



India
Nepal
Sri Lanka

A refugee family in the final stages of preparation for resettlement from Sanischare camp in Nepal.



South Asia

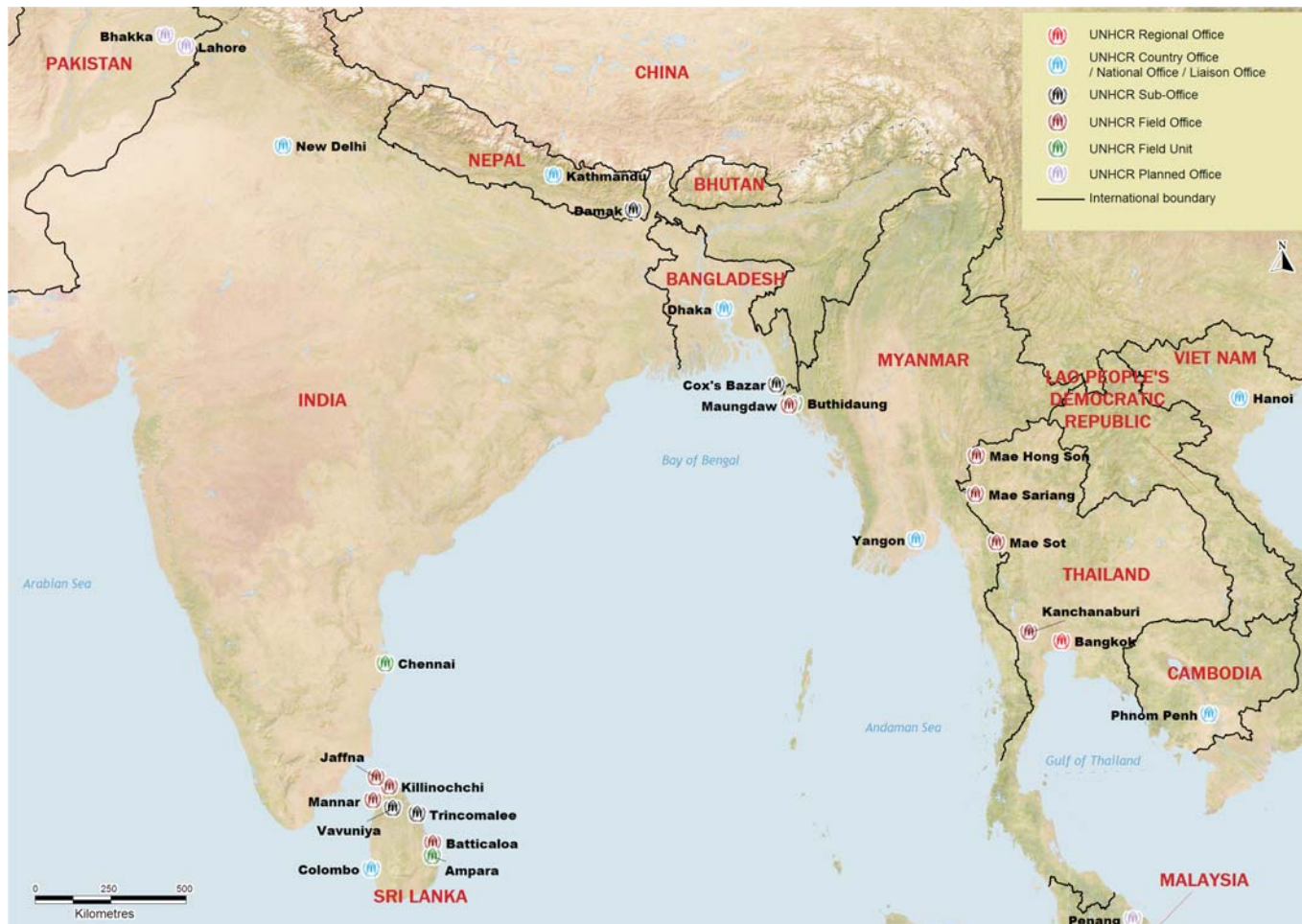
| Working environment |

In Sri Lanka, the Government declared an end to military operations in the north of the country in May 2009, bringing closure to a 26-year-long civil conflict. The end of hostilities has paved the way for the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), although some key obstacles to return still need to be addressed. Northern Sri Lanka currently hosts some 260,000 newly displaced people, most of them living in closed camps in Vavuniya district, but also in Mannar, Jaffna and Trincomalee districts. In addition, some 300,000 IDPs, some of whom have been in displacement since 1990, remain in need of durable solutions.

In India, security remains a key concern following the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and other insurgency-related incidents. While it continues to be a fairly accessible country for those seeking asylum, public concern about the increasing presence of foreigners, and the adoption of new anti-terror laws, mean that respect for asylum needs to be carefully monitored.

In Nepal, major steps in the ongoing peace process include signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006 and successful Constituent Assembly elections in April 2008. Several challenges remain, however, with respect to the establishment of long-term stability, as political tensions persist and the economic situation remains challenging.

In May 2009, the Maoist-led Government in Nepal resigned from power. A new coalition Government was formed in which the Maoists retained representation in the Constituent Assembly but held no ministerial posts. Political rivalries have hampered the reconstitution of local government bodies (which became inactive during the war), significantly impeding the delivery of services to Nepal's rural populations.



| Strategy |

In India, UNHCR handed over the registration of displaced people to an implementing partner in 2009, with monitoring and oversight by UNHCR. Refugee status determination (RSD) will continue to be carried out by UNHCR, which will require the strengthening of the relevant staff positions.

In India, UNHCR's strategic priorities will be to provide effective and timely international protection to refugees and asylum-seekers; make available efficient RSD processing; and pursue local integration for people who have access to citizenship. Furthermore, the Office will facilitate voluntary repatriation and use resettlement as a strategic protection tool.

UNHCR will also continue to identify opportunities for improving the lives of urban refugees by increasing their self-reliance and livelihood opportunities, particularly for people with specific needs.

UNHCR will engage the new authorities in Nepal in the search for durable solutions for all refugees. The strategy will have three objectives: (i) the large-scale resettlement of refugees from Bhutan; (ii) the promotion of durable solutions for urban refugees who have been displaced over a long period of time, including resettlement for people with specific needs; and (iii) the improvement of protection for long-stayers.

In 2010, UNHCR's strategy for Sri Lanka focuses on the voluntary return of IDPs. It includes return assistance in the form of non-food items and basic shelter support. Protection monitoring in return areas will be a strategic priority. UNHCR and its protection partners will organize go-and-see visits; and monitor the return and relocation of IDPs, as well as conditions in their new places of residence. Shelter assistance will be

coordinated with other actors.

To make returns sustainable, the Office will implement quick-impact projects to reconstruct community infrastructure, rebuild community-based organizations and provide livelihood opportunities. UNHCR will also continue to facilitate the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees in India who are originally from the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka on a case-by-case basis. Some refugee returnees may require assistance with livelihoods and in building or repairing homes.

| Constraints |

The major constraints in India revolve around access to social and economic rights for refugees and asylum-seekers. While the principle of *non-refoulement* continues to be respected for holders of UNHCR refugee certificates, other protection challenges include the absence of a national legislative framework on asylum issues.

In Nepal, political instability and sporadic violence throughout the eastern region will continue to interfere with operational activities. Although UNHCR staff are likely to have uninterrupted access to camps, spontaneous strikes affect the movement of partners, prevent refugees from attending interviews in Damak and challenge timely delivery of assistance.

Furthermore, the presence of refugees is perceived as hurting the environment and curtailing livelihood opportunities for local people. Camps are seen as providing higher standards of services than those available to nationals, giving rise to resentment. UNHCR and its partners will continue to work with the Government, refugees and civil society to implement projects that improve relations between the refugees and the

host community.

In Sri Lanka, one of the main constraints to early return will be the rate at which de-mining is completed and low mine risk certifications received. Certain areas in Jaffna and the east will continue to be designated by the Government as high-security zones in 2010, preventing some IDPs from returning to their homes. In the north, the lack of freedom of movement for a large number of IDPs, particularly in Vavuniya, presents serious protection concerns. Humanitarian access to return areas will likely be a challenge, especially for NGOs, requiring more direct implementation by UNHCR.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** are covered in separate country chapters.

By the end of 2008, there were some 11,200 refugees recognized by UNHCR in **India**. The majority of them come from Afghanistan (75 per cent), Myanmar (17.5 per cent), Somalia (4.3 per cent), Palestinians from Iraq (1.2 per cent) and Iraq (1 per cent). In 2009, there has been a sharp increase in the number of asylum-seekers approaching the Office.

In 2010, new systems will be introduced for registration and RSD to cope with the increasing number of arrivals. As in the past two years, access to citizenship will be promoted for the protracted Hindu/Sikh Afghan population, while resettlement will be pursued for the protracted ethnic Afghans, and for those whose protection needs cannot be met in India.

UNHCR will expand its outreach to refugee communities directly and through implementing partners. The Women's Protection Clinic for refugees from Myanmar and similar approaches for other refugees are essential elements of this strategy.

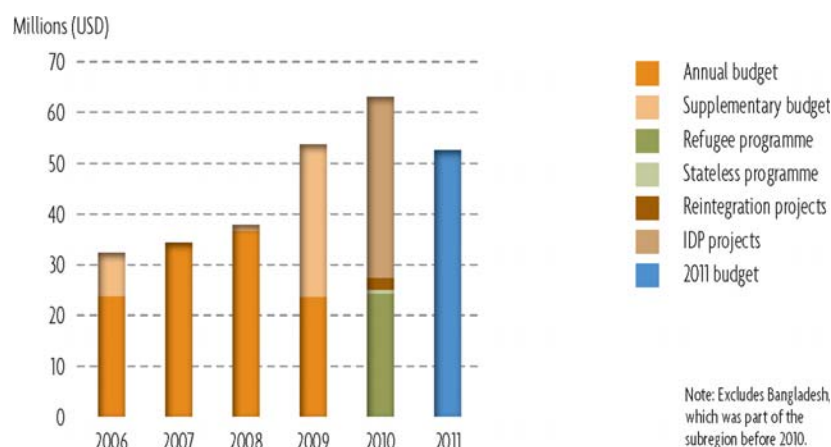
In-depth surveys will be conducted to address the requirements of people with specific needs and to develop appropriate approaches to help them improve their self-reliance. Given the Government's agreement to allow access to basic health care and primary education for refugees and asylum-seekers, the Office will encourage people to make use of these services. It will support them with interpreters, help them obtain documentation such as birth certificates and affidavits, offer Hindi-language lessons for children and adults, and provide courses to assist children to join the national education system.

The situation in Sri Lanka will be carefully monitored to ascertain the level of interest among Sri Lankan refugees in India in returning with UNHCR's assistance.

Financial information

UNHCR's requirements in South Asia have increased steadily over the last three years to meet additional requirements. These include the improvement of registration and RSD systems in India, more resettlement activities and efforts to improve camp conditions in Nepal, and the emergency response and assistance for IDP returns in Sri Lanka.

UNHCR's budget in South Asia 2006 – 2011



UNHCR budget for South Asia (USD)

COUNTRY	2009 REVISED BUDGET ¹	2010					TOTAL	2011
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL		
India	5,537,152	9,808,728	122,422	0	0	9,931,150	10,000,000	
Nepal	13,079,655	13,924,712	154,673	0	0	14,079,385	14,122,600	
Sri Lanka	35,021,472	1,004,587	0	2,413,005	36,330,717	39,748,309	28,500,000	
Regional activities	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL	53,738,279	24,738,027	277,095	2,413,005	36,330,717	63,758,845	52,622,600	

¹ Includes supplementary programme requirements in Sri Lanka of USD 29,965,776.