

One of the priorities of the Republic of Serbia is the respect, protection, and promotion of human rights at both national and international levels, in line with the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments.

The Republic of Serbia is committed to meeting international standards in the domain of human rights and humanitarian law. Serbia is a party to a large number of major international instruments, including: the Slavery Convention, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its protocols: Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; the Convention on the Status of Refugees, the Protocol on the Status of Refugees, the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons, Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, the Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick, and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, the Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and the Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Protocol additional to the Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, Protocol additional to the Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts, Protocol additional to the Geneva Convention relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem.

### Cooperation within the United Nations

The Republic of Serbia actively participates in the work of the organs and mechanisms of the United Nations and other international organizations in the human rights field. It devotes particular attention to the work of the UN Human Rights Council and its mechanisms and partakes in the work of the GA's Third Committee dealing with human rights issues.

The Republic of Serbia actively cooperates with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (it extended to its experts in 2005 an open invitation to visit Serbia). Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights N. Pillay visited Serbia in June 2013, and Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Dr. Beyani visited Serbia in October 2013. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances was on a working visit to Serbia in June 2014, during which it was acquainted with the issues of the missing persons. Ms. Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, is due to visit Serbia in 2015.

Given the position that the enhancement and protection of human rights should be based upon the principles of cooperation and open dialogue, the Republic of Serbia actively participates in the Universal Periodic Review, a unique mechanism within the UN Human Rights Council where the record of human rights in all countries world-wide is being reviewed. The second periodic report on the human rights situation in the Republic of Serbia was presented within this

mechanism in January 2013.

### UN Treaty Bodies

- The Republic of Serbia has ratified the majority of the leading UN international instruments in the field of human rights:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on individual complaints mechanism and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of death penalty;

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);

- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment relating to regular visits of national and international experts to correctional institutions

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD);

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women relating to individual complaints and investigation procedures;

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED);

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on individual complaints procedure.

In compliance with its treaty obligations, the Republic of Serbia submits periodic reports on the implementation of the ratified conventions to the relevant UN committees. The Republic of Serbia presented in 2014 its periodic report on the application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, while the presentation of the initial report on the application of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances is due in February 2015, and the report on the application of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is due in April 2015.

### Displaced persons

Due to a large number of persons facing protracted displacement (both refugees from the regions of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija), the Republic of Serbia devotes special attention to this issue. In this regard, it is actively involved in actions at the international level with the aim of enhancing the situation and full protection of the rights of refugees and IDPs.

The Republic of Serbia regularly participates in the meetings of the UNHCR Executive Committee that it joined in 2002. First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic attended the 65th session of the Executive Committee in Geneva, on 30 September 2014.

The Republic of Serbia is committed to full implementation of the Regional Housing Programme intended to provide housing for the refugees. The Regional Housing Programme is a part of a broader process of regional cooperation in the process of finding durable solutions to the problems facing refugees (restoration of occupant's rights and the reconstruction of property, convalidation of years of work and the unpaid pensions, residence status and citizenship for returnees, restitution of agricultural holdings to their lawful proprietors, participation in the privatization process, issues of the missing persons and the safety situation concerning returnees).

The Regional Housing Programme aims to secure housing solutions for 16 780 most vulnerable refugee families in Serbia over the next five years.

The Republic of Serbia has so far submitted five subproject proposals to the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) that manages the RHP Fund, amounting to EUR 87 534 811.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Commission for Coordination of the Permanent Integration Process of refugees and Chair of the RHP Steering Committee, took part in a media event on 2 October 2014, marking the launch of the RHP implementation in Serbia. A visit to the beneficiary family in the village of Krnjesevci near Stara Pazova that had been allocated construction material was organized on the occasion, and contracts with representatives of nine municipalities and cities where 200 flats are to be built in the framework of the RHP second wave were signed.

The Republic of Serbia is first in Europe according to the number of the internally displaced persons facing protracted displacement. A large number of Serbs and other ethnic groups (thirty-one groups in total) had since 1999 been forced to leave their homes in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija and to seek shelter in other parts of Serbia. The number of IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija amounts to around 220 000, out of which 18 000 are displaced within the Province.

The Republic of Serbia invests efforts aimed at consistent implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) which specifically stipulates the "ensuring of free and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo", under UNHCR monitoring, as one of the major tasks of the international presence in Kosovo and Metohija. Quarterly reports by the United Nations Secretary-General on UNMIK, which are reviewed in the Security Council, point to a worrying trend of a decreased return of internally displaced persons.

The Republic of Serbia has made continuous efforts at the international level to the effect of creating conditions for durable solutions, which implies that the IDPs are free to choose to return or to integrate in the place of displacement, as well as full respect of these persons'

human rights.

### Missing persons

The Republic of Serbia is committed to the issue of unearthing the fate of persons missing in the former SFRY territory, considering that the right to truth is one of the fundamental human rights, and that the process of true reconciliation in the region hinges on the possibility for the families to realize their right to find out the truth about the fate of their loved ones.

The Republic of Serbia has undertaken a number of activities aimed at resolving this issue at the national level, and through regional-level cooperation.

Presidents of four countries from the region (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia) signed the Mostar Declaration on the Role of the State in Addressing the Issue of Persons Missing as a Consequence of Armed Conflict and Human Rights Abuses, on 29 August 2014.

### National minorities

Having in mind that Serbia is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual country, it pays special attention to bilateral cooperation with its neighbours, and particularly to the protection and promotion of the situation of national minorities. In this context, several bilateral agreements have been entered into with the neighbouring countries.

### World Humanitarian Summit

As one of the four member states of the Regional Europe and Others Disaster Management Group, the Republic of Serbia actively participates in the preparation of the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in 2016.

Within the framework of preparations for the Istanbul Summit, a regional consultation meeting of the Europe and Others Group was held in Budapest, February 2015.

### International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

The Republic of Serbia actively cooperates with a large number of international actors over a wide range of humanitarian issues, both in terms of respect and development of international humanitarian law, and concrete activities on the ground.

Preparations for the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to be held from 8 to 10 December 2015 in Geneva, are currently underway.