

NEPAL

NEPAL IN SHORT



IN SHORT

Main Objectives

- Protect and assist Bhutanese refugees until a durable solution is found.
- Support bilateral efforts by the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal to identify such a solution.
- Emphasise self-help activities and encourage the active involvement of refugees in the management of their daily lives.
- Help and assist Tibetan arrivals in transit, and advise other asylum-seekers on legal matters linked to their right to international protection.

Planning Figures		
Population	Jan. 2000	Dec. 2000
Bhutanese Refugees	96,600	96,600
Tibetans	3,000	3,000
Various Individual Refugees	45	45
Total	99,645	99,645
Total Requirements		
USD 5,429,264		



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WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Recent Developments

Prospects for 96,600 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal remain in flux. Despite seven rounds of talks at Ministerial level between the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal, up to and including the meetings from September 13 to 16, 1999 in Kathmandu, the two parties have yet to reach a conclusive agreement. It has however been agreed that a Joint Ministerial Committee should establish a mechanism for the verification of the refugee population and its final details are under discussion.

Constraints

Limited progress in the bilateral talks on the Bhutanese refugees still blocks the emergence of a long-term solution to their situation. They remain dependent on international humanitarian aid, provided by UNHCR and other agencies operating in the Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal. The lack of national legislation on refugee issues sometimes encumbers protection work.

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STRATEGY

Protection and Solutions

The majority of the Bhutanese refugees wish to return home. However, prospects for their voluntary repatriation are uncertain pending the outcome of ongoing bilateral negotiations. Meanwhile, UNHCR seeks to ensure that their basic rights are respected in accordance with internationally recognised refugee and humanitarian principles. UNHCR has been supported by local and national authorities since the arrival of the refugees in 1992 and cooperation is still close.

Although the more than 20,000 Tibetans who arrived in Nepal prior to 1989 are permitted to stay in the country and do not need UNHCR's material assistance, the Office is pursuing with the Nepalese authorities the question of issuing identity documents to all members of this group. Protection monitoring missions to border areas will continue to ensure the implementation of transit arrangements and other measures to help newly arrived Tibetans. UNHCR will also advocate an end to refoulements and see that detention of asylum-seekers is kept to a minimum.

Assistance

The Bhutanese refugees' nine-year stay in seven crowded refugee camps has had an undeniable impact on their psychological and social well-being. So in recent years they have been encouraged to participate actively in the day-to-day administration of the camp to help mitigate these effects and boost self-esteem. This has also made UNHCR's programme more cost effective. Today, the Bhutanese Health Association implements most public health and sanitation projects with minimum supervision from specialised NGOs.

Increased participation of refugee women in decision-making and camp activities has raised awareness of their rights and status. Non-formal education and skills-training projects will continue, and new opportunities for income-generating and self-support activities will be explored. UNHCR will ensure access to primary education for all children in the camps. Many teachers are drawn from skilled professionals among the refugee population itself.

The protection of the refugees' immediate environment is of great concern to UNHCR, the Government and the international community. Kerosene will be provided instead of firewood for cooking and tree-planting projects and awareness programmes on safe and environment-friendly garbage and human waste disposal will continue.

An estimated 2,000 Tibetans arrive in Nepal each year. While in transit in Nepal they receive temporary assistance in the form of food, shelter, health care and transportation.

A small number of individual asylum-seekers of various nationalities are assisted with voluntary repatriation or resettlement in third countries. During their stay in Nepal, UNHCR provides legal advice and counselling as well as subsistence support.

Desired Impact

UNHCR's presence in Nepal aims to give Bhutanese refugees adequate protection and assistance until a bilateral agreement allows for their voluntary repatriation or other long-term solution. Pending such a solution, the refugees' active participation in community-development projects will be



encouraged. Through its discussions with the Governments and other concerned parties, UNHCR hopes to help find a humanitarian solution to this refugee situation.

UNHCR aims to cater for the basic needs of Tibetans upon their arrival in Nepal and during their temporary stay there.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management Structure

In 2000, UNHCR will operate with 36 staff (six international and 30 national) in Nepal. The deployment of two Junior Professional Officers is also expected. The Branch Office in Kathmandu is responsible for overall management of the programme as well as liaison with the Government, diplomatic missions and NGOs. Activities on the ground are coordinated through a field office located in Bhadrabu, Jhapa district, eastern Nepal.

Coordination

For all refugee assistance activities UNHCR provides the point of articulation for coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs, its Government counterpart. At the district level, the Refugee Coordination Unit represents the authorities. The WFP provides basic food rations to the refugees and a number of international and national NGOs help provide other forms of assistance. UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO provide advice to UNHCR in their respective areas of expertise. Refugees themselves are organised in Committees. Each camp has

a Camp Management Committee, a Refugee Women's Forum, and a Women's Focal Point and Users' Committee through which the refugee community participates in camp management, skills-development, health and sanitary services, and fire prevention.

Budget (USD)	
Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	560,949
Community Services	119,576
Crop Production	31,461
Domestic Needs/ Household Support	860,269
Education	636,474
Food	573,868
Forestry	155,902
Health/Nutrition	662,180
Income Generation	23,014
Legal Assistance	115,699
Operational Support (to Agencies)	309,556
Sanitation	126,507
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	321,710
Transport/Logistics	261,284
Water (non-agricultural)	151,900
Total Operations	4,910,349
Programme Support	518,915
Total	5,429,264

Offices

Kathmandu
Jhapa

Partners

Government Agencies

Ministry of Home Affairs

NGOs

Association of Medical Doctors in Asia
Caritas/Nepal
Lutheran World Federation
Nepal Red Cross Society
OXFAM
Save the Children Fund/UK
Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office

