



# UNHCR WOMEN'S PROTECTION CLINIC FOR REFUGEES

Timings: 9 am to 5:00 pm  
Days: Monday to Friday

## South Asia

### Operational highlights

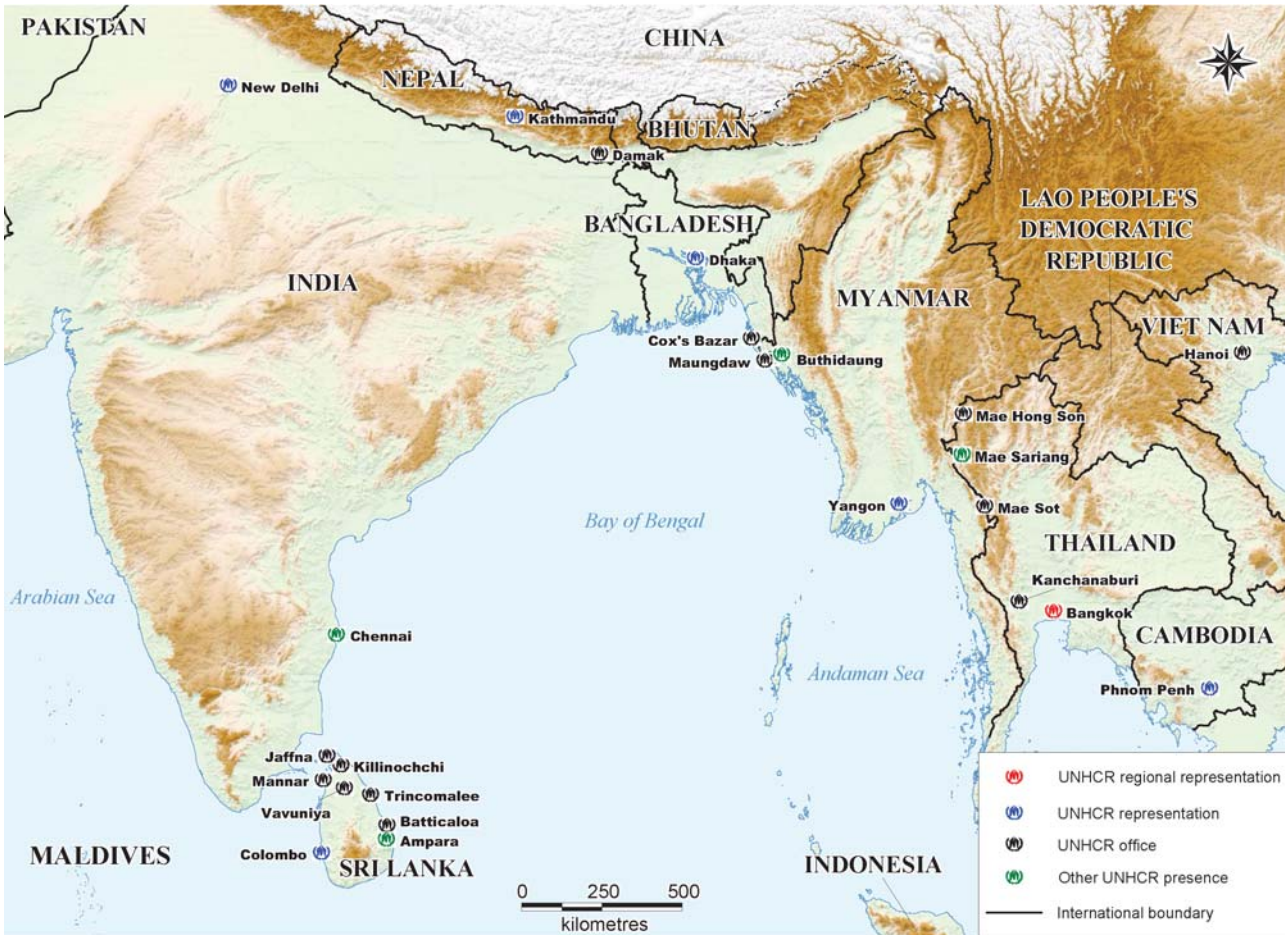
- In Nepal, UNHCR and the Government, with the strong support of a group of interested countries, moved closer to finding solutions for more than 100,000 long-staying refugees. Key achievements in 2007 were completion of a census of the entire camp population, the distribution of identity cards to all refugees and improvements in camp security. Furthermore, the Government agreed to allow group resettlement for those refugees who wished to accept this solution.
- In Bangladesh, UNHCR cooperated with the interim Government, the UN Country Team and a steering group of engaged stakeholders to improve camp conditions for 27,500 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar's northern Rakhine State.
- In India, UNHCR promoted new solutions for the long-staying Afghan refugee population negotiating a combined approach of resettlement for ethnic Afghan refugees and local integration for Hindu and Sikh refugees from Afghanistan.
- UNHCR led the collective humanitarian response in a difficult security environment in Sri Lanka, where the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) peaked at 308,000 in the first half of the year. A permanent field presence helped secure displacement sites and contributed to the safe return of some 158,600 people to their areas of origin.

Bangladesh

India

Nepal

Sri Lanka



## Working environment

Political instability in Nepal was reflected in the postponement of elections for the Constituent Assembly. The southern Terai region saw protests by minority groups.

The installation of a military-backed interim government in Bangladesh following major upheavals in late 2006 brought a measure of calm to the country in 2007. UNHCR committed to establish a stronger dialogue with its governmental counterparts.

Building on the visit of the High Commissioner to India in 2006, the Office explored new areas of collaboration with the Government. India's agreement to participate in high-level bilateral consultations slated for early 2008 promised to open a new chapter in UNHCR's relationship with this strategic partner.

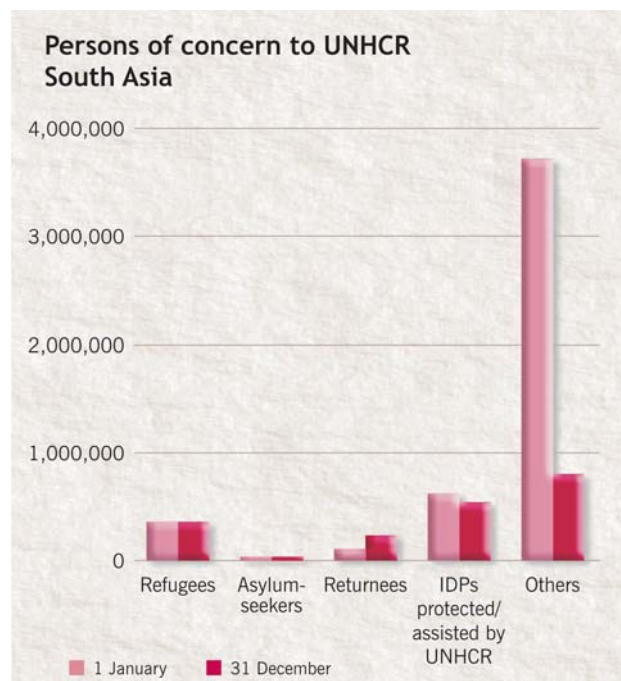
Insecure conditions in Sri Lanka caused new displacement, affected the safety of humanitarian actors and hampered their work in the country.

## Achievements and impact

The Government's support for resettlement presented UNHCR with new opportunities to find solutions for

refugees in Nepal. Information sessions on resettlement and the collection of declarations of interest began in late 2007.

In its continuing efforts to build a close partnership with the Government of India, UNHCR held discussions with the authorities on protection delivery and related legal framework. The Office also strengthened its cooperation with the National Human Rights Commission and was





invited to train Government staff and security agencies on refugee protection issues. Furthermore, the Indian authorities agreed to waive certain procedural requirements for Hindu and Sikh refugees from Afghanistan in order to pave the way for their naturalization.

Although life remained difficult for the 27,500 Rohingya refugees living in the two camps in Bangladesh, there have been improvements following an accord signed in 2006 by UNHCR and the authorities. This allowed UN agencies and NGOs to work in the refugee camps in the areas of health, skills training, education and community mobilization. UNHCR and its partners started construction of new shelters to replace old and decrepit huts, improved water supply and sanitation, and organized better access to primary and secondary health care. The major community-mobilization efforts begun in 2007 will be strengthened in 2008.

In Sri Lanka, UNHCR's field presence and protection work, including extensive monitoring and advocacy, helped uphold the rights of IDPs and ensure the voluntary nature of returns. Legal assistance benefited more than 12,000 people. Training and awareness-raising events boosted the capacity of national entities and NGOs and helped reduce the risk of sexual and gender-based violence.

## Constraints

In Nepal, the growing hostility of groups of refugees opposed to resettlement delayed work on finding durable solutions. Security in the camps was restored with the deployment of Nepali police.

The protracted nature of the refugee situation in Bangladesh camps remained a concern. UNHCR committed to the search for durable solutions by strengthening its cooperation with the Government and other concerned stakeholders.

In India, protection risks are particularly acute for urban refugees with little or no community support. Other problems relate to the legal status of asylum-seekers and mandate refugees, and a deterioration in conditions for long-staying mandate refugee communities.

In Sri Lanka, increased military activity and tougher security measures hampered the implementation of planned activities. Among the challenges were the frequent closure of crossing points into areas of UNHCR operations, curfews and the presence of land mines.



Refugee women and children with specific needs receive protection assistance at a clinic in Delhi, India.

## Operations

The operations in **Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** are covered in separate chapters.

Various factors played a role in achieving a more favourable protection environment for refugees in camps in **Bangladesh**. For instance, arbitrary arrests were eliminated thanks to community involvement and reporting, combined with daily interventions and regular follow-up of individual cases with camp authorities, police and the local courts. The accountability of officials in charge of refugee camps was reinforced and the former refugee-led camp management system was replaced by a new community-based participatory approach. The Government also agreed to replace family books with individual refugee identity cards for recognized refugees.

UNHCR's new and expanded activities included construction of 85 shelters, benefiting some 405 refugee families; the installation of solar-powered street

lights; and the introduction of energy-efficient cooking stoves. Standard operating procedures to address sexual and gender-based violence saw a reduction of harassment and insecurity in the camps. Training in vocational skills and the construction of new schools and classrooms, including girls-only classes, provided fresh opportunities for young people. Additional resources made available from Headquarters and the Government's inclusion of all refugee children in national immunization campaigns led to lower incidence of infections, lower mortality rates and a general improvement in the health conditions of the refugee population.

In **India**, UNHCR was particularly concerned about the protection of some 300 newly arrived Palestinian refugees, formerly resident in Iraq. Their unauthorized stay in the country and their lack of community links made them particularly vulnerable. UNHCR submitted some of their cases for resettlement, but few were accepted in 2007. Meanwhile, the Office continued to work on improving protection conditions through the Women's Protection Clinic, the Protection Community Days and the Protection Panel. At the Women's Protection Clinic, refugee women and unaccompanied or separated minors were assessed in order to identify specific protection needs. Solutions were duly addressed by the Protection Panel, with referrals for durable solutions. In 2007, the Panel also focused on protection of unaccompanied minors and separated children, with the support of UNHCR, relevant implementing partners and an external child rights expert.

In response to an information campaign, nearly half the approximately 8,000 Afghan refugees of Hindu and Sikh origin in India have expressed interest in naturalization. A three-year strategy has been put into effect to resolve this protracted situation. Two Citizenship Clinics in these refugees' principal areas of residence saw the filing of large numbers of citizenship applications. Only 18 individuals opted to repatriate voluntarily to Afghanistan.

Almost 600 urban refugees departed for resettlement from India in 2007, a three-fold increase from the previous year and a reflection of the commitment of resettlement countries to burden-sharing. Almost all those resettled were refugees from Myanmar (360) or Afghanistan (230).

## Financial information

After the austerity measures introduced in 2006, UNHCR's budget for South Asia increased significantly in 2007. While administrative costs remained stable, operational expenses went up. Additional resources under the Special Projects for Health and Nutrition allowed greater expenditures in Bangladesh and Nepal.



Budget and expenditure (USD)		
Country	Annual budget	
	Final budget	Expenditure
Bangladesh	4,078,000	3,997,845
India	4,010,586	3,758,794
Nepal	9,459,349	9,133,527
Sri Lanka	20,841,958	20,641,617
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,389,893</b>	<b>37,531,783</b>

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)		
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget
Bangladesh	CERF	1,000,000
	European Commission	1,315,789
	Japan	400,000
	United States	707,285
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,423,074</b>
India	Australia	100,529
	United States	1,780,679
	USA for UNHCR	10,000
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,891,208</b>
Nepal	Australia	363,092
	Canada	296,610
	Denmark	37,500
	International Olympic Committee	15,000
	Japan	2,000,000
	Japan Association for UNHCR	52,146
	Nepal Investment Bank	13,709
	OPEC Fund for International Development	27,000
	Private donors in Canada	28,027
	Shinnyo-en Foundation (Japan)	50,000
	UNAIDS	150,000
	United Kingdom	196,030
	United States	2,111,306
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>5,340,420</b>
Sri Lanka	Australia	1,959,147
	Canada	313,793
	CERF	4,551,792
	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	992,908
	European Commission	1,367,989
	Germany	463,576
	Ireland	533,333
	Japan	700,000
	Luxembourg	136,612
	Netherlands	3,286,984
	New Zealand	386,200
	Norway	2,784,130
	Private donors in Switzerland	8,698
	Red Crescent Society (Saudi Arabia)	44,968
	Sweden	734,750
Switzerland	204,918	
United States	2,045,000	
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>20,514,798</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>31,169,501</b>

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.