

Sarajevo Declaration on the Humanitarian Treatment  
of Displaced Persons

The Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ), under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),

Considering the particular problems of displaced persons in Bosnia and Hercegovina,

Acknowledging that they were compelled to leave their homes as a result of the conflict and tensions which affect the neighbouring Republics and some areas of Bosnia and Hercegovina, and which continue to generate new displacement,

Concerned by the tragedy of tens of thousands of people, most of them women, children and the elderly, who all suffer the bitter consequences of the conflict equally, regardless of their ethnic, religious or national origin,

Pledging to promote the respect of internationally recognized human rights, including those applying to displaced persons,

Affirming that voluntary return with full guarantees of security and non-discrimination is the basic right of the displaced and the best means to achieve a lasting solution to their plight,

Acknowledging the deteriorating economy in the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, and the urgent need for increased assistance from the international community to alleviate the situation of the displaced and their host families,

Agreed:

To adhere to the principle that the treatment of displaced persons is to be based on strictly humanitarian, non-political and non-discriminatory criteria and that the drama of displacement is not to be misused for political or sectarian ends,

To promote initiatives at the regional, municipal and local levels aimed at preventing further displacement and at establishing adequate guarantees to allow for the return of the displaced in Bosnia and Hercegovina to their places of origin or former residence,

To support the initiative to establish a tripartite commission between the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina and UNHCR to define principles, guarantees and procedures aimed at facilitating the return of displaced persons to the Republic of Croatia,

To express their gratitude and firm support to UNHCR for the role it is playing in assisting and protecting the displaced and in particular, for the initiatives being undertaken to encourage negotiation and dialogue among all relevant parties.

To call upon all political structures and the supporters of the signatory parties, the military, the republican, municipal and local authorities and the inhabitants of Bosnia and Hercegovina, to cooperate with UNHCR and other international humanitarian organizations and to provide them the protection and support required for the fulfilment of their humanitarian functions,

To draw the attention of the international community to the grave economic situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina, aggravated by the presence of close to 100,000 displaced persons in the Republic and to seek international support and cooperation both on a bilateral and multilateral basis, through UNHCR or other humanitarian agencies,

To promote the strengthening of the local, established relief structures in order to ensure the efficient distribution of assistance according to non-political, non-sectarian criteria,

To meet again at the initiative of any one of the undersigned parties in order to evaluate the implementation of this agreement, and to adopt further resolutions as may be considered appropriate,

To disseminate this Declaration through all channels at the disposal of the undersigned,

(Signed):

Alija IZETBOGOVIC  
President  
Party of Democratic  
Action

(Signed):

Radovan KARADZIC  
President  
Serbian Democratic  
Party

(Signed):

Miljenko BRKIC  
President  
Croatian Democratic  
Community

Under the auspices of:  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(Signed) Jose Maria MENDILUCE  
Special Envoy of the  
High Commissioner

11 April 1992