

## | WORKING ENVIRONMENT |

- The working environment in the Asia–Pacific region is unique in many respects: it covers a vast geographical area comprising 45 countries and territories and hosts one third of the world's refugees – some 3.5 million people. Of these, 2.5 million (70 per cent) are Afghan refugees, still in exile a decade after the start of voluntary repatriation to their country. Some 66 per cent of the people of concern to UNHCR in Asia and the Pacific reside in urban settings, and in the Islamic Republic of Iran that figure rises to 97 per cent. The region also has long-standing camp situations in Nepal, Bangladesh and Thailand.
- Though only 20 countries in the region have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, there is a long, informal tradition of providing protection on a humanitarian basis to refugees. Two countries in the region host the largest refugee populations in the world: Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- The number of new asylum applications in Asia and the Pacific increased threefold in 2012, placing new strains on national institutions and UNHCR's mandate refugee status determination (RSD) programmes. The region also has UNHCR's largest resettlement programme, accounting for half of all departures worldwide.
- Irregular movements by sea remain a challenge. Numbers are estimated to have increased dramatically in recent years, with mounting loss of life at sea, owing to unseaworthy vessels.
- Major displacements in the region include that of individuals fleeing inter-communal violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State and heading for Malaysia (either directly or through Thailand). Other onward movements out of Thailand, Malaysia or Indonesia, are of people from a range of ethnic and national backgrounds seeking asylum in industrialized countries such as Australia, New Zealand or as far as Canada.
- A contrasting situation exists in Myanmar: on the one hand, internal displacement and lack of citizenship are generating mixed migratory flows; on the other, signs of stability in parts of the country are offering the potential for voluntary repatriation.
- UNHCR works with the Government of Bangladesh to address the plight of the 30,000 registered refugees in the country who reside in two official camps. Bangladesh also hosts an estimated 200,000 people in a refugee-like situation from Myanmar's Rakhine State.



# ASIA AND THE

An IDP mother cares for  
her four children in Datu  
Piang, Philippines.



# PACIFIC

## | STRATEGY |

### ○ *Safeguarding protection and asylum space*

In 2014, UNHCR will continue to assist countries in the region facing large numbers of asylum-seekers by conducting mandate RSD, while supporting the establishment of national eligibility procedures and protection-sensitive migration management systems, including alternatives to detention for asylum-seekers.

Advocating for protection space in the context of mixed maritime movements will be another priority for UNHCR. In the past few years, many lives have been lost at sea; stowaways have not been allowed to disembark; and restrictive asylum policies have been introduced to deter arrivals by boat. UNHCR will cooperate with governments in the region to seek solutions to these problems at both national and regional levels.

UNHCR will continue to press for regional cooperation to cope with situations that exceed the capacities of individual countries, using established forums such as ASEAN and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. UNHCR will also advocate for the implementation of the Bali Process Regional Cooperation Framework.

In Central Asia, the Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration, launched in 2012, is fostering protection-sensitive border-management and asylum systems tailored to the subregion. UNHCR will support this process.

Since urban refugee populations are increasing in most refugee-hosting countries in Asia, preserving and expanding protection space for this group will be another priority, in application of UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas. Several countries have adopted generous policies allowing urban refugees to obtain access to health, education and other services, as well as some livelihood activities. Solutions such as access to long-term visas and work permits will continue to be sought throughout the region, following their success in India and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### ○ *Pursuing solutions for protracted refugee situations*

The Afghanistan situation remains the world's largest protracted refugee situation. While

2014 is expected to be a critical transition year for Afghanistan, the need to pursue sustainable solutions for Afghan refugees remaining in exile will remain acute. The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, launched in 2012, has the triple goal of facilitating voluntary repatriation, sustaining reintegration and maintaining adequate support for refugees and their host communities. Some 2.5 million registered Afghan refugees live in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. These countries also host a large number of undocumented Afghans.

In addition to its active support for the Solutions Strategy, UNHCR will continue to advocate for a greater share of development funding to be directed at projects helping Afghan returnees to overcome the challenges of reintegration. Within Afghanistan, UNHCR will work closely with the Government to try and ensure that national development plans give sufficient attention to areas of high return.

In mid-2013, the Government of Pakistan approved a new Afghan refugee policy, calling upon UNHCR to help create conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation, while strengthening support to host communities. Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue providing Afghan refugees with access to education, health and livelihood services through a wide range of initiatives.

The region is also home to other long-staying refugees – from Bhutan in Nepal and from Myanmar in Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia. The large-scale resettlement programme, which started in Nepal in 2007, has allowed more than 83,000 refugees from Bhutan to begin new lives in eight different countries, reducing the camp population by two thirds. This programme will continue in 2014.

In anticipation of political developments in Myanmar that should allow the return of Myanmar refugees from Thailand, UNHCR is working with governments and partners in the region to prepare for voluntary repatriation when conditions are favourable.

UNHCR will continue to facilitate the voluntary return of Sri Lankan refugees from abroad by providing them with transportation, support for civil registration and documentation and basic relief items. It will also engage in post-return monitoring to address reintegration challenges.

○ *Ensuring protection and durable solutions for IDPs*

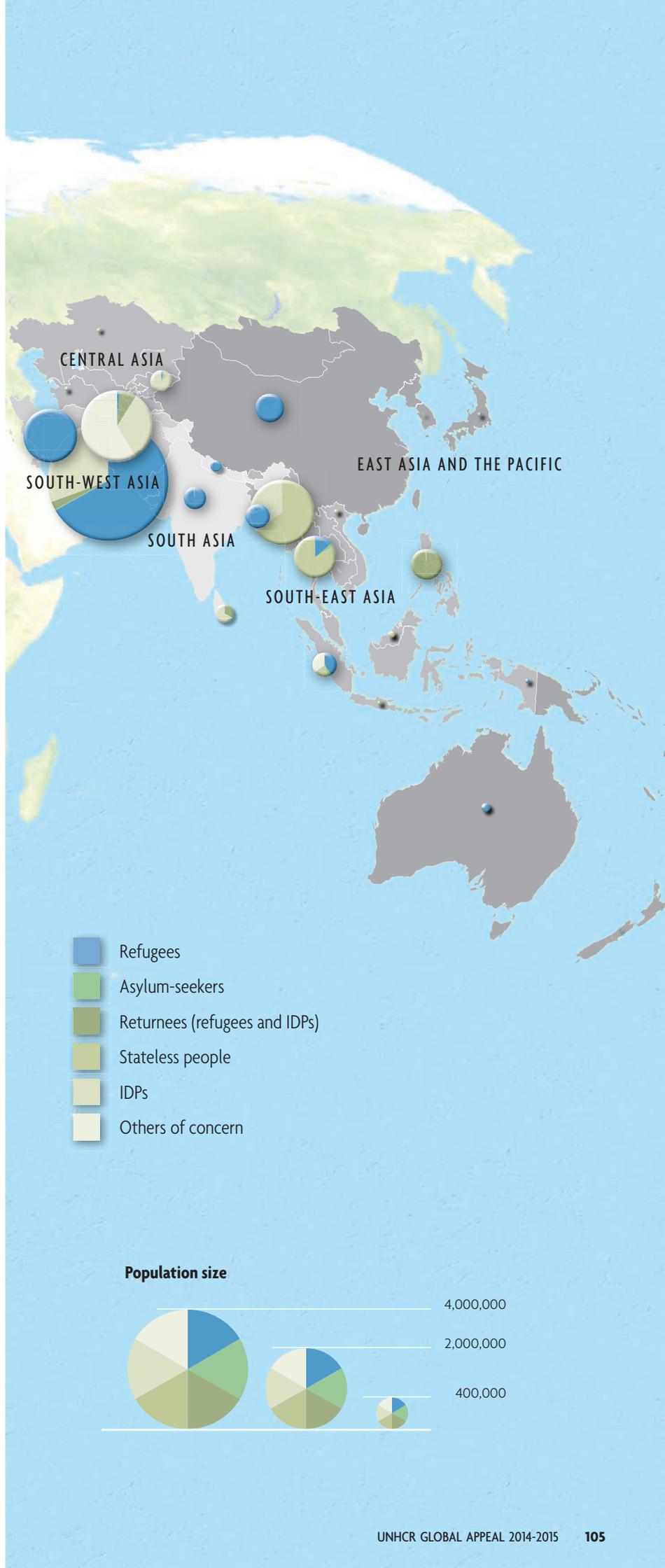
The number of displaced people in Myanmar remains very high. Many were driven from their homes following the 2012 inter-communal violence in Rakhine State, linked to the lack of citizenship affecting many of its residents. In 2013, UNHCR participated in the inter-agency emergency response for up to 140,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Rakhine State. UNHCR's priority in 2014 will be to sustain its humanitarian assistance while continuing the search for durable solutions. It will also work with the Government to address the legal status of people without citizenship, both within and outside Myanmar.

UNHCR also has a presence in Myanmar's Kachin State as part of the inter-agency response to the displacement of some 100,000 people. A tentative cessation of hostilities between Kachin rebels and government forces has renewed hopes for peace. In the south-east of Myanmar, UNHCR is exploring the possibility of an eventual return of some of the 230,000 IDPs and 128,000 refugees currently in Thailand.

In 2014, UNHCR will work with the Government and partner agencies in Kyrgyzstan to ensure the sustainable reintegration of those displaced by ethnic violence in 2010. Programmes in community development, coexistence, livelihoods and protection will be integrated into broader initiatives under the umbrella of the Secretary-General's Durable Solutions initiative, and UNHCR is working closely with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office for technical support.

In Pakistan, UNHCR will continue to assist more than one million IDPs affected by security operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa providing basic assistance, protection and monitoring in the three existing camps, and addressing their needs upon return to their homes. The difficulties are many, as these areas remain volatile and humanitarian access is restricted.

UNHCR estimates that some 600,000 people within Afghanistan have been uprooted from their homes by conflict. Many have been displaced more than once, owing to lack of protection or livelihood opportunities in areas of return, or because of food insecurity or natural disasters. UNHCR's work with IDPs in Afghanistan in 2014 will focus primarily on



**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

The organization-wide move in 2010 from a resource-based to a comprehensive needs-based methodology for planning and budgeting explains the significant increase in the region's financial requirements as of 2010 when compared with previous years. More recently, the revised 2013 budget for the Asia and Pacific region grew to USD 575.6 million, due largely to the establishment of a supplementary budget for the Myanmar situation to respond to needs arising from displacements in Rakhine and Kachin States, and to prepare for the potential voluntary repatriation of refugees currently in Thailand.

In 2014, the financial requirements for the region are set at USD 581.4 million, a slight increase from the revised 2013 budget, reflecting the growing requirements for Myanmar, whose budget represents some 12 per cent (USD 68 million) of the total budget for the region. The financial requirements for the Afghanistan situation, comprising the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, represent some 62 per cent (USD 359.9 million) and the remaining 26 per cent is shared by 18 medium-sized and small operations in other subregions.

assisting those still displaced by conflict, and advocating for them to be able to return and reintegrate.

In Sri Lanka, the displacement situation has largely been resolved, but smaller numbers remain in protracted displacement among host communities. UNHCR will seek durable solutions for these groups, and help address reintegration challenges for returnees.

○ **Reducing and preventing statelessness**

At the end of 2013, an estimated 1.4 million people were without citizenship in Asia, the largest group of them in Myanmar's Rakhine State. UNHCR will continue to map stateless populations throughout the region and work to prevent statelessness, including through the issuance of birth certificates, and by participation in verification exercises.

Since Central Asia hosts large populations of stateless people or people at risk of statelessness, UNHCR will continue to encourage governments in the region to accede to the

Statelessness Conventions and assist them to deal with people who are stateless on their territory. One such example is Turkmenistan, the first country in Central Asia, and the third in the Asia-Pacific region, to be party to both Statelessness Conventions, which has already granted citizenship to 3,300 stateless people.

○ **Maintaining operations in high-risk areas and ensuring staff safety**

Afghanistan's volatile security environment has required UNHCR to set up remote delivery and monitoring mechanisms with local partners. Such measures will continue, owing to increased security concerns in anticipation of the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force. Recent attacks targeting humanitarian actors have prompted UNHCR to review the security of its personnel in the country. Likewise, in Pakistan, UNHCR works closely with government counterparts and local partners to improve outreach in insecure areas.

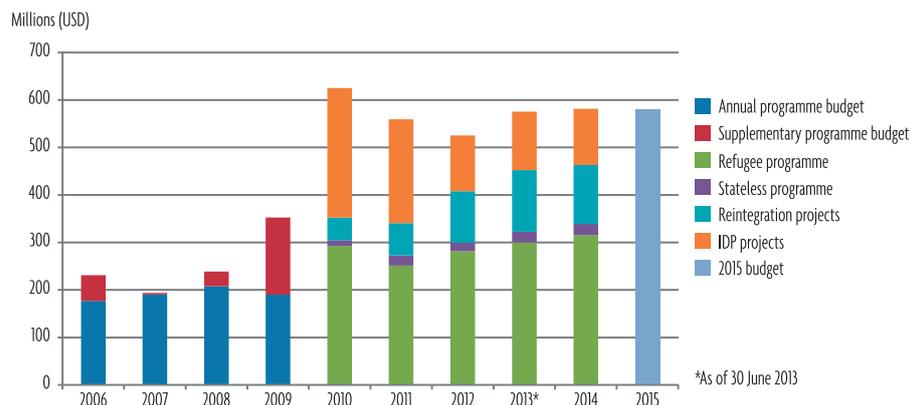
**| CHALLENGES |**

In a region that lacks overall legal frameworks on asylum, the interplay of complex migratory movements and restrictive national policies creates many uncertainties and discrepancies in the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees.

The political and security transitions in Afghanistan compel UNHCR to prepare for possible new scenarios that may involve further internal or cross-border movements.

The lack of security in many parts of the country continues to curtail UNHCR's ability to deliver assistance and support the reintegration of returnees in these areas. United Nations agencies have access to less than half the country, forcing UNHCR to rely on local partners. Ensuring staff safety amidst increased targeting of humanitarian workers is a constant challenge. ■

**Budgets for Asia and the Pacific | 2006-2015**



## BUDGETS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC | USD

Operation	2013 Revised budget (as of 30 June 2013)	2014				Total	2015
		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
<b>SOUTH-WEST ASIA</b>							
Afghanistan	131,375,226	49,622,827	0	60,084,704	33,441,595	143,149,126	143,642,446
Iran, Islamic Republic of	59,563,289	69,000,442	0	0	0	69,000,442	75,548,617
Pakistan	161,354,322	58,121,443	160,420	60,849,014	28,616,056	147,746,934	137,134,632
Subtotal	352,292,837	176,744,712	160,420	120,933,719	62,057,651	359,896,502	356,325,694
<b>CENTRAL ASIA</b>							
Kazakhstan Regional Office	7,622,513	4,863,774	2,385,500	0	90,350	7,339,624	8,520,327
Kyrgyzstan	7,497,298	2,848,575	1,081,575	0	2,366,817	6,296,968	5,515,522
Tajikistan	1,942,848	1,904,159	93,878	0	0	1,998,038	2,154,157
Turkmenistan	1,041,589	423,588	434,795	0	0	858,383	635,574
Subtotal	18,104,248	10,040,097	3,995,748	0	2,457,167	16,493,012	16,825,579
<b>SOUTH ASIA</b>							
India	13,007,112	13,606,075	30,000	0	0	13,636,075	14,594,199
Nepal	15,579,191	10,176,263	2,231,142	3,030,049	0	15,437,453	13,288,681
Sri Lanka	10,253,602	7,785,524	75,742	0	1,264,439	9,125,705	7,541,497
Subtotal	38,839,905	31,567,862	2,336,884	3,030,049	1,264,439	38,199,234	35,424,378
<b>SOUT-EAST ASIA</b>							
Bangladesh	12,609,556	11,410,451	12,510	0	0	11,422,961	11,356,138
Indonesia	8,007,336	7,950,312	155,005	0	0	8,105,317	8,238,418
Malaysia	17,477,520	18,875,102	1,231,502	0	0	20,106,604	21,695,610
Myanmar	68,481,570	6,051,000	12,940,291	0	49,073,119	68,064,410	67,772,726
Philippines	8,427,638	697,717	727,572	0	3,480,770	4,906,059	4,641,297
Thailand	28,044,521	32,090,244	710,059	0	0	32,800,303	37,233,459
Thailand Regional Office	7,564,224	6,584,919	577,849	0	0	7,162,768	7,817,007
Viet Nam	400,500	0	437,203	0	0	437,203	0
Subtotal	151,012,866	83,659,745	16,791,991	0	52,553,888	153,005,624	158,754,655
<b>EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b>							
Australia Regional Office	2,859,685	2,630,314	0	0	0	2,630,314	2,630,314
China Regional Office	4,364,719	4,611,161	121,219	0	0	4,732,380	4,732,380
Japan	4,478,733	3,965,234	44,328	0	0	4,009,562	4,009,562
Republic of Korea	2,540,151	2,012,761	96,385	0	0	2,109,146	2,109,146
Regional activities	1,100,001	300,000	0	0	0	300,000	300,000
Subtotal	15,343,290	13,519,470	261,932	0	0	13,781,402	13,781,402
Total	575,593,146	315,531,885	23,546,976	123,963,767	118,333,145	581,375,774	581,111,709