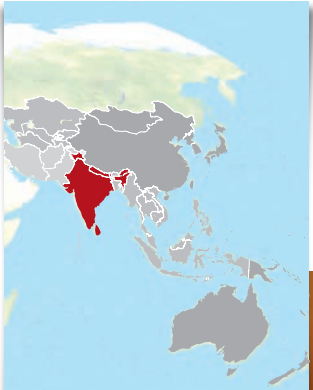


SOUTH ASIA



UNHCR
2012 GLOBAL REPORT

Returnee children at school
in Mannar (Sri Lanka)

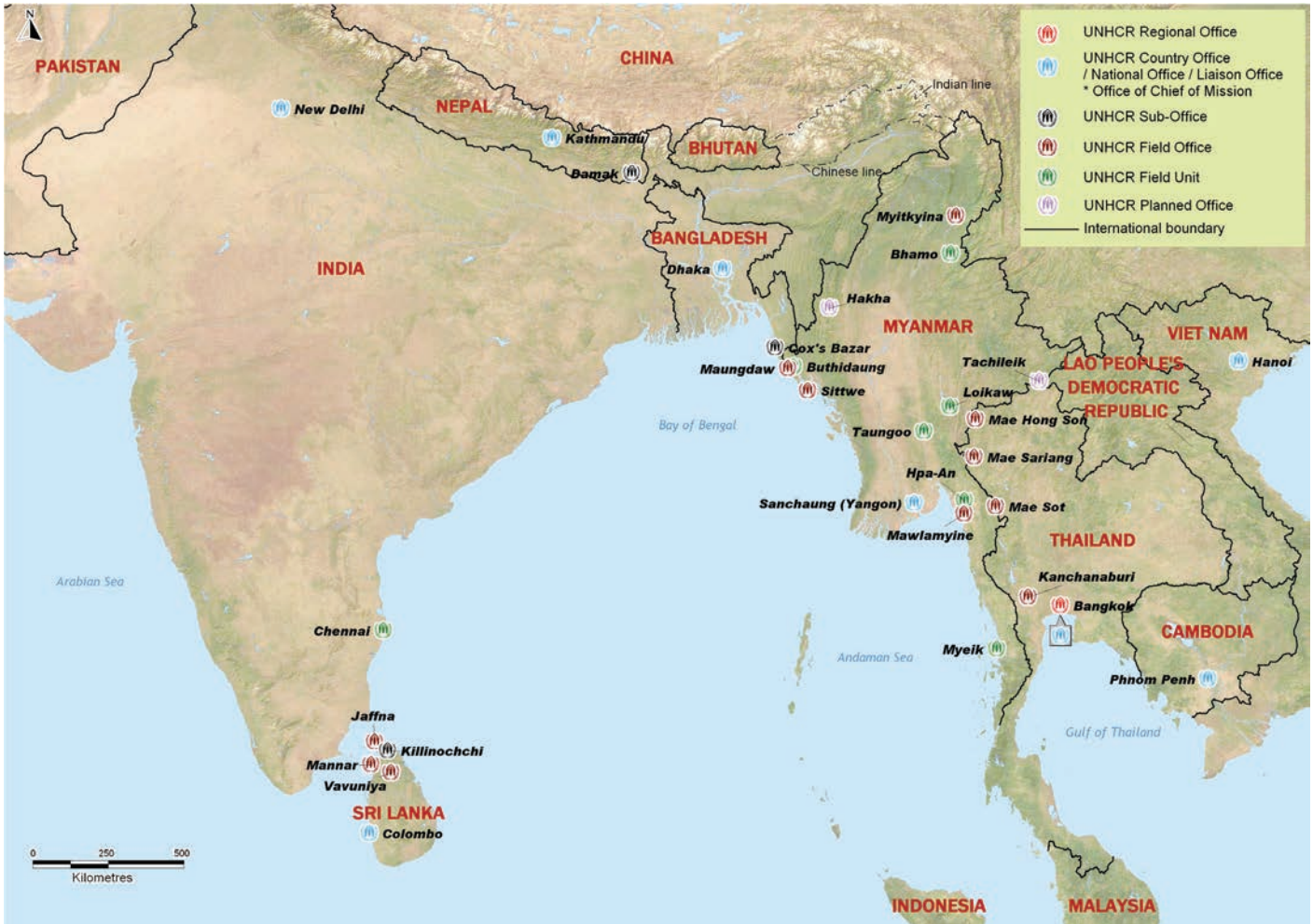
India

Nepal

Sri Lanka



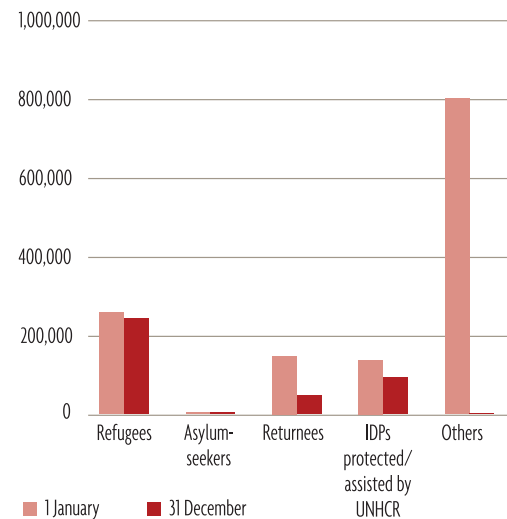
Overview



Highlights

- The Government of India permitted mandate refugees to apply for long-stay visas and work permits, which should significantly expand the protection space and improve the situation of refugees in India.
- UNHCR's third-country resettlement programme for refugees from Bhutan in Nepal reached a major milestone, with over 75,000 refugees resettled since the programme began in late 2007. During the year, nearly 17,000 refugees left Nepal for their new homes in eight resettlement countries.
- Khudunabari camp was closed in May 2012 as part of UNHCR's plan for the consolidation of refugee camps in eastern Nepal. Of the original seven refugee camps, only two remain (Sanischare and Beldangi), hosting some 41,000 refugees in total at the end of 2012.
- In Sri Lanka, the Government-run Menik Farm, once the largest camp for internally displaced people (IDPs) in the world, was closed and its last occupants have returned home or relocated. Since the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka in 2009, some 500,000 IDPs have returned to their places of origin.
- With the support of resettlement countries, UNHCR in Sri Lanka was able to provide durable solutions through resettlement for nearly 200 refugees, the highest number in the past four years.

People of concern to UNHCR in 2012
South Asia



Working environment

Despite not having acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the States in South Asia have offered asylum to refugees and shown respect for the principle of *non-refoulement*. However, many refugees in urban settings face protection and/or livelihood challenges, given their lack of formal status and the absence of national refugee protection frameworks.

In India, the Government continued to grant asylum to a large number of refugees from neighbouring countries, while UNHCR's mandate continued to apply for refugees from non-neighbouring States and Myanmar. The number of new asylum-seekers increased in 2012 by 30 per cent, most of whom were from Myanmar. The Government's recent decision to allow refugees to apply for long-stay visas and work permits should bring about a marked improvement in the quality of asylum in India. Despite an overall favorable protection environment, life in urban settings remained challenging for many refugees who lived in conditions of poverty.

In Nepal, the Constitution building process received a major setback with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in May 2012. As a result, UNHCR at times faced challenges in its work in areas requiring action by the Government even though close cooperation was maintained with the relevant authorities. The large-scale resettlement programme for refugees from Bhutan in the country, of whom some 40,000 remained in two camps at the end of 2012, continued through the year.

In Sri Lanka, significant progress was made in re-establishing infrastructure and advancing mine clearance in the north of the country. The last Government-run IDP camp hosting people displaced after 2008 was closed in September 2012, with its inhabitants returning voluntarily to their places of origin or relocating. Almost 500,000 displaced people have returned to their areas of origin since returns began in 2009. However, there remain an undetermined number of individuals in protracted displacement situations in Sri Lanka for whom durable solutions are yet to be found.

Achievements and impact

Fair protection processes and documentation

- In India, UNHCR continued to undertake refugee status determination (RSD) and assist 22,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Somalia. Protection outreach was strengthened through the provision of counselling and other services in 15 refugee centres in Delhi neighbourhoods, providing refugees, particularly women and children, with access to UNHCR.
- Through a successful registration exercise conducted by the Government of Nepal with the support of UNHCR, an additional 1,800 individuals from Bhutan were registered as refugees in 2012. Through its NGO partners, UNHCR also assisted nearly 13,000 vulnerable individuals living in five remote districts in western Nepal to obtain citizenship certificates.
- In Sri Lanka, UNHCR continued with its RSD work and assisted some 370 urban refugees and asylum-seekers with health care, education and a subsistence allowance. In the north and east of the country, UNHCR monitored protection in places of

displacement, return or relocation, benefiting more than 12,000 people. Some 8,000 people in areas of return were assisted to obtain civil-status documentation, enabling them to avail of public services.

Basic needs and essential services

- In Sri Lanka, UNHCR provided more than 5,500 shelter grants and distributed over 9,000 non-food item (NFI) kits to returning IDP families.
- In Nepal, UNHCR provided basic assistance to refugees, including education, health care and psychosocial assistance. Basic assistance and protection were provided also to urban refugees and some 400 Tibetans transiting to a third country (India) during their short stay in the country.
- In India, UNHCR supported 710 students to enrol in secondary education and provided supplementary education and language courses to over 800 children. Some 1,700 people with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children, also received assistance that included financial support and counselling.

Community empowerment and self-reliance

- Poverty continued to be a major challenge for people of concern living in urban areas in India. UNHCR reinforced its livelihoods programmes in the country, benefiting 3,300 refugees. UNHCR continued capacity building of community leadership and promoted refugee women's representation. Overall 60 per cent of the existing community leadership structures were represented by women. Participatory assessments and open house meetings with refugees from various communities were also conducted.
- In Nepal, the project document for the Community-Based Development Programme/Transitional Solutions Initiative (CBDP/TSI) for refugees from Bhutan and their host communities was finalized in late 2012 by the UN Country Team, in coordination with the Government of Nepal. The document was formally submitted to the Government for its endorsement in December 2012.

Durable solutions

- Resettlement was used to address protection needs that could not be met in India, with some 350 people departing for third countries in 2012. Some 1,200 Sri Lankan refugees were assisted to repatriate voluntarily. Furthermore, legal aid was provided to eligible Hindu and Sikh Afghan refugees who wished to be naturalized.
- In Nepal, the resettlement programme for refugees from Bhutan continued to receive the strong support of the Government and eight resettlement countries. Since late 2007, more than 75,000 refugees from Bhutan have been resettled, with nearly 17,000 of them departing in 2012. UNHCR also provided protection and assistance to some 300 urban refugees, of whom 33 departed for resettlement in 2012.
- UNHCR assisted in the return and reintegration of more than 1,200 Sri Lankan refugees, providing them with repatriation and reintegration grants and monitoring their situation after return. Some 120 quick-impact projects were implemented in IDP and refugee returnee communities to anchor their return and reintegration. During the year, some 180 registered urban refugees found durable solutions through resettlement in the United States and Canada – the highest number in four years.

Constraints

In India, UNHCR's presence is limited to New Delhi and it is difficult to access refugees and asylum-seekers who were dispersed across the country. Many refugees and asylum-seekers possess limited education or professional skills and are new to urban settings. Although they enjoy India's traditional hospitality, the absence of a formal national refugee protection framework renders their status uncertain.

In Nepal, the frequent departures on resettlement of skilled refugees, particularly in the education and health sectors, made it difficult to maintain the quality of services in the camps. The absence of a national refugee protection framework hampered the provision of protection and pursuit of durable solutions for urban refugees. Even when durable solutions, such as resettlement, were identified for some urban refugees, they were sometimes delayed pending the resolution of visa fines and granting of exit permits.

In Sri Lanka, there was a concern about shrinking asylum space in the country. The lack of a comprehensive national policy on land, housing and property issues continues to challenge the sustainability of return for IDPs and refugees. A joint plan by UNHCR and the Government to conduct a country-wide profile of the protracted IDP community could not be carried out, delaying decision-making on durable solutions for this group.

Operations

In **India**, UNHCR continued to strengthen its RSD procedures, including through the improvement of the registration centre in West Delhi. The Office facilitated refugees' access to national health and education services and developed synergies with local networks to provide additional support to refugees and asylum-seekers in New Delhi and beyond. Efforts were redoubled to enhance the self-reliance of refugees and address the concerns of people with specific needs. To this end, UNHCR reviewed its livelihoods programme and shifted from a social-protection model to a self-reliance model, focusing on training and employment, income-generation opportunities, home-based production, language, computer courses and job placement support.

UNHCR in India also implemented a sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) strategy based on prevention and multi-sectoral

responses, including women's education and employment. Child protection was mainstreamed into existing institutional services. UNHCR continued to facilitate the voluntary return of Sri Lankan refugees through information dissemination as well as documentation and transportation arrangements.

In **Nepal**, in cooperation with the Government and NGO partners, UNHCR remained engaged in the provision of basic services to refugees from Bhutan in camps, while facilitating the resettlement of nearly 17,000 people during the year. Dialogue in relation to the voluntary repatriation of refugees to Bhutan continued. In 2012, UNHCR implemented 31 activities to comprehensively address the prevention and response to SGBV. The activities included innovative interventions engaging men and boys, specialized counselling for alleged perpetrator as well as anger-management and alternatives to violence. In addition, the project ensured enhanced support mechanisms for survivors, vulnerable and at-risk women.

For urban refugees, UNHCR carried out RSD and provided basic assistance, including education, health care and psychosocial support. While facilitating their safe transit to India, UNHCR advocated for new arrivals from Tibet to continue being granted access to Nepalese territory. Training was carried out by UNHCR and its partners on issues of citizenship and refugee law.

In **Sri Lanka**, UNHCR's primary objectives were to monitor persons of concern, advocate for their rights, conduct targeted protection interventions and assist with the documentation and reintegration of returnees. Some 44,000 returnee or relocated IDPs were assisted by UNHCR in 2012, with shelter grants, NFI kits and projects to support their reintegration. UNHCR sustained its advocacy for the Government to find solutions for those who remained displaced. UNHCR also assisted with the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees, mainly from India, albeit at a slower pace than in the past. All returnees were received by UNHCR at the point of arrival and assisted with transportation, reintegration grants and NFI kits. UNHCR worked to increase the engagement of development actors in addressing the reintegration challenges facing returnees in the areas of livelihood, rule of law and infrastructure development. Following registration and RSD, recognized refugees were assisted to gain access to health care and educational institutions and provided with a subsistence allowance.

| Financial information |

UNHCR's overall requirements for South Asia have been progressively reduced over the past few years, largely as a result of the downscaling of IDP-related activities in Sri Lanka and the decline in the size of the refugee population in camps in Nepal

due to resettlement departures. Of the total requirements of USD 46.7 million for the subregion in 2012, available funding allowed for expenditure of USD 26.4, leaving significant gaps in UNHCR's response to the needs of people of concern.

Budget and expenditure in South Asia | USD

Operation		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
India	Budget	13,130,133	81,278	0	0	13,211,411
	Expenditure	6,458,455	71,510	0	0	6,529,965
Nepal	Budget	12,955,089	1,351,419	1,411,101	0	15,717,609
	Expenditure	9,315,841	747,228	623,778	0	10,686,847
Sri Lanka	Budget	10,119,117	68,724	0	7,553,888	17,741,729
	Expenditure	4,761,080	39,306	0	4,357,006	9,157,392
Total budget		36,204,339	1,501,421	1,411,101	7,553,888	46,670,749
Total expenditure		20,535,376	858,044	623,778	4,357,006	26,374,204

Voluntary contributions to South Asia | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
SOUTH ASIA SUBREGION					
United States of America				3,743,000	3,743,000
South Asia subtotal	0	0	0	3,743,000	3,743,000
INDIA					
International Olympic Committee	2,850				2,850
India subtotal	2,850	0	0	0	2,850
NEPAL					
Canada				501,505	501,505
European Union	1,333,333				1,333,333
Germany	272,271	355,082			627,353
Japan				630,438	630,438
Japan Association for UNHCR	109,760				109,760
United Kingdom	166,794				166,794
United States of America	257,000				257,000
Nepal subtotal	2,139,159	355,082	0	1,131,942	3,626,182
SRI LANKA					
Canada				501,505	501,505
Central Emergency Response Fund			330,000		330,000
Charities Aid Foundation				124	124
European Union			1,866,667		1,866,667
Germany	565,755		659,735		1,225,490
Italy	54,545		75,325		129,870
United Nations Population Fund			6,362		6,362
United States of America				2,500,000	2,500,000
Sri Lanka subtotal	620,300	0	2,938,089	3,001,629	6,560,018
Total	2,762,309	355,082	2,938,089	7,876,571	13,932,050

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.