as the key indicator of the "similarity" of distributions, since this coefficient is not sensitive to the size of samples but primarily to the differences among the distributions. If the Cramer's coefficient is lower than 0.10, the sample distributions can be from the practical point of view considered rather similar, i.e. "negligibly different" regardless of the statistical significance of the difference.

As it was already said when describing the samples, in the 2002-sample there were more males than females (54,7%:45,3%), while in the 2000-sample the number of males was almost identical with the number of females (49,9%:50,1%). However, difference in gender structure of these two samples is very small (*Cramer's V=0.04; n.s.*). This sample, just as the 2000-sample, is also characterised by high ethnic homogeneity: 96,4% of the examinees in both samples are of Serbian or Montenegrin nationality (*Cramer's V=0.04; n.s.*).

The 2002-sample consisted mainly of displaced persons from the town of Prizren (79,3%), and a far smaller number of the examinees was from villages near Prizren (20,5%; No data: 0.2%), similarly as in the

2000-sample (83,1%:15,1%; No data:1,8%) (Cramer's $V=0.07$; $p<0.01$).

In the 2002-sample all age categories over 14 are satisfactorily represented (young, middle-aged and old persons) (see **Table 1**). In comparison to the 2000-sample, there are more examinees between 25 and 34 years of age and those between 55 and 64 years of age, while the number of the expellees younger than 24 and those older than 65 is relatively smaller in the 2002-sample (Cramer's $V=0.14$; $p<0.001$).

Table 1: Structure of the PrIDP sample according to the age

Age categories	<i>n</i>	%	% in the 2000-sample (n=1630)
15 - 24	57	14,6	18,5
25 - 34	80	20,5	14,5
35 - 44	79	20,2	21,0
45 - 54	84	21,5	19,5
55 - 64	63	16,1	11,7
65 - >	26	6,6	14,8
No data	2	0,5	0,0%
Total	391		

Table 2: Distribution of IDPs from the Prizren area according to the level of education

Education	<i>n</i>	%	% in the 2000-sample (n=1630)
Incomplete elementary	14	3,6	3,4
Elementary	43	11,0	18,8
Secondary	213	54,5	51,9
University	114	29,1	22,6
No data	7	1,8	3,2
Total	391		

As regards the educational level, the sample consists of predominantly more educated groups of the expellee population, just as it was the case in the research conducted two years ago (see **Table 2** and **Table 3**). Relatively favourable educational structure of the sample in this, as well as in the previous research, was partly a consequence of the way in which the data were gathered (through questionnaires). However, in the 2002-sample there is a relatively lower proportion of the examinees who finished only primary school,

and relatively higher proportion of examinees with a university degree, than in the 2000-sample (*Cramer's V=0.10; p<0.01*). Regarding the occupation (see **Table 3**), the situation is similar: in the 2002-sample there is a relatively smaller number of physical and industrial workers and housewives, and a relatively greater number of craftsmen, engineers and specialists in humanities and law than in the 2000-sample (*Cramer's V=0.14; p<0.001*).

Table 3: Distribution of occupation in the sample of IDPs from the Prizren area

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>% in the 2000-sample (n=1630)</i>
Farmer	5	1,3	0,9
Physical worker	21	5,4	9,1
Qualified industrial worker	9	2,3	6,1
Craftsman, shop assistant, waiter	40	10,2	8,0
Office worker and technician	72	18,4	19,6
Engineer	25	6,4	3,2
Specialist in humanities and law	69	17,6	15,0
Housewife	27	6,9	8,3
Pensioner	46	11,8	11,4
Other	50	12,8	8,2
No data	27	6,9	10,2
Total	391		

The greatest number of the PrIDPs in the 2002-sample are married (**63,9%**), and the proportion of the married in this sample is very near to that in the 2000-sample (**65%**; see **Table 4**). As can be seen from Table 4, the specificity of the 2002-sample with respect to marital status lies in a somewhat higher relative proportion of the singles and lower proportion of the widowed than in the 2000-sample (*Cramer's V=0.10; p<0.01*).

Table 4: Distribution of IDPs from the Prizren area according to marital status

Marital status	n	%	% in the PrIDP sample from the 2000 (n=1630)
Single	110	28,1	23,3
Married	250	63,9	65,0
Divorced	8	2,1	2,0
Widowed	10	2,6	8,0
No data	13	3,3	1,7
Total	391		

As can be seen from Table 5, the 2002-sample and the 2000-sample are more similar than dissimilar with respect to the number of family members (*Cramer's V=0.07; p<0.05*). Differences between the samples in the proportions of all categories are, if they exist, rather small.

Table 5: Distribution of IDPs from the Prizren area according to the number of members in their families

Number of family members	n	%	% in the 2000-sample (n=1630)
One	5	1,3	2,1
Two	24	6,1	8,8
3 to 5	259	66,3	63,9
6 ->	92	23,5	20,1
No data	11	2,8	5,1
Total	391		

•••

The 2002-sample of the PrIDPs is not markedly dissimilar with the 2000-sample of the PrIDPs regarding the main sociodemographic characteristics to. The most prominent differences between these two samples are concerned with the age, educational and professional structure: in the 2002-sample, comparing to the 2000-sample, there is a higher relative proportion of representation of the examinees between 25 and 34 years of age as well as those between 55 and 64, while there is a relatively lower proportion of the expellees younger than 24 and older than 65; in the 2002-sample the educational and professional structure is even more favourable than in the 2000-sample. Due to the size of the samples, even small dissimilarities reach statistical significance. Therefore, obtained values of the

Cramer's V-coefficient, which very rarely reach over 0.10, bring us to a conclusion that these samples, at least regarding sociodemographic characteristics, can be considered very similar. They are similar enough so that, when contrasting the results obtained in two time points (with a two-year interval between) on these two samples, they may be recognised as indicators of possible "changes" or "non-changes" regarding the main target characteristics (living conditions, mental health status and positions on return to homeland) of the PrIDP population.

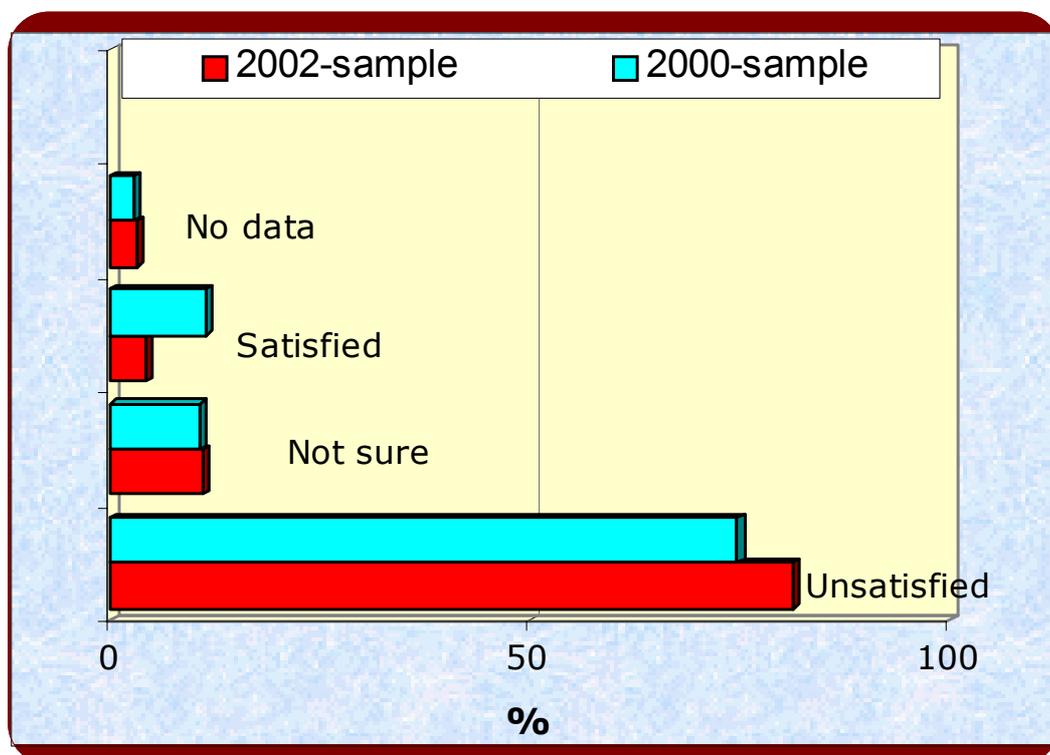
A. Living Conditions and financial status of IDPs from the Prizren area: two years later

Compared to the period two years ago, living conditions and financial status of the PrIDPs are not better at all:

- ✓ Most of the examinees are currently privately accommodated in rented flats (58,6%) just as it was the case in the year 2000 (64,8%), and a far smaller percentage is accommodated with relatives or friends (21%; 2000-sample: 21,8%). Among the examined PrIDPs 12 % live in refugee camps (2000-sample: 4,1%), 7,7% of them own a house or a flat (2000-sample: 8,5%), and 3 examinees (0,8%) did not give data on the type of their accommodation (2000-sample: 0,7%).
- ✓ When the data from only those examinees who gave information on their employment are considered (95,1% in each sample), the unemployment rate estimated on the basis of the 2000-sample was 79,1%, while in the 2002-sample there are 84,1% unemployed (*Sample /2000-2002/ by Employment /yes-no/: Chi square = 4.78, df =1, p < 0.05*). This data is even more important in the view of the fact that a relatively higher percentage of the PrIDPs from the 2002-sample considers himself/herself able to work (68,3%) than it was the case with the examinees from the 2000-sample (56,9%). The percentage of the unemployed within the PrIDP population is much higher than the unemployment rate in the general population of Serbia (about 20% to 30%) or in the populations of the internally displaced persons in other countries (for example in IDP population in Georgia there are about 40% unemployed, while the unemployment rate in the general population is, similarly as in Serbia, around 20%; according to Dershem & Gurgenzidze, 2002).
- ✓ The average monthly income per family member of those stating the data in the 2000-sample (58,5% of them) was 13,54 EUR (Standard deviation=11,54). In the 2002-sample the average monthly income per family member of the PrIDPs stating the data (87,7% of them) amounts to 40,58 EUR (Standard deviation=26,65). It is obvious that the average nominal monthly income has grown (*Average monthly income by sample: $F_{(1;1298)}=652,50, p < 0.0001$*). However, the real costs of living in Serbia have increased, and therefore it can be concluded that the financial situation of the PrIDPs is not at all better than it was two years ago;
- ✓ Very small change for better has occurred regarding the dependence on humanitarian aid: while in the 2000-sample, only 0.6% of the examinees gave a negative answer to the question "do you consider the humanitarian aid needed", in the

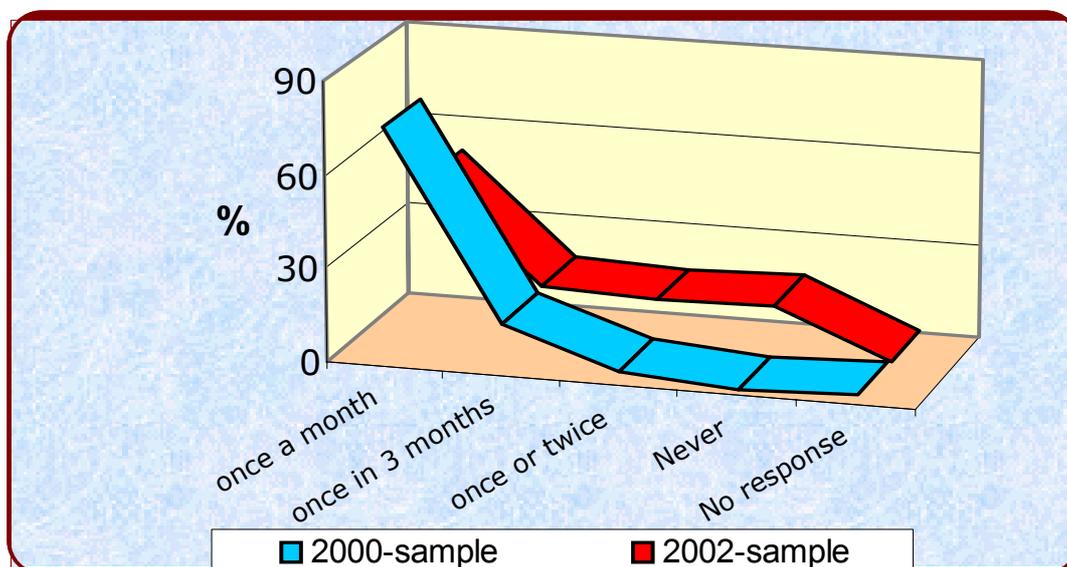
2002-sample the percentage has risen to **5,6%** (*Sample by Need for humanitarian aid /yes-no/: Chi square =53.78, df =1, $p < 0.0001$*). This small change for better is probably a consequence of the smaller number of the eldest examinees in the 2002-sample, than a result of realistically decreased need for humanitarian aid among the population of the PrIDPs. This conclusion is reached according to the data on the level of satisfaction of the IDPs 2002-sample with the received humanitarian aid: dissatisfaction with the received humanitarian aid is more prominent now than it was two years ago (see **Graph 1**). While in the 2000-sample **74,9%** of the examinees was completely or mostly dissatisfied with the received aid, in the 2002-sample dissatisfaction with the received aid was expressed by **81,3%** of the examinees. Apart from that, frequency of the humanitarian aid distributions has been significantly decreased (see **Graph 2**): two years ago **78,3 %** of the PrIDPs said that they used to receive humanitarian aid once a month or even more often, while in the 2002-sample the percentage of the examinees who receive humanitarian aid once a month or more often is **50,3%**. In the year 2000 only **1%** of the examinees in the PrIDP sample stated that they received no humanitarian aid at all during the previous year, and in the 2002-sample the percentage of these persons rose to **16,6%**! Most of the persons in the 2002-sample who said that they never received humanitarian aid during the previous year (**16,6%** of the whole sample) are unemployed (**78,5%**), but also able to work (**72,3%**), with rather different level of income per family member. The relatively greatest number of them lives in a rented flat (**43,1%**).

Graph 1: Distribution of satisfaction with the received humanitarian aid (completely or mostly) in the 2002-sample



and 2000-sample of the Prizren area IDPs

Graph 2: Distribution of frequency of humanitarian aid in the last year in 2002-sample and 2000-sample of the Prizren area IDPs



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The PrIDPs are in no better position than two years ago with respect to their current living conditions and financial status:

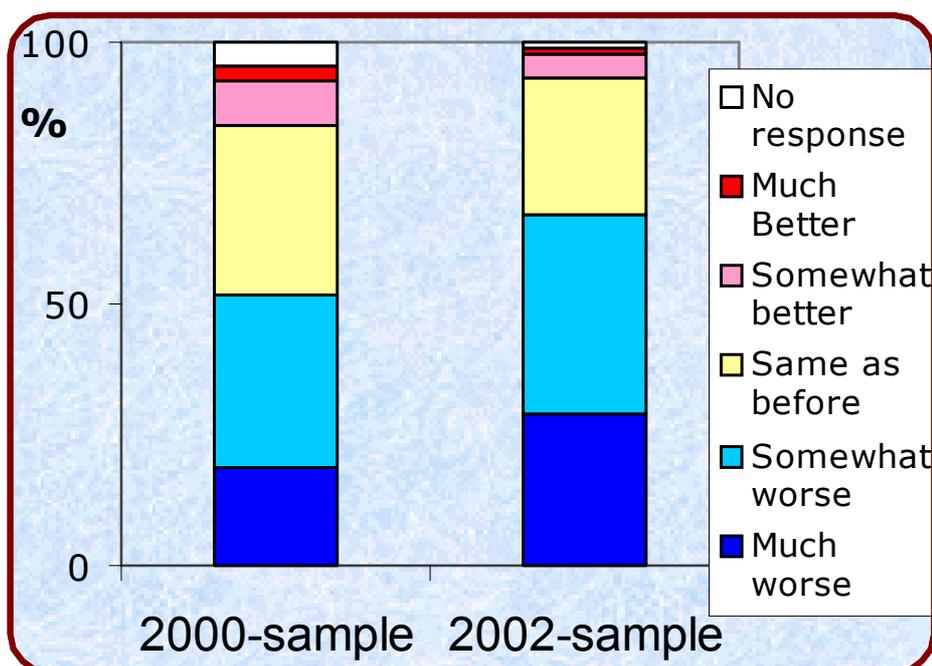
- Unemployment rate is now even higher, and actual average income even lower than two years ago;
- Percentage of persons who consider themselves in need for humanitarian aid is somewhat lower than two years ago, however, great number of the examinees (92,8%) still thinks that humanitarian aid is indispensable;
- Frequency of humanitarian aid distributions has been considerably decreased, while dissatisfaction of the PrIDPs with the humanitarian aid received has been increased.

B. Mental health status of the Prizren area IDPs: two years later

After everything that they suffered during the war operations in Kosovo, the expellees from the Prizren area (as well as the vast majority of expellees from other parts of Kosovo and Metohija) have been trying to survive, living away from their homeland for almost four years. According to the data gathered in 2000 from the expellees from Kosovo and Metohija, mental health status of this population was characterised by very prominent symptoms of the intrusion component of posttraumatic response syndrome, as well as a "high level of current psychopathological symptomatology, especially marked in males" (Tenjović et al. 2000, p. 50). In the long period of uncertainty that still continues, chances to heal wounds from the war traumas have been small. Hard conditions of life in exile, additionally burdened by the political instability and dynamic transition towards democracy in the country, complete uncertainty regarding the possibility and time of return to the homeland, are definitely not a favourable environment for healing traumas and continuance of life with mental scars.

In the same way as two years ago, the current mental health status of the IDPs is estimated based upon the examinees self-estimates in the General Questionnaire as well as the scores on the Impact of Event Scale (IES) and Symptom Check List (SCL-90-R).

Graph 3: Distribution of responses to the question: "Compared with the period prior to exile, your current psychological condition is..." in the 2002-sample and 2000-sample of the Prizren area IDPs



If we considered the data on mental health status obtained from the samples of the PrIDP population two years ago and now as relevant records of changes, then we could say the following about the mental health status of the PrIDP population:

- ✓ As can be seen from **Graph 3**, the current psychological health condition (in comparison with the period before the exile) is relatively more frequently self-perceived as "much worse" (28,9%) or "somewhat worse" (38,4 %) in the 2002-sample than it was the case in the 2000-sample ("much worse":19%; "somewhat worse":32,8 %)(*Sample by Current Psychological health Self-Perception: Chi square = 40.15, df =5, p < 0.001*).
- ✓ While in the 2000-sample 26% examinees felt the need to talk with a professional about their own psychological condition, 35,8% of the examined IDPs in the 2002-sample have this need (*Sample by Felt need to talk with professional: Chi square = 22,92, df =4, p < 0.0001*). In the 2000-sample, the number of the examined PrIDPs who, at the time when the research was conducted, had the need for professional help due to psychological difficulties rose by 19,4% compared to the time before their displacement. In the 2002-sample number of the examinees who felt the need for professional help when the research was conducted due to psychological difficulties rose by 25,9% in comparison to the time before their displacement. Although this difference is not great, it still represents a clear sign of deterioration of the mental health of the PrIDP population.
- ✓ As regards the use of tranquillizers, compared to the period before the exile there is almost no difference between the PrIDPs from the 2000-sample and those from the 2002-sample (*Sample by Change in tranquillizers use: Chi square = 6,26, df =3, n.s.*). The percentage of the examinees from the 2002-sample that started taking tranquillizers in exile is very close to the percentage obtained on the 2000-sample (2000-sample: 24,4%; 2002-sample: 21,2%). Also, the greatest number of the examinees (2000-sample: 60,5%; 2002-sample: 66,5%) neither used tranquillizers before the exile nor uses them now, while a considerably lower percentage of them (2000-sample: 12,6%; 2002-sample: 11,3%) keeps using tranquillizers. Number of the PrIDPs who stopped using tranquillizers in exile is negligible (2000-sample: 2,5%; 2002-sample: 1%).

Table 6: Means (and standard deviations) on the Impact of event scales and SCL-90-R Global Severity Index in the 2000-sample and 2002-sample from the PrIDP population and F-ratios for the mean sample differences comparisons

Scale	Gender	SAMPLE		F and p values* (2000-sample vs 2002-sample)
		2000-sample Females=443 Males=460	2002-sample Females=161 Males=197	
Intrusion (IES)	Females	23,12 (9,51)	21,09 (8,99)	5,57 (p<0.05)
	Males	20,80 (10,31)	19,29 (10,53)	2,91 (p>0.05)
	Total	21,94 (9,99)	20,10 (9,90)	
Avoidance (IES)	Females	21,98 (9,24)	21,83 (8,81)	0,03 (p>0.05)
	Males	21,84 (9,86)	20,85 (10,90)	1,29 (p>0.05)
	Total	21,91 (9,56)	21,29 (10,01)	
Global Severity Index (SCL-90-R)**	Females	3,10 (2,20)	3,69 (2,97)	6,85 (p<0.01)
	Males	4,36 (3,41)	5,42 (4,30)	11,31 (p<0.01)
	Total	3,74 (2,95)	4,64 (3,86)	

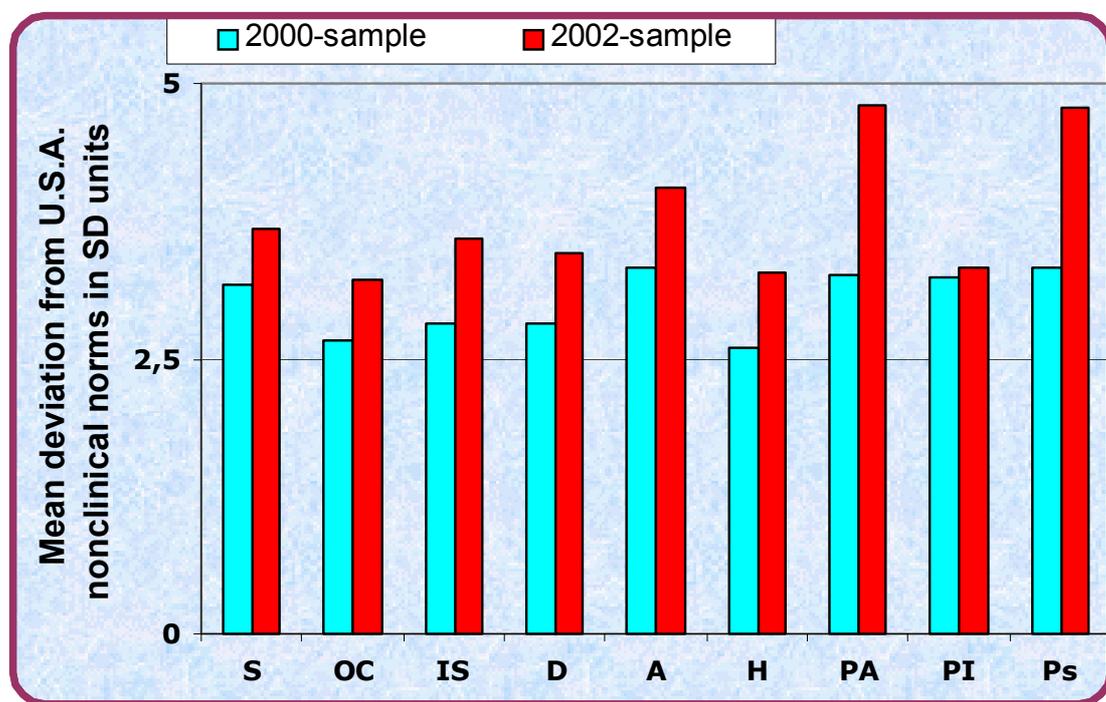
* Degree of freedom for F-ratios within male samples: $df_1=1$; $df_2=655$ and for the F-ratios within female samples: $df_1=1$; $df_2=602$.

**Mean scores on SCL-90-R are mean deviations (in standard deviation of normative sample units) from the norms of the American non-clinical population.

- ✓ Mean Global Severity Index of the PrIDPs in the 2002-sample, as a measure of the current psychopathological status and global distress (SCL-90-R) is above the American non-clinical adult population norm by **3,69** standard deviation unit for females and by **5,42** standard deviation unit for males in the 2000-sample (see **Table 6**). This index was above the American non-clinical adult population norm by **3,10** standard deviation unit for females and by **4.36** standard deviation unit for males in the 2000-sample. (Since norms related to SCL-90-R for normal population in our country are not at our

disposal, the raw scores on this instrument are transformed into deviation scores with regard to the norms obtained on the non-clinical USA population. Thus, the IDPs' deviation scores are expressed in the standard deviation / of the normative USA sample / unit. Regarding the specific SCL-90-R scales, the greatest dissimilarity between the two samples of the PrIDPs are obtained on the phobic anxiety, psychoticism, interpersonal sensitivity and hostility scales (see **Graph 4**) (Average differences between the 2000-sample and 2002-sample are statistically significant on all scales except on the paranoid ideation scale). Differences obtained on the two samples are always inclined towards the more prominent psychopathology in the 2002-sample. Apart from that, there is a more prominent psychopathology in both men and women in the 2002-sample on all of the SCL-90-R scales. Yet, the differences between the samples are even more prominent in men than in women on most scales.

Graph 4: Mean deviation of the 2000-sample and 2002-sample results (in SD unit of the USA normative sample) from the USA non-clinical norms on the SCL-90-R scales



Note: S=Somatisation; OC=Obsessive-compulsive; IS=Interpersonal Sensitivity; D=Depression; A=Anxiety; H=Hostility; PA=Phobic Anxiety; PI=Paranoid Ideation; Ps=Psychoticism.

- ✓ **Average** results obtained from the 2002-sample of the PrIDPs on the intrusion and avoidance scales, as measures of the stress response syndrome and posttraumatic distress, are very similar to the results obtained from the 2000-sample (see **Table 6**). Mean intrusion is somewhat lower in women in the 2002-sample than it was in the 2000-sample. However, both the avoidance and intrusion mean scores obtained from the samples fall into the zone stated by the IES scale designers as the zone of high-level posttraumatic distress (Horowitz et al., 1979).

- ✓ The results of linear correlation analysis on the 2002-sample (see **Table 7**) show that age, extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events and personality traits are main correlate of the current posttraumatic response syndrome, global distress and psychopathology. The main difference, compared to the results obtained two years ago on the sample of the PrIDPs, is the fact that now there is no difference in gender regarding neither the intrusion and avoidance level nor the level of current global distress (see Table 10 in Tenjović et al. 2001, p.48). Apart from that, in the 2002-sample the expected relationships of personality traits with the prominence of the posttraumatic intrusion and avoidance, as well as with the global distress and psychopathology were also obtained, which was not present in the research two years ago. As can be seen from **Table 7** the elderly examinees or those who are unemployed at the moment, generally show higher degree of intrusion and avoidance comparing with the younger or the presently employed ones. Likewise, the PrIDPs who were exposed to a greater number of extremely stressful life events have more prominent symptoms of intrusion and global distress comparing to the expellees with a lower number of the potentially extremely stressful life events. Finally, the persons in the PrIDP population characterised by a higher degree of neuroticism and more prominent introversion, and a lower degree of openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness show generally more symptoms of intrusion, avoidance, global distress and psychopathology.

Table 7: Matrix of linear correlations of IES scales and SCL-90-R Global Severity Index with gender, age, type of the place of origin, employment, monthly income, asking for medical help before the exile, extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events and personality traits in the 2002-sample of the PrIDPs (n=295)

	<i>Intrusion (IES)</i>	<i>Avoidance (IES)</i>	<i>Global Severity Index (SCL-90-R)</i>
Gender	-0,05	-0,02	-0,03
Age	0,22**	0,17**	0,07
Type of the place of origin (town-village)	0,11	0,12*	0,00
Employment	-0.15**	-0.13*	-0.09
Monthly income	-0.11	-0.08	-0.12*
Asking for medical help before exile	0,08	0,02	0,13*
Extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events (LECL)	0,20**	0,08	0,24**
Neuroticism (NEOFFI)	0,39**	0,36**	0,72**
Extraversion (NEOFFI)	-0,21**	-0,16**	-0,09
Openness (NEOFFI)	-0,24**	-0,21**	-0,30**
Agreeableness (NEOFFI)	-0,14*	-0,18*	-0,58**
Conscientiousness (NEOFFI)	-0,08	-0,19**	-0,33**

*Correlation is significant at 0,05 level; ** Correlation is significant at 0,01 level

These comparative results about the mental health status of the PrIDPs a year after the exile and more than three years of life in exile suggest that the mental health of this population has deteriorated. Yet, given the fact that we have reached such conclusion by comparing two samples selected from the same population in two time points, we should, before forming a final decision, find out whether the image of the deterioration of mental health might be a consequence of the differences between two samples with respect to the key characteristics, which can have impact on the current mental health of IDPs. According to the research conducted in 2000 and on the bases of the correlations gained on the 2002-sample, the key characteristics connected with the mental health status include gender, age and exposure to extremely stressful life events. The analysis of differences between the samples brings us to the following conclusions:

- ✓ As it was explained in the sample description, when the gender structure of the 2002-sample and 2000-sample is concerned, the samples are somewhat different: in the 2002-sample there are relatively more men than in the 2000-sample. However, the analyses of differences between the two samples regarding the indicators of mental health status obtained on the basis of the "objective" questionnaires (IES and SCL-90-R) were done separately for each gender;
- ✓ In the 2002-sample, as it was already said (see **Table 1**), there are slightly fewer persons from the eldest categories of the PrIDPs (over 65) than in the 2000-sample (Median Age: 2002-sample=42; 2000-sample=43). Since in the PrIDP population age is consistently in positive correlation with the prominence of the symptoms of intrusion, avoidance, global distress and psychopathology, the differences in the age structure might have influenced the results to incline towards the alleviation and not towards intensification of the mental health deterioration;
- ✓ PrIDPs from the 2002-sample were, generally, less exposed to extremely stressful life events than the PrIDPs from the 2000-sample (see **Table 8**). From the 1212 examined in the year 2000 on whom the data were available (74,4% of the whole 2000-sample), 10,9% of them was not exposed to any of the extremely stressful life events listed in the Table 8. In the 2002-sample 23% of displaced did not personally experience any of the listed extremely stressful life events. Also, almost even percentages of the examinees from both samples have a family member missing from the war without knowing what has happened to them (2000-sample: 8%; 2002-sample: 9,2%; *Sample by Have a missing family member/Yes-No/: Chi square = 0.27, df =1, n.s.*).
- ✓ As regards the mental health status before the displacement, the 2002-sample and the 2000-sample do not differ significantly. In both samples there is a similar number of persons who, in the period before the displacement, asked for professional help because of psychological difficulties (2000-sample: 6,2%; 2002-sample: 7,4%; *Sample by Asked for Professional Help because of Psychological difficulties/Yes-No/: Chi square = 0.56, df =1, n.s.*).

Table 8: Relative frequencies of exposure to particular extremely stressful life events in the 2002-sample and 2000-sample of IDPs from the Prizren area

<i>Extremely stressful life event (Life event check list -LECL)</i>	<i>Percentage of the responses "It happened to me" -2002-sample (n=387)*</i>	<i>Percentage of the responses "It happened to me" -2000-sample (n=1212)*</i>
Combat exposure	46,3	55,3
Sudden death of a close person	23,3	44,1
Deep suffer	34,6	42,5
Natural disaster	45,5	36,8
Fire or explosion	28,4	30,9
Direct physical assault	20,4	27,6
Other very stressful event or experience not listed	12,1	27,4
Exposure to toxic agents	9,8	22,2
Traffic accident	17,3	22,1
Direct assault by firearms or cold steel	13,2	19,6
Life threatening injury or disease	16,3	14,8
Serious accident at work, at home or during recreation	9,8	14,1
Sudden violent death (suicide or homicide)	5,2	10,2
Imprisonment (hostage, prisoner of war...)	2,6	3,6
Serious injury, damage or death you caused	1,8	3,0
Unwanted sexual experiences (excluding rape)	1,6	1,4
Sexual assault (rape and forcible sexual activity)	1,0	1,2

Note: Respondents could report more than one experience, so percentages in column may total >100.

Therefore, the differences that exist between the samples with respect to the key characteristics and that could be connected with the mental health status, suggest that the image of deterioration of psychological condition of the IDP population obtained by comparing these two samples regarding the mental health status, is not only a

consequence of differences in some other important characteristics of the samples. The presented data lead to the conclusion that we have probably underestimated the degree of deterioration of mental health status that occurred in the PrIDP population in the last two years.



There were no significant improvements of the mental condition in the PrIDP population, comparing to the period two years ago. Moreover, in some of the examined aspects mental health of the people in this population is generally worse than it was in the year 2000:

- Sense of deterioration of the mental health condition, compared with their mental health condition prior to exile, is present with relatively greater number of the examinees than it was the case in 2000;
- Although there has been some decrease of the intrusive component of posttraumatic response, and only in the female part of the population, there is still an extremely high level of the posttraumatic response syndrome, both intrusive and avoidance component, especially in the elderly, or in subpopulations of the IDPs exposed to the cumulative effect of the large number of very stressful life events as well as in those IDPs with neurotic personality structure;
- Symptoms of global distress and psychopathology, prominent in 2000, have become even more prominent, particularly the symptoms of psychoticism, anxiety, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity and depression. These unfavourable changes are especially prominent in the male part of the PrIDP population.

C. Position of the Prizren area IDPs on return to their home area: two years later

Same as in the 2000-sample, the overwhelming majority of PrIDPs from the 2002-sample (80,8% of the whole sample), accept the possibility of returning to homeland only under certain conditions (2000-sample: 86%), while 9,2% examinees would return under any conditions (2000-sample: 4,2%). Small number of the examined PrIDPs (9%) would never return to the place they fled from (2000-sample: 8,8%), while there is a negligible number of displacees (1%) who gave no answer to this question in the 2000-sample (1%). Therefore, the only difference between the 2002-sample and 2000-sample of the PrIDPs with regard to the position on return is that there is a somewhat higher percentage of the examinees in the 2002-sample than in the 2000-sample that would return under any conditions (*Sample by Position on return: Chi square = 16,91; df =3; $p < 0.01$*).

The most frequently stated conditions that would make the return possible are very similar to those obtained in the research in 2000. (see Tenjović et al., Table 12, p.52). Conditions for return that the examinees stated may be classified into three main groups:

1. guaranteed **safety, freedom and human rights in the home area** ("If safety, freedom and human rights were guaranteed", "Yes, if normal life were assured");
2. **re-establishment of the jurisdiction** of the state organs of **Serbia and Montenegro** in the areas for return ("If FRY army and police returned", " If FRY army and police returned and KFOR were gone away", "If Serbia state integrity were established in my home area").
3. free **access to the property** in possession before the exile, **assistance in house reconstruction and creation of conditions for employment** ("If the property were given back", "If all returned", "Yes, if higher standard, job and help in home reconstruction were provided);

From 316 examinees who stated some of the conditions under which they would return to their homeland (80,8% of the whole sample), 60,5% of the examinees stated a condition from the first group, 25% a condition from the second group, and 9,8% some of the conditions from the third group. Only 4,7% of the examinees

from this group did not say precisely under which conditions they would return.

Analyses of potential links between the position on return on the one hand, and gender, age, education, employment, current accommodation, type of the place of origin (town-village), extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events, current mental health status (current use of tranquillizers, intrusion, avoidance, global distress), and personality traits on the other hand, suggest that the PrIDPs' position on return is associated with education, employment, and current mental health status:

- ✓ The same as in the research from 2000 (Tenjović et al. 2000, p. 53), among the PrIDPs who would never return there are relatively much more persons with a university degree (48,6%), than among those who would return under certain conditions (27,5%) or those who would return under any conditions (33,3%) (*Education by Position on return: Chi square=12,11; df=6; p=0,06*).
- ✓ Among the PrIDPs who would return to homeland under any conditions there are relatively much more unemployed (97%) than in the group of those who would never return (71,4%) or those who would return under certain conditions (84,3%). (*Employment by Position on return: Chi square=8,34; df=3; p<0,05*).
- ✓ PrIDPs who have assumed a position that they would never return to the place they were exiled from are currently in a more favourable mental health condition than those who would return under certain conditions or those who would return under any conditions. In the group of the persons who would return to the place they fled from under any conditions, a half of them uses tranquillizers now, while in other two groups tranquillizers are currently used by 20,6% ("I would never return"-group) or 31,3% of the displacees ("I would return under certain conditions"-group) (*Current Use of tranquillizers by Position on return: Chi square=7,45; df=2; p<0,05*). Apart from that, the results of the variance analyses variance show that the average intrusion, avoidance, global distress and symptoms of psychopathology are less prominent in the "I would never return"-group than in groups of those who are willing to return under any or under certain conditions (*Intrusion/IES/: $F_{(2,336)}=8.52$, $p<0,001$; Avoidance/IES/: $F_{(2,336)}=5.55$, $p<0,01$; Global Severity Index/SCL-90-R/: $F_{(2,336)}=5.97$, $p<0,01$).*

Just as in the research from 2000, the PrIDPs show clear desire to return to the homeland when possible. When asked a question "Do

you think of returning to the place you have been displaced from?" **82,1%** of them gave positive answer. However, apart from the wish and thoughts about that, the displacedes from the Prizren area most often do not have clear time plans regarding return to the homeland. Thus, when asked "Do you plan to return to the place you have been displaced from" only **8,2%** of the PrIDPs said that they planned to return in the following 6 months, while most of them (**65%**) has not made any plans to return under the current conditions.

Yet, the PrIDPs have not given up the contact with the homeland: a great number of them (**90,1%**) is interested in new events in the place of origin, **35,4%** of them has been in contact with persons of their nationality who live in Kosovo and Metohija at the moment, and **35,5%** with persons of other nationalities who live in Kosovo and Metohija. Personal and telephone contacts are at the same time most frequently used way of acquiring information on events in the place they were displaced from (see **Table 9**).

Unfortunately, a very small number of the PrIDPs (**12,3%**) has visited the place of origin: **3,1%** of them have visited the place they fled from several times, and **9,2%** of the examined IDPs have been in their homeland only once since they left.

Table 9: Distribution of responses to the question: "What is your most frequently used source of information about new events in the place of origin?" in the 2002-sample of IDPs from the Prizren area

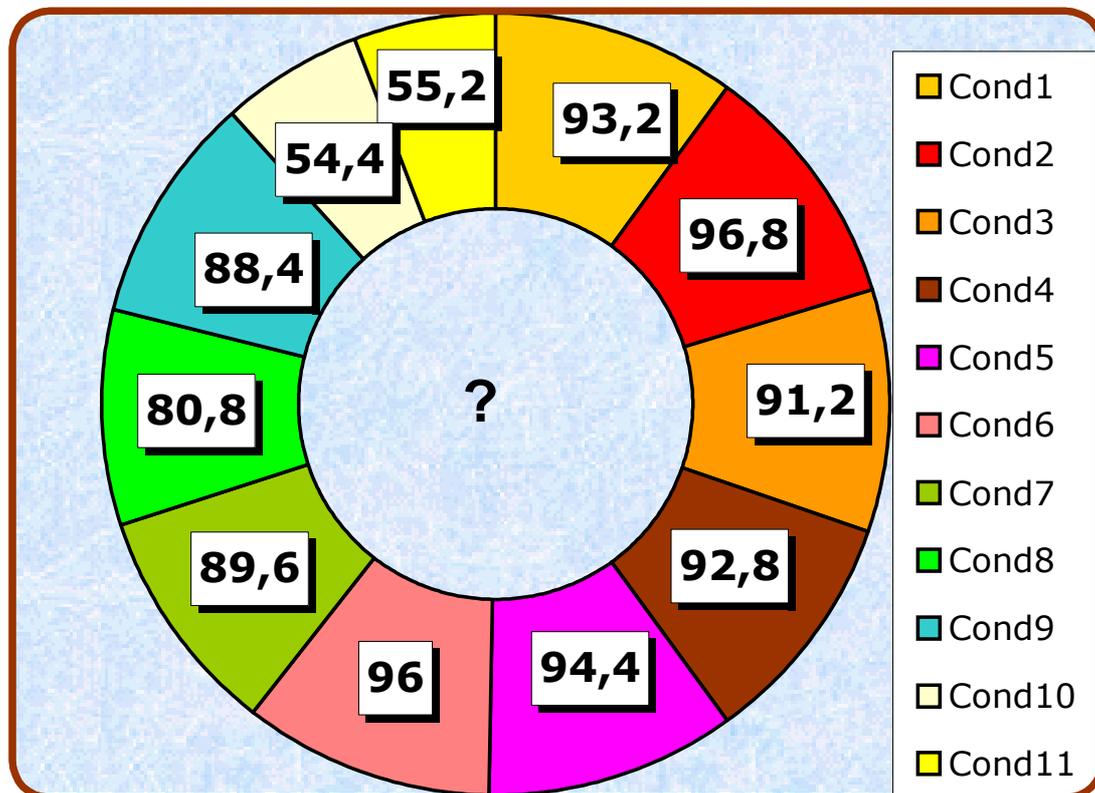
<i>Most frequently used source of information about new events in the place of origin</i>	<i>Percentage of responses-2002-sample (n=391)*</i>
Personal or phone contact with people living now in Kosovo and Metohija	43,8
Sources of mass communication (TV, radio, newspapers)	42,5
Associations of displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija	3,4
No response	17,9

Note: Respondents could report more than one source, so percentages in column may total >100.

Thus, unlike the refugee population of Serbs from Croatia and regardless of the present unfavourable conditions for return, the PrIDPs show significant readiness to return to their home as soon as the conditions for that are fulfilled. While on the one hand a great number of refugees from Bosnia and Croatia reached a decision to integrate in the new society (ECRE report 2001: Serbia) - according

to certain researches the percentage of those who wish to return to homeland is around 5% (USCR Worldwide refugee information–Country report: Yugoslavia, 2002), on the other hand it could be said that less than 10% of the PrIDPs do not wish to return to home areas. However, considering the current situation in Kosovo and Metohija, it is completely uncertain whether the wish of the vast majority of the PrIDPs to return to the homeland, as well as their right to return guaranteed by the international conventions on human rights, would ever be realised. How much could, according to the PrIDPs` opinion, the fulfilment of certain conditions influence their decision to return to the homeland? The results of this research (see **Graph 5**) show that the following offered conditions are on the top of the list

Graph 5: Percentages of responses "much" or "very much" to the question "How much would this condition, if fulfilled, influence your decision to return to the place of origin": 2002-sample of the PrIDPs (n=250)



Note: Cond1- Guaranteed personal safety in the place of return;
 Cond2- Guaranteed safety for all family members in the place of return;
 Cond3- Guaranteed possibilities of employment in the place of return;
 Cond4- Guaranteed possibilities of schooling for children in the place of return;
 Cond5- International guarantees that Kosovo will remain within Serbia;
 Cond6- Return of the Serbian state authorities (courts, police...) in the place of return;
 Cond7- Assistance of the state organs of Serbia in providing income source for family in the place of return;
 Cond8- Actual readiness of the international forces (KFOR, UNMIK) to provide

protection for the returnees and their property in Kosovo and Metohija;
Cond9- Assistance of the state organs of Serbia in house reconstructions or return of property in the place of return;
Cond10- Firm promises of Albanian neighbours and acquaintances that they would not jeopardize the safety of returnees;
Cond11- Firm and public promises of the Albanian political leaders that they would guarantee safety to the returnees .

as the most important: safety of the family members, personal safety, possibility of employment, and possibility of undisturbed education of children, but also re-establishment of the state jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia over the areas they fled from. A decision to return would be greatly influenced also by the fulfilment of the following conditions: assistance of the state organs of Serbia in the property repossession, house reconstruction and provision of income source in the place of return, actual readiness of the international forces (KFOR, UNMIK) to provide protection for the returnees and their property. As regards the guaranties for the safety that should be given by the Albanian neighbours and friends as well as Albanian political leaders in Kosovo and Metohija, there is a very clear polarisation between the PrIDPs: while for one half of them this would have a great influence on their decision to return, for the other half of the displacees such guarantees would have no significant impact on reaching such decision.



In the past two years little has changed in the PrIDP population regarding their position on return to home areas:

- The same as two years ago the overwhelming majority of displacees from the Prizren area (80,8%) would return to the home area, but only if their safety, freedom and basic human rights in the home area were provided as an indispensable condition to make a decision on return;
- Very small part of the PrIDP population (9%), composed mostly of people with higher education, has already reached a decision not to return to the homeland;
- Compared with the situation two years ago, the percentage of internally displaced persons from the Prizren area who would return to the home area under any conditions has risen from 4,2% to 9,2%.

IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of the research, the results of which are presented in this text, was to provide updated information on the Prizren area IDPs` current living conditions, mental health status, and their position on return to the places they have been forced to leave more than three years ago.

Due to objective reasons it was not possible to repeat the research about the status of this population conducted in the year 2000 on the same examinees. Therefore, we reached the conclusions about possible changes in the PrIDP population by comparing the results obtained in two time points with the two-year interval on two, as much as it was possible, similar samples. The comparison of the samples regarding main sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age, nationality, education, profession, marital status and family size) suggests that the samples are similar enough. Thus, regardless of many methodological problems, their comparing could be a useful indicator of possible changes regarding living conditions, mental health status, and position on return in the population of the PrIDPs.

Main elements of "changes" that occurred in the part of the population of displacees from the Prizren area composed of literate persons over 14 years of age are:

- Increased unemployment rate and decreased actual income, together with reduced distribution of humanitarian aid, and in that respect, more prominent dissatisfaction with the humanitarian aid received;
- Further deterioration of mental health condition that is primarily manifested through higher prominence of the global distress symptom and psychopathology, with the same or slightly decreased (only in female part of the population) persistence of the high level of intrusion and avoidance components of the posttraumatic response. Further increase of the psychopathological symptomatology, especially regarding psychoticism, anxiety, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity and depression, is particularly prominent in the male part of the PrIDP population.
- Still equally strong and omnipresent desire for return detected in a somewhat greater number of persons (compared to the period of two years ago) who are ready to return to their homeland under any condition, but also widely spread awareness that the key preconditions for reaching a decision on return do not exist at the moment: safety and freedom of movement and reliable mechanisms for guaranteeing basic human rights in the areas of return.

Despite the positive changes in Serbia (especially regarding its international status), the last two years, at least according to the results of this research, have not brought any improvement for the expellees from the Prizren area. Their current life situation, after more than three years in exile, is worse than it was before. Mental health of many among them is on the verge of cracking, and perspectives for return to the homeland are completely uncertain. They are currently in "neither here nor there" situation, living in the country in whose changing society dynamics even the people who were not forced to experience the hardships of displacement cannot cope well with everything. Without enough social support and with decreased distribution of humanitarian aid, with no employment, with frustrated wish to return and awaiting a totally unpredictable day of return to the homeland, overwhelmed with the impulses of anxiety, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity and psychoticism, many displaced from the Prizren area are on the verge of endurance. Their everyday life in exile cannot remain stretched between "high political interests" of either their native country, or aspirations towards the independent Kosovo among the political leaders of Kosovo Albanians, or local interests of the states that play the leading role in the international community.

Obviously, without providing basic preconditions for normal life in the place of return (personal and property security, freedom of movement, access to employment opportunities, possibilities for undisturbed education of children) displaced persons from the Prizren area will not even start planning the return.

In the meantime, until the conditions for a free personal decision on return to the homeland or integration in the new environment are created, the following activities could be undertaken:

- ✓ It is necessary to intensify the system of psychosocial support to a great number of the exiled persons that would help them in finding sources of income and improving the quality of life in exile. A very important component of this support should be professional psychosocial assistance to all those who feel the need for this kind of help. Such assistance should be directed towards strengthening their health, energy, positive beliefs, problem-solving and social skills, since in the situations of the limited social support, material resources and environmental constraints, those are the most important coping resources;
- ✓ Precise data should be gathered on the number of PrIDPs who have strong intention to return to the place of origin when the most important conditions for that are created;
- ✓ Displaced persons should be provided with reliable and updated information related to their life in displacement and about political and security situation in their home areas as well as their property so that they would be enabled to make well-informed decisions about their own future;

- ✓ It would be very useful to further develop information networks between IDPs in exile and the population who has already returned to Kosovo and Metohija;
- ✓ Displaced persons should be provided with valid and up-to-date information on achievements in establishing democratic institutions in Kosovo and Metohija and respecting human and minority rights in the region. They should also be given updated information regarding concrete steps that the state of Serbia undertakes to resolve the issue of return of the internally displaced persons;
- ✓ When the appropriate conditions are created, collective visits to homeland and property should be organised, which would certainly help the displaced persons to personally see the reality of the "changed" Kosovo;
- ✓ If possible, meetings of displaced persons and representatives of local government from the areas of return should be organised as frequently as possible;
- ✓ It would be very useful if relevant international organisations, with the support of the authorities in Serbia and political representatives of Albanians and Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija, organised trainings from the fields of human rights and ethnic tolerance as well as a wide campaign on reconciliation to promote interethnic reconciliation, especially among former neighbours;
- ✓ Displaced persons who have already reached the decision not to return to their homeland (currently this number is still small) should be assisted to properly integrate in the new environment.

The issue of return of the internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija has a very clear political dimension. State organs of Serbia and the international community obviously do not have much time for finding concrete and durable global solutions for the situation in which displacees from the Prizren area currently are. This population should either be provided with the conditions necessary for exercising one of their basic rights according to the "UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", the right to return in safety and dignity, or they should be directed towards viable integration in places of their exile. Further exploitation of their coping resources in the "neither here nor there" position could have hazardous effects. Abandoning them to the reducing aid of the humanitarian organisations, their personal wit and intensified symptoms of anxiety, hostility and psychoticism, could lead to serious consequences not only in individual souls of the displacees but also in social environment in which they presently live. And then, "hiding" of the Serbian authorities, political representatives of the "multiethnic Kosovo" and the international community behind the human rights could lose its real meaning.

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