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Navigation guide

Refugee populations in the UK:
Kosovars

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January 2004, updated March 2004

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Acknowledgements

For issues relating to Kosovars in the UK since 2001, this guide could not have been written without the generous assistance of community groups and refugee organisations working with the Kosovar community. In particular, the author would like thank Albanian Unity in Leeds, Albanian Youth Action and BRICKS in London, the Scottish Refugee Council, and Refugee Action Choices Project. For background information on events up to the end of the Kosovo Humanitarian Evacuation Programme, this guide draws upon research undertaken for the report *Asylum Stories: the experiences of Kosovars settling in the UK* (Smart 2001) which was made possible through the support of the Refugee Studies Centre, the British Academy, the Mertz-Gilmore Foundation Fund and the Noel Buxton Trust Fund.

ICAR would like to thank Katia Amore for her comments and suggestions on final drafts of this guide.

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Introduction

This guide outlines the unfolding history of Kosovars living in the UK, assesses their current circumstances and provides background information on events in Kosovo. It brings up to date information on a population that generated huge public interest a few years ago, but on whom little has been written since 2001.

The Kosovars are relatively new arrivals to the UK, almost all having arrived during the 1990s. As such, a well-established refugee community spanning several generations does not exist in the same way as is true for refugees from Poland, for example. Nor is it the case that there is a pre-existing non-refugee, migrant community as there is for refugees from China, for example. Most of those currently in the UK are either asylum seekers or have temporary leave to remain – either ‘Temporary Protection’ status or ‘Exceptional Leave to Remain’ for a fixed period.

Arrival and reception during the Kosovo crisis

In 1999, the unfolding crisis in Kosovo was headline news around the world. Following a decade of civil war between the other regions of Yugoslavia, which gave rise to the term ‘ethnic cleansing’, the exodus of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo (Kosovars) fleeing Serb armed forces, was a refugee crisis unparalleled in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

Kosovars had been arriving in the UK in growing numbers throughout the 1990s. In addition, in April 1999 the UK government authorised an airlift of over four thousand Kosovars from camps on the border of Macedonia, under the Kosovo Humanitarian Evacuation Programme (the Kosovo Programme). The rapid expansion of the Kosovar population and the nature of the reception arrangements for the evacuees, meant that for many UK towns, their first contact with asylum seekers and refugees was with the arrival of the Kosovars.

Settlement and return

Since the reception centres and other services operating under the Kosovo Programme were wound down in 2001, the community of Kosovars in the UK has received less support and less publicity. With the swift resolution of the conflict, Kosovars returned home at a rate unprecedented among refugee populations in the UK. The population has shrunk as many returned, but conditions in Kosovo remain difficult and there is still a threat of persecution to some individuals and minorities. As a result, Kosovars continue to arrive in the UK to claim asylum, albeit in far smaller numbers, and many of those who have been allowed to remain in the UK have been joined by family members.

Between 1999 and 2001, the high level of public concern about the Kosovar refugees, the resources made available to supporting organisations under the Kosovo Programme, and the demand from service providers for information on the needs of the new arrivals, all contributed to the production of a wealth of written information about Kosovar refugees.

About this guide

Since the final phases of the Kosovo Programme came to an end in 2001, there has been an information vacuum on this population, leading to the commonly-held views that Kosovar refugees have either ‘gone

home' or 'become integrated'. The only sources of up-to-date information are the anecdotal accounts of those organisations and individuals who still work with the Kosovar community across the UK.

The unique contribution of this guide is to draw together in a written format for the first time since 2001, the views of community organisations and refugee supporting agencies across the UK on the key issues affecting Kosovars living in the UK today. This guide is based on a synthesis of the available literature and information, which largely dates from 1998-2000¹ (very little has been written since on this subject) plus more recent information on the situation in Kosovo taken from the websites listed at the end of the guide.² It draws on primary research conducted by the author in 2000 that included interviews with 65 Kosovars and with numerous organisations that were supporting them at that time.³ For the purpose of producing this guide further interviews with seven refugee-assisting organisations have been conducted.

The guide uses the term Kosovar for Albanians from Kosovo, rather than the more anglicised Kosovan. Kosovo is sometimes referred to as Kosova which is the Albanian rather than the Serbo-Croat spelling. While Kosovo remains part of Serbia, Kosovo is the more correct term for the province.

This guide follows a similar structure to other guides on this website.

- The first section entitled historical context includes information on the historical background to the Kosovo crisis, the conflict in Kosovo, the history of Kosovars in the UK, and events since the end of the conflict.
- The second section provides a profile of the Kosovar population in the UK, giving their demographic characteristics and cultural interests.
- Section three looks at relevant legal aspects including asylum applications, which is enhanced by quantitative information provided in the statistics section.
- The key issues section summarises the main issues identified for this community, including return, the settlement needs of individuals, the state of community organisations, and whether Kosovars should be considered a 'special case'.
- Resources, projects, links and contacts sections are given at the end of the guide.

¹ Including histories such as **Malcolm, N.** (1998) *Kosovo: A Short History*. London: Papermac; reports from refugee organisations such as **Refugee Council** (2000) *My Name Came Up: Kosovo – War, Exile and Return*. London: Refugee Council; and the writings of Kosovar refugees as found in publications such as **Luta, V. I. and Langer, J.** (ed.) (1999) *Kosova: Sharing the Pain: Collected Writings from Exile*. London: Refugee Writers Ink!

² Particularly pertinent are **Amnesty International** at <http://www.amnesty.org>, **Home Office** at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>, **Human Rights Watch** at <http://www.hrw.org>, **UNHCR** at <http://www.unhcr.ch>, and **UNMIK** at <http://www.unmikonline.org>.

³ **Smart, K.** (2001) *Asylum Stories: The Experiences of Kosovars Settling in the UK*. London: Asylum Initiatives.

Historical context

Historical background to the Kosovo crisis

The history of Kosovo has been at the centre of Serbian and Albanian nationalist controversies. There are different accounts and interpretations of events regarding the origins of Kosovo and its earlier inhabitants, and contrasting views on the relationship between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians during the Ottoman conquest, the First and the Second World Wars, and the early times of Marshal Tito's regime. It is commonly accepted that during the twentieth century, both communities have gone through violent times and have been, in turns, responsible for and victims of atrocities.⁴

By the 1980s, Kosovo was an autonomous province of the Republic of Serbia, within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which also included the Republics of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro – a Federation in which the relationships between the provinces were becoming increasingly strained. In 1981 demonstrations took place in Kosovo to demand that Kosovo's autonomy should become a republic independent of the Federation. Under the Presidency of Slobodan Milosevic (1987-2000) Serbia increased control in Kosovo, cutting constitutional powers in 1988 and later imposing a state of emergency, whereby Serbian troops took control of the police and judiciary.

In 1991, a brutal and prolonged civil war broke out between Serbia, the largest of the republics, which sought to maintain the Yugoslav Federation, and the republics of Croatia and Bosnia which sought independence. Kosovars were conscripted into the Yugoslav Army to fight against Bosnia and Croatia. The war ended with the Dayton Peace Accord in 1995 formalising independence for Croatia and Bosnia.

Throughout the civil war, conditions in Kosovo worsened considerably – tens of thousands of state employees who were of Kosovo Albanian origin lost their jobs, leading to lack of proper access to education and healthcare for the majority population and destruction of the local economy. Human rights violations and black marketeering were commonplace. Calls for Kosovo to achieve independence from what remained of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia gained in popularity and in 1996 the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged, carrying out guerrilla attacks on Serb forces. In 1997, the KLA declared some areas of Kosovo to be 'liberated' territory.

Conflict in Kosovo

In response, the Yugoslav army launched a major assault on central Kosovo in 1998. The offensive was temporarily halted for peace talks at the request of the international community but the talks broke down in February 1999. The Yugoslav army, determined to protect the Federation from KLA guerrilla activity, refused to withdraw from Kosovo. As NATO began airstrikes on Yugoslav forces, troops responded by driving Kosovars from their homes. Almost the entire population of Kosovo (estimated at 1.8 million people) were displaced and there was widespread destruction of homes and villages. Hundreds were executed, detained, tortured and raped.⁵ At least half of the displaced left Kosovo, crossing into neighbouring countries.

⁴ Many thanks to Katia Amore for her additions to this section.

⁵ See **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** (2000) *Kosova: As Seen As Told. Part 1: October 1998 – June 1999; Part 2: June 1999 – October 1999*, and also successive Home Office country assessments, the most recent being **Home Office Country Information and Policy Unit** (2003) *Country Assessment: Serbia and Montenegro: October 2003*, section on Kosova available at

By April 1999, with 400,000 Kosovars in Albania and Macedonia, Macedonia closed its borders, refusing to allow in any more refugees unless it was agreed that they could continue on to other European countries. Between 50 and 100 thousand refugees amassed at the border, with more arriving every day. UNHCR and other aid agencies worked to set up camps and supply basic services. European governments responded by evacuating thousands of Kosovars from the camps to other countries.

In June 1999, NATO intensified the bombing after peace talks failed. The UN Security Council adopted resolution 1244 maintaining Kosovo's position within Yugoslavia but making it a UN Protectorate. This led to a peace settlement and the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces. By this time, one million Kosovars were refugees in other countries.

The history of Kosovars in the UK

Spontaneous arrivals

Exact numbers of spontaneous arrivals from Kosovo are hard to calculate because they are not separately identified in Home Office statistics. Instead throughout the 1990s and beyond, they were included in statistics for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, sometimes called the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, and more recently in figures for Serbia and Montenegro. However, it is generally held that numbers of spontaneous arrivals from Kosovo grew during the 1990s and that towards the end of the decade, Kosovars represented the vast majority of those recorded as arrivals from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Asylum applications from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were the largest group of spontaneous arrivals for most of the period 1998 to 2000, reaching a high of 1,575 arrivals in the month of September 1999.⁶

The Kosovo Humanitarian Evacuation Programme

The UK Kosovo Humanitarian Evacuation Programme began airlifting refugees to the UK in April 1999, and for the next few months ran up to six flights a week, bringing a total of 4,346 evacuees. Funded by the Home Office, services for the programme were provided by a consortium of large refugee-assisting organisations and statutory authorities, co-ordinated by the Refugee Council. Evacuees were chosen on the basis of vulnerability or existing family in the UK. The evacuees were granted one year's Temporary Protection status and issued with different documentation to those spontaneous arrivals who had applied for asylum and been granted leave to remain. Most were flown into Leeds Bradford Airport and from there dispersed to reception centres. Centres were hastily converted from disused residential homes and schools. In some cases, evacuees were moved into independent accommodation.

The aim of the programme was to accommodate the refugees in clusters in areas with existing ethnically diverse populations, but away from London. A wide range of services was provided, including medical care, language classes, information services, family tracing, social events, advice on finding employment or continuing education, and assistance with return, and evacuees could access social security benefits. In the regions where evacuees were accommodated in centres, most who have remained in the UK have been

<http://ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?PageId=265> [checked 16 August 2003], and successive reports from the period from UNHCR at <http://www.unhcr.ch> and Amnesty International at <http://amnesty.org>.

⁶ This figure is for asylum applications from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, most of which during this period were from Kosovo. Source: **Home Office Research Development and Statistics** (1999) *Asylum statistics United Kingdom September 1999*, London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/asy-sep99.pdf> [checked 16 August 2003].

given local authority or other social housing. This was initially offered on a short-term basis, but has been extended in line with their immigration status.

The Kosovo Programme did not shut down on a given date but was gradually phased out over the next two years, with some of its services temporarily continued by the refugee agencies after Home Office funding had ended, or evolving into more generic services.

Events since the end of the conflict

Political events

Kosovo continues to be under the authority of UNMIK as accorded by UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The current UN Special Representative, Harri Holkeri, is charged with creating the conditions for UNMIK's successful withdrawal. Kosovo's first post-conflict elections were held in November 2001. The Democratic League of Kosova gained most seats but not an outright majority. Ibrahim Rugova, its leader, became President of Kosovo, with Bajram Rexhepi of the Democratic Party of Kosova, as Prime Minister. Municipal elections were held in October 2002. These were marred by ethnic unrest culminating in the killing of a mayor, and by a widespread boycott of the election by Kosovo Serb voters.

Zoran Djindjic was elected Serbian Prime Minister after the fall of Milosevic at the end of 2000. He steered the restructuring of the new state by the union of Serbia and Montenegro, replacing the Former Yugoslavia, in February 2003. This move led to renewed calls for independence in both Montenegro and Kosovo, to which Special Representative Steiner's response was that banditry, ethnic persecution and lack of democratic institutions in Kosovo all precluded independence for the time being.⁷ Zoran Djindjic was assassinated on 12 March 2003 and a month-long state of emergency was announced. Djindjic was succeeded as Prime Minister by Zoran Zivkovic.

Reconstruction

In recent years, the focus of international attention and resources has moved from physical reconstruction of infrastructure to rebuilding judicial and administrative institutions, and the Kosovo Police Service is gradually being established and taking over functions from NATO troops. Current difficulties centre on the transfer of power from central to local authorities, as many local councils fail to overcome ethnic hostility and local officials are linked to extremist activity.

Physical reconstruction, now a secondary concern, is still required. For example, there are still housing shortages, unemployment is high and the health system is suffering from widespread shortage of medicines and other essentials. The EU has donated 50 million Euros for reconstruction in Kosovo in 2003, a reduction of over 70% on the allocation for the previous year. NATO withdrew 5,000 of its 38,000 troops in 2002 and although there were rumours of further reductions in 2003, events in March 2004 saw increased NATO presence in the region.

Safety

⁷ See Traynor, I. (2003) 'Kosovans seek freedom from Serb-led union' *Guardian Unlimited* 8 February 2003. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Kosovo/Story/0,2763,891388,00.html> [checked 12 August 2003].

The UK Foreign Office [website](#) states that: 'there are still significant dangers in Kosovo, including mines and unexploded ordinance' and that UK citizens should 'avoid non-essential travel to Kosovo'.⁸ UNHCR states that the general situation has improved, and KFOR has relaxed security measures, but Kosovo is suffering from a high level of criminal activity, particularly from organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking and extortion, and there remains a threat from unexploded ordinance.

The main threat to safety is the continuing ethnic violence. Although attacks on minorities have declined, Human Rights Watch's [World Report 2003](#) (reporting on events in 2002) states that 'minorities – including Roma and other non-Albanians as well as Serbs – generally face a precarious security environment' and KFOR troops are coming under increased attack by extremists on both sides⁹. Some Serb enclaves require 24-hour protection by KFOR. The situation in the area of the town of Mitrovica has been especially volatile. For example, in December 2003, a visiting delegation from the World Bank were caught up in a disturbance involving 150 people who threw stones and set vehicles alight.¹⁰ Most recently in March 2004, violence between ethnic Albanians and Serbs broke out in Mitrovica and sparked incidents elsewhere, including Pristina, Lipljan, Belo Polje, Zvecan, Decan, Obilic, Prizren, and Pec/Peje. The violence in Mitrovica erupted when two ethnic Albanian boys drowned after allegedly being chased by Serb youths. From Mitrovica to Belgrade, homes and religious sites were attacked. It is now reported that at least 30 places of worship, mostly churches, were destroyed and more than 300 homes were burnt. UNHCR estimates that 3,200 people, mostly ethnic Serbs and Roma, are now internally displaced as a result of the violence. Over one thousand ethnic minority civilians, mostly Serbs, were evacuated from the Pristina, Gnjilane and Pec/Peje areas. These evacuees are now staying with host families or at KFOR bases. It has been reported that at least 28 people were killed and over 500 injured in the clashes, including a number of international policemen and peacekeeping troops. Within days, over 1,000 extra NATO peacekeepers had been brought into Kosovo.¹¹

Excerpts from [UNHCR Position on the Continued Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo, January 2003](#)¹²

'The security situation of minorities continues to be a major concern. Non-ethnic Albanian persons originally from Kosovo continue to face security threats which place their lives and fundamental freedoms at risk, and fuel ongoing departure from the province.'

⁸ Available at

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618386622> [checked 12 August 2003].

⁹ Human Rights Watch (2003) *World Report 2003*, section on Kosovo (reporting on events in 2002). Available at <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/europe17.html#kosovo> [checked 12 August 2003].

¹⁰ UNMIK news pages. Available at <http://www.unmikonline.org/news.htm#1012a> [checked 10 December 2003].

¹¹ This information is drawn from: UNMIK news pages available at <http://www.unmikonline.org/news.htm#1012a> [checked 25 March 2003]; UNHCR briefing note, 23 March 2004, available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=40602ac24&page=news> [checked 25 March 2003]; FCO travel advice, available at

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618386622> [checked 25 March 2003]; Guardian Unlimited 'Special Report: Kosovo', available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Kosovo/0,2759,450616,00.html> [checked 25 March 2003].

¹² UNHCR (January 2003) 'UNHCR Position on the Continued Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo'. Available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=3e2d5ad34> [checked 12 August 2003].

'The Kosovo Serb community remains the primary target of ethnically motivated violence, including grenade attacks, deliberately laid landmines and booby traps, drive-by shootings and arson... including the elderly, women and children.'

The protection problems of the Roma are 'comparable to the Serbs'.

'There are certain categories of Kosovo Albanians who may face serious protection related problems, including physical danger, were they to return home at this time. These categories include 1) Kosovo Albanians originating from areas where they constitute an ethnic minority; 2) Kosovo Albanians in ethnically mixed marriages and persons of mixed ethnicity and 3) Kosovo Albanians perceived to have been associated with the Serbian regime after 1990.'

Prosecution of war criminals

Identifying and bringing to justice those responsible for war crimes is an essential part of recognising the suffering of individuals and of restoring stability in Kosovo. The trial of Slobodan Milosevic, which began at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague in February 2002, has been followed closely and with high emotion by people in Kosovo and by Kosovar exiles. Indictments include for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Yugoslav and Serbian troops under his command in Kosovo in early 1999. Four refugee children from Kosovo, living in Manchester, travelled to the Hague in July 2003 to give evidence about a massacre in which they were among the only survivors.¹³

In other respects, progress has been slow and relatively few arrests have been made. [Human Rights Watch](#) states that 'with the exception of the high profile Milosevic trial [...] there was little progress toward accountability for war crimes committed during the conflict, clearly undermining the processes of refugee return and reconciliation.'¹⁴

In February 2003, a number of KLA members were arrested for war crimes and crimes against humanity relating to events in 1998; they are the first Albanians publicly indicted by the ICTY.

In May 2003, many hundreds of bodies of missing Kosovars, recently discovered in Serbia, began to be returned to their families: a grim reminder of the difficulties of reconstruction and reconciliation where the extent of the horrors of war are still, literally, being uncovered.

¹³ See Traynor, I. (2003) 'In cold blood' *Guardian Unlimited*, 12 July 2003. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Kosovo/Story/0,2763,995098,00.html> [checked 12 August 2003].

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch (2003) *World Report 2003*, section on Kosovo (reporting on events in 2002). Available at <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/europe17.html#kosovo> [checked 12 August 2003].

Profile of the Kosovar population in the UK

Refugees or migrants?

To date, the focus for service provision and research has been Kosovar refugees and asylum seekers. While not all Kosovars in the UK are refugees or asylum seekers, it is not clear what proportion of the population are migrants who have arrived through other immigration channels. However, there does not appear to be a distinct migrant community from Kosovo that is not linked with the volatile events of the 1990s.

Demographic information

Kosovars of all ages and backgrounds have arrived in the UK, although, as for spontaneous arrivals of other nationalities, they are proportionately more likely to be those who are younger, fitter and with the resources to travel, compared with the population as a whole. In contrast, many of the Kosovars who were evacuated under the Kosovo Programme were selected for reasons of vulnerability and included medical evacuees, families with several young children and the very elderly. Significant numbers of unaccompanied minors have been a constant feature of arrivals from Kosovo before, during, and after the crisis of 1999. It has not been the case that arrivals of men significantly outweigh arrivals of women, as is the case with other populations.

Ethnic background

The majority of the population of Kosovo is ethnic Albanian with significant minorities of Serbs, Roma and other groups. Historical events in Kosovo have meant that refugees and asylum seekers from Kosovo in the UK are overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, ethnic Albanian.

Languages spoken

The most commonly spoken language in Kosovo is Albanian. The national language of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was Serbo-Croat.

Religion

Most Kosovars are Muslims with a minority of Catholics. Although religion is an important aspect of ethnic identity, few regularly attend mosques. Many Kosovars perceive Islamic organisations representing British Muslim communities as requiring stricter religious observance than is common in Kosovo. The Kosovo Islamic Centre and the organisation Albanian Speaking Catholics in the UK help meet religious needs.

Length of residence in UK

Refugees and asylum seekers from Kosovo began arriving in the UK in significant numbers from the beginning of the 1990s, with numbers increasing dramatically towards the end of the decade, peaking in 1999-2000. Those who arrived first tended to be from urban areas, while the majority of the later arrivals and evacuees came from rural areas. Due to the swift imposition of UN authority in 1999, the length of stay in the UK for thousands of Kosovars was weeks or months rather than years. Those evacuated under the

Kosovo Programme were expected to stay no more than a year, and while many applied for an extension, many others returned within the year. Individuals still continue to arrive from Kosovo, although at a far lesser rate.

Political affiliations

Many of those who arrived in the early 1990s did so because of their involvement in political activity or their links to others involved in political activity in Kosovo. In contrast, most of those who arrived at the height of the crisis in 1999 were not politically active but were affected by the incursions of the Serbian army into rural Kosovo. Regardless of their level of political involvement prior to flight, the overwhelming majority of adult refugees have followed closely the unfolding political events in Kosovo, assisted by information relayed by the Kosovo Information Centre (now closed) and the national refugee organisations who were funded to provide information under the Kosovo Programme.

Naturally political differences exist, but commonly held views are a desire for peace and stability in Kosovo, for its legal position to be regularised, autonomy and protection from Serbia assured, retribution for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the establishment of functioning democratic structures and the reconstruction of other aspects of the economy and society. The Kosovo Programme was instrumental in enabling both evacuees and spontaneous arrivals from Kosovo to vote in the post-conflict elections in November 2001.

Geographic distribution

Most spontaneous arrivals settled in London in the 1990s, with pockets of arrivals in other cities. London local authorities regularly dispersed Kosovars to towns in Kent and elsewhere on the South Coast. As numbers grew, clusters of Kosovars could be found in towns near airports, coastal ports or near motorway stopping points.

The Kosovo Programme identified a number of centres to which evacuees would be sent, most in the North of England and Scotland, leading to a significant presence in towns such as Leeds and Glasgow. Since the introduction of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and the national dispersal system for asylum seekers, later arrivals from Kosovo have been distributed all over the UK.

Since 2001, numbers as a whole have declined. In the North of England, some towns no longer have a significant Kosovar population, others have seen a movement towards their town by Kosovars initially sent to other towns in the area. Of the 2,000 or so evacuees sent to Leeds, about 200-300 people remain. Nearly all are concentrated in Leeds but some have settled in outlying towns such as Huddersfield. Approximately 40 evacuees remain in Glasgow. In London, Kosovars were predominantly settled in North London, but can now be found in all parts of the city where affordable housing is available.

Information produced by NASS lists the towns and regions within cluster areas that have been earmarked to receive Albanian speakers under the dispersal system for newly arrived asylum seekers. Apart from Plymouth, Newport and Swansea, all the areas identified are in the Midlands or the North of England, including Nottingham, Derby, Hull, Doncaster, Birmingham, Coventry, Middlesbrough, Barnsley, Redcar and Cleveland, and several towns in Greater Manchester. Interestingly, 2003 NASS figures list people from Kosovo as distinct from those from Former Yugoslavia. In January 2003, NASS was providing accommodation for 155 Kosovars in Greater London, 82 in the East Midlands (most in Derby), 90 in the

North East (most in North Tyneside, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland), 113 in the North West, (most in Greater Manchester), 194 in Yorkshire and Humberside and 130 in Scotland.¹⁵

Unaccompanied minors are still settled wherever foster parents or other accommodation can be found. Research published by Save the Children in 2001 found that the majority of unaccompanied minors in the West Midlands were Kosovars.¹⁶ Significant numbers were also based in Newcastle and Greater Manchester.¹⁷

Cultural issues

As the Kosovar community in the UK grew during the 1990s, a number of cultural events were organised. For example, Kosovar writers found expression through belonging to the refugee writers' forum Exiled Writers Ink. At the height of the crisis in 1999, public support for the refugees was demonstrated by platforms provided by local authorities and other bodies for cultural events. The Kosovo Programme recognised the benefit of encouraging cultural events both as a social activity for the refugees and to build bridges with the host community. For example, Klubi Kosova, supported by the Kosovo Programme in Leeds, put on displays of traditional dancing.

In recent years, community organisations state that there have been fewer opportunities or resources available to develop cultural activities and few grassroots cultural events have emerged. Although Albanian Youth Action, the most established community organisation, has hosted drama and cultural events from time to time, it states that there have been little or no events organised spontaneously by members of the Kosovar community. Kosovar refugees are, as yet, still too busy with the practicalities of making a life in the UK.

Kosovars across the UK share with the British a passion for football, and whereas communities have found it increasingly difficult to host musical and artistic events, there is never a shortage of volunteers to participate in a football match. In Glasgow, for example, the local Kosovar team is called the Black Eagles.

It is also no longer the case that local authorities and other British institutions are organising cultural events aimed specifically at promoting the culture of the Kosovars. A notable exception is the theatre group Company of Angels, which continues to regularly perform in schools a play about a Kosovar refugee family in the South of England, *Hannah and Hanna*.

¹⁵ 'Number of people supported in NASS accommodation at end of January 2003', and 'NASS dispersal cluster languages by towns', both produced by NASS.

¹⁶ **Marriott, K. and Oliver, K.** (2001) *Young separated refugees in the West Midlands*. London: Save the Children.

¹⁷ **Hedges, C., Render, A. and Stanley, K.** (2001) *Young separated refugees in Newcastle*. London: Save the Children. **Mynott, E. and Humphries, B.** (2001) *Young separated refugees in Greater Manchester*. London: Save the Children.

Legal aspects

Visa restrictions

Kosovars wishing to travel to the UK require a visa. Residents of Kosovo have to travel to Belgrade in Serbia to apply for a visa and as a result, refugees in the UK report that relatives in Kosovo have had difficulty getting a visa, which in some instances has required travelling to Albania or Macedonia to make an application.

Status of evacuees

Evacuees under the Kosovo Programme were granted a new status: Temporary Protection for one year. This reflected the priorities of the government which were to extend humanitarian assistance whilst pressing for a swift resolution to the Kosovo conflict and swift return of those granted protection once the conflict was resolved. The status was granted immediately on arrival. This was an advantage for the evacuees in that they did not need to present their case or face uncertainty as is the case with asylum seekers, but it was made clear to them that their stay was expected to be time limited. There was no guarantee that Temporary Protection would be extended once it had expired.

Temporary Protection status brought legal rights distinct from either asylum seekers or those with Exceptional Leave to Remain, refugee status under the 1951 UN Convention or Indefinite Leave to Remain¹⁸. The most significant rights were entitlements to social security benefits, temporary accommodation, family reunion, and access to the additional support services of the Kosovo Programme, including support to return.

Temporary Protection status was a response to a situation of mass generalised persecution and humanitarian crisis, and although evacuees were eligible to apply for asylum under the 1951 UN Convention through the normal Home Office channels, there was an expectation that after the resolution of the conflict, few of the evacuees would have a strong individual claim to protection from persecution as defined in the 1951 UN Convention.

Although the number of evacuees remaining in the UK is relatively small, those who have made applications for asylum or to remain in the UK on humanitarian grounds have found it difficult to argue their cases successfully, as shown by the case study below. Many claims have been turned down, while others have frequently suffered bureaucratic delays, and many of those granted extensions do not yet have settled status. Some have had the one-year Temporary Protection renewed twice without being granted leave to remain for any longer period. Nonetheless, there now exists a small settled community of Kosovars from the evacuation programme who have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain and can apply for UK citizenship.

Applications for protection by spontaneous arrivals

Throughout the 1990s, growing numbers of Kosovars applied for asylum in the UK. Those who could demonstrate involvement in the political upheavals such as trade union or student protests were likely to be granted either refugee status according to the 1951 UN Convention, or more commonly, Exceptional Leave

¹⁸ These were the other forms of status available at the time. Exceptional Leave to Remain has now been replaced by Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave.

to Remain (ELR) for one year, which may later be extended. Large numbers of cases remained undecided in the growing backlog of cases awaiting decisions at the Home Office.

During the Kosovo crisis, spontaneous arrivals who had applied for asylum in previous years and were caught in the backlog were likely to receive a positive decision. Those who did not return to Kosovo at the end of the crisis period applied for an extension of ELR. Responses from the Home Office varied, some had ELR extended, some were refused. Organisations currently working with Kosovars state that uncertainty around status remains a key concern as many people who have been in the UK for several years continue to have ELR for a fixed term; continuing the uncertainty that it may not be renewed. Applications for extensions of ELR have been prone to bureaucratic delays which have increased anxiety.

More recent spontaneous arrivals from Kosovo are more likely to receive a negative decision on their asylum applications, although again applicants have experienced delays. Serbia and Montenegro has been added to the Home Office's 'White List' of countries which are considered safe and any asylum applications from such countries are assumed to be without foundation unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary.

One group particularly affected by the use of short term ELR is unaccompanied minors. Many were granted ELR to last until they are 18, but on reaching the age of majority must reapply for their status to be extended.

Community organisations report widespread uncertainty and anxiety in regard to status. Kosovars who have not been granted long term leave to remain face barriers to integration; they are unable to apply for family reunion and find it more difficult to pursue careers or educational opportunities. Very few Kosovars who arrived during or since the Kosovo crisis have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain and as a result few have applied for British citizenship.

- For statistics on asylum applications and decisions, refer to the [statistics](#) section of this guide.

Recent caselaw: an example

This section details a case recently presented at appeal and the determinations made in that case¹⁹. It is a summary of a determination report available on the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) [website](#)²⁰, current at December 2003.

In this case, the Secretary of State appealed against an earlier decision relating to an individual from Kosovo who had been refused asylum but who, on appeal, had been granted leave to remain in the UK under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The individual concerned had arrived in the UK in 1999 as an evacuee under the Kosovo Programme and been granted one-year's Temporary Protection. She married another Kosovar evacuee and they had two children, the youngest being three weeks old at the time of the October 2003 hearing. The individual lodged an asylum application when her Temporary Protection expired, which was refused.

At her appeal hearing in January 2003, she claimed to have been raped by a Serb soldier in Kosovo but to have kept this secret from her husband and her family in Kosovo. The adjudicator accepted her account,

¹⁹ *The Secretary of State for the Home Department v. G UKIAT 00097* [2003]. Available at http://www.iaa.gov.uk/2003_ukiat00097_g_serbiaandmontenegro.pdf.

²⁰ <http://www.iaa.gov.uk>.

including her belief that her husband would leave her and take her child if he found out about the rape. His decision took into consideration background information on treatment of rape victims in Kosovo that had been made available to him. He also accepted medical reports about the likely deterioration of her mental health if she were returned.

The adjudicator found that although she was not at risk of persecution in Kosovo, the trauma of return, the likelihood of being ostracised by her family and local community and separated from her young child, the difficulty in accessing psychological help and the lack of appropriate accommodation were such that return could be considered inhuman or degrading treatment under the ECHR.

The tribunal in October 2003 overturned this decision in favour of the Secretary of State. They found that the individual had the option of living near her husband's family rather than in her own locality and that after four years, they were 'not satisfied...that what happened in the past would come back to haunt her'.

What is not explained in the determination of the tribunal is how the individual is to persuade her husband that she does not wish to return to her own locality when he does not know about the rape.

This case indicates the high standard of evidence of continued humanitarian concerns required for individuals from Kosovo to secure the right to remain in the UK.

Statistics

Numbers present in the UK

It is notoriously difficult to estimate the size of a particular refugee population with any accuracy. In the case of the Kosovars, this is complicated by the fact that they are not counted separately but included under statistics relating to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). At the height of the Kosovo crisis, one writer stated that the number of Kosovars in the UK could be as high as 20,000²¹.

Albanian Youth Action – the largest community organisation working with Kosovars and based in London – saw around 500 Kosovars in 2002, many of whom would have been in the UK for several years. A far larger number are likely to be settled but without contact with community organisations. From largely anecdotal evidence given in interviews for this guide, an estimated 500 remain of the 4,346 evacuees. Over 5,000 new asylum applications were made between January 2001 and December 2002 by nationals of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a large proportion of whom will have been from Kosovo, and many of whom are likely to still be in the UK. A working guesstimate would be in the region of 8,000 – 10,000 Kosovars currently in the UK.

The statistical tables below give information on asylum applications, unaccompanied minors, outcome of applications, support for those currently awaiting a decision, regional distribution of NASS supported asylum seekers, numbers in detention, acquisition of citizenship for those with leave to remain, removals and voluntary returns to former Yugoslavia.

All of the information in these tables is drawn from information supplied by the Home Office on its [website](#).²²

Number of humanitarian evacuees

Year	Number
1999	4,346

Humanitarian evacuees were not required to apply for asylum and so are not included in the tables below. Instead they were given one year's 'Temporary Protection' status.

Number of asylum applications

Number applying for asylum

Year	Applications from Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	Total number of asylum applications in the UK
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²¹ Refugee Council (2000: 43) *My Name Came Up: Kosovo – War, Exile and Return*. London: Refugee Council.

²² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html>.

1997	1,865	32,500
1998	7,395	46,015
1999	11,465	71,160
2000	6,070	80,315
2001	3,190	71,365
2002	2,270	85,865

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)²³

The figures in this table show clearly how the trend in the number of applications over the six-year period reflects events in Kosovo, peaking at over 11,000 applications in 1999. In that year, almost one in six of all the applications for asylum in the UK came from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), most of which can be assumed to have been from Kosovo.

Number of asylum applications from unaccompanied minors

Year	Number of unaccompanied minors from FRY
1998	1,529
1999	1,522
2000	666
2001	477
2002	725

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)²⁴

Applications for asylum from unaccompanied minors follow a similar trend; they are highest in 1998-9 and reduce gradually after that. Applications from unaccompanied minors have been a feature of the arrival of Kosovars. When this table is compared with that above, it can be seen that in 2000 more than one in six of the applications for asylum from nationals of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was from an unaccompanied minor.

Outcome of asylum applications

Asylum applicants from FRY granted refugee status or leave to remain

Year	Granted	Granted	Appeals
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²³ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom* Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

²⁴ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom* Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

	refugee status	ELR	allowed
1997	1,355	210	No data*
1998	935	75	No data*
1999	6,290	85	No data*
2000	275	815	No data*
2001	340	2,015	1,055
2002	220	815	165

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)²⁵

*Before 2001, Home Office statistical reports show the outcomes of appeals against a negative decision on asylum applications as totals for all nationalities. Separate figures for each nationality are only given from 2001 onwards.

Asylum applicants from FRY refused asylum

Year	Refusals	Appeals dismissed
1997	380	No data*
1998	565	No data*
1999	460	No data*
2000	13,830	No data*
2001	8,810	7,670
2002	2410	745

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)²⁶

*Before 2001, Home Office statistical reports show the outcomes of appeals against a negative decision on asylum applications as totals for all nationalities. Separate figures for each nationality are only given from 2001 onwards.

These two tables show the outcome of asylum applications. The first of the two reveals that there was a dramatic increase in the number granted refugee status in 1999. Interestingly, the year with the highest numbers granted Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) was 2001, which may reflect the decisions made relating to those who had arrived in the UK before and during the Kosovo crisis, had begun to settle in the UK and who were considered to have reasons to stay on humanitarian grounds. Equally, the peak of refusals from 2000 to 2001 corroborates the views of refugee support agencies that a clear message was given at this time that it was safe for most Kosovars to return home and that they were expected to do so.

²⁵ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom* Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

²⁶ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom* Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

Asylum support

NASS support applications from nationals of FRY

Year	Accommodation and support	Subsistence support only	Total
2001	985	355	1,415
2002	1,180	645	2,250

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)²⁷

This table shows that the majority of those applying for asylum from FRY in recent years (see earlier table) require support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

Regional distribution of NASS supported asylum seekers

Regions and counties with over 200 supported asylum seekers from FRY at December 2001

Region	Number in region*
Greater London	670
Yorkshire and Humberside	475
West Midlands	315
Scotland	230
North East	225

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)²⁸

*These figures include those receiving accommodation and subsistence and those receiving subsistence only.

Most of those arriving from FRY who receive support remain in Greater London. The region with the second largest population is Yorkshire and Humberside.

²⁷ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom* Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

²⁸ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom* Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

Numbers in detention

Number of asylum seekers from FRY detained in the UK at December 2002 ²⁹

	Number detained
Total number of detained asylum seekers from FRY	50
Total number of detained asylum seekers who are European nationals	260
Total number of detained asylum seekers	795

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)³⁰

Nationals from FRY are the largest group of detainees from a European state.

Number of nationals from Serbia and Montenegro detained in the UK at 27 September 2003

More recent figures for the third quarter of 2003 feature statistics for the new state of Serbia and Montenegro (SAM), which includes Kosovo.

	Number detained
Total number of detained asylum seekers from Serbia and Montenegro	10
Total number of detained asylum seekers who are European nationals	345
Total number detained asylum seekers	1,270

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)³¹

Nationals of Serbia and Montenegro are no longer the largest group of detainees from a European state, but are still a significant group.

²⁹ Home Office statistics state that these are people who have claimed asylum 'at some stage' i.e. they include those who are current asylum seekers awaiting a decision and those who claimed asylum and have been refused.

³⁰ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom* Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

³¹ Home Office (2003) *Asylum Statistics: 3rd Quarter 2003 United Kingdom*. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/asylumq303.pdf> [checked 28 December 2003].

Acquisition of citizenship

Year	Numbers from FRY granted British citizenship
1997	252
1998	336
1999	382
2000	585
2001	880
2002	1,670 (listed as Serbia and Montenegro) 485 (listed as Yugoslavia)

Source: [Home Office](#) (2003)³²

Numbers of people from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who are granted citizenship is increasing. However, because applications for citizenship may take place many years after arrival in the UK it cannot be assumed that the majority of these are from Kosovo – many will be from Bosnia, Croatia and other areas. In 2002, figures for Serbia and Montenegro are listed rather than FRY, but additional figures are also given for Yugoslavia. Again, given the time that has lapsed since arrival in the UK, both of these categories are likely to contain Kosovars, but the proportion is unclear.

Removals and voluntary returns

Home Office figures for returns are limited to those who are removed or voluntarily returned under the supervision of the Home Office, and so do not reflect those who return independently.

Year	Numbers returning or returned to former Yugoslavia
1997	190
1998	220
1999	No data
2000	No data
2001	1,780
2002	2,360

Source: [Home Office](#) (2000)³³; [Home Office](#) (2002)³⁴; [Home Office](#) (2003).³⁵

³² Dudley, J. and Woollacott, S. (28 August 2003) *Persons Granted British Citizenship United Kingdom, 2002*. HOSB 9/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb903.pdf> [checked 11 November 2003].

³³ Woodbridge, J., Burgum, D. and Heath, T. (October 2000) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 1999*. HOSB 17/00. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb1700.pdf> [checked 14 January 2004].

UNHCR records that 1,771 FRY nationals were returned to their country of origin from the UK in 2002³⁶.

³⁴ Heath, T. and Hill, R. (July 2002) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom, 2001*. HOSB 9/02 London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb902.pdf> [checked 14 January 2004].

³⁵ Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2002*. Issue 06/03. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

³⁶ UNHCR (2003) *2002 Statistics on Asylum-Seekers, Refugees and Others of Concern to UNHCR*. Geneva: UNHCR. Available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/statistics/opendoc.pdf?tbl=STATISTICS&id=3f3769672&page=statistics> [checked 11 November 2003].

Key issues

These issues affecting Kosovan refugees and asylum seekers in the UK have been identified from the available literature and from interviews with members of the community and service providers.

Return

The rapid rate of return to Kosovo has been one of the distinctive features of this population's experience in the UK. By August 2000, 2,396 of the 4,346 evacuees, who had begun to arrive in April 1999³⁷, had returned, as had countless numbers of Kosovars who had not been part of the programme. By July 2003, approximately 500 remain of the evacuees according to the estimates of community organisations and other agencies³⁸. The rate of return to Kosovo is now a steady trickle – most of those who remain in the UK wish to settle permanently, and most of those interested in return have already gone home. Those with leave to remain in the UK and sufficient financial resources are able to travel backwards and forwards between the two countries.

The speed of return of the Kosovars is attributable primarily to the swift end to the conflict in Kosovo but also to the carrots and sticks of the UK government's provision for them under the Kosovo Humanitarian Evacuation Programme. The evacuees, being granted one year's Temporary Protection, were, from their arrival, given a strong message that they were expected to return at the end of the year. Those refused an extension of stay would be liable for forced removal if they did not return voluntarily. They were kept up to date on unfolding events in Kosovo to enable them to plan their return, for example, through publications like *Lajmetari*, produced by the Kosovo Programme³⁹.

For a temporary period during the Kosovo programme, the government instituted a mechanism for undertaking 'Explore and Prepare' visits, allowing evacuees to visit Kosovo for up to three months to make preparations for return. Usually this opportunity was undertaken by men who left their families behind in the UK for the duration of the trip. They were able to look for work in Kosovo, carry out repairs to property, assess the state of local services and so on. Most of those who undertook Explore and Prepare visits found conditions in Kosovo to be very difficult – 60% found their houses were totally destroyed – but nonetheless it was a significant factor in preparing the evacuees for return.

Financial incentives, travel assistance, training courses and specialist advice (in English and Albanian) were also offered to returnees. Refugee Action's advice services for those considering voluntary return were extended to form the Kosovo-focussed ODA project, which facilitated the provision of many of the services for returning Kosovars. ODA no longer exists, and Kosovars are now provided with advice only, alongside other nationalities, through Refugee Action's recently renamed [Choices](#)⁴⁰ project. A representative of Choices stated:

'Towards the end of ODA we were working in a climate of a high rate of refusals and of threatened forced removals. The government expected a quick rate of return. Initially they [Kosovars] received

³⁷ Data recorded by the Kosovo Humanitarian Evacuation Programme.

³⁸ Interviews conducted by the author for this guide.

³⁹ **Refugee Council Kosovo Programme** (1999 – 2000) *Lajmetari* (the magazine of the Kosovo Programme). London: Refugee Council.

⁴⁰ Visit <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/choices.asp> for more information.

special treatment in relation to return – the Explore and Prepare option, for example – but later on there was a feeling that the government just wanted them to leave.⁴¹

For various individual reasons, a handful of Kosovar refugees continue to decide each year that they should return even after several years in the UK, often due to family circumstances in Kosovo. Community organisations also report that increasingly returns to Kosovo are related to refusal of status in the UK.

The Choices project continues to see Kosovars considering return. These tend not to be those who arrived after 2001 and are supported by NASS, but those who have been in the UK for a number of years. They also see those who claim to be from Kosovo but who have been judged to be from Albania and refused asylum on these grounds. Taken together, Kosovars and Albanians are the largest group approaching the service. One explanation for this is the reputation of the ODA project – those considering return mistakenly believe that a wide package of financial and other support may still be available.

One advantage of the ODA experience is the opportunity it provided to specialise in working with one nationality and so set up good relationships with local organisations and international agencies working with returnees in the country of origin. This experience has helped the Choices project to continue to provide good quality advice to Kosovars despite the end of the programme. Even with these links, it is hard to gather information about how people cope after return.

As outlined in the section on historical context, the situation in Kosovo remains physically hard with risks to the safety of certain groups. Many refugees from Kosovo are unlikely to consider return for reasons of continuing safety risks, because of the continuing trauma they suffer as the result of atrocities witnessed or experienced in Kosovo, or because they now consider themselves settled in the UK.

Settlement needs of individuals

Housing

One of the biggest problems faced on arrival has always been finding accommodation. Those spontaneous asylum seekers who arrived at the height of the Kosovo crisis faced many problems relating to squalid conditions in bed and breakfast accommodation. The biggest factor in improving their quality of life has been moving into independent and permanent housing and this has enabled them to make more progress in settling in general. Securing better accommodation is closely linked to gaining Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) or refugee status.

As explained earlier, evacuees were provided with a better standard of accommodation on arrival than spontaneous asylum seekers. Those evacuees who remained in the UK have received additional assistance to find more permanent accommodation. This has often been in the form of local authority accommodation due to the housing entitlements that their legal status confers⁴², and no accommodation problems were reported by the agencies interviewed for this guide.

Employment

⁴¹ Interview conducted for this guide with Deputy Team Leader of Choices Project, June 2003.

⁴² Those with asylum seeker status in the UK are not entitled to local authority social housing in the same manner, unless they have special needs.

From the outset, Kosovars proved to be resourceful at finding work, albeit insecure and low paid work. During the period in which most spontaneous asylum seekers arrived from Kosovo, asylum seekers were entitled to apply for a work permit six months after claiming asylum. Evacuees had the right to work under their Temporary Protection status, although helping them to find work was not a priority of the Kosovo Programme until its latter stages when it was clear that some did not plan to return. Although most of the population is now employed, there has been little improvement in the type of work that they have been able to find. Those with better-paid jobs are notably those who have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (rather than those who still have the temporary status Exceptional Leave to Remain) and those who have been to college in the UK and hold British qualifications.

Insecure legal status

Uncertainty about the right to remain in the UK is a significant source of stress and a barrier to successful settlement. Many fear that they will not have their leave to remain renewed and that they will face deportation.

Health and mental health

Some individuals still suffer health problems related to traumatic experiences in Kosovo, for example women who were raped during the war, but cannot tell their families.

Feelings of isolation and homesickness are still common among some members of the community, even those who have been in the UK for several years.

Generational experiences

The younger generation have found it easiest to settle, helped by the experience of going to British schools, and in general are keen to pursue their education and get good jobs. Those who arrived as unaccompanied minors some years ago, and have been in the UK throughout their adolescence are reported to be very settled by several of the refugee community organisations (RCOs) interviewed for this guide. However, experiences vary between individuals, particularly relating to the level of support provided to them. Although there has been an improved recognition of the needs of unaccompanied minors, and with it a better level of support, RCOs maintain that instances of very poor care still exist.

Older people have experienced the most difficulty in resettlement, largely because of language problems, which in turn have made it harder to find work. They are also most likely to find it hard to adjust to cultural differences, and complain that their children no longer speak Albanian.

New arrivals

RCOs express concern that recent spontaneous arrivals who are subject to dispersal and supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) are living in poor housing on very low levels of support with little to do and no opportunity to improve their situation until a decision is reached on their case.

The state of community organisations

There has been no financial assistance for Kosovar community organisations from the large refugee organisations since the end of the Kosovo Programme and other sources of funding have proved

increasingly difficult to secure. Although it might have been expected that after a number of years in the UK the Kosovar population would have developed a number of thriving community groups, such groups have actually fallen into decline.

Albanian Youth Action is the largest and most active community group. Its premises open every day with two full time staff, two part-time staff and ten sessional workers. It offers a number of services, including training courses, advice sessions and social activities. The organisation is not exclusively for Kosovars and makes no distinction between the different ethnic groups that use its services. The organisation also sees Albanian nationals and ethnic Albanians from Serbia and Macedonia, and less frequently some Roma, Serbs and Gorani from Macedonia. As such the organisation has a vital role to play in building relations between communities with a shared ethnicity and/or history. Although the older generation may be less inclined to mix, young people are encouraged through joint activities to overcome preconceived ideas and see each other as individuals. Despite having built its reputation at the time of the Kosovo crisis, the organisation is finding it increasingly difficult to secure funding. Grants from the Community Fund, for example, have not been renewed.

Aside from Albanian Youth Action, there is very limited community activity, especially outside of London. Community leaders stress that difficulties in maintaining community organisations are not just related to the reduction in the numbers of Kosovars remaining in the UK. Where there is insufficient funding to employ a member of staff, organisations rely on volunteers to hold events, maintain premises, provide services and conduct fundraising. These volunteers, almost all of whom have refugee status or Exceptional Leave to Remain, struggle to find the time and resources to achieve this and without some regular funding from, for example, a local authority or charitable trust, organisations can become inactive. Of the organisations listed in this guide, some have recently secured funding, for example Shpresa in London, while others are run entirely by volunteers.

Leeds, one of the main centres for the Kosovo Programme, makes a good case study. The community organisation Klubi Kosova was set up under the Kosovo Programme, as a focus for the newly arrived Kosovar community, which it was hoped would continue to provide support to those who did not return after the end of the programme. The organisation has struggled to survive. Currently without funds, premises or paid staff, it has been renamed Albanian Unity, and relies on a core of Kosovars who previously worked on the Kosovo Evacuation Programme.

They manage to organise a few events a year to celebrate cultural days; notably they organised an event in November 2003 to celebrate Flag Day/Albanian Independence Day and have organised folk dancing displays. Such events are well attended and give some support to local families. Their chairman says:

'There is so much more we could be doing – many people have failed to learn much English in the last few years. The community organisation wants to set up a drop in centre so that they can translate letters, make phone calls and give advice and help people find jobs, especially low skilled jobs for those with little English. It is a problem not having a regular meeting place where people can come for a chat, etc. The difficulty is that all our committee have full time jobs and it is difficult to secure funding when you can only phone out of office hours. What we need is a part time worker to get the organisation off the ground.'⁴³

A special case?

⁴³ Interview conducted for this guide, June 2003.

At the time of the Kosovo crisis, Kosovar refugees were widely regarded as 'special'. Substantial media coverage of their plight contributed to unprecedented public sympathy. The proximity of Kosovo to the UK meant that it was seen as a refugee crisis on the country's doorstep. The existence of the Kosovo Programme and the rare experience of chartering flights to airlift refugees from camps in Macedonia, captured the public imagination and added to the sense that these refugees were special. It also led to the view that these refugees had been 'invited' and so should be made welcome. The support offered went beyond the provisions of the Kosovo Programme, which by themselves were far more generous than those for other refugees, as the British public organised at a local level to co-ordinate donations of clothing, toys and food and offer services to the reception centres.⁴⁴

However, even at the time of the Kosovo Programme, Kosovars were not universally welcome. In some towns where numbers of refugees had risen from a low level after the arrival of the Kosovars, they were subjected to harassment and local criticism. In the days before the National Asylum Support Service, the large numbers of spontaneous arrivals at the height of the Kosovo crisis that were not entitled to assistance under the Kosovo Programme, were felt to be a burden on local services by some local authorities. In many areas like Hull and Margate, 'Kosovan' has become the generic name for refugees and asylum seekers and is used more negatively now. More recently, reports of criminal gangs from Albania operating in the UK has added to hostility against Albanians from Kosovo.

The end of the Kosovo Programme has led to a significant reduction in the media profile of Kosovar refugees and as a result has meant not only the end of services offered by the programme but also an end to voluntary activity by the British public on behalf of Kosovar refugees. Once the spotlight of public concern shifts, it is the community organisations that are left to provide support, and in the case of the Kosovars, lack of resources is making this difficult. The impact of media reporting is now seen as overwhelmingly negative. Stories that criticise the numbers of asylum seekers, the cost of asylum support, or report increasing public hostility to asylum seekers, sometimes mentioning Kosovars as an example, add to feelings of isolation among Kosovars.

Of course it is true that refugee community organisations representing most other nationalities or ethnic groups have not received the advantages given to the Kosovars (notable exceptions are the Bosnians and Vietnamese) and have had to struggle for resources from their inception. The early support may have benefited individuals from Kosovo but has not had long-term benefits for their community organisations.

In terms of the priorities of the large refugee organisations, the UK government and local authorities, as one interviewee put it, 'other wars come along'. Community organisations representing Kosovars see themselves as in competition with other groups of refugees for funding.

For those who have been in the UK some time, and witnessed the provision of services under the Kosovo Programme, it has been a hard adjustment. One community leader felt that the Kosovars should have foreseen the current situation and tried harder to become more organised before the programme ended.

Those left most vulnerable as a result of the weak community structure are the most recent arrivals from Kosovo who have been dispersed across the UK. Very little information is available on their circumstances, as this group is the least likely to have contact with those community organisations that do exist. Further research would be required to make an assessment of their experiences, but from research conducted in 2001,⁴⁵ it might be expected that many of them are extremely isolated, living in poverty and without access

⁴⁴ See, for example, **Wainwright, M.** (1999), 'Leeds United' in *The Guardian*, Wednesday 5 May 1999. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardiansociety/story/0,3605,296969,00.html> [checked 12 November 2003].

⁴⁵ See **Smart, K.** (2001) *Asylum Stories: The Experiences of Kosovars Settling in the UK*. London: Asylum Initiatives.

to sufficient information on the progress of their asylum application, their rights in the UK, or the situation in Kosovo.

Real lives

This section presents summaries of two case studies based on research conducted by particular organisations or individuals. These studies seek to illustrate the different experiences of Kosovar refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

Persecution in Kosovo

A woman describes how she was evicted from her home in 1993 in this extract from Human Rights Watch's *Open Wounds: Human Rights Abuses in Kosovo*.

'I suddenly heard a knock on my door. My husband was not home. ... When I opened the door, the first thing I saw was a machine gun in front of my face. There were three uniformed policemen standing there with their guns. One of the policemen asked... "Who is the owner of this apartment?" I told him that I was, and he said "Look woman, I give you 24 hours to get out of this apartment." He told me that he was a Serbian refugee from Bosnia and that he needed my apartment. He said, "I don't care where you go. Just leave and I will come here to live, otherwise you will regret it if I find you here after 24 hours." ... The same policeman came back with two other policemen in regular police uniforms. ... They pushed me aside and came into my house by force. They said, "why don't you start packing?" I said, "I will not pack because I was at the police station and the chief inspector said that I must stay in my apartment."... I grabbed the phone and called the chief inspector. ... The man that was interested in my flat took the phone and started to threaten the chief inspector. He yelled into the receiver, "I will go to Belgrade and tell them that you are supporting Albanians here."... He threatened to rape and kill me.... He said, "I can rape and I can kill you and you can't complain to anyone. I can do it because I am Serbian...." He also said "You know I can do something else. I can go into a restaurant in a place where everyone will see me and have a drink while I send someone else to rape and kill you and your girls. I would have a perfect alibi.'⁴⁶

Separation and reunion

This extract, supplied by the Refugee Council for the purposes of this guide⁴⁷, provides a first hand account of how one family was affected by the upheavals of the 1990s.

'In 1992 I received the call up for conscription to the Yugoslav army. Many of my friends had been sent to the Serb front line in the war with Croatia and Bosnia and many had died, forced to fight a war they did not belong in. The choice was simple – to follow them or to flee, as many of us did, to countries throughout Europe and to seek asylum....

When this intolerable situation erupted into a war characterised by atrocities against the civilian population, my thoughts were with my elderly father. Last time I had spoken to him on the phone he told me that some Serb paramilitaries had planted a bomb near our house and all the windows had shattered. It was March 1999 and the conflict was spreading in the cities. ... All we could do was watch the news and pray that our loved ones were still alive. There was no way of finding out what had happened to them or where they were. For days I was praying that he did manage to flee with

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch (1993: 31-33) *Open Wounds: Human Rights Abuses in Kosovo*. USA: Human Rights Watch.

⁴⁷ More details available on request.

the flood of refugees and that he would phone me. But there was not to be such a phone call. All sorts of things came to my mind. I spent many sleepless nights feeling weak and unable to do anything until such feelings of impotence became unbearable. I decided to go to Albania and search for my father. When I arrived in Albania I went straight to the refugee camps and what I saw there I will never forget. People had the look of fear and desperation in their eyes.... There were accounts of summary executions, beatings, rape and slaughter.... I still had no news of my father....

Three days after NATO troops went in I received a fax from my brother in London. It said, "Father is alive". Finally after three months of searching for him I knew that we would meet again. Two days later I was in Kosovo driving to my old house... pushing the broken door, I entered the dark house. Everywhere I stepped, glass crunched under my feet. I remember carefully watching every step, fearful that I might step on a mine or booby-trap. Then the door swung open behind me and there stood my father. As we hugged I thanked God through tears of joy that he was alive and to my surprise he looked very well.'

Arrival in the UK

This unaccompanied young boy, age 15, was interviewed in April 2000 by the author as part of the research for *Asylum Stories: The Experiences of Kosovars Settling in the UK*. His testimony sheds light on the experience of separated children in the UK.

'I came here six months ago. My parents made arrangements for me to leave Kosovo but now I do not know where my parents are. I have had one visit from the Red Cross Tracing Service who took some details but I have not heard anything from them about whether they have found my parents. I arrived here alone and I spoke no English. I had no friends or relatives in the UK apart from my brother. He had arrived in the UK already but I had no contact with him since he left Kosovo and did not know where in the UK my brother was living.

I went to the Home Office in Croydon to claim asylum. At the Home Office was a man from Kosovo who I had not met before and he said I could go and live with him, so when I left the Home Office I went to his flat. After two weeks, through contacts in the Kosovar community, this man was able to track down my brother who was living in a children's home in London. My brother is 16, a year older than me. My brother took me to a social services office but they told us to go away. Then my brother took me to a police station. The police took us to a different social services office and told the social workers that they had to find me somewhere to live.

I was given a place in a children's home but it was on the other side of London from where my brother is living. At first I was lonely because my brother was the only person that I knew here and it was difficult for me to see him.... Now that I have been here some time, I have made friends at school and I don't mind not living with my brother any more. ... Altogether I think I am doing ok.'⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Smart, K. (2001: 204-5) *Asylum Stories: The Experiences of Kosovars Settling in the UK*. London: Asylum Initiatives.

Resources

This section contains references for useful resources on the Kosovar population. If you would like to suggest a resource to be included in the list, please contact esme.peach@kcl.ac.uk.

Organisational websites are listed in the [contacts and links](#) section.

Publications

History

Human Rights Watch (1993) *Open Wounds: Human Rights Abuses in Kosovo*. USA: Human Rights Watch.

Malcolm, N. (1998) *Kosovo: A Short History*. London: Papermac.

Mertus, J. A. (1999) *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*. California: University of California Press.

UNHCR, Centre for Documentation and Research (1996) *Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Kosovo*. Geneva: UNHCR.

The war

Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2000) *Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (2000) *Kosovo: As Seen As Told. Part 1: October 1998 – June 1999; Part 2: June 1999 – October 1999*. Warsaw: OSCE. Available at <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/documents/reports/hr/part1/index.htm> [checked 8 December 2003].

Frequently updated reports and briefings from the period can be found in the online archives of the following organisations: UNHCR, UNMIK, NATO, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, BBC, Reuters - see the [online resources section](#).

Arrival of Kosovars in the UK

Bloch, A. (1999) 'Kosovan Refugees in the UK: the Rolls Royce or Rickshaw Reception?' *Forced Migration Review* 5, August 1999, pp. 24 – 26.

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (1999) *Kosovar refugees: protection, reception conditions and return policies in some European countries*. London: ECRE. Available at <http://www.ecre.org/positions/kosovo00.shtml> [checked 8 December 2003].

Gibney, M. (1999) 'Kosovo and Beyond: Popular and Unpopular Refugees'. *Forced Migration Review* 5, August 1999, pp. 28 – 30.

Luta, V. I. and Langer, J. (ed.) (1999) *Kosova: Sharing the Pain: Collected Writings from Exile*. London: Refugee Writers Ink!

Refugee Action (1999) *Kosovan Refugee Reception Centres: A Practical Guide*. London: Refugee Action.

Refugee Council (2000) *My Name Came Up: Kosovo – War, Exile and Return*. London: Refugee Council. Details available at http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/publications/list_2003.pdf [checked 8 December 2003].

Refugee Council Kosovo Programme (1999 – 2000) *Lajmetari* (the magazine of the Kosovo Programme). London: Refugee Council.

Rutter, J. and Davies, H. (2001) *Kosovan Journeys*. London: Refugee Council.

Scottish Refugee Council, Barry, P. (date unknown) *The Kosovan Programme in Scotland: a report on the Kosovan Humanitarian Evacuation Programme from April 1999 to October 2000*. Available at <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/Documents/kosovanprogramme.htm> [visited 23 February 2004].

van Selm, J. (2000) *Kosovo's Refugees in the European Union*. London and New York: Pinter.

Experiences since the end of the conflict

Kosovars in the UK

See also section above.

Bloch, A. (2002) *Refugees' opportunities and barriers in employment and training*. Department for Work and Pensions Research Report 179. Leeds: Corporate Document Services.

Burgess, H. (2001) *Political Asylum from the Inside*. Oxford: Worldview Publishing.

Daly, C., Fiddy, A., and Hamilton, C. (2003) *Mapping the provision of education and social services for refugee and asylum seeker children: lessons from the Eastern region*. London: Children's Legal Centre.

Kostovicova, D. and A. Prestreshi (2002) 'Between the Challenge and the Opportunity: The Identity Transformations of the First Wave of the Albanian Diasporans in the UK'. Paper presented at the Albanian Migration and New Transnationalism International Conference, University of Sussex, 6-7 September 2002.

ODA (the Kosovan Voluntary Return Project) (2000) *Visit of British Refugee Agencies' Delegation to Kosova April 2000: Issues Concerning the Return of Kosovan Albanians*. London: Refugee Action.

Rato, I. (2002) *Identity and family relationships amongst refugee Kosovar adolescents*. MSc dissertation, Imperial College, London.

Refugee Council Kosovo Programme (2000) *Returning Home: A Guide for Kosovars*. London: Refugee Council.

Smart, K. (2001) *Asylum Stories: The Experiences of Kosovars Settling in the UK*. London: Asylum Initiatives.

Kosovo and Kosovars in exile

Amnesty International (March 2003) *Amnesty International's Concerns in Serbia and Montenegro*. London: Amnesty International. Available at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR700042003?open&of=ENG-YUG> [checked 8 December 2003].

Amnesty International (2003) *Serbia and Montenegro (Kosovo/Kosova): Prisoners in their own homes. Amnesty International's concerns for the human rights of minorities in Kosovo*. London: Amnesty International. Available at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGEUR700102003> [checked 8 December 2003].

British Parliamentary Delegation (2000) *British Parliamentary Delegation Visit to Kosovo/Kosova 28-31 May 2000*.

Collegium for Development Studies Uppsala University (2001) *Kosovo and the Changing Face of Humanitarian Action, Conference Report*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.

Home Office Country Information and Policy Unit (October 2003) *Country report: Serbia and Montenegro*. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?pageid=199> [checked 8 December 2003]. (At the time of writing this is the most recent information from the Home Office. It is regularly reviewed and researchers should check the Home Office website for updated versions.)

Losi, N., Passerini, L., Salvatici, S. (2001) *Archives of Memory: supporting traumatised communities through narration and remembrance*. Psychosocial Notebook Vol. 1. Geneva. International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

UNHCR (January 2003) *Position on the Continued Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo: January 2003*. Geneva: UNHCR. (At the time of writing this is the most recent information from UNHCR. It is regularly reviewed and researchers should check the UNHCR website for updated versions. Similarly, earlier assessments, which show how the situation changed during and since the war, are also available on the UNHCR website.)

Statistics

Home Office (2003) *Asylum Statistics: 3rd Quarter 2003 United Kingdom*. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/asylumq303.pdf> [checked 28 December 2003].

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Home Office, Heath, T. and Hill, R. (July 2002) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom, 2001*. HOSB 9/02. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb902.pdf> [checked 14 January 2004].

Home Office, Heath, T., Jeffries, R., Lloyd, A. (28 August 2003) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom Issue 06/03*. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf> [checked 12 September 2003].

Home Office, Woodbridge, J., Burgum, D. and Heath, T. (October 2000) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 1999*. HOSB 17/00. London: Home Office. Available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb1700.pdf> [checked 14 January 2004].

UNHCR (2003) *2002 Statistics on Asylum-Seekers, Refugees and Others of Concern to UNHCR*. Geneva: UNHCR. Available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/statistics/opedoc.pdf?tbl=STATISTICS&id=3f3769672&page=statistics> [checked 11 November 2003].

Relevant aspects of UK asylum policy

Acts of Parliament

Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) Information available at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?PageId=353> [checked 8 December 2003].

Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act (2002) Information available at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?PageId=3784> [checked 8 December 2003].

Other policy documents

Home Office (2000) *Full and Equal Citizens: A strategy for the integration of refugees into the United Kingdom*. London: Home Office. Available at http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/filestore/Refugee_Integration.pdf.

Home Office (2002) *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with diversity in modern Britain*. CM 5387. Norwich: The Stationery Office. Available at <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm53/5387/cm5387.pdf> [checked 8 December 2003].

Audiovisual resources

Birthday Boy

Play and video

Created by Greenwich and Lewisham's Young People's Theatre (GYPT)

Directed by Simon Brown

Produced by Stella Barnes and Maria Pavlou, in partnership with Kidbrooke School, Greenwich

This play focuses on two brothers from rural Kosovo and how the 18th birthday of one threatens to disrupt their lives together in London. This play was created as part of 'Voices', a programme of theatre and arts activities run by GYPT. It was produced in partnership with a school where GYPT has been running a drama project with students in the post-16 ESOL Unit.

Visit <http://www.gypt.co.uk/voices/youth.htm> for more information.

Hannah and Hanna

Play and video

Written and directed by John Retallack

Produced by Company of Angels, Channel Theatre Company and UK Arts International

An acclaimed play about the friendship between a Kosovar asylum seeker and a young girl from Margate. The script and a video of the play are available.

Visit <http://www.companyofangels-uk.org/default.htm> for more information.

Kosova 1999

Photography

Howard Davies, Exile Images

Features many photographs taken at refugee camps in Macedonia.

Available at http://www.exileimages.co.uk/Exhibition/Exhib_K_01.htm.

Postcard from Peje

Film documentary

Directed by Mark Landsman (2000)

15m video documentary

Albanian with English subtitles

This is a video postcard made by Albanian teenagers from the Kosovar city of Peje about their experiences during and after the war.

Visit <http://www.hrw.org/iff/2001/ny/postcard.html> for more information.

Vivisect

Film documentary

Directed by Marija Gajicki (2003)

Portrays the public reaction of a Serbian audience to the photographs of Ron Haviv, which chronicle the war in Yugoslavia over many years, at an exhibition in Serbia in autumn 2002.

More information is available at <http://www.hrw.org/iff/2003/ny/vivisect.html>.

Online resources

See also the [publications](#) section for publications that also have online availability.

Albanian Online

This is an internet-based educational and cultural community project that aims to assist schools and other community service providers. It intends to develop new support systems to promote bilingual and cultural education through community and cultural support, parental involvement in education, and mediation. The site provides online learning and translated resources, information on cultural traditions and practices, community groups and job opportunities.

<http://www.albanianonline.co.uk>

Amnesty International

You can find a complete list of reports and briefings about Kosovo and this area by using the search term 'Serbia and Montenegro' in the library database.

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/engindex>

BBC Online

Using the search function on the site and the keyword 'Kosovo', you can access archival reports and broadcasts and the latest news on Kosovo. You will need Realplayer to listen to some of the recorded reports.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk>

Department of Health

This site has a number of documents relating to the health needs of Kosovars in the UK. The pages were last updated in 1999.

<http://www.doh.gov.uk/kosovo/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

This site provides a country profile for Kosovo, as part of Serbia and Montenegro, and includes links to useful historical and research papers and key policy documents.

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1019233722672>

Guardian Unlimited

Using the search function on the site and the keyword 'Kosovo', you can access relevant archival reports and features and the latest news.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Human Rights Watch

Historical and the current information on Kosovo, from press releases to commentary, can be accessed on this site.

<http://www.hrw.org/europe/fry.php>

International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kosovo

This site provides useful statistical data on returns and demographics in Kosovo, information on and reports arising from projects based at this office, such as that on counter-trafficking and the Kosovo Information Project, and a photo gallery.

<http://www.iom.ipko.org>

Local Government Authority (LGA)

A range of bulletins and factsheets from the Kosovo Programme are available on this site.

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/kosovo/index.htm>

NATO

Using the search function on the site and the keyword 'Kosovo', you can access archival reports, policy statements and news updates on this topic.

<http://www.nato.int>

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Using the search function on the site and the keyword 'Kosovo', you can access mission reports, factsheets and features about Kosovo.

<http://www.osce.org>

http://www.osce.org/publications/factsheets/kosovo_e.pdf

<http://www.osce.org/publications/survey/survey09.htm>

Reuters

Using the search function on the site and the keyword 'Kosovo', you can access archival news reports and photographs relating to Kosovars and events in Kosovo.

<http://www.reuters.com>

UNHCR

Use the search function on this site with the search term 'Kosovo' to identify recent and archival reports and papers relating to Kosovo and Kosovar refugees.

<http://www.unhcr.ch>

United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

The website includes archived news bulletins from 1999 onwards, information about UNMIK and its work, access to online publications, photograph collections and other relevant reports and manuals. It also features links to other key agencies.

<http://www.unmikonline.org>

Caselaw quoted in this guide

The Secretary of State for the Home Department v. G UKIAT 00097 [2003]. Available at

http://www.iaa.gov.uk/2003_ukiat00097_g_serbiaandmontenegro.pdf.

Projects and initiatives

This section aims to provide basic information relating to a number of current or recently completed projects and initiatives concerning Kosovar refugees and asylum seekers.

If you would like your project to feature in the list and ICAR's projects database, then please contact us at esme.peach@kcl.ac.uk.

Please note that all these contacts are UK-based. If you are calling from outside the UK, please prefix the number with country code 44 and omit the 0 at the beginning of the number.

Arts

Asylum seeker narratives

Albanian Youth Action and Company of Angels

This project is using drama workshops to construct a programme of work that aims towards the performance of short, devised or written narratives live and on video. The second phase of the project will also involve local British teenagers alongside Albanian and Kosovar young people. The project aims to educate and motivate young asylum seekers to create new narratives and to achieve greater personal empowerment through doing so; to develop a performance medium little-used by teenage groups in Britain; and to disseminate scripts and videos to schools and other places where they may help promote a greater understanding of the plight of young asylum seekers.

126 Cornwall Road

London

SE1 8TQ

Telephone 020 7928 2811

Email info@companyofangels-uk.org

<http://www.companyofangels-uk.org/default.htm>

Illegal

Concept Films

This film company are currently making a film based around the character of a Kosovo-Albanian girl in England destined to be returned to Kosovo, where she no longer has a home nor any family members.

IG10 2WS

Concept Films Ltd

PO Box 261

Loughton

Essex

Telephone 070 2111 7312

Fax 070 2164 5220

Email CFILMS2004@yahoo.co.uk

Contact: Robert Stokvis

Research

Refugee repatriation: the Kosovar experience

Katia Amore, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations (CRER), University of Warwick

This research is being conducted for a PhD in Ethnic Studies. The research deals with refugee repatriation movements from the European Union, specifically Italy and Britain, and studies the way refugees decide whether to stay or to repatriate by looking at their relationship with the whole experience of exile: their link with the country of origin, their position within the conflict and their situation in the host country. The research focuses on the experience of Kosovar Albanian refugees in Italy and Britain and fieldwork has been conducted in the UK and in Italy talking to policy makers, NGO representatives and refugees.

Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

University of Warwick

Coventry

CV4 7AL

Email k.amore@warwick.ac.uk

<http://www.warwick.ac.uk/staff/K.Amore/>

Understanding voluntary assisted return

Richard Black, Sussex Centre for Migration Research

This research project commissioned by the Home Office, aims to 'further understanding of the process of voluntary return, and what makes it sustainable in order to identify areas for policy and operational development'. The project will consider the factors that influence participation in existing voluntary return schemes, in particular the role of packages and incentives. Research methods include focus group discussions with individuals from seven different communities in the UK, in-depth interviews with a further sample selected from four of these communities, in-depth interviews with a sample of individual returnees and their families in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and interviews with key stakeholders in government, refugee agencies, and refugee community organisations in the UK, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. This study has now been completed but remains unpublished.

Sussex Centre for Migration Research

University of Sussex

Falmer

BN1 9SJ

Email R.Black@sussex.ac.uk

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/research/pdf/avr.pdf>

Asylum-seeking mothers' perception of factors which support successful inclusion into Early Years provision

Mala German, Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust

This project will look at the experiences of asylum seeking mothers with children under five years old living in temporary accommodation. It will seek to ascertain their perceptions of their children's needs in relation to learning, growth and development and their understanding of early years provision. The project seeks to find out what mothers and workers from refugee community organisations believe is needed to facilitate access early years provision. The research will be comprised of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Kosovar Albanians are one of the four communities to be included in the research. The research will be completed in 2007.

Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust

120 Belsize Lane

London

NW3 5BA

Telephone 0208 368 5118

Email mala@mgerman.clara.co.uk

<http://www.tavi-port.org>

Treatment-seeking behaviour in those from the Balkans suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Professor Stefan Priebe, Institute of Psychotrauma

This trans-European multi-centre study uses a sample of 150 Balkan refugees suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder to compare those who have sought treatment against those that have not. It is due to be completed in March 2005 and is funded by the European Commission.

Institute of Psychotrauma

William Harvey House

61 Bartholomew Close London

EC1A 7BE

Telephone 020 8586 5272

Fax 020 8586 5273

Email s.priebe@gmw.ac.uk

Exploring the relationship between language, gender and social exclusion: the experience of Kosovan and Kurdish women's access to English language learning

Alexandra Mann, Oxford Brookes University

This is a PhD research project.

Email Alexandra.mann@brookes.ac.uk

Narratives from the margins: identity and sense of place in a group of young refugees from Kosovo

Elena Zezlina-Phillips, CREATE, APU, School of Education

This is a PhD research project that is scheduled to complete in 2006.

CREATE

APU - School of Education

Rivermead Campus

Bishop Hall Lane

Chelmsford

Essex

CM1 1SQ

Email e.phillips@apu.ac.uk

Contacts and links

This section aims to provide contact details for organisations whose work relates to Kosovar refugee and asylum seeker issues.

This list will be updated as other useful links and contacts are identified. If you would like to add details of your organisation to these pages then please email esme.peach@kcl.ac.uk.

Links to publications are incorporated in the [resources](#) section.

Community organisations in London

This list was accurate at July 2003. As community organisations evolve, names, addresses and staff change.

Albanian Community 'Faik Konica' in the UK

5 Blantyre Walk
Worlds End Estate
London
SW10 0EW
Telephone 020 7351 5139
Contact: Talat Plana

Albanian Online

This is an internet-based educational and cultural community project that aims to assist schools and other community service providers. It intends to develop new support systems to promote bilingual and cultural education through community and cultural support, parental involvement in education, and mediation. The site provides online learning and translated resources, information on cultural traditions and practices, community groups and job opportunities.

PO Box 28
N19 4ZH
Email enquiries@albanianonline.co.uk
Co-ordinator: Maralba Jani

<http://www.albanianonline.co.uk>

Albanian Speaking Catholics in Britain

Telephone 020 7682 0365
Contact: Jak Gega

Albanian Youth Action

This is the main refugee community organisation working with Kosovars in the UK. It was set up to address welfare issues for Albanian speaking people in the UK, with a special focus on the young. The project provides advice on accessing benefits, housing, health, legal and immigration services, and also conducts outreach work. Its initiatives include arts and sports related group activities, weekend and holiday schemes,

the INFORMATION CENTRE *about* asylum and refugees IN THE UK

and a homework club. The project additionally provides assistance into education, English classes and support in schools and colleges. Assistance with family contact is also offered.

Unit E209 Second Floor
East Building
Westminster Business Square
Durham Street
Lambeth
London
SE11 5JH
Email albaction@aol.com
Co-ordinator: Caroline French

<http://www.members.aol.com/albaction%20/>

BRICKS: Bosnian Refugee Advice Centre and Kosovan Support

62 Mill Lane
London
NW6 1NJ
Telephone 020 7433 3834 (afternoons)
Director: Xenia Wilding

Kosovo Islamic Centre UK (formerly Albanian Islamic Society and Centre)

PO Box 33006
London
W9 3YB
Telephone 020 8211 0009
Contact: Bahri Bojaj

Shpresa

170 Harold Road
Upton Park
Newham
E13 0SE
Telephone 020 8472 2785
Development worker: Lulieta Nuzi

Community organisations outside London

Albanian Unity (formerly known as Klubi Kosova)

170 – 172 Roundhay Road
Leeds
LS8 5PL
Telephone 07930417215
Chair: Flamur Aliu

Manchester Aid to Kosovo (MAK)

PO Box 400
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA14 4WY
Telephone 0161 928 2933

Other organisations working with Kosovars in the UK

British Red Cross

In addition to its other international and UK work responding to emergencies and assisting vulnerable people, the British Red Cross also assists refugees and asylum seekers. The British Red Cross was one of the agencies involved in developing and implementing the reception programme for Kosovar evacuees.

9 Grosvenor Crescent
London
SW1X 7EJ
Telephone 020 7235 5454

<http://www.redcross.org.uk>

Choices, Refugee Action

Choices seeks to provide confidential and impartial advice to refugees and asylum seekers who are considering return to their country of origin. Choices also has a broader remit to campaign for the long-term needs of those considering return, including: the provision of resettlement grants; training and employment activities; and the lifting of travel restrictions that prevent refugees from visiting their country to assess the situation on the ground. Refugee Action was one of the agencies involved in developing and implementing the reception programme for Kosovar evacuees.

The Old Fire Station
150 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8SB
Telephone 020 7654 7700

<http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/choices.asp>

Refugee Council

Refugee Council is the largest organisation working with asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. The organisation provides a range of services including support for new arrivals, community development work and advocacy and campaigning. Refugee Council was one of the agencies involved in developing and implementing the reception programme for Kosovar evacuees.

3 Bondway
London
SW8 1S

Telephone 020 7820 3000

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>

Refugee Women's Association

RWA provides advice and guidance on employment and training for refugee women and organises a range of training projects, including English language, childcare and mentoring. It also provides capacity building support and training to refugee women's groups around the UK and has launched a new small grants programme to assist refugee women who are unable to meet their educational expenses. RWA also produces a bimonthly publication entitled *Refugee Women's News* and its internet site hosts a discussion forum. The organisation has also been responsible for conducting and commissioning research on issues relating to refugee women in the UK.

Print House

18 Ashwin Street

London E8 3DL

Telephone 020 7923 2412

Fax 020 7923 3929

Email info@refugeewomen.org

<http://www.refugeewomen.org/rwa.htm>

Migrant Helpline

Migrant Helpline provides reception and advice services to asylum seekers and refugees presenting and residing within its area of operations, the Southeast.

Rm 65, No 1 Control Building

Eastern Docks

Dover

Kent

CT16 1JA

Telephone 01304 203977

<http://www.migranthepline.org.uk>

Scottish Refugee Council

The Scottish Refugee Council was founded in 1985 to provide advice and assistance to individuals who are forced to leave their own country and seek protection in Scotland. It provides a range of services from service provision to campaigning and community development. The Scottish Refugee Council was one of the agencies involved in developing and implementing the reception programme for Kosovar evacuees.

5 Cadogan Square

(170 Blythswood Court)

Glasgow

G2 7PH

Telephone 0141 248 9799

<http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk>