

# Sri Lanka in short

## Main Objectives

- Improve access to national protection and humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the north and north-east of Sri Lanka.
- Minimise internal displacement and provide alternatives to flight from regions of instability.
- Stabilise displaced communities and promote conditions for solutions.
- Facilitate return and reintegration of displaced populations, with particular attention to the vulnerable groups.
- Advocate the implementation of policies, protective of the rights of the displaced and other victims of the conflict.
- Extend the capacity of the Government, NGOs and displaced communities to respond to displacement and bring about lasting solutions.

## WORKING ENVIRONMENT

### Recent Developments

The intensification of conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) since late 1999 has led to the renewed displacement of over 200,000 people in the northern Jaffna Peninsula and in the Vanni region. By September 2000, some 13,000 displaced persons remained in the UNHCR-supported Madhu Open Relief Centre. At the same time, in the districts of Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Mannar, conditions in government-controlled areas have permitted the return and relocation of some 3,000 people. In the districts of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu, some 15,000 people have also been able to return to their homes following a geographical shift in the area of conflict. The flight of refugees to India continued; 1,605 people arrived in the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu between January and September 2000.

### Constraints

In the conflict zones of north and north-east Sri Lanka, the displaced have in many cases already had to move several times and the movement of people and goods is strictly controlled. There is only limited access to basic services such as health and



### PLANNING FIGURES

Areas	Jan. 2001	Dec. 2001
Jaffna	120,600	120,600
Vavuniya	46,200	46,200
Mannar/Madhu	37,800	37,800
Kilinochchi	66,000	66,000
Mullaitivu	80,600	80,600
Trincomalee	61,200	61,200
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>412,400</b>	<b>412,400</b>

<sup>1</sup> The total number of IDPs in Sri Lanka is estimated at 800,000. The table shows the number of people benefiting from UNHCR's assistance, including IDPs and the local population.

### TOTAL REQUIREMENTS • USD 6,800,386

education. Employment opportunities are also severely constrained. The heavy military presence and continued conflict leave the civilian population extremely vulnerable and dependent on humanitarian assistance.



## STRATEGY

### Protection and Solutions

To ensure safety and facilitate freedom of movement of IDPs, UNHCR will maintain a regular dialogue with the Government and the LTTE, and intervene as necessary. UNHCR will maintain its presence in both government-controlled and LTTE-dominated areas. UNHCR monitors conditions at the government 'welfare centres' housing displaced people. UNHCR intercedes with the authorities on issues such as freedom of movement and the issuance of travel passes.

UNHCR will continue to support the Sri Lankan authorities and other agencies, helping them to build up the resources and expertise necessary to protect the displaced in emergency situations. This involves raising awareness of UNHCR's mandate among the military, the civilian population, government officials and the LTTE. UNHCR will also promote the UN's 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement' as a normative framework for defence of the rights of the IDPs, including the right to return to their homes. UNHCR provides legal assistance to IDPs regarding documentation, land and other matters pertaining to their basic rights and the attainment of durable solutions.

When the political and security climate appears to have become sufficiently clement for consideration of the return of IDPs to their place of origin or resettlement to new sites, UNHCR assesses security conditions there. If security is deemed satisfactory, UNHCR organises working groups with key stakeholders in the area to lay the ground for repatriation and reintegration. UNHCR monitors return movements to ensure they take place in safety and dignity. The Office also monitors the well-being of the returnees and their level of reintegration. UNHCR intervenes with the local authorities when necessary, to address issues hindering their reintegration.

For a small number of asylum-seekers from various countries, UNHCR continues to conduct refugee status determination on behalf of the Sri Lankan Government. Since local integration is not possible, third country resettlement remains the only option. Refugees recognised by UNHCR still lack access to basic public services, such as medical care and education, as well as social security and employment. UNHCR also monitors the return of rejected asylum-seekers as well.

### Assistance

UNHCR provides IDPs with essential relief items, such as plastic sheeting and roofing materials and assistance such as emergency water supply, health and sanitary services and transportation. Up to 75 per cent of the IDPs are women and children. The special needs of vulnerable groups such as widows, single parents and the disabled, are carefully incorporated into the programming process. Projects for these groups will include: psychosocial rehabilitation of traumatised individuals, vocational training, social mobilisation training and community welfare activities.

In addition to monitoring and interceding on behalf of displaced persons at government-supported welfare centres, UNHCR will provide limited direct assistance to some of these centres. UNHCR will also upgrade the basic infrastructure of host communities that accommodate displaced populations. In addition, UNHCR will implement micro-projects in a variety of areas such as health, agriculture, water and sanitation. Assistance measures will encourage self-reliance through income-generating activities.

UNHCR will continue to facilitate the initial stage of reintegration both for those who have returned to their places of origin and those who have settled elsewhere. Reintegration activities will focus on locations where UNHCR has a field presence. Assistance measures will include micro-projects for the improvement or development of basic infrastructure. Income-generating activities will be supported through the provision of grants and a revolving loan scheme. UNHCR will intercede with decision-makers to ensure that the returnee communities or new settlements are given priority within overall rehabilitation programmes in the relevant districts.

## Desired Impact

UNHCR's continuous presence in both the government-controlled and LTTE-dominated areas, as well as ongoing dialogue with both sides, will improve access to national protection and humanitarian assistance for IDPs and alleviate the consequences of displacement. Improved co-ordination will ensure coherence of humanitarian action by various agencies and duplication will be avoided. UNHCR's support for reintegration will not only increase economic opportunities for those who have returned or resettled, but also contribute to social cohesion. UNHCR will ensure that impediments to respect for basic rights, or to the attainment of durable solutions, will be overcome.

## ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Management

In 2001, UNHCR will operate with 64 staff (15 internationals including two Junior Professional Officers and 49 nationals) with the additional support of seven United Nations Volunteers. The office in Colombo is responsible for overall management of the programme as well as liaison with the Government, diplomatic missions and NGOs. UNHCR has five field offices in Jaffna, Mallavi, Madhu, Vavuniya and Trincomalee, enabling it to respond immediately to changing circumstances on the ground.

#### OFFICES

Colombo	Jaffna
Madhu	Mallavi
Trincomalee	Vavuniya

### Co-ordination

UNHCR's primary government counterpart is the Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority of the North. UNHCR works with seven international NGOs and four national NGOs in Sri Lanka. UNHCR will maintain active

## BUDGET (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,851,953
Community Services	210,152
Crop Production	499,523
Domestic Needs/Household Support	123,589
Education	462,154
Fisheries	105,372
Forestry	21,074
Health/Nutrition	238,502
Income Generation	57,851
Legal Assistance	347,053
Livestock	55,096
Operational Support (to Agencies)	569,382
Sanitation	132,774
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	563,223
Transport/Logistics	141,873
Water (non-agricultural)	366,982
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>5,746,553</b>
Programme Support	1,053,833
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,800,386</b>

partnerships with other agencies working with the displaced in the north and north-east. These agencies include ICRC, UNDP, UNICEF WFP, and the World Bank.

UNHCR contributes to the cost of a full-time Field Security Officer shared by UN agencies in Sri Lanka. This Officer monitors security procedures relating to staff movement, communication capacity, safety equipment, and manages decisions with regard to staff security. The Security Officer also conducts regular missions to conflict areas and organises training for national and international staff as appropriate.

### PARTNERS

#### Government Agencies

Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority of the North

#### NGOs

Campaign for Development and Solidarity

CARE International

Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shamadana Sangamaya

Médecins sans Frontières (France)

Médecins sans Frontières (Holland)

OXFAM

Rural Development Foundation

Sewa Lanka Foundation

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society - Trincomalee Branch

World University Services of Canada

Zoa Refugee Care Netherlands