

Sri Lanka

Working environment

The context

The situation in Sri Lanka has deteriorated steadily in 2006-2007, with serious humanitarian consequences including a new large-scale displacement. During the first half of 2007, some 160,000 newly displaced persons arrived in Government-controlled Batticaloa. The military operations, which focused on the east, have now shifted to the north and increased the likelihood of significant displacement in the areas of Vavuniya and Mannar. While the fighting in the north increases, the 2002 ceasefire agreement remains in force and no efforts to reignite the peace process have been made public.

In September 2007, the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka stood at some 503,000, including more than 190,000 persons newly displaced by the upsurge in violence in April 2006. The remainder were displaced as a result of earlier fighting and no durable solutions have been found for them since the ceasefire agreement. From August 2006 to October 2007 more than 152,000 new IDPs returned to their places of origin in the districts of Batticaloa and Trincomalee in a Government-organized return monitored by UNHCR and other agencies.

In addition to the large numbers of internally displaced, Sri Lanka hosts both asylum-seekers and refugees. Sri Lanka is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. UNHCR continues to undertake refugee status determination (RSD) in the country and seeks third-country resettlement for recognized refugees.

The needs

To achieve sustainable peace, several fundamental issues need to be addressed. These include respect for human rights by all parties, security, reconciliation of communities, durable solutions for IDPs, protection of



minority rights, compensation and the resolution of land and property issues. In the search for durable solutions, there are many obstacles, ranging from security issues, lack of basic infrastructure and income-generation and livelihood opportunities to continued violence, repeated displacement, and disrupted access to food, employment, health facilities and education.

Total requirements

2008: USD 10,789,341

2009: USD 15,038,352

Main objectives

- Provide protection monitoring, reporting and advocacy for IDPs and assist them with legal assistance and individual protection interventions as necessary.

- Prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and expand awareness-raising, training and capacity-building activities.
- Reduce conflict between communities and facilitate integration upon return.
- Seek durable solutions through return, local integration and relocation of IDPs.
- Respond to new displacement by providing physical security and registration, emergency protection and protection during flight.
- Ensure provision of emergency shelter, non-food relief items and camp management.
- Raise awareness and provide regular reporting on the situation of IDPs in Sri Lanka, while generating support for various initiatives benefiting IDPs.

Key targets for 2008 and 2009

- IDPs benefit from greater physical security and freedom of movement.
- IDPs have civil documentation.
- Authorities, security forces, NGOs and IDPs have a comprehensive knowledge of human rights, the guiding principles on internal displacement and good governance thanks to workshops and training.
- IDPs have better access to national protection mechanisms, including free legal aid.
- Protection intervention and advocacy is provided for individual cases with specific needs.
- Protection risks and human rights abuses are identified and reported; adequate responses, advocacy and continuous monitoring prevent further abuse.
- The response to, and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence is improved.
- Different communities, government institutions and security forces gain more trust in each other.
- Durable solutions for IDPs are identified and implemented.
- New displacement is met with effective emergency response, including construction of shelter and distribution of relief items.
- Effective coordination of protection partners ensures strategic overall protection.
- Asylum-seekers enjoy fair and efficient RSD; refugees receive care and maintenance and assistance in resettlement procedures.

Strategy and activities

The framework for UNHCR's operations in Sri Lanka is based on confidence-building and stabilization measures. These aim to prevent further displacement by restoring trust between different communities, the civil administration and security forces. This is coupled with mitigation activities in response to new displacement and an active search for durable solutions, including return. The long-term focus of UNHCR's operation in Sri Lanka is built around the creation of a domestic protection network that is fully able to ensure the rights of the internally displaced. In addition, UNHCR will ensure that contingency arrangements are in place in case of further escalation of conflict.

The key components of UNHCR's operation in Sri Lanka are protection monitoring and capacity building. UNHCR and its partners will continue to monitor the general welfare and security of all IDPs. Special attention will be given to the needs of the most vulnerable individuals by ensuring gender- and age-sensitive protection and assistance. The emphasis will be on preventing and addressing all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Measures in this regard include awareness-raising workshops on sexual and gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS, training and information programmes, legal aid, medical and psycho social support, and improvements to the infrastructure in IDP sites. UNHCR will continue to assist the Government to undertake a country-wide individual registration of IDPs to establish a comprehensive database for targeted protection interventions and to ensure IDPs' access to humanitarian assistance.

Advocacy and capacity building is a central part of the protection strategy. To ensure that IDPs enjoy the same level of governmental protection as other nationals, UNHCR has developed a national protection network of NGOs and government institutions such as the Ministry of Nation Building and Development and Estate Infrastructure, the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights.

UNHCR will continue to lobby for Sri Lanka's accession to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.



UNHCR/G. Marasinghe

A 2003 law enables some Indian origin Tamil plantation workers to obtain citizenship.

UNHCR will conduct surveys and participatory assessments and support “go and see” visits to identify durable solutions for IDPs. The Office will make regular assessments of the possibility of return, and returns will be monitored closely. In addition, assistance packages including shelter kits, quick-impact projects to restore infrastructure, income-generation activities, and measures to build trust between communities will follow the return process. UNHCR will also assist the Government to find alternative solutions such as relocation or local integration. In this connection, the Office will focus on land allocation, the creation of

secure environments to sustain returns and ensure NGOs can work in return areas to support the transition from relief to development.

UNHCR will also support initiatives such as IDP advocacy groups and peace committees and activities to promote peaceful co-existence, in addition to holding regular meetings with IDP and host communities to reduce mistrust, enhance communication, and empower communities. These measures will be coupled with the physical restoration of community infrastructure and the strengthening of community-based organizations.

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2008		Dec 2008 - Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Pakistan	150	150	140	140	130	130
	Various	40	40	40	40	20	20
Asylum-seekers	Pakistan	120	120	110	110	100	100
	Various	30	30	30	30	30	30
Returnees (refugees)		200	20	1,000	100	3,000	250
IDPs		797,000	797,000	787,000	787,000	665,000	665,000
Returnees (IDPs)		50,000	50,000	102,000	102,000	100,000	100,000
Others of concern		5,000	2,000	15,000	5,000	20,000	5,000
Total		852,530	849,340	905,310	894,410	788,270	770,520

Protection monitoring allows early detection of the warning signs of possible population flows and rapid response to new displacements. UNHCR's expansion of its protection activities will include the identification of new sites for IDPs, the protection-oriented layout of sites, implementation of physical-security measures and advocacy for safe access to food, water, medical services and sanitation. The Office will also provide assistance to IDPs living with host families.

Furthermore, UNHCR will take the lead in responding to new displacements in the shelter, non-food relief items and site-management sectors.

Ongoing displacement and new movements require extra resources, particularly for the development of new sites. In addition, the extended use of existing emergency shelters has raised the need for their repair and refurbishment. Procuring and distributing more basic household items among IDP and host populations alike will also be part of UNHCR's response in Sri Lanka.

Constraints

The Sri Lanka operation is constrained by security concerns for UNHCR's staff and partners arising from the ongoing hostilities. The lack of humanitarian access to conflict areas, including the closure of Forward Defence Lines, curfews, and the difficulties facing NGO workers in obtaining work permits, present further constraints. Restrictions on the transport of relief items and the lack of fuel in some areas often lead to delays or failures in the delivery of basic supplies. The multitude of Government counterparts on IDP issues also complicates advocacy, cooperation and coordination. Some Government institutions and NGOs lack adequate human and technical resources.

Organization and implementation

Coordination

UNHCR is the designated lead agency for IDPs in Sri Lanka. The Office works through coordination mechanisms established under the framework of the UN Country Team and UN Focal Points/OCHA at district level. The IDP Working Group in Colombo chaired by UNHCR will play a vital role in coordination, with similar structures in the districts. District-level protection concerns are analysed and relayed to the national IDP Working Group.

In close coordination with its partners, UNHCR created a shelter coordination cell to monitor and guide the shelter interventions of the international community in Sri Lanka. The cell develops policies on emergency shelter, host-family support, return assistance and decommissioning of camps.

UNHCR is also a standing member of the Consultative Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, which is chaired by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights and attended by the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other line ministries. It has been mandated by this body to co-chair the Sub-Committee on IDP Affairs. This elaborate structure keeps all government interlocutors informed about concerns pertaining to IDPs.

In order to ensure the sustainability of programmes, UNHCR works with partners at national, district and divisional governmental levels as well as NGOs. The Office also holds consultations with selected civil-society organizations and academic institutions. Partnership with civil society is crucial for the harmonization of field programmes and the engagement of NGOs as implementing partners, particularly those working for social mobilization.

UNHCR presence

	2008	2009
Number of offices	7	7
Total staff	131	131
International	23	23
National	99	99
UNVs	7	7
JPOs	2	2

Partners

Implementing partners

Government: Ministry for Disaster Management and Human Rights, Ministry for Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure.

NGOs: Campaign for Development and Solidarity, Danish Refugee Council, Eastern Rehabilitation Organization, Jaffna Social Action Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council, Refugee Rehabilitation Organization, Rural Development Foundation, Solidar INGO Consortium, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society.

Others: National Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, United Nations Office for Project Services.

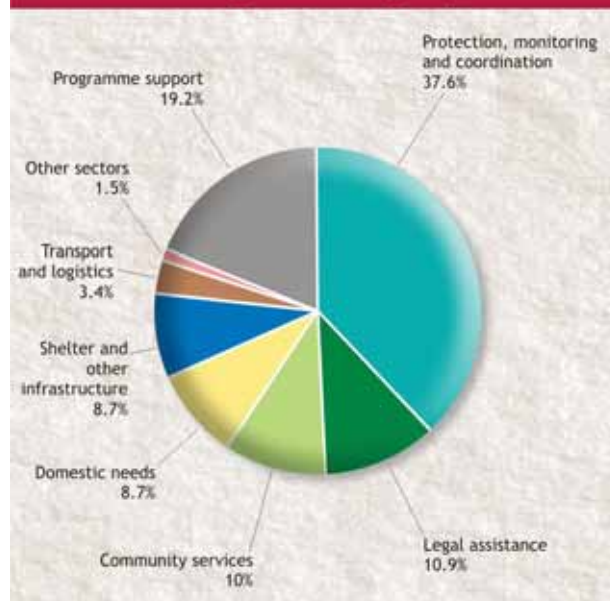
Operational partners

Government: Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure, Ministry for Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, Ministry for Disaster Management and Human Rights.

NGOs: Centre for Policy Alternatives, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, Foundation for Coexistence, Legal Aid Foundation, Red Cross Movement.

Others: Asian Development Bank, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*, FAO, ILO, JICA, OCHA, OHCHR, UNDP, UNDSS, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, World Bank.

2008-2009 Biennial Programme Budget by sector



Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget		
	2007	2008	2009
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,330,145	4,860,652	4,860,652
Community services	1,169,613	750,072	1,830,000
Domestic needs	598,019	717,380	1,537,925
Education	24,594	0	0
Health	14,757	0	0
Legal assistance	970,512	775,337	2,032,075
Operational support (to agencies)	350,116	175,000	200,000
Shelter and other infrastructure	0	750,000	1,500,000
Transport and logistics	208,390	283,200	600,000
Total operations	5,666,145	8,311,641	12,560,652
Programme support	1,665,634	2,477,700	2,477,700
Total	7,331,779	10,789,341	15,038,352