

B. IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES

11. The most urgent needs are for: 1) Protection; 2) Shelter and relief items; 3) Food; 4) Logistics and transportation, and 5) Health.

1. Protection

12. The most pressing protection need is access to safety. UNHCR urges Governments to keep all border crossing points open and to facilitate to speedy admission of the fleeing population and their transfer away from potentially dangerous border areas. Registration of those newly arrived should occur as soon as possible. UNHCR will provide financial and necessary technical support to the authorities to facilitate processing in a speedy and efficient manner. This will be particularly important for those arriving without identification documents. Everything must be done to address the problem of statelessness. Additional important guidance on protection is provided in Chapter VIII, below.

2. Shelter

13. Host family capacity, particularly in Albania and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, is already largely depleted. It is estimated that collective emergency accommodation must be provided immediately for at least 200,000 people. In Albania available space in collective centres has also been depleted. The selection of potential refugee-hosting sites is underway, as is the purchase and dispatch of tents, but sourcing up to 40,000 tents presents quite a challenge and will require urgent donor support.

14. Beyond the identification of sites on which to erect tents and other facilities, immediate essential services must rapidly be provided, including: water, sanitation, electricity and cooking facilities. Water tanks and tankers are urgently needed, and the source of water supplies needs to be identified. Additional blankets, mattresses, cooking sets, hygiene items and jerry-cans are needed.

3. Food

15. WFP has sufficient food supplies in the region for the first seven days of the emergency and for 100,000 of the total 350,000 anticipated new arrivals. For the first three months, therefore, additional basic food supplies are needed for 250,000 refugees and displaced persons.

4. Logistics and Transport

16. International and internal transportation by air, sea and land, as well as warehousing must be provided. Three Governments have already made available aircraft to support the humanitarian airlift to Tirana and Skopje, along with international staff to assist in air traffic control. Another Government has promised a fleet of 50 trucks with international drivers and fuel. This, coupled with existing facilities and equipment, will go a considerable way towards meeting immediate emergency needs.

5. Health

17. Existing facilities in Albania, The Former Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro will need very substantial reinforcement and support, while health systems in Kosovo and the rest of Serbia will have been seriously damaged or affected by the ongoing air-strikes. First-aid capacity is being rapidly established at the transit centres in Albania and The former Republic of Macedonia.

6. Related needs

18. Each of the above sectors will require staffing and communications, as well as field office support. Programme delivery and administrative support are an essential part of the package.

VIII. PROTECTING NEW ARRIVALS

19. Large and growing numbers of refugees are daily fleeing Kosovo in the face of the destruction of homes and means of livelihood and the expulsion of inhabitants. The scale of external displacement is approaching mass proportions: close to 20,000 arrivals per day in Albania alone and double that rate in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 2 April. No one knows how many more are displaced within Kosovo.

20. UNHCR, as lead humanitarian agency in the region, calls on all affected States to keep their borders open, admit those arriving to safety, and ensure that they are allowed to stay, at least on a temporary basis. UNHCR is deeply concerned. In the face of the evolving massive displacement, the protection needs of the refugees fleeing Kosovo remain central in the broader response of the international community to this humanitarian crisis.