



South Asia

India

Nepal

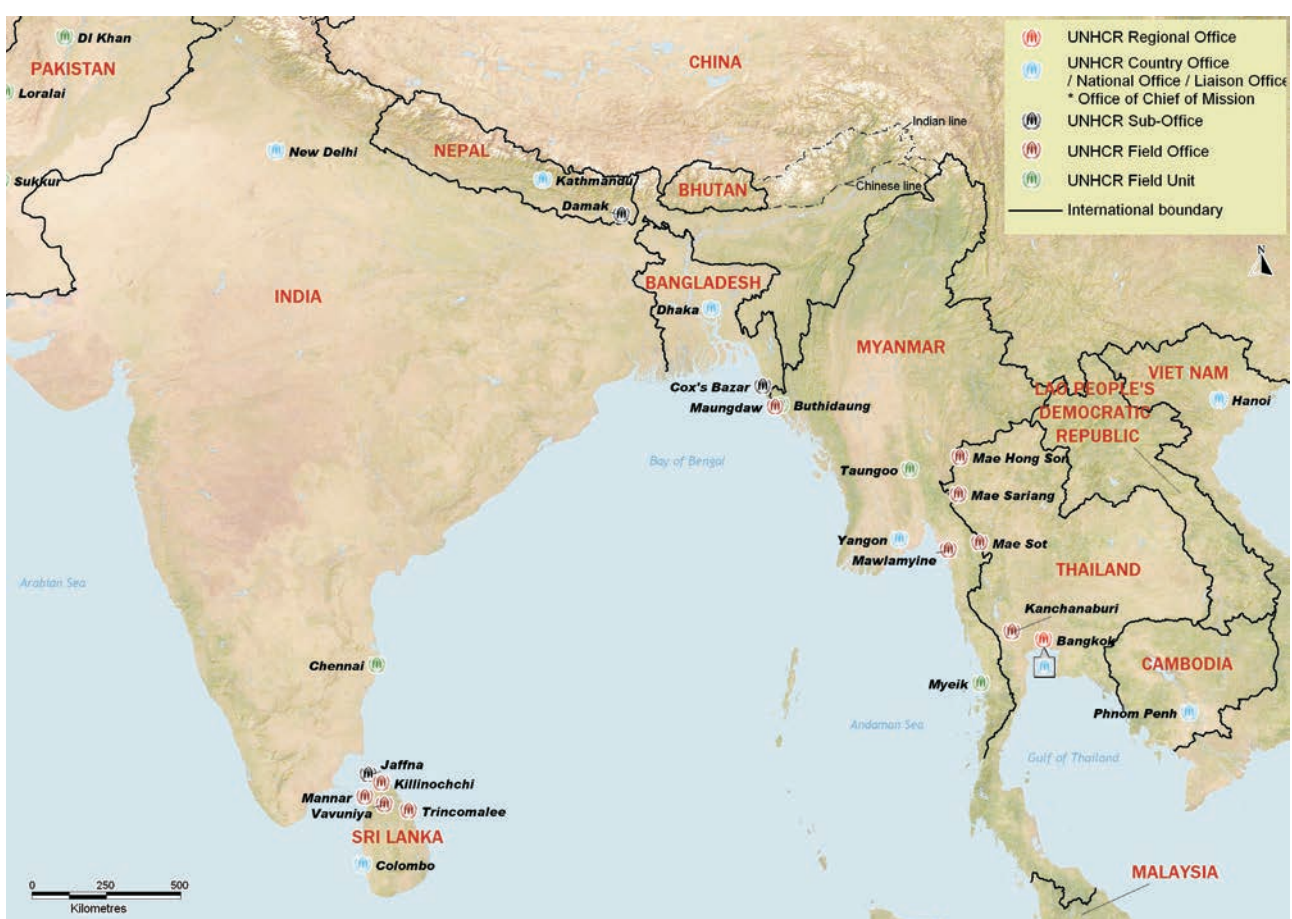
Sri Lanka

| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- UNHCR's resettlement programme in Nepal remained the largest such programme worldwide. Some 18,100 refugees, originally from Bhutan, left Nepal for their new homes in eight different resettlement countries in 2011. In total, some 58,500 individuals have been resettled since the start of the resettlement programme in late 2007.
- Given the reduction in the size of the camp population in Nepal, with the endorsement of the Government, UNHCR consolidated the administration of the three Beldangi camps, and closed the Goldhap and Timai camps in 2011. This left only three of the original seven camps.
- Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees uprooted during the civil war in Sri Lanka continued to return. Some 144,600 IDPs returned to their villages of origin in 2011. UNHCR also facilitated the voluntary return to Sri Lanka of more than 1,700 refugees.
- UNHCR's monitoring activities and other protection interventions in Sri Lanka helped safeguard the basic rights of IDPs and returnees. While there were improvements compared to the previous year, issues relating to housing, land and property issues in return areas remained a challenge. The military presence in the north continued to have an impact on civil administration and humanitarian coordination.
- In India, the Government maintained protection space for nearly 190,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, of whom approximately 21,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR. In July, UNHCR began issuing new identity cards with encrypted smart chips to enhance the protection of urban refugees.



A Somali refugee in the kitchen of her rented living space in New Delhi.



Working environment

In partnership with a variety of stakeholders, UNHCR pursued the coordination of humanitarian efforts and the protection and assistance needs of persons of concern. Despite not having acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention or 1967 Protocol, the countries in South Asia have continued to provide protection and humanitarian space and to respect UNHCR's mandate. Nonetheless, the situation of urban refugees and asylum-seekers remained difficult, given their lack of formal status in the absence of national refugee protection frameworks.

In Sri Lanka, the return of IDPs to their places of origin in the north continued. By the end of 2011, more than 430,000 IDPs had returned to their districts of origin since 2009. Some 138,000 individuals remained in camps, with host communities or in transit, unable to return due to ongoing demining operations or continued military occupation of their land.

The general stability in the north allowed early recovery and development agencies to become involved in assisting returnees. The Government made significant progress in its efforts to re-establish infrastructure and services in this region. Nevertheless, civilian structures in the north needed greater support to become fully staffed and operational. While access to the camps and return areas improved during the year, at times some NGOs continued to experience access issues in trying to carry out their activities.

In Nepal, under the new Government formed in August 2011, the drafting of a new constitution, due to be completed in May 2012, and the integration of ex-Maoist combatants in the national army, remained key political priorities. UNHCR continued to enjoy cooperation with the Government and especially in assisting some 55,000 refugees from Bhutan who remain in the camps. Urban asylum-seekers and refugees, although considered illegal immigrants by the authorities, have in practice been allowed to stay in the

country. Tibetan new arrivals continued to transit through Nepal to India.

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 to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers in urban areas. The protection space for urban refugees and asylum-seekers was maintained and expanded; for instance, UNHCR gained access to certain asylum-seeker groups in detention and secured their release. Rising prices of food and other basic commodities again affected refugees and asylum-seekers as well as local residents.

Achievements and impact

UNHCR ensured protection for persons of concern while seeking durable solutions for them. Further participatory assessments and focus group discussions were conducted by all offices to identify, address and advocate for the needs of refugees and IDPs. The Office also worked towards addressing child protection needs and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through training, awareness raising, monitoring and targeted interventions. Moreover, creative approaches were adopted to address the livelihood needs of refugees, asylum-seekers and returnees, including through the introduction of the Community Technology Access (CTA) project in India and Nepal, and small scale community-based quick impact projects (QIPs) in returnee areas in Sri Lanka.

With more stability in the country, Sri Lankan refugees continued to return home, mainly from India, but also from other countries. However, the numbers returning from India were lower than expected, partly due to the delay in the launch, and the subsequent suspension, of the Tuticorin-Colombo ferry service. During 2011, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of nearly 1,700 Sri Lankan refugees and assisted them with standard reintegration and

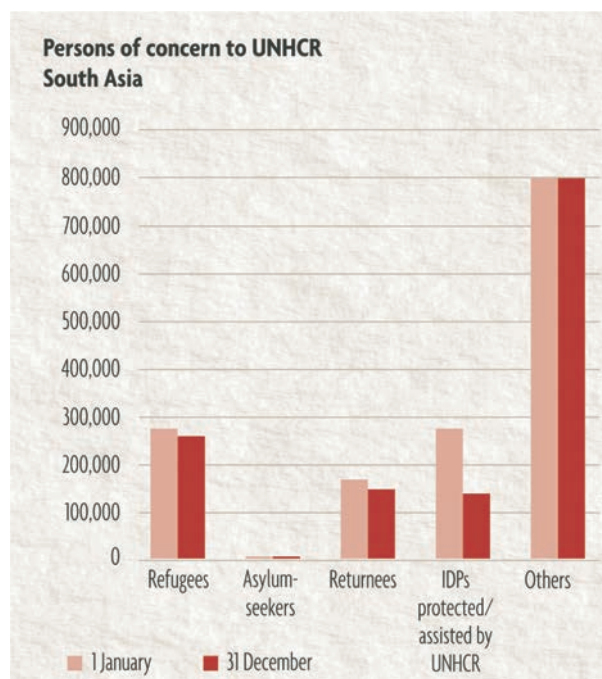
transport grants. The refugees also received non-food items (NFIs) in their places of return in Sri Lanka.

UNHCR's humanitarian and protection activities within Sri Lanka focused on assisting IDPs returning to their homes. In 2011 alone, UNHCR registered close to 9,000 returnee families for the shelter grant, benefiting approximately 31,400 persons, and enabling them to repair or reconstruct damaged shelters, meet other basic needs and invest in livelihood activities during the initial post-return phase. Since the shelter grant programme started in October 2009, more than 86,000 families received the shelter cash grant. A total of 120,000 NFI kits have been distributed to returnees since the return process began in August 2009. Shelter assistance was provided to some 700 extremely vulnerable returnee families.

UNHCR continued to lead inter-agency coordination in the areas of protection and shelter/NFIs. Key protection concerns included the continued presence of military personnel in areas of return, the need to maintain humanitarian space, the demining of agricultural land, and essential services available in return areas. UNHCR supported and strengthened protection networks of UN agencies, local and international NGOs and relevant government bodies. The NFI/Shelter cluster coordinated the provision of resources to minimize assistance gaps and overlaps.

In Nepal, with the strong support of the Government and of resettlement countries, some 18,100 refugees from Bhutan were able to leave for their new homes in the course of 2011. With the substantial reduction in the size of the camp population due to these departures, UNHCR worked with the Government and NGO partners to begin the consolidation of the camps. The administrative consolidation of the three Beldangi camps and the closure of Goldhap and Timai were completed in 2011. At the end of the year only three of the original seven camps remained, and these are due to be reduced to two by the end of 2012.

While maintaining basic services and infrastructure in the camps, in 2011 UNHCR initiated an inter-agency, five-year Community-Based Development Programme (CBDP) aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence between refugee and hosting communities in Jhapa and Morang districts. The CBDP will allow UNHCR to move from providing humanitarian assistance to supporting the



self-reliance of refugees and sustainable development in host communities. UNHCR was supported by the Government and the UN Country Team in implementing this programme.

In Nepal, UNHCR also provided protection and assistance to some 300 urban refugees and asylum-seekers, and to approximately 800 Tibetan new arrivals whose safe transit to India was also facilitated. Together with national and international partners, UNHCR supported legal aid and awareness projects to assist individuals in need of citizenship certificates. It also strongly advocated for citizenship provisions in the new Constitution to be in line with Nepal's international obligations.

In India, UNHCR strengthened its refugee status determination (RSD) processes through speedy registration, fast-tracking persons with specific needs, and reducing the waiting time for all asylum-seekers. Poverty continued to be a major challenge for persons of concern living in India's urban areas, where 3,600 of them benefited from UNHCR's livelihoods and self-reliance programmes. The programmes focused on refugees and asylum-seekers with specific needs, including older people and persons with disabilities.

Budget and expenditure in South Asia | USD

Country		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
India	Budget	13,222,330	104,177	0	13,326,507
	Expenditure	7,474,121	102,048	0	7,576,169
Nepal	Budget	15,445,714	1,397,775	0	16,843,489
	Expenditure	11,701,053	765,719	0	12,466,772
Sri Lanka	Budget	7,627,840	0	17,498,959	25,126,799
	Expenditure	3,627,752	0	9,467,396	13,095,148
Total budget		36,295,884	1,501,952	17,498,959	55,296,795
Total expenditure		22,802,926	867,767	9,467,396	33,138,089

Addressing SGBV and protecting children, especially those who were unaccompanied or separated from their families, remained a priority. UNHCR continued to conduct best interest assessment procedures to ensure that children were protected in a safe environment and received counselling, living allowances and educational support, such as the Learn and Train project, which benefited some 70 unaccompanied or separated children in the country.

| Constraints |

In Sri Lanka, humanitarian access to return areas improved after July 2011, when Government clearances were no longer needed to access all areas in the north. However, access for some NGOs remained difficult. In certain cases, military involvement in daily administrative work in the north, including in humanitarian or development projects, impeded the ability of UNHCR and its partners to implement projects. Some areas continued to be designated as high security zones, prolonging displacement in the north. A lack of comprehensive policies on land issues reduced the sustainability of returns.

In Nepal, UNHCR faced difficulties in maintaining quality services in the camps due to the departure for resettlement of skilled and experienced refugee workers. Although the Government supported most projects, the urban refugee programme was affected by the absence of domestic refugee legislation. As such, urban asylum-seekers and refugees were considered as illegal immigrants.

In India, UNHCR was able to continue interviewing Sri Lankan refugees in the district centres close to the camps in Tamil Nadu, without direct access to the camps. Ferry services between Tuticorin and Colombo, which started in October 2011 and allowed refugees to return with more belongings, were suspended in late November 2011, adversely affecting returns.

While the overall environment remained positive, the lack of a national refugee protection framework was an obstacle to the delivery of refugee protection in India.

| Operations |

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

In **India**, some 17,000 refugees and 4,000 asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR as of December 2011, comprising mainly Afghan, Myanmar and Somali nationals. The Government continued to provide asylum and direct support to some 200,000 refugees from neighbouring

countries. Pending the adoption of a national refugee protection framework, UNHCR conducted status determination procedures for asylum-seekers in urban areas, and ensured individual registration of all persons of concern.

With respect to durable solutions, UNHCR continued to use resettlement to address compelling protection needs that could not be met in India, and some 500 people departed for resettlement in 2011. UNHCR assisted more than 1,700 Sri Lankan refugees to repatriate voluntarily. In addition, it provided legal aid to support the naturalization of eligible Afghan, Hindu and Sikh refugees. Eight individuals were naturalized during the year.

UNHCR's protection outreach initiative in India was expanded with the establishment of a new refugee protection centre in an area where many Afghan and Somali refugees lived. There are now 11 such refugee centres in Delhi that aim to bring legal, social and community services closer to people of concern, in particular women. These centres have been instrumental in identifying and addressing their needs, including in the area of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

UNHCR also sought to find innovative ways to meet the growing livelihood needs of people of concern, mainly through a shift towards self-reliance activities, limiting direct financial assistance to refugees with specific needs (1,500 persons). In addition, sanitary materials were provided to all refugee women and girls assessed to be in need of such supplies. While the Government continued to allow all refugees and asylum-seekers to have access to public health and education services and the national legal system, a lack of knowledge of these services and the local language were practical barriers to such access. UNHCR enhanced its community-based sensitization and support activities to help overcome these barriers.

| Financial information |

UNHCR's overall requirements for South Asia were reduced in 2011, largely as a result of the initial downscaling of IDP-related activities in Sri Lanka. The requirements for Nepal increased slightly to ensure that basic services were provided to refugees and asylum-seekers, and that camp consolidation activities benefiting both refugees and host communities were undertaken. The increased requirements in India were for the protection of the growing urban refugee population in the country, and for increased activities to combat SGBV.

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			3,900,000	3,900,000
South Asia subtotal	0	0	3,900,000	3,900,000
INDIA				
Australia	75,000			75,000
Espana con ACNUR	22,753			22,753
Lebara Foundation	141,443			141,443
India subtotal	239,196	0	0	239,196
NEPAL				
Canada	308,960			308,960
CERF	999,991			999,991
European Union	681,690			681,690
International Organization for Migration	20,055			20,055
Japan			861,751	861,751
Japan Association for UNHCR	39,988			39,988
OPEC Fund for International Development	60,000			60,000
Private donors in China	149,605			149,605
Fast Retailing Co., Ltd. (UNIQLO)	113,800			113,800
United Kingdom	158,815			158,815
United States of America	200,000			200,000
Nepal subtotal	2,732,904	0	861,751	3,594,654
SRI LANKA				
Canada			815,494	815,494
CERF	638,148	1,224,121		1,862,269
Charities Aid Foundation			104	104
European Union		133,333		133,333
France		343,406		343,406
Italy		142,653		142,653
Japan			1,231,072	1,231,072
Switzerland		730,228		730,228
UN Population Fund		23,314		23,314
United States of America			4,900,000	4,900,000
Sri Lanka subtotal	638,148	2,597,055	6,946,671	10,181,874
Total	3,610,248	2,597,055	11,708,422	17,915,724