

**Internally displaced persons from the Prizren  
Area of Kosovo: Living conditions, mental  
health and repatriation issues**



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## ***I INTRODUCTION***

Throughout and immediately after the formal end of the Kosovo conflict and cessation of NATO bombardment of FR Yugoslavia in 1999, a great number of Serbs and other non-Albanians from Prizren and other regions of Kosovo were forced to flee for refuge to other parts of the country. On the report of respective estimates of certain international organizations (UNHCR, ICRC) about 200, 000 persons were forcibly displaced into the parts of Serbia outside Kosovo.

**I**nternally **D**isplaced **P**ersons ( hereinafter identified as **IDPs**) from Kosovo, being persons who remain within the borders of their country of origin, at least formally retain civil and other rights they had before the exile, appertaining to them based on their citizenship. Though lacking the formal refugee status, they share many similar characteristics with refugees:

- Forcibly displaced persons, as well as refugees, belong to the persons exposed to the so called catastrophic or cataclysmic stressor such as a forcible leave of the homeland (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Such a flight from home and home area, as a rule, is involuntary, coercive, done under pressure, most frequently occurring abruptly, its primary purpose being saving life in front of the existing threats. In contrast to the natural disasters, forcible displacement comes under human-made catastrophic stressors, therefore having, according to many studies, stronger stressogenic and psychopathogenic potential than natural disasters. Even without being exposed to other traumatic events, IDPs are, by the very act of forcible displacement exposed to a mental health threat stressor;
- Like exile, forcible displacement is also most often related to numerous temporary or permanent losses of the life's most important footholds (home, property, job, social positions, familiar natural and social environment, social networks). To make it worse, a great number of losses are condensed into a very short time interval;
- Like refugees, Kosovo IDPs can in brief be described as "regionally, socially and psychologically uprooted" people (Milosavljević, 2000, str. 18);
- Exposure to a catastrophic stressor like forcible displacement, in the case of Kosovo IDPs, is most frequently combined with the previous exposure to other massive catastrophic (war, bombardment) and personal stressors (death of the closest ones, a loss of a job, direct physical assaults, rapes, threats and the like);
- By going into exile, IDPs only partially fulfil one of the basic human needs, the need for safety. At the same time,

fulfilment of the very important belongingness and esteem needs are frustrated (Vlajković, 2000);

- Displacement into a new environment, often having different relationships, customs and life styles, imposes great challenge on displacees' adaptive capacities. Usually, sources required for coping with strenuous life situations have already been seriously thwarted by prior traumatic war experiences (including the exposure to the daily bombardment). Many Kosovo IDPs, abreast with healing already existing wounds of the soul, are ahead of hard life tasks how to: earn and provide for their families in spite of being unemployed, hold the family together, obtain aid, find your way in the new environment and adapt. This is further aggravated by existing conditions basically characterized by widespread poverty and political instability in the country just stepping on the road to democratic transition.

Going through extremely cruel and hard life experiences, forcible displacement being only one of many, along with numerous adaptation problems in the new environment, the key question to be answered, inevitably, sooner or later, poses itself upon IDPs. Formulated more freely, this question reads: "Life saved, survival in progress, but **WHAT** and **WHERE** now?". If the resettlement option is disregarded for a short while, IDPs are in front of the choice of two options between which, taking into consideration personal resources and given circumstances, the optimal or at least more convenient one is to be selected: **to stay** in the new environment (and integrate) **or to return** ("repatriate") to the previously fled home area.

Irreplaceable assistance, both in coping with prior traumas, survival and adjustment to the new environment and also in a rather complex process of making decision whether to stay permanently in the new environment or to return to the homeland, is provided by humanitarian and non-governmental organizations. Their role gains in importance if a poor and politically unstable states are in question, whose official institutions lack sufficient resources to provide relief for displacees. It is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that neither the refugees nor the IDPs represent homogeneous population. Thus, it can be talked about the existence of different refugee and IDP groups according to their social experience and actual status. Therefore, timely and accurate information on the target population characteristics as well as an up-to-date research approach are a prerequisite for adequate assistance to IDPs by non-governmental organizations throughout the processes of IDPs' adaptation and/or "repatriation". Hence, the main purpose of the investigation, whose results are reported in this text, was to explore key characteristics of Prizren area IDPs (hereinafter

called **PrIDPs**). The conclusions reached on the data gathered during this research could hopefully provide useful guidelines in the further work with PrIDPs within the project: *"Facilitation of free decision-making concerning the process of repatriation or integration for non-Albanian population fled from Kosovo"*.

## ***II RESEARCH GOALS***

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

- A. To screen Prizren area displacees with regard to their sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age and ethnic structure, marital status, family status regarding its size and number of children and type of place fled from /town-village/);
- B. To screen educational and occupational/work-related characteristics of PrIDPs (educational and occupational structure, additional working skills, working ability and entrepreneurial abilities);
- C. To explore financial status and living conditions of PrIDPs in exile (including the type and frequency of aid received and structure of the aid most needed);
- D. To assess Prizren area displacees' current mental health status and to explore possible relationships of PrIDPs' current mental health on the one hand, and their previous and current living conditions and individual characteristics on the other hand;
- E. To explore Prizren area displacees' position on return to home area and possible relationships of PrIDPs' position on return on the one hand, and their previous and current living conditions and individual characteristics on the other hand.

## ***III RESEARCH METHODS***

### **Instruments**

The data were gathered employing the following questionnaires and inventories:

**1. General Questionnaire** designed by the I.A.N research team provided the data on the following characteristics of the examinees:

- ◆ **Sociodemographic** characteristics:
  - gender;
  - nationality;
  - age;
  - marital status;
  - number of family members;
  - number of children;
  - type of place fled from /town-village/
  
- ◆ **Educational and occupational/work-related characteristics**
  - education level;
  - occupation;
  - employability (working ability);
  - possession of additional (not included by occupation) working skills;
  - managerial abilities;
  - entrepreneurial ability (readiness to initiate a new business or expand the existent one, provide employment and repay credits).
  
- ◆ **Financial status and living conditions**
  - financial status before exile;
  - employment;
  - monthly income per family member;
  - amount of social aid (if received) per family member;
  - type of accommodation in exile;
  - need for humanitarian aid;
  - organizations providing humanitarian aid;
  - type of the humanitarian aid received;
  - frequency of the humanitarian aid received;
  - satisfaction with the humanitarian aid received;
  - type of aid most needed.

◆ **Mental health status**

- mental health condition before the exile;
- exposure to the loss of the closest ones during the war;
- current mental health status (need to talk with a professional due to psychological difficulties, use of tranquillizers, self-estimate of current psychological condition).

◆ **Views on return to the home area**

- position on return to the homeland;
- conditions required for return.

**2. Life event check list (LECL)**, designed by the I.A.N research team, is employed in this research to assess the extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events. It comprises the list of 17 extremely stressful life events. Each event is checked by an examinee as experienced in the course of the life, witnessed, learned from somebody else's experience, uncertain to come under the relevant experiences or irrelevant for him.

**3. Impact of event scale (IES)** (Horowitz, M., Wilner, N. & Alvarez, W., 1979) a self-report instrument for assessing severity of posttraumatic distress, i.e. the intensity level of "two most commonly reported categories of experiences in response to stressful events: intrusion (of ideas, images, feeling and bad dreams) and avoidance (denial or blocking of thoughts and images related to stressful events)" (Zilberg, Weiss & Horowitz, 1982, p.408). The examinee checks each item on the four-point scale ("not at all", "rarely", "sometimes", "often" ), indicating in that way how frequently he had the experiences described by the item during the last seven days. The responses to each item are weighted by 0 ("not at all"), 1, 3 or 5 ("often") for the frequency categories respectively. The scores of intrusion, avoidance and total score of posttraumatic distress are obtained as a sum of weighted responses. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) of Intrusion and Avoidance scales in the sample of PrIDPs were 0,89 and 0,79 respectively.

**4. Symptom check list- SCL-90-R** -a self report inventory comprising 90 items for the assessment of current psychological symptom pattern, current distress and global psychopathological status. The examinee rates each item on the five-point scale (from "not at all" to "extremely") according to the degree of distress during last seven days. The nine symptom dimensions (Somatization, Obsessive-Compulsive, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Depression, Anxiety, Hostility, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid Ideation and Psychoticism) and certain global indices of distress can be

derived from responses to items. In this research Global Severity Index (GSI) will be employed as a measure of global distress or psychopathological status.

**5. NEOFFI personality inventory** - is composed of 60 items (Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R.R, 1992). The examinee responds choosing one answer on a five-point scale (from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). NEOFFI was used in this research for the assessment of five personality traits describing personality in accordance with the currently most widely accepted Big -Five personality model: *Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness* and *Conscientiousness* (Digman, 1990).

### **Sample**

The sample of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Prizren (and the surrounding villages of Dušanovo, Ljubižda and Rečane) consisted of 1630 examinees. Considering the purpose of this research and the fact that the data were gathered through a questionnaire, only persons over 14 were included in the sample. To outline specific characteristics of the PrIDPs more clearly, a random sample of 1559 IDPs (over 14 years of age) fled from 32 different places in the remaining parts of Kosovo (hereinafter called **RPKoIDPs**) was also included in the research.

### **Procedure**

The data were gathered during the humanitarian aid distribution campaign conducted by the I.A.N team. The IDPs older than 14 were handed out the questionnaires and requested to fill them in, if they wish and are able to. The examinees were asked to answer all the questions as sincerely as possible since their responses would be very useful in providing better-quality assistance to them or any other people who might in future find themselves in the similar position. All the examinees filled in the General Questionnaire by themselves or with the help of an examiner (if needed), while the questionnaires IES, LECL, IES, SCL-90-R and NEOPI-R were filled up only by the examinees able to do it by themselves. At the end of the General Questionnaire, the examinees were informed that, if they feel the need for a talk with a professional, they are free to contact I.A.N. counselling agencies offering free psychological assistance.



## ***IV RESULTS***

The results regarding some categories of PrIDP population characteristics studied (sociodemographic characteristics, mental health status and a position on return to the home area) will be shown contrasted with the concurrently gathered random sample data on RPKoIDPs.

The data on educational and occupational/work-related characteristics, financial status and living conditions in exile will be presented only for the PrIDPs, i.e. without being contrasted with the data on the sample of RPKoIDPs.

Besides, for the clarity's sake, the results related to PrIDPs' current mental health condition obtained by SCL-90-R and IES questionnaires are reported compared with those gathered on the random sample of RPKoIDPs. For the same reason, PrIDPs' results obtained by IES and SCL-90-R are presented with reference to the available data on the refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and non-clinical population norms.

## A. The Structure Of The Prizren Area IDPs Sample According To The Sociodemographic Characteristics

### Gender

The proportion of women to men in the sample of PrIDPs is practically equal: 817 examinees (50.1%) are female and 813 (49.9%) male. In this respect there is almost no difference between the PrIDPs and the RPKoIDPs. In the sample of RPKoIDPs there were 783 (50.2%) females and 776 (49.8%) males. The ratio of women to men in the group of PrIDPs was practically equal to their ratio within the Serbian population (49% males and 51 % females). Furthermore, the balanced PrIDP sex structure exists not only at the level of the whole sample but also within all the age categories as well. (*Gender by Age Categorized: Chi square = 8.44, df = 5, n.s.*).

### Nationality

As it is customarily the case with the refugee population throughout the wars within the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the population of PrIDPs has high ethnic homogeneity: 1572 examinees (96.4%) were Serbs or Montenegrins, 54 (3.3%) Romanies, Muslims, Macedonians and others, and only 4 examinees (0.3%) gave no information on nationality. Such a high degree of ethnic homogeneity is also observed in the RPKoIDPs : 96.1% of them were Serbs or Montenegrins.

### Age

The PrIDPs aged from 15 to 98 (Median age = 43; Mean age = 43.34, Standard Deviation = 17.11). The examinees' age in the sample of RPKoIDPs ranged from 15 to 92 years (Median Age = 41 years, Mean age = 43.51 years, Standard Deviation = 16.68). The age distribution of the PrIDPs is presented in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Distribution of Age in the sample of PrIDPs**

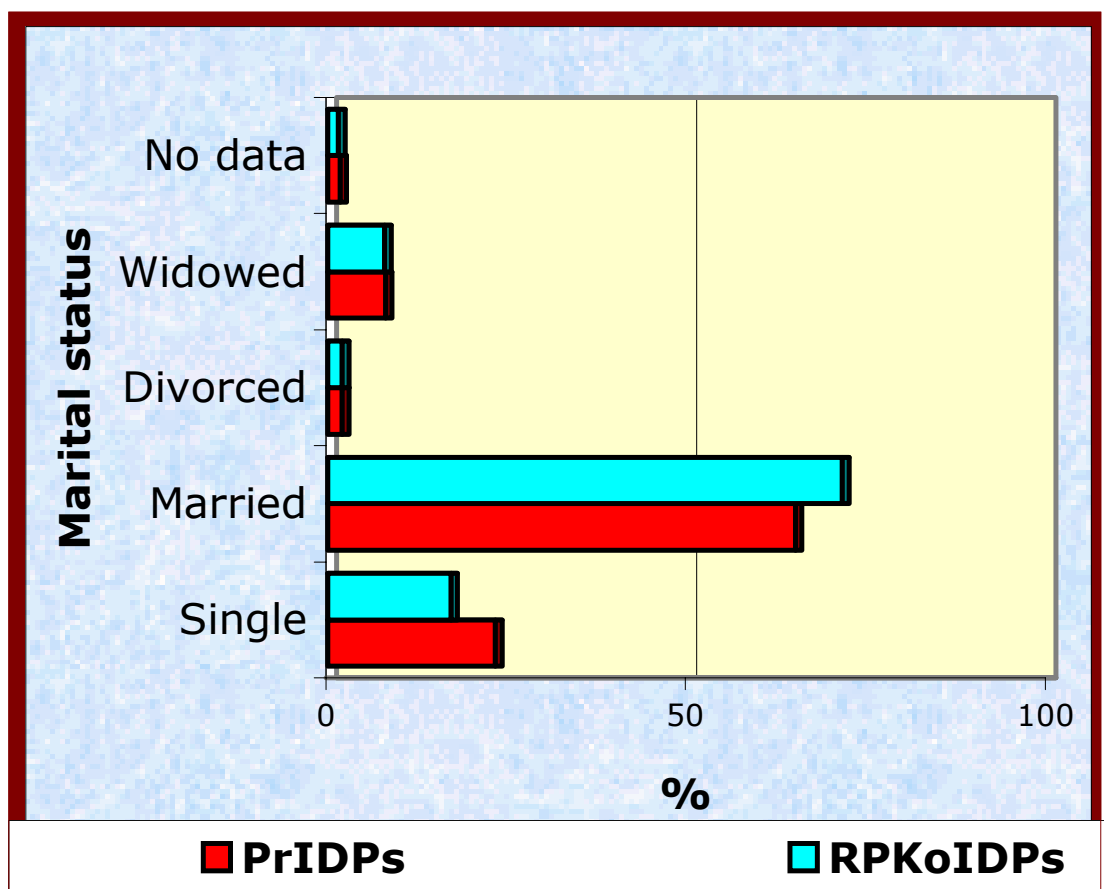
<b>Age categories</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
15 -24 years	301	18,5
25 -34 years	237	14,5
35 -44 years	342	21,0
45 -54 years	318	19,5
55 -64 years	190	11,7
65 -98 years	242	14,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1630</b>	

### **Type of place (town-village) fled from**

The PrIDP group being consisted mainly of the displacedes from the town of Prizren, its structure with regard to the type of place fled from does not surprise at all: most PrIDPs ( **83,1%** of them) are displaced from town, while almost half (**47.6%**) of RPKoIDPs are displaced from a village (*Type of place by Area: Chi square = 412,06, df = 1, p < 0.0001*). For about 1.8 % PrIDPs and 3.5% RPKoIDPs there are no data available on the type of place fled from. As regards to the type of place fled from, the PrIDPs differ considerably from the overall population of Serbia, where, according to the official statistical reports, 54 % of population live in town and 46 % in a village.

### **Marital status**

The greatest number of PrIDPs are married (**65%**), single is 23,3%, 10% is divorced or widowed while 1,7 % examinees gave no information on the marital status. The specificity of the PrIDPs with respect to this characteristic lies in the somewhat higher relative proportion of the married persons in the population of RPKoIDPs (**71.5%**), and the lower proportion of the singles (17.1%). (see **Graph 1**; *Marital status by Area: Chi square = 20.13; df = 3; p < 0.01*). The relative frequency of the divorced and widowed, as well as of the respondents with the missing information on marital status, is practically the same in both groups (RPKoIDPs: 9.9% divorced or widowed; No data for 1.5 %).



**Graph 1: Distributions of Marital Status in the groups of Prizren area IDPs and the remaining parts of Kosovo IDPs**

**Number of family members and number of children in family**

The Prizren area families are generally somewhat fewer in number of their members, since the number of children in them is in general somewhat smaller in comparison with the families from the remaining parts of Kosovo (see **Table 2**; *Number of family members categorized by Area: Chi Square =15.92; df = 3; p < 0.01*). The majority of PrIDPs, like the RPKoIDPs, come from families of 3 to 5 members (Prizren area: 63,9%; Remaining parts of Kosovo: 58, 9%). A considerable number of families have 6 and more members (Prizren area: 20,1%; Remaining parts of Kosovo: 26, 1%), while far fewer are the families of two (Prizren area: 8,8%; Remaining parts of Kosovo: 8, 8%) or one family member (Prizren area: 2,1%; Remaining parts of Kosovo: 2, 4%). For 5,1% examinees from Prizren area and 3.8% from the remaining parts of Kosovo there were no data on this characteristic.

**Table 2: Distribution of IDPs from Prizren area according to number of members in their families**

<b>Number of family members</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
One	35	2,1
Two	144	8,8
3 to 5	1041	63,9
6 to 18	327	20,1
No data	83	5,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1630</b>	

A smaller number of families in the group of IDPs from Prizren area is due to the proportionally higher percentage of population fled from town in this group than the one in the remaining parts of Kosovo. Differences in the number of children and number of family members disappear when it is taken into consideration whether the families come from village or from town (*Number of family members categorized by Area: Chi Square for town = 1.74; df = 3; n.s.; Chi Square for village = 3.97, df = 3; n.s.*).

Relatively most frequent families in the population of IDPs from Prizren are those with 2 or 3 children (**Table 3**), while families with 4 or more are almost equally frequent as those with 1 child.

**Table 3: Distribution of IDPs from Prizren area according to number of children in their families**

<b>Number of children</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
None	6	0,4
One	134	8,2
Two or Three	870	53,4
Four to Eight	142	8,7
No response	478	29,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1630</b>	

Compared with the IDPs from the remaining parts of Kosovo, within the group of PrIDPs the families with 2 or 3 children are relatively more frequent (Prizren area:53.4 %;Remaining parts of Kosovo:50 %) while the families with one child as well as those having over three children are more frequent in the RPKoIDP group (One child: Prizren area 8.2 %, Remaining parts of Kosovo 10.3 %; More than three: Prizren area 8.7 %, Remaining parts of Kosovo 16,1 %). No answer to the question about the number of children was given by 29.3 % examinees from Prizren area and 23.6 % from the remaining parts of Kosovo.



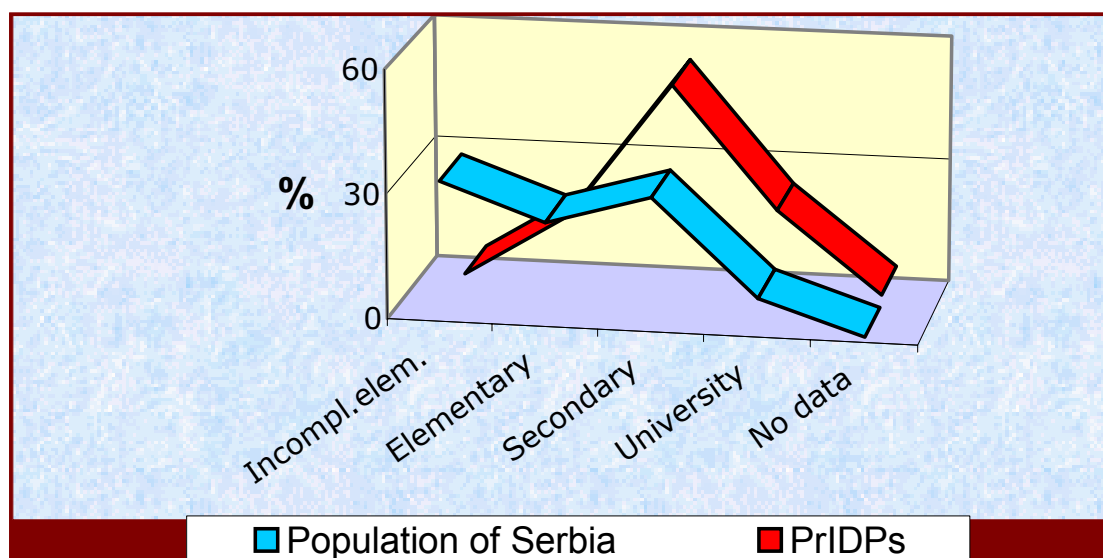
The main characteristics of IDPs from Prizren area in regard to the sociodemographic features examined are the following:

- Equal ratio of men to women to the one in the whole population in Serbia;
- Ethnic homogeneity;
- Adequate representation of all the age categories ranged from 14 to 98 years (young, middle-aged and old persons);
- Proportionally smaller number of married persons, and a greater number of singles than it is the case in the IDP population from the remaining parts of Kosovo;
- Higher proportion of IDPs fled from town than fled from village compared with the IDP population from the remaining parts of Kosovo;
- Smaller number of family members compared with the IDP population from the remaining parts of Kosovo due to a higher proportion of town than the village population.

## B. The Educational And Occupational/Work-Related Characteristics Of Prizren Area IDPs

### Educational level

The educational structure of PrIDPs is by far more favourable than the same structure in the overall population in Serbia (*Goodness for fit test: Chi Square = 1104, 9; df = 4; p < 0.001*). While, by the official data based on a representative sample of the population of Serbia older than 14, only 8,9 % of the population is university trained and 32% has secondary education, the majority of the examined PrIDPs have secondary (51,9 %) or university education (22,6 %) (see **Graph 2**). In the population of Serbia there is 24,7 % of elementary educated, while 18,8 % Prizren area IDPs come under this category. In the population of Serbian citizens 33,5% of persons over 14 have incomplete elementary education, while in the PrIDP group there is only 3,4 % persons at this level. The information on the educational level lacks in 3,2 % examinees.



**Graph 2: Educational structure of Prizren area IDPs in relation to the estimated educational structure in the population of Serbia**

## Occupation and possession of additional working skills

Regarding the profession in the group of PrIDPs there is the largest number of office workers, technicians and specialists in humanities and law, and the smallest number of farmers and engineers (see **Table 4**). There is no information on the occupation for 10,2 % examinees.

**Table 4: Distribution of IDPs from Prizren area according to occupation**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Farmer	14	0,9
Physical worker	148	9,1
Qualified industrial worker	99	6,1
Craftsman, shop assistant, waiter	131	8,0
Office worker and technician	319	19,6
Engineer	52	3,2
Specialist in humanities and law	244	15,0
Housewife	135	8,3
Pensioner	188	11,4
Other	134	8,2
No data	166	10,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1630</b>	

Answering the question "If you are not able to work in trade, what else can you do (what additional working skills do you possess)?", of the total number of 1630 examinees, less than half (42,3 %) states at least one skill which is not an integral part of their occupation. (Types and frequencies of the first-stated skills are presented in **Table 5**). Besides, most examinees (26,7 %) state to possess one of such skills. Two of these skills have, in their own opinion, 12,5% examinees, and three skills are stated by only 3,1 % PrIDPs. A subsequent classification of the skills according to the particular categories of occupations shows that 29,3 % examinees state skills which are not the integral part of any occupation in the category his occupation falls into.



**Table 5: Distribution of additional skills stated by the Prizren area IDPs (only the first-stated skill is included)**

<b>Skills Category</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Farming skills	8	0,5
Physical work skills	41	2,5
Industrial work skill	33	2,0
Craftsmanship and service skills	103	6,3
Office and computer skills	160	9,8
Humanity and law specialist skills	54	3,3
Handicraft skills	291	17,9
No response	940	57,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1630</b>	

### **Self-sufficiency ability**

Most PrIDPs examined (56,9 % of them) state they are able to earn money by themselves. Anyway, it is most likely that such a small percentage of "employables", which is considerably smaller than the percentage of the persons in the sample ageing from 18 to 65 (82,3 %), more reflects their current situation, i.e. lack of the opportunity to earn money, than it gives a true picture of their working abilities.

### **Managerial abilities**

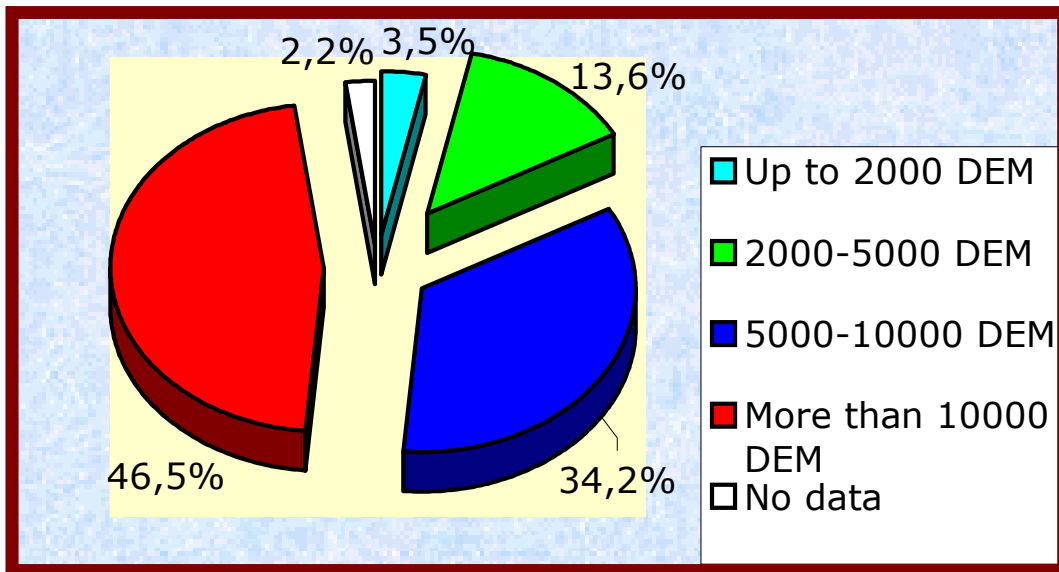
It is claimed by 39,1 % examinees to possess managerial abilities, and 27,5 % cannot say surely whether they are able to manage others. The possession of managerial abilities is denied by 26,7 % examinees, while no answer is given by 6,6 % examined IDPs. The males in comparison with the females, just in line with traditional beliefs, relatively more frequently claim to be able to manage others. (*Gender by Possession of managerial ability: Chi Square = 45,89; df = 2; p < 0.001*). Similarly, a relatively larger number of examinees in the group ranging in age from 25 to 45 claim to possess managerial abilities than it is the case with the groups of younger and older IDPs. (*Categorized Age by Possession of managerial ability Chi Square = 353,86; df = 10; p < 0.001*).

## **Entrepreneurial ability (readiness to initiate a new or expand the already existent business by credit stimulation, provide employment and repay credits)**

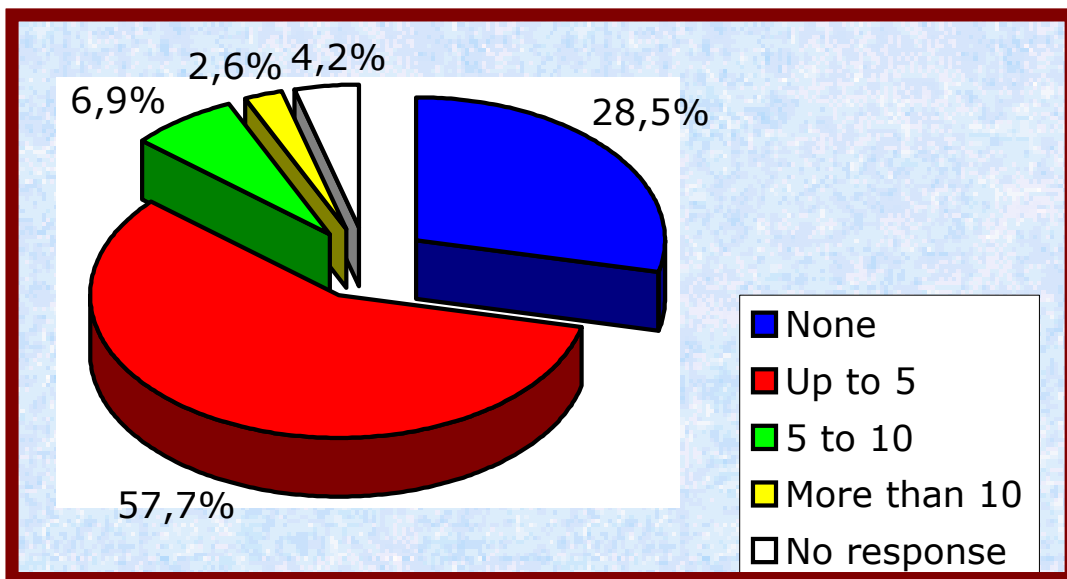
More than half (55 %) PrIDPs claim to be able to initiate a new or expand the already existent business stimulated by a favourable credit, 12,3% is not sure about it, 20,1% claims not to be able to do it, and no answer is given with regard to this item by 12,6% examinees. The males relatively more often than the females claim to be able to set up a credit-stimulated business; 70,4 % males answering the question claims to be able to initiate a new or expand the already existent business stimulated by credit incentives, while only 55,3% females claim to possess such abilities. (*Gender by Readiness to initiate or expand business: Chi Square = 35,04; df = 2;  $p < 0.001$* ). The entrepreneurial abilities are relatively more rarely stated within the older IDPs than by the young and middle-aged ones (*Categorized Age by Readiness to initiate or expand business: Chi Square = 308,01; df = 10;  $p < 0.001$* ). Also, IDPs of higher education level relatively more often express readiness to get involved into entrepreneurial activities than those at a lower educational level. (*Education by Readiness to initiate or expand business: Chi Square = 199,08; df = 6;  $p < 0.001$* ).

Within the IDPs claiming to be able to initiate a new business under the condition of receiving a very favourable credit, prevail those who consider that:

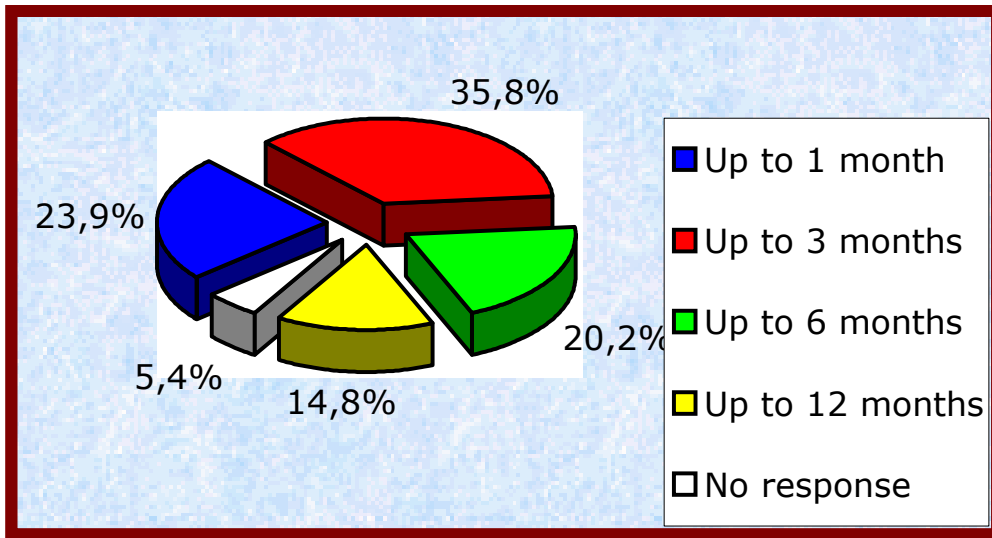
- ✓ They need more than 10 000 DEM (46,5 %) or from 5 000 to 10 000 DEM (34,2 %) for establishing new business (see **Graph 3**);
- ✓ They could employ up to 5 employees (57,7 %) in a newly-established business (see **Graph 4**);
- ✓ They need up to three months to establish a business with the help of favourable credit incentives (59,7%)(see **Graph 5**);
- ✓ They need One year (32,9%) or several years (52,2%) for credit repayment since the moment of credit allowance. (**Graph 6**)



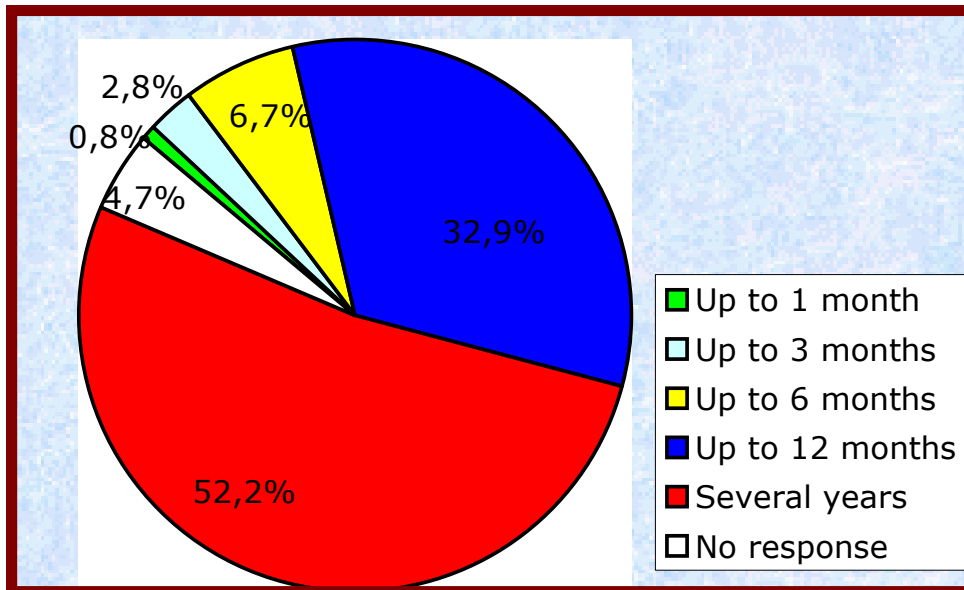
**Graph 3: Distribution of responses to the question "How much money would you need to initiate new or expand already existent business" in the group of PrIDPs stating to be able to set up a credit-stimulated business (n=897)**



**Graph 4: Distribution of responses to the question "How many employees would you be able to employ within the credit-stimulated business?" in the group of PrIDPs stating to be able to set up a credit-stimulated business (n=897)**



**Graph 5: Distribution of responses to the question "Time needed to start a new business since the moment of credit approval?" in the group of PrIDPs stating to be able to set up a credit-stimulated business (n=897)**



**Graph 6: Distribution of responses to the question "Time needed for credit repayment since the moment of credit approval?" in the group of PrIDPs stating to be able to set up a credit-stimulated business (n=897)**



Regarding the examined educational and occupational characteristics, the PrIDPs are characterized by:

- Mainly secondary or high education and a more favourable educational structure than the existent one of the overall population in Serbia;
- Relatively most frequent occupations are office workers, secondary educated technicians and specialists in humanities and law;
- Possession of additional working skills like handicrafts, office and computer skills, crafts and services;
- Relatively unfavourable self-estimate of personal ability to earn resulting more from objective than subjective possibilities;
- Relatively favourable self-estimate of personal managerial abilities and prevailing readiness for credited entrepreneurship.

## C. The Financial Status And Living Conditions Of IDPs From Prizren Area

### Financial status before displacement

The financial situation before their displacement was appraised by most IDPs as "approximately the same as the one typical for most other people" ( 38,3 %), "good" (26,7%) or "very good" (13,3 %). A far smaller number of IDPs assess the financial situation before their displacement as "bad" (7,1 %) or extremely bad (8,9 %) and no estimate was given by 5, 8 % examinees.

### Employment

Within the group of PrIDPs there is a somewhat higher percentage of the employed persons than usual in the case of refugee populations. While there is, according to the data gathered on refugee populations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, about 10% refugees in part-time or full-time employment (Milosavljević, 2000), in the group of PrIDPs there are 19,9% employed persons. Nevertheless, the number of non-employed (75,2 %) is also much the largest within this group, while 4,9 % examinees gave no data on employment.

In the male group, the number of the employed is proportionally somewhat larger than in the female one (23,4% to 18,5 %; *Gender by Employment Chi Square = 5, 47; df = 1; p < 0.05*). Employment is also relatively more frequent within the IDPs of higher educational level than within those IDPs of lower educational level. (*Education by Employment Chi Square = 63,85; df = 3; p < 0.001*).

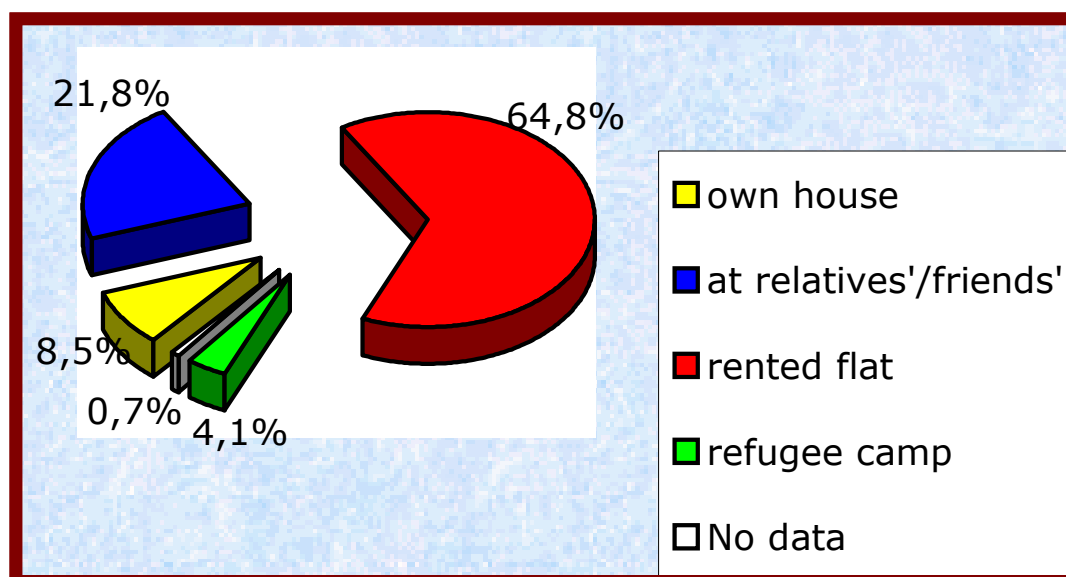
### Monthly income

Nearly half (41,5 %) PrIDPs give no data on their monthly income, which is quite understandable concerning this group. The average monthly income per family member of those stating the data is 27,07 DEM. Taking into account only the monthly income of those IDPs giving the relevant data on their income (n= 954), 55,1% IDPs earn an income under 20 DEM, and 30,1% from 20 to 40 DEM. Under the families with the monthly income per member ranging from 40 to 60 DEM come 10,1% of IDPs stating this information. Finally, only 4,7% of IDPs stating the information on income live in the families with the monthly income per member over 60 DEM.

Social security aid (if received) is paid to 46 (2, 8 %) PrIDPs. The average sum of aid is 14,91 DEM per family member, not in a single case exceeding 50 DEM per family member.

### Accommodation in exile

The largest number of PrIDPs are currently privately accommodated in a rented flat (64,8 %) or at kins' or friends' (21,8%; see **Graph 7**). A house or flat is owned only by 8,5 %, while 4,1 % PrIDPs live in refugee camps. With regard to the proportion of accommodation in collective centres, PrIDPs are completely similar to the refugee populations from Croatia and Bosnia wherein the percentage of refugees accommodated in refugee centres was about 3% (Kaličanin et al., 1994). However, while the vast majority of



**Graph 7: Relative frequencies (in %) of different types of PrIDPs accommodation in exile**

refugee population, at least at the initial stage of their refugee lives, lived at kins' and friends', in the PrIDPs population prevail those privately accommodated in rented flats.

### Type, frequency and satisfaction with the received humanitarian aid

The question with reference to the type of the humanitarian aid received was answered by 93,6 % PrIDPs with one or at the most three different types of aid specified. Five most frequently mentioned

types of the received aid were: food (91,3%), clothing items (40,2 %) , hygiene items (12,1%), home furnishing (1,2 %) and medicines (1 %). Among humanitarian organizations providing aid, the PrIDPs most frequently state The Red Cross, The Karitas, Čovekoljublje (The Philanthropy), Hleb života (The Bread of life) and The DRC.

During last year, the largest number of PrIDPs (76,3 %) received aid once a month or more frequently. Aid was given to 16,2 % once in three months, and 4,9 % PrIDPs received it even more rarely; on 2,6 % PrIDPs the information lacks.

The PrIDPs are by far more frequently dissatisfied than satisfied with the given humanitarian aid. Completely or mostly dissatisfied with the given aid is 74,9 % IDPs. Of the total number of IDPs, 11,6 % examinees are mostly or completely satisfied; whether being satisfied or not 10,7 % of them could not give a sure answer to, while 2,9 % gave no information on this issue. The obvious dissatisfaction of PrIDPs with the humanitarian aid they received was also manifested by the fact that answering to the question asking them to precise what they are satisfied or dissatisfied with:

- a) only 16,4% state what they are satisfied with while
- b) **67,2%** examinees state the type of the aid they were dissatisfied with.

Within the types of aid they were satisfied with, the IDPs most frequently reported food (9,6%), everything (2,6%) and hygiene items (1,4%), while most frequently they are dissatisfied with quality (26,8%), everything (12,2 %), quantity (11,2 %), food (9,9%) and frequency of aid (8,5 %).

### **Current need for humanitarian aid**

Only **9** of 1630 IDPs (0,6 %) give a negative answer to the question "do you consider the humanitarian aid needed", while 25 (1,5%) do not answer the question. All the remaining IDPs (**97,9%**) answer **affirmatively** to this question. Five most frequently stated types of aid considered most needed are: **clothing items, food, home furnishing, house renting money and heating fuel.**

When relative frequencies of particular types of aid are compared with regard to the number of IDPs they were distributed to and the IDPs' estimate of their current need (see **Table 6**), it is noticed that **house renting money and heating fuel** are considerably more frequently stated as indispensable than stated as the type of aid received. Likewise, food, clothing items and hygiene items are considerably more frequently stated as a type of aid received than the types of aid currently most needed.



**Table 6: Relative frequencies of particular types of humanitarian aid with regard to that how often they were received up to now and how necessary they are currently considered to be by IDPs.**

<b>Type of humanitarian aid</b>	<b>The percentage of PrIDPs stating to have received the given type of aid* (n=1630)</b>	<b>The percentage of PrIDPs considering the given type of aid most needed* (n = 1630)</b>
<b>food</b>	91,3	27,9
<b>clothing items</b>	40,2	30,1
<b>hygiene items</b>	12,1	0,8
<b>home furnishing</b>	1,2	15,2
<b>medicines</b>	1,0	4,3
<b>heating fuel</b>	1,0	9,3
<b>money (credit)</b>	0,4	2,3
<b>house renting money</b>	0	12,9
<b>everything</b>	0	5,1

\*Note: Respondents could state more than one type of aid, so percentages in column may total >100.



The prominent characteristics of PrIDPs with reference to the financial status and living conditions are:

- Low monthly incomes, in the greatest number of cases not exceeding 40 DEM per family member;
- Private accommodation in a rented flat or at relatives' and friends' as a prevailing type of accommodation in exile;
- Dissatisfaction with humanitarian aid, especially with quality, quantity and frequency of the aid.

## **D. The Mental Health Status Of Prizren Area IDPs And Its Relation To Their Pervious And Current Living Conditions And Individual Characteristics**

### **Exposure to extremely stressful life events**

The data on the exposure to the extremely stressful life events given on Life event check list (LECL) were gathered for the total of 1212 examinees, which represents 74,4 % of the whole PrIDPs sample. **Table 7** shows the relative frequency of exposure to each of the listed extremely stressful life events. The greatest part of PrIDPs was personally exposed as a victim or a witness to a considerable number of stressors listed in LECL:

- ✓ The greatest number of those on whom the data were available (48,1 % ) underwent from 4 do 10 extremely stressful life events, 39,2 % had 1 to 3 of such events, 1,8% experienced from 11 to 15 of such stressors, while 10,9 % of them were not personally exposed to any of such events listed;
- ✓ Of 132 PrIDPs who personally underwent none of the listed events, nearly half of them (65) at least witnessed one of these events.

Due to the fact that 'a loss of a family member' was not included in LECL, a separate question in the General Questionnaire elicited this information. Within the PrIDPs group (n=1630), 131 persons (8,0%) state to have a family member missing in the course of war without knowing what has happened to them.

**Table 7: Relative frequencies of exposure to particular extremely stressful life events in the sample of IDPs from Prizren area**

<b><i>Extremely stressful life event</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of responses "It happened to me" (n=1212)*</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of responses "I only witnessed that" (n=1212)*</i></b>
Combat exposure	55,3	10,0
Sudden death of a close person	44,1	7,7
Deep suffer	42,5	8,6
Natural disaster	36,8	8,7
Fire or explosion	30,9	15,9
Direct physical assault	27,6	8,0
Other very stressful event or experience not listed	27,4	2,6
Exposure to toxic agents	22,2	5,8
Traffic accident	22,1	10,5
Direct assault by firearms or cold steel	19,6	8,9
Life threatening injury or disease	14,8	4,6
Serious accident at work, at home or during recreation	14,1	6,5
Sudden violent death (suicide or homicide)	10,2	9,8
Imprisonment (hostage, prisoner of war...)	3,6	1,3
Serious injury, damage or death you caused	3,0	0,7
Unwanted sexual experiences (excluding rape)	1,4	0,7
Sexual assault (Rape and forcible sexual activity)	1,2	0,8

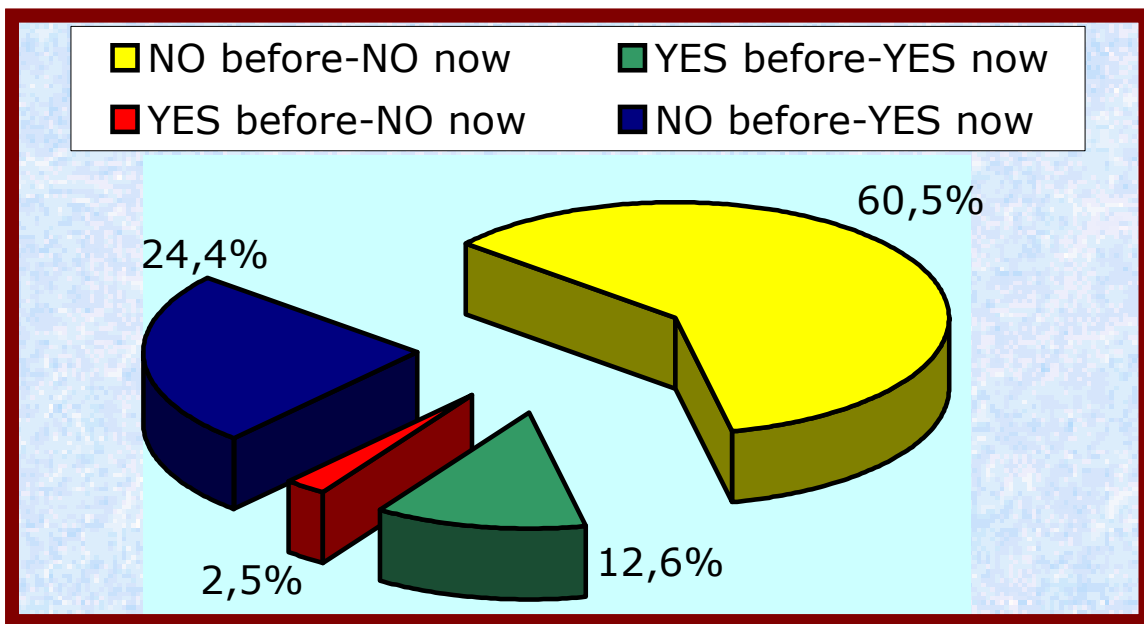
Note: Respondents could report more than one experience, so percentages in column may total >100.

## Current mental health status

As being explained under INSTRUMENTS, the current mental health status of IDPs is estimated based upon the examinees self-estimates in the General Questionnaire as well as the scores on the Impact of Event Scale (IES) and Symptom Check List (SCL-90-R).

Compared with the period prior to exile, the IDPs mental health condition deteriorated:

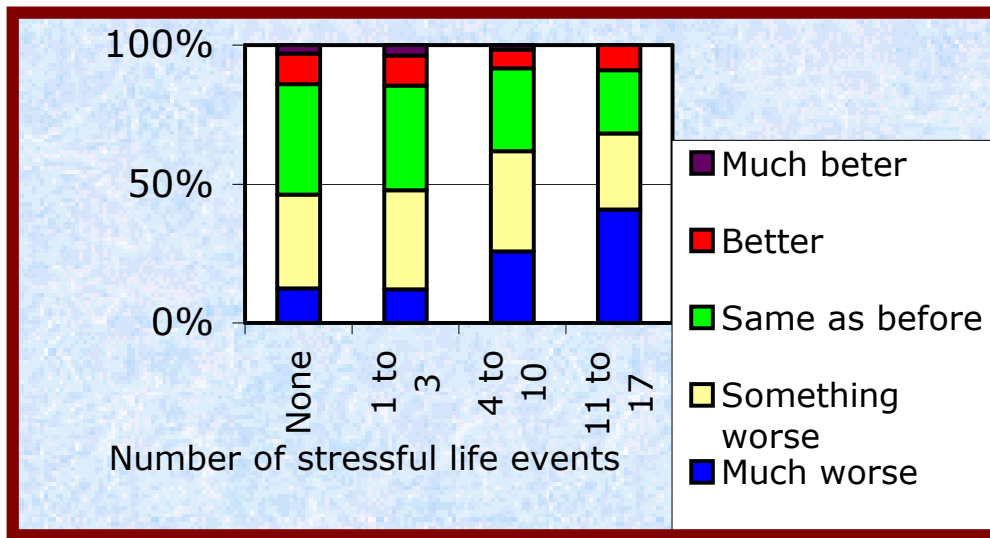
- ✓ While 6,6 % PrIDPs before bombardment of FRY (and their displacement) felt the need for professional help due to psychological difficulties, now 26 % of them have this need (*Felt need before by felt need now Chi square = 80,61, df =3, p < 0.0001*);
- ✓ Though the greatest part of PrIDP population, with regard to the tranquillizer use, remained in the same category as before exile (see **Graph 8**), deteriorating changes, when occurring, are more frequent than enhancing ones. Of the total number of PrIDPs, with the relevant data available, (n = 1465 or 90% of the whole sample), 60,5% of them neither used tranquillizers before exile nor use it now while 12,6 % keeps using them. In 2,5 % cases tranquillizers were used no more and **24,4%** started taking tranquillizers in exile. The deteriorating tendency is more conspicuous if the given data are seen in the following way: within the PrIDP group taking tranquillizers before the bombardment of FRY, i.e. before exile, 16,3 % gave up using drugs, while within the PrIDPs not previously taking tranquillizers at all, tranquillizers are now consumed by no less than 28,7 % of them (*McNemar test for change: p < 0.0001*);
- ✓ The current mental health condition is most frequently perceived even by PrIDPs themselves as "much worse" (19%) or "somewhat worse" (32,8 %). Their current mental condition is self-estimated as "same as before" by 32,5 % of IDPs, while 10,9 % sees it as "better" or "much better".



Note: **No before - No Now** = Tranquillizers neither were used before exile nor they are used now; **Yes before - No Now** = Tranquillizers were used before exile but are not used now; **Yes before - Yes Now** = Tranquillizers were used before exile and are used now; **No before - Yes Now** = Tranquillizers were not used before exile but are used now.

**Graph 8: Tranquillizer use before exile and now in the Prizren area IDP Group**

- ✓ The deteriorating mental health condition is not related to neither the gender of IDPs (*Current psychological condition by Gender: Chi square = 4,07, df = 4, n.s*), family's average monthly income (*One-Way Anova with Current psychological condition as a factor: F = 0,92, n.s*) nor the type of accommodation (*Type of accommodation by Current psychological condition: Chi square = 20,13; df =12; n.s*). The self-estimation of IDPs' current mental health condition is related to their age (*Categorized age by Current psychological conditions: Chi square = 91,03, df =20, p < 0.0001*), education (*Education by Current psychological conditions: Chi square = 34,70; df =12; p < 0.01*) and, particularly, to the extensivity of exposure to stressful life events (*Categorized number of stressful life events by Current psychological conditions: Chi square = 51,69, df =12, p < 0.0001*). The feeling of deteriorating mental health condition is more frequently experienced by the older ones than the younger, the IDPs of higher-education level compared with the lower-educated, as well as by those having over 4 stressful life events than those undergoing a smaller number of such event (see **Graph 9**).



**Graph 9: Distributions of self-estimates of current mental health condition with regard to the condition before exile according to the extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events**

The distressing picture of current PrIDPs psychological conditions also emerges from the results obtained by the objective measures through IES and SCL-90-R questionnaires (see **Table 8**):

- ✓ Mean Global Severity Index of PrIDPs, as a measure of current psychopathological status and global distress (SCL-90-R), is above the American non-clinical adult population norm by 3,74 standard deviation unit. (Since norms related to SCL-90-R for the normal population in our country are not at our disposal, the raw scores on this instrument are transformed into deviation scores with regard to norms obtained on the non-clinical USA population. Thus, the IDPs' deviation scores are expressed in the standard deviation/of normative USA sample/ unit).

**Table 8: Means (and standard deviations) on Impact of event scales and SCL-90-R Global Severity Index in the Groups of PrIDPs, RPKoIDPs and Bosnian&Croatian Refugees**

Scale	Gender	GROUP *		
		PrIDPs Females=443 Males=460	RPKoIDPs Females=411 Males=381	B&Cr R Females=28 Males=42
<b>Intrusion (IES)</b>	Females	23,12 (9,51)	23,30 (9,75)	18,79 (11,94)
	Males	20,80 (10,31)	20,10 (10,25)	18,43 (11,47)
	Total	21,94 (9,99)	21,76 (10,12)	18,64 (11,67)
<b>Avoidance (IES)</b>	Females	21,98 (9,24)	22,54 (9,80)	20,36 (11,35)
	Males	21,84 (9,86)	21,01 (10,30)	21,32 (11,74)
	Total	21,91 (9,56)	21,80 (10,06)	20,74 (11,44)
<b>Global Severity Index (SCL-90-R)**</b>	Females	3,10 (2,20)	3,45 (2,39)	3,51 (2,39)
	Males	4,36 (3,41)	4,01 (3,27)	4,93 (3,14)
	Total	3,74 (2,95)	3,72 (2,86)	4,08 (2,78)

\*PrIDPs=Internally Displaced Persons from Prizren area; RPKoIDPs=Remaining parts of Kosovo; B&CR R=Refugees from Bosnia and Croatia.  
 \*\*Mean scores on SCL-90-R are mean deviations (in standard deviation of normative sample units) from the norms of the American nonclinical population.

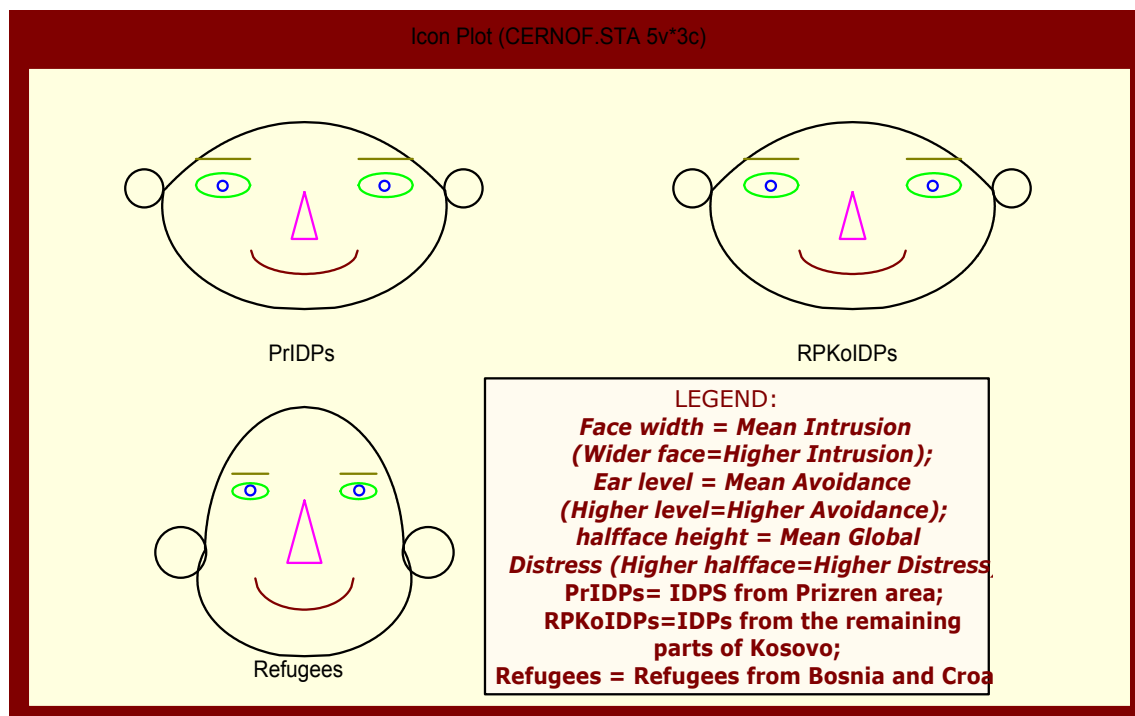
- ✓ Even the **average** results gained from this subsample of PrIDPs on the intrusion and avoidance scales as measures of the stress response syndrome and posttraumatic distress (see **Table 8**) fall into the zone stated by IES scale designers as the zone of **high**-level posttraumatic distress (Horowitz et al., 1979)! Namely, Horowitz et al., based upon their up-to-that-time experience acquired through work with traumatized persons, proposed that the examinees, according to the results obtained on the IES scales, can be divided into three groups with regard to the level of posttraumatic stress: low, medium and high. The scores less than 9 indicates a *low level*, the one ranging from 9 to 19 *medium*, while the scores over 19 point out the *high* level of posttraumatic distress. Applying these criteria to the PrIDPs with the intrusion and avoidance scores available (n = 1040



or 63,8 % of the whole sample), the following conclusions could be reached:

- Rated on the intrusion scale, **66,9%** of PrIDPs have a **high** posttraumatic distress, 18,7 % comes under medium, and 14,4% is under the category of a low posttraumatic stress;
- According to the results on the avoidance scale **65,9 %** PrIDPs fall into the group with a **high** level of posttraumatic distress, 23,1 % of them has medium, and 11,0 % has a low-level distress.

- ✓ With regard to the current psychopathological status and mean level of intrusion and avoidance, there are almost no differences between the PrIDPs and the RPKoIDPs (see **Table 8** and **Graph 10**; *Multivariate F for factor Area /levels:Prizren-Remaining parts of Kosovo/=0,04* ).



**Graph 10: Chernoff faces: Profiles on the IES, SCL-90-R) scales for the groups of PrIDP, RPKoIDP and Bosnian&Croatian Refugees**

- ✓ Therefore, the majority of the whole Kosovo IDPs population could be considered to have an extremely high level of global distress and upsettingly high levels of posttraumatic intrusion and avoidance. Taking into consideration that so high mean levels of intrusion and avoidance observed in the group of PrIDPs are accompanied with high average scores on the anxiety, paranoid ideation and somatization SCL-90-R

scales (see **Table 9**), it can be supposed that a considerable number of IDPs have not successfully completed the stage of working through traumatic experiences yet (cf. Horowitz, 1997);

**Table 9: Means (and standard deviations) on SCL-90-R Symptom dimension scales in the PrIDPs Group**

<b>SCL-90-R Scale</b>	<b>Mean (Standard deviation) in the Prizren area IDPs group* (n=903)</b>
<b>Somatization</b>	3,18 (2,77)
<b>Obsessive-compulsive</b>	2,67 (2,13)
<b>Interpersonal Sensitivity</b>	2,82 (2,44)
<b>Depression</b>	2,83 (2,47)
<b>Anxiety</b>	3,33 (3,10)
<b>Hostility</b>	2,60 (2,35)
<b>Phobic Anxiety</b>	3,27 (3,70)
<b>Paranoid Ideation</b>	3,24 (2,05)
<b>Psychoticism</b>	3,32 (3,50)

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

- ✓ The level of intrusive experiences, assessed by IES scale, in the Prizren group of IDPs is higher with comparison to the one obtained by an earlier research of ours conducted on the sample of 70 refugees (42 females and 28 males; Mean age = 40 years) from Bosnia and Croatia (see **Table 8** and **Graph 10**; *Tukey HSD post-hoc test for PrIDPs and refugees groups: Mean difference = 3,29;  $p < 0.05$* ). Both the level of avoidance, assessed by IES scale, and the level of global distress, assessed by SCL-90-R, in the Prizren area IDPs are similar to the levels gained from the group of refugees from Bosnia and Croatia.

## Relations of Current Mental Health Status of Prizren Area IDPs to their previous and current living conditions and individual characteristics

The linear correlation and multiple regression analyses were applied to the subsample of PrIDPs with all the indispensable data available ( $n=510$ ; 258 females and 252 males; Median age = 40,5; Mean age = 41,35). The results of correlation analysis (see **Table 10**) and the three respective multiple regression analyses with IES intrusion scale, IES avoidance scale and SCL-R-90 global severity index (see **Table 11**) as criterion variables and Gender (females =0; males =1), Age (in years), Type of living place before displacement (village =0, town = 1), Asking for medical help because of psychological difficulties before exile (NO=0, YES =1), Number of experienced extremely stressful life events and personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) as predictors, suggest the following conclusions:

- ✓ The individual differences of PrIDPs with regard to intrusion can be partially explained by age and gender differences, and, primarily, by individual differences in the extensity of exposure to very stressful life events (see **Table 11**;  $Multiple R = 0,40$ ;  $F_{(10;499)} = 9,36$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The elderly, females and those with the larger number of experienced very stressful life events, generally speaking, have a higher level of posttraumatic distress intrusion component compared respectively to the younger persons, males and those having fewer potentially traumatic life events.
- ✓ Individual differences of PrIDPs with regard to posttraumatic avoidance may be partially accounted for only by individual differences in the extensity of exposure to very stressful life events (see **Table 11**;  $Multiple R = 0,26$ ;  $F_{(10;499)} = 3,58$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The IDPs undergoing a larger number of potentially traumatic life events, generally, have a higher level of posttraumatic distress avoidance component than the persons with fewer stressful life events.

**Table 10: Matrix of correlations of IES scales and SCL-90-R Global Severity Index with Gender, Age, Type of place fled from, Asking for medical help before exile, Extensity of Exposure to extremely stressful life events and personality traits in the PrIDPs Group (n=510)**

	<i>Intrusion (IES)</i>	<i>Avoidance (IES)</i>	<i>Global Severity Index (SCL-90-R)</i>
<b>Gender</b>	-0,14**	-0,02	0,21**
<b>Age</b>	0,23**	0,11*	0,23**
<b>Type of place fled from</b>	-0,05	-0,01	0,11*
<b>Asking for medical help before exile</b>	0,01	-0,05	0,16**
<b>Extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events (LECL)</b>	0,29**	0,22**	0,36**
<b>Neuroticism (NEOFFI)</b>	0,02	0,02	0,02
<b>Extraversion (NEOFFI)</b>	-0,03	-0,01	-0,08
<b>Openness (NEOFFI)</b>	-0,08	-0,08	-0,05
<b>Agreeableness (NEOFFI)</b>	0,03	0,02	-0,01
<b>Conscientiousness (NEOFFI)</b>	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01

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

- ✓ The degree of current psychopathological symptomatology and global distress, displayed by IDPs compared with American normative population, was significantly influenced by the number of experienced extremely stressful life events, gender and age and, at the lesser extent, by the mental health status prior to displacement and the type of place (village/country) fled from (see **Table 11**; *Multiple R* = 0,47;  $F_{(10;499)} = 14,17$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 11: Standardized regression coefficients for predictors in three separate multiple regression analyses (with IES intrusion and avoidance scales and SCL-90-R Global Severity Index as Criterion variables) in the PrIDPs Group (n=510)**

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>Dependent variable</b>		
	<b>Intrusion (IES)</b>	<b>Avoidance (IES)</b>	<b>Global Severity Index (SCL-90-R)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	-0,15**	-0,03	0,18**
<b>Age</b>	0,19**	0,08	0,16**
<b>Type of place fled from</b>	-0,05	-0,01	0,09*
<b>Asking for medical help before exile</b>	-0,04	-0,08	0,10*
<b>Extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events (LECL)</b>	0,28**	0,22**	0,32**
<b>Neuroticism (NEOFFI)</b>	0,03	0,04	-0,01
<b>Extraversion (NEOFFI)</b>	-0,01	0,02	-0,08
<b>Openness (NEOFFI)</b>	-0,01	-0,08	-0,04
<b>Agreeableness (NEOFFI)</b>	-0,06	0,03	0,03
<b>Conscientiousness (NEOFFI)</b>	-0,03	-0,01	-0,01

\*Coefficient is significant at 0,05 level; \*\* Coefficient is significant at 0,01 level

Broadly speaking, the IDPs having a larger number of potentially traumatic life events show somewhat more conspicuous distress than those experiencing a smaller number of very stressful life events. Also, the male or elderly IDPs generally express higher global distress than females or younger IDPs, respectively. In the end, the IDPs fled from town or displaced with prior psychological difficulties generally have somewhat higher global

distress than the IDPs living in a village before displacement or IDPs with no prior psychological difficulties.



The main characteristics of the Prizren area IDPs with regard to their current mental health conditions are:

- Exposure to a large number of very stressful life events;
- Sense of deteriorating current mental health condition compared with their mental health condition prior to exile, particularly in the elderly, more highly educated displaced or IDPs previously experiencing a great number of stressful life events;
- Extremely high level of posttraumatic response syndrome, particularly intrusive component, especially in the females, elderly or IDPs exposed to the cumulative effect of large number of very stressful life events;
- High level of current psychopathological symptomatology, especially marked in the males, elderly or IDPs exposed to the cumulative effect of large number of very stressful life events;
- Dominance of anxiety, psychoticism, paranoid ideation and somatization symptoms of current psychopathology.

## E. Position Of Prizren Area IDPs On Return To Their Home Area: Is The Position They Hold On Returning To The Homeland Related To Their Previous And Current Living Conditions And Individual Characteristics?

### Position of PrIDPs on return to home areas

The overwhelming majority of PrIDPs, 1402 of them (86% of the whole sample) accept the possibility of returning to the homeland only under certain conditions, while 68 (4,2 %) would return under any conditions. The number of PrIDPs who would never return to the place fled from is 144 (8,8 %), while there is a negligible number of displacees (16 or 1 %) who gave no answer to this question. There are no differences at all between the PrIDPs and RPKoIDPs with regard to the position on return (*Area by Position on return: Chi square = 2,94; df =2; n.s.*).

As can be seen on **Table 12**, the most frequently stated conditions making the return possible are the following:

- a) guaranteed **safety in the home area** ("If our army were returned and safety were guaranteed", "If the Albanians were expelled");
- b) free access to the property in the possession before exile ("If the property were given back", "If the property were given back and regular income were guaranteed")

**Table 12: Distribution of responses to the question "Would you return to the place where you lived before exile?" in the sample of IDPs from Prizren area**

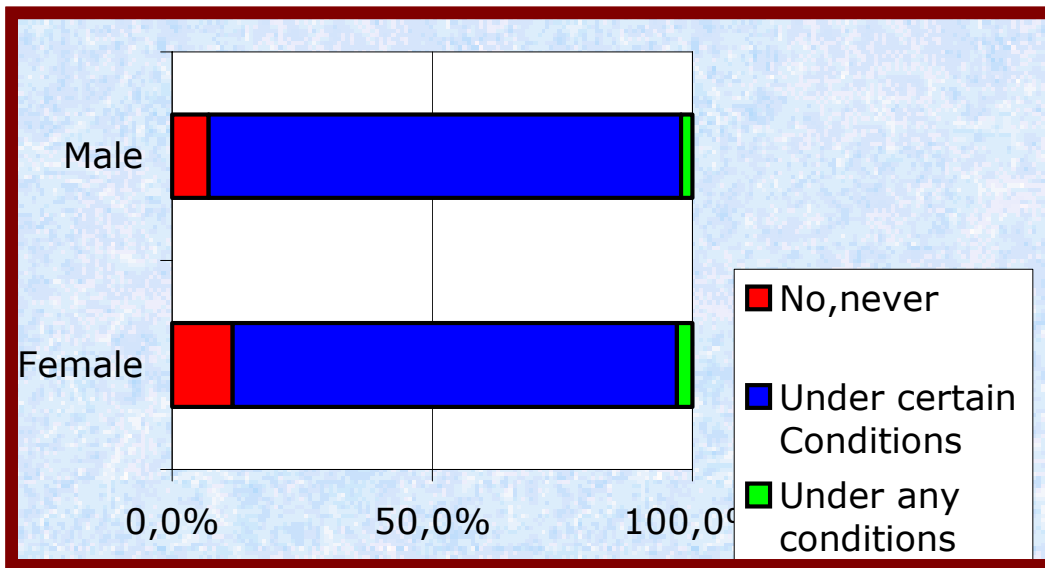
<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>% (n=1630)</b>
Yes, under any conditions	68	4,2
Yes, under certain (unspecified) conditions	105	6,4
Yes, if safety were guaranteed and the Yugoslav army and police returned	861	52,8
Yes, if the property were given back	45	2,8
Yes, if the Yugoslav army and police were returned, safety guaranteed, a free access to the property were assured	260	16,0
Yes, if regular income were guaranteed	2	0,1
Yes, if the property were given back and regular income guaranteed	15	0,9
Yes, if the Yugoslav state integrity were reestablished	47	2,8
Yes, if the Albanians were expelled	53	3,3
Yes, if help in home reconstruction were provided	14	0,9
I would never return	144	8,8
No response	16	1,0



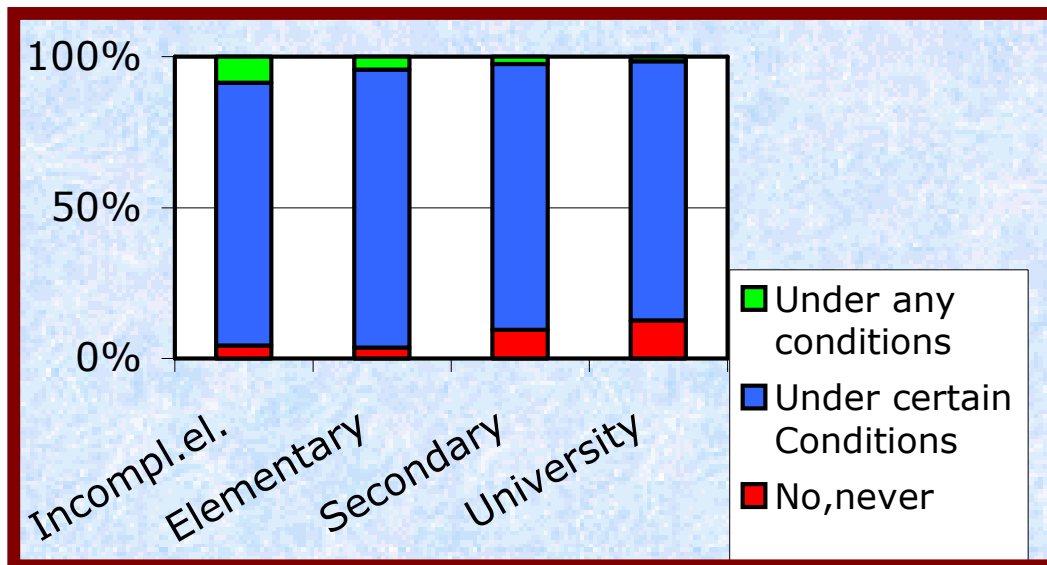
## Relations of PrIDPs' Position on Return to Home Areas to their previous and current living conditions and individual characteristics

The analyses of potential relationships between Position on return on the one hand and Gender, Age, Education, Employment, Monthly income per family member (categorized), Current accommodation, Type of place fled from (town-village) on the other hand, were made on the subsample of 832 PrIDPs (431 females and 401 males) on whom all the indispensable data were available. Of all the variables employed in these analyses, only Gender and Education are associated with Position on return (*Gender by Position on return: Cramer's  $V=0,09$ ;  $p=0,05$ ; Education by Position on return: Cramer's  $V=0,09$ ;  $p<0,05$* ). Within the females, there is a larger number of those who would never return to home areas, than it is the case with the males. On the other hand, within the group of males there is a larger proportion of those who would return under certain conditions, than it is in the group of females (see **Graph 11**). Furthermore, within the groups of PrIDPs with secondary or advanced/university education, the answer "I would never return" is relatively more represented than it is in the lower educated persons (see **Graph 12**).

The analyses of possible relationships between the Extensity of exposure to extremely stressful life events and Current mental health status (The need for a talk with a professional due to the psychological difficulties, Current use of tranquillizers, Self-estimate of current psychological condition with regard to the condition prior to exile, Intrusion, Avoidance and Global distress levels) on the one hand and Position on return on the other hand was made on the subsample of 769 PrIDPs (372 females; 402 males) on whom all the required data were available. These analyses suggest that the position on return to home areas is associated only with the current level of intrusion (*Intrusion level /low, medium, high/ by Opinion about return: Cramer's  $V=0,09$ ;  $p<0,05$* ). Namely, within the group of PrIDPs with a high level of intrusive component, the position "I would return under certain conditions" is relatively more frequent than in the PrIDPs with a lower level of intrusion. On the other hand, the positions "I would return under any conditions" and "I would never return " appear relatively more rarely in the group of PrIDPs with a high level of intrusion than it is the case in the group with lower level of intrusion. However, the association between the intrusion level and the position on return to home areas, though statistically significant, is not strong enough to be considered important from the practical point of view.



**Graph 11: Position on return according to gender in the Prizren area IDPs group**



**Graph 12: Position on return according to education in the Prizren area IDPs group**



Regarding the position on return to home areas the PrIDPs could be in the briefest way described as following:

- The overwhelming majority of displacees would return to the home area, but only providing their safety were guaranteed and access to the property in their prior possession assured;
- There is little or no impact of IDPs' personal traits on their position on return to homeland.

## ***IV CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

The main purpose of the research, whose results are reported in this text, was to provide useful information on sociodemographic, educational and professional characteristics of Prizren area IDPs, on their current living conditions, aid needs, current mental health status, and, finally, their position on return to the places they were coerced to leave.

The dominant elements, the picture of the Prizren area IDP population is composed of, outlining in the light of the reported results of this research are:

- ◆ Equal number of the females and males;
- ◆ Adequate representation of all ages;
- ◆ Ethnic homogeneity;
- ◆ Dominance of the "fled from town" people.

- ◆ Favourable educational structure;
- ◆ Solid possession of additional working skills like handicrafts, office and computer skills, crafts and services;
- ◆ Marked readiness for credited entrepreneurship as a rule implying a 5 000 DEM credit incentive, up to 5 workers employed and at least one-year credit repayment term.

- ◆ Predominating sense of humanitarian aid indispensability and concurrent dissatisfaction with humanitarian aid, especially with the quality, quantity and frequency of the aid received up to now;
- ◆ High rate of unemployment, especially in the lower-educated population;
- ◆ Low monthly incomes (if any earned), rarely exceeding 40 DEM per family member.

◆ Difficult current mental health conditions:

- ✓ Prevailing subjective sense of deteriorating mental health condition compared with the condition prior to exile, especially in the elderly, more highly educated displaceds or IDPs previously experiencing a great number of extremely stressful life events;
- ✓ High level of posttraumatic response syndrome, particularly intrusion, especially within the female part of population, elderly persons or persons previously exposed to the cumulative effect of a large number of extremely stressful life events;
- ✓ High level of current psychopathological symptomatology (psychopathological symptoms), especially the symptoms of anxiety, psychoticism, paranoid ideation and somatization.

- ◆ Dominant lack of clear personal decision on the future, i.e. the lack of clear answer to the dilemma whether "to stay (in the new environment) or to return (to the homeland)".

In contrast to the refugee population from the war zones of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in which as usual, at least during the initial phase of refuge life, there was a considerably larger number of females than males, in the population of IDPs from Kosovo, the number of females and males was nearly the same. The balanced gender structure of the Kosovo IDPs results from the twofold fact: firstly, the exodus of non-Albanians from Kosovo was the most massive immediately upon cessation of the bombardment and arrival of international forces; secondly, practically the entire Serbian and somewhere all the Non-Albanian population from certain areas fled their homes concurrently with the withdrawal of Yugoslav army and police. It seems, however, that the fact that (in contrast to many refugee populations from the territory of former Yugoslavia) into exile from Kosovo often set off the complete families neither has contributed to their better financial status in exile nor turned out to be an important protective factor against the devastating effect of the "routine traumatization" (Laufer, cf. Savjak, N. 1998) during the war and NATO bombardment or against the effect of involuntary displacement and adverse living conditions in exile on mental health. Although the "objective" indicators of this IDPs' population mental health status prior to war and displacement lack, and even despite the fact that the data of "objective" indicators (IES, SCL-90-R) on their current psychological conditions were available only for one part

of the sample, **dominant personal estimate** within these people is the one telling about **deterioration** of their **psychological condition**.

The results gathered on "objective" instruments show that both males and females with respect to posttraumatic stress, regardless of the differences among them in the prevailing type of symptoms, come under the vulnerable categories and that, to all appearance, the considerable number of them manifest symptoms of incomplete process of *working through* the traumatic distress, i.e. the indispensability of professional help in facing what has happened.

It is well-known that the social support, material resources and positive selfviewing can represent an important facilitator in effective coping with stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Likewise, the current situation "**neither here nor there**" has an adverse effect on the IDPs' mental health condition.

The practical steps which, as strategies of psychosocial support to PrIDPs' and the way to improve their material and psychological conditions and, consequently, their self-esteem, can be taken with the aim of mitigating their current condition are:

- ✓ Assistance in finding employment, or, concerning those ready for entrepreneurial challenge, help in obtaining credits for starting own business;
- ✓ Accommodation aid or provision of adequate free accommodation;
- ✓ Improving the quality, quantity and frequency of humanitarian aid;
- ✓ Psychological support and help in working through traumatic experiences (including the very process of displacement as well), coping with and completion of posttraumatic process;
- ✓ Assistance in the process of confrontation with the current displacees' status and commencement with the free decision-making process as a contribution to finding durable solutions of their situation in displacement.

Free decision-making as a way of finding durable solutions of their current situation can be an important link in the process of coping with traumas the IDPs have been exposed to up to now. The process of making decision whether to return to the old environment (and reintegrate into it) or to stay in the new environment (and integrate into it) is complex and long-term. In the case of Prizren area IDPs, the case is further aggravated, at least that is how they perceive it, by the hostile social context in their home areas. Namely, the hostility of the Albanian population in the majority, who themselves tasted the bitterness of the refugee life, was one of the factors causing many non-Albanians IDPs' flights. Stating "expelling of the Albanians" (Table 12) as a condition under which their return would be possible, therefore, rather has, one can say, a psychological function of posing the demand for safety assured in the homeland

than it is the expression of ethnical hatred. Besides, the confidence in the international forces stationed on Kosovo mainly from the states taking part in the bombardment of FRY is yet to be, if possible, established.

It seems that most Prizren area IDPs have not even started the process of making decision on durable solutions of their condition in a proper way. Such a conclusion is drawn upon the results stating the lack of relationship between the personal characteristics and their position on return; if it were well along, a greater influence of IDPs' particular status and personal characteristics on the position with regard to return might be expected.

In the answers the Prizren area IDPs gave to the question examining the position on return to home areas, some basic conditions, which might facilitate the decision-making process with regard to that issue, can be discerned:

- ✓ Valid and credible updated information on the safety state in their home areas and guarantees really existing in the home areas. With respect to this, it is of utmost importance to ensure IDPs' access to the experiences the non-Albanian population have with the international forces in the field;
- ✓ Valid and accurate information on the possibility of restitution of or access to the property in their possession prior to displacement;
- ✓ Establishing of information networks between the IDPs in exile and the population who has already returned to Kosovo since these (organized and informal) contacts are an extremely important factor in the "cost-benefit" analysis, which is an unavoidable component of the process of making a decision on a return or permanent stay in the new environment.

Finally, it appears that the current position of the majority of Prizren area IDPs might be best described by the following sentence: though 'the sky above the homeland and the familiar outlines in the horizon' are one of the strongest facilitators of the *wish* in many of them to return to home areas, without (for them acceptable) guarantees of their safety there and possibility of regaining their property, that wish would never turn into a *decision* on return.

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