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A Learning Process: The Implementation and Effects of Returnee Policies in Post-War Bosnia-Herzegovina

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**A LEARNING PROCESS: THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTS OF
RETURNEE POLICIES IN POST-WAR BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA**

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There are nearly 17.1 million refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers in the world today. Eighty percent are women and children. Two million of those refugees and IDPs originated from Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995. According to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees report, Bosnia reached 1 million returnees this March. The Dayton Peace Accords, signed in 1995, provided the legal framework for returning refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes of origin, outlining the actors in this process - specifically the UNHCR, but also other international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the international community, and the Bosnia-Herzegovina government. Beyond this outline, there was no clear implementation plan. Analyzing the process, the mistakes, and the triumphs Bosnia-Herzegovina faced through the return process, and using BiH as a case-study, other countries can overcome the obstacles. (The lessons learned in Bosnia-Herzegovina have already helped the return process in Kosovo and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.) The world continues to face refugee, internal displacement, and returnee issues due to civil, political, and economic strife. The international community, local governments, and international and local NGOs are trying to assist in these situations, hoping to alleviate the problems. Looking over my interviews and evaluating the situation from my understanding, I have found the greatest challenge these actors face is a lack of communication.