



South Asia

India

Nepal

Sri Lanka

| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- More than 90 per cent of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) uprooted during the last phase of Sri Lanka's civil war had returned to their places of origin by the end of 2010. UNHCR also facilitated the voluntary return of more than 2,000 refugees to Sri Lanka.
- UNHCR's protection monitoring and interventions in Sri Lanka promoted the safety and basic rights of IDPs and returnees. While there was improvement compared to the previous year, advocacy remained particularly important in light of the difficult access to people of concern.
- Thanks to the generous support of resettlement countries, since November 2007 more than 40,000 refugees from Bhutan have departed from Nepal to start new lives in third countries.
- In December 2010, the Government of Nepal endorsed UNHCR's proposal for camp consolidation, camp closure and the introduction of a community-based development

programme in refugee-affected and hosting areas in the remote eastern districts of Nepal.

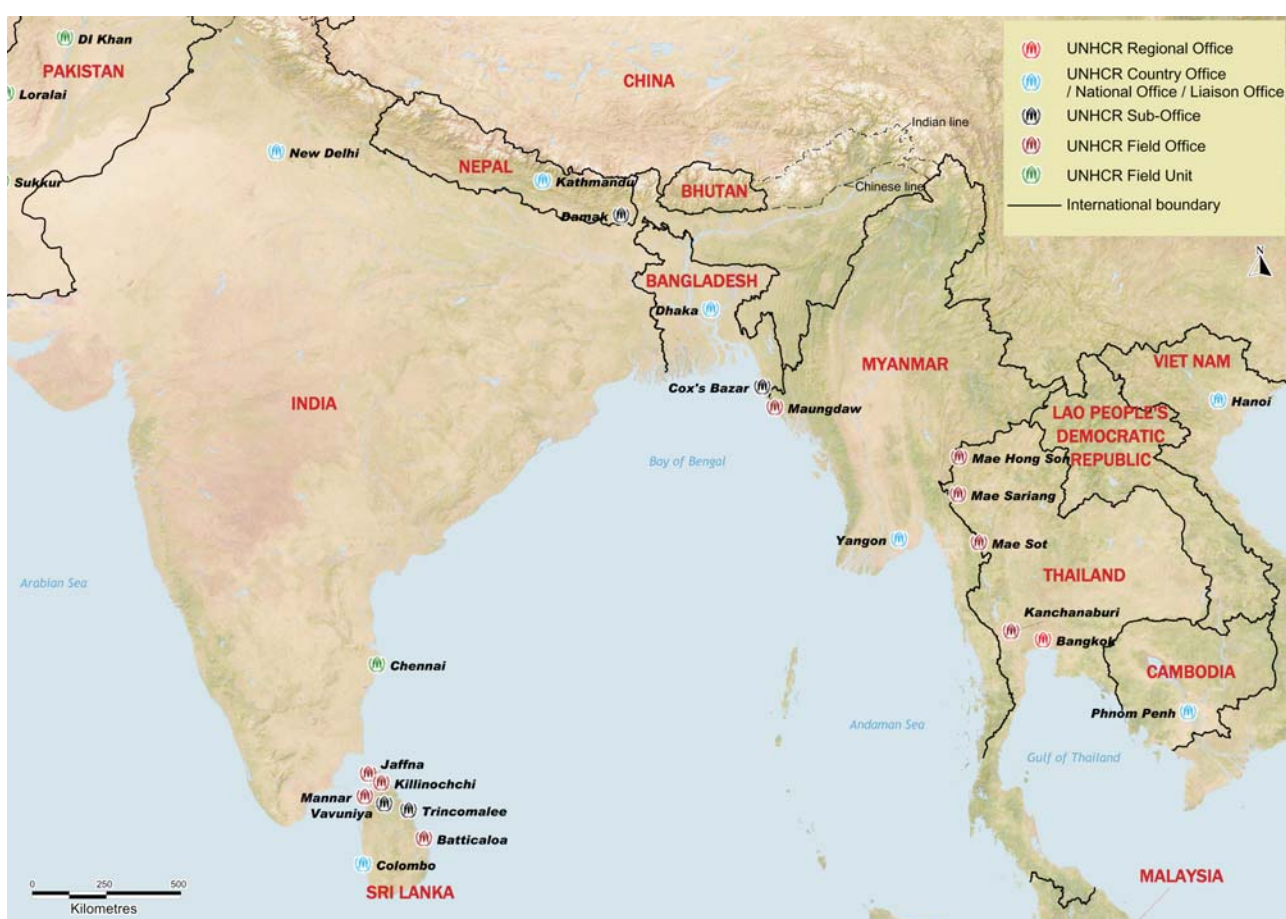
- In India, UNHCR improved its refugee status determination (RSD) operation to ensure the timely registration of asylum-seekers and reduce the processing time for their applications. The Government maintained protection space and provided access to services for some 6,000 asylum-seekers and 15,000 refugees.

| Working environment |

UNHCR partnered with a variety of stakeholders to coordinate humanitarian efforts and meet the protection and assistance needs of persons of concern to the Office in the region. Despite not having acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention, countries in South Asia have generally continued to provide protection and humanitarian space to refugees and asylum-seekers. In some situations, however, restrictions on access by humanitarian organizations to people of concern remained a challenge.



A refugee woman from Myanmar collecting a blanket in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh.



In Sri Lanka, intensive humanitarian and early recovery efforts were undertaken by the Government and the international community, following the end of the conflict in May 2009. With the gradual improvement in conditions in the north and east of the country, 2010 saw the progressive return of IDPs from government-run camps to their places of origin. More than 260,000 people have returned home since October 2009, while some 86,000 remained in camps or with host communities. Some 2,500 people remained stranded in transit, unable to return to their places of origin, for reasons such as incomplete mine removal or continued military occupation of their land.

The Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security in the Northern Province was mainly responsible for coordinating assistance for IDPs and returnees in Sri Lanka. UNHCR worked in close cooperation and in support of its efforts. Improvements in access were noted compared to the previous year, although difficulties remained, particularly for NGOs, and humanitarian assistance programmes were suspended in July and August. While restrictions on UN agencies were eased after discussions with the authorities, some NGOs continued to face difficulties in obtaining permission to operate in return areas until the end of the year.

In Nepal, political stalemate continued after the resignation of the prime minister in June 2010, resulting in the country being run by a caretaker Government for the remainder of the year. In a complex political environment, the deadline for the completion of the draft of the new constitution was extended by one year. Despite intermittent strikes called by different political parties and social groups, refugee camps in Nepal remained accessible to UNHCR and its NGO partners throughout the year.

Nepal's current draft constitution contains citizenship provisions that would create a serious risk of statelessness for considerable numbers of people. An estimated 800,000 people currently lack citizenship certificates in Nepal.

UNHCR worked closely with a number of key stakeholders to ensure access to citizenship certificates and to reduce the risk of statelessness in the country.

India experienced an unprecedented rise in the prices of food and other basic commodities, which affected the daily lives of refugees and asylum-seekers as well as local residents. Despite the absence of a national refugee protection framework, the Government of India continued to grant asylum to a large number of refugees from neighbouring States, while respecting the principle of *non-refoulement* and UNHCR's mandate for refugees and asylum-seekers.

The naturalization of Afghan Hindu and Sikh refugees of Indian origin continued. Some 660 Afghan refugees have received Indian citizenship, including some 20 people in 2010. UNHCR's office in Chennai facilitated the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees to areas which were declared safe for return.

▮ Achievements and impact ▮

UNHCR ensured protection for its people of concern while seeking durable solutions for them. Participatory assessments and group discussions were conducted by all offices to identify, address and advocate for the needs of refugees and IDPs, with due consideration given to age, gender and diversity.

In Sri Lanka, UNHCR's humanitarian and protection activities focused on assisting returning IDPs. Between October 2009 and the end of 2010, some 76,000 families who had been displaced since April 2008 were assisted with a shelter grant (approximately USD 220 per family) upon return to their homes. Moreover, some 109,000 returnee families received non-food item (NFI) return kits. Vulnerable individuals among the protracted IDP cases received shelter assistance.

With the improvement of the conditions in the country, the year 2010 saw a marked increase in the return of Sri Lankan refugees, mainly from India, but also from other countries in Asia. UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of more than 2,000 refugees and assisted them with NFIs in areas of return. It also provided NFIs to refugees who returned spontaneously.

UNHCR continued to lead the protection and NFI and shelter clusters in Sri Lanka. It supported and strengthened protection networks composed of UN agencies, local and international NGOs and relevant government bodies. The Protection Working Groups chaired by UNHCR helped identify risks, devise protection strategies and interventions and undertake advocacy. The NFI and shelter cluster continued to coordinate the provision of resources for NFIs and shelter to minimize assistance gaps and overlaps.

In Nepal, a large-scale resettlement programme continued in cooperation with the Government, IOM and eight Core Group countries: the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In 2010, some 14,800 refugees from Bhutan were resettled, adding up to the departure of more than 40,000 refugees from the camps since 2007. Basic assistance and social services, as well as protection-related activities, continued to be provided, with an enhanced focus on gender-based violence and mental health-related issues. UNHCR continued its efforts to address comprehensive solutions including potential voluntary repatriation to Bhutan.

With the substantial reduction in the refugee camp population due to resettlement, in December 2010 the Government of Nepal endorsed UNHCR's proposal for the consolidation of the refugee camps (from seven to two by the end of 2012) and a community-based development programme in refugee-affected and hosting areas.

In India, UNHCR improved its RSD processes and reduced the waiting time for asylum-seekers from Myanmar and non-neighbouring countries. Resettlement was used as a protection tool, with the departure of some 600 people during the year. UNHCR assisted more than 2,000 Sri Lankan refugees to repatriate.

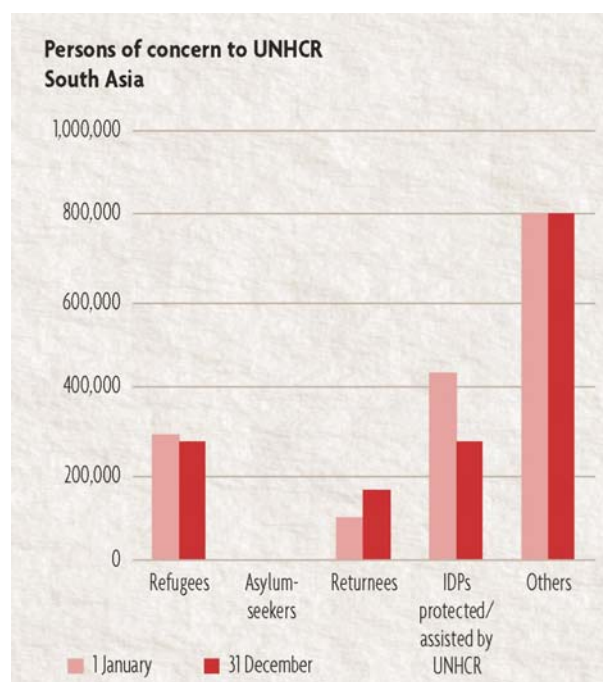
Poverty continues to be a major problem for people of concern living in India's urban areas, and 3,700 of them benefited from UNHCR's livelihoods and self-reliance programmes. The programmes focused on refugees and asylum-seekers with specific needs, including unaccompanied minors and older people. Moreover,

UNHCR strengthened its partnerships with government institutions to improve the access of refugees and asylum-seekers to health and education services.

| Constraints |

Despite certain improvements towards the end of the year, restrictions on humanitarian access to people of concern in Sri Lanka hampered the delivery of assistance to IDPs and returnees, especially when partner NGOs could not gain access to beneficiaries. Mine action continued, but slow progress in some heavily contaminated return areas, as well as the military occupation of private lands, prevented the return of a considerable number of IDPs. In spite of improvements, limited infrastructure and livelihood opportunities as well as land- and property-related problems continued to place major impediments in the way of returnees wishing to rebuild their lives after years of displacement.

The political stalemate in Nepal had an adverse impact on the implementation of some planned activities that required the engagement of the Government. Moreover, with the continuing departure of skilled and experienced refugee workers from the camps, maintaining the quality of services became difficult.



Budget and expenditure in South Asia | USD

Country		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
India	Budget	10,066,054	75,000	0	0	10,141,054
	Expenditure	6,383,295	74,626	0	0	6,457,921
Nepal	Budget	14,000,436	70,351	0	0	14,070,787
	Expenditure	11,484,250	69,343	0	0	11,553,593
Sri Lanka	Budget	5,906,127	0	635,032	29,174,350	35,715,509
	Expenditure	839,432	0	540,440	24,843,987	26,223,859
Total budget		29,972,617	145,351	635,032	29,174,350	59,927,350
Total expenditure		18,706,977	143,969	540,440	24,843,987	44,235,373

In Tamil Nadu, India, UNHCR was able to interview Sri Lankan refugees in the district centres closer to the camps, though direct access to the camps continued to be restricted.

Operations

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

Financial information

UNHCR's budgets for South Asia continued to increase in 2010, largely as a result of the IDP operation in Sri Lanka, the resettlement operation in Nepal and the growth in the number of asylum-seekers and recognized refugees in India.

Voluntary contributions to South Asia | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
SOUTH ASIA SUBREGION				
United States of America			3,550,000	3,550,000
South Asia subtotal	0	0	3,550,000	3,550,000
INDIA				
Australia	122,080			122,080
Charities Aid Foundation	53,611			53,611
India subtotal	175,691	0	0	175,691
NEPAL				
Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	106,196			106,196
European Commission	1,370,851			1,370,851
Finland			680,272	680,272
Japan			753,498	753,498
Japan Association for UNHCR	37,077		7,309	44,386
UN Central Fund for Influenza Action	185,819			185,819
United States of America	571,613			571,613
Hewlett Packard (USA)	44,000			44,000
Nepal subtotal	2,315,557	0	1,441,079	3,756,636
SRI LANKA				
Australia		1,889,033		1,889,033
Australia for UNHCR		3,428		3,428
Brazil		900,000		900,000
Canada			1,500,938	1,500,938
Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)		4,290,471		4,290,471
Charities Aid Foundation			207	207
European Commission		2,758,097		2,758,097
France		404,858		404,858
Italy		123,305		123,305
Japan			1,076,426	1,076,426
Japan Association for UNHCR			51,913	51,913
Norway			611,247	611,247
Russian Federation			300,000	300,000
Sweden		879,176		879,176
Switzerland		470,810		470,810
United Kingdom		480,000		480,000
United States of America		2,250,000	6,400,000	8,650,000
Sri Lanka subtotal	0	14,449,177	9,940,731	24,389,908
Total	2,491,248	14,449,177	14,931,810	31,872,235

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities - mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.