

ASIA AND THE



| Working environment |

The Asia region has suffered major humanitarian crises in 2010, with violence in southern Kyrgyzstan in June and torrential monsoon rains which caused the worst floods in Pakistan in 80 years. UNHCR has played a prominent role in delivering much-needed assistance and protection to the affected populations as part of the humanitarian community's overall relief efforts.

Mixed migratory movements continue to be a defining feature of the region, with some people moving in search of better livelihoods while others flee persecution or conflict. In an environment where States' concerns about national security and bilateral relations take priority over refugee protection, UNHCR continues to advocate for the respect of asylum space.

Both Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to host some of the world's largest refugee populations, with 1.7 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan and another million in Iran. Though voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan slowed significantly in 2009 to some 57,580 people, it picked up between March and August 2010, when more than 100,000 Afghan refugees returned home.

Following the major humanitarian emergency which ensued as a result of the massive displacement after the end of the 26-year conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2009, the year 2010 has seen the return of IDPs from Government-run camps to their places of origin. Of the original number of 270,000 people displaced at the end of the conflict, 35,000 remained in camps at the end of August 2010.

In the complex context of mixed migration in South-East Asia, the security concerns of States continue to constrain refugee protection and asylum space. The increasing use of detention facilities to hold asylum-seekers and refugees, including children and other vulnerable persons, is a worrying trend. UNHCR continues to advocate for increased protection space, unhindered access to asylum, fair and efficient refugee status determination (RSD) procedures and expanded opportunities for durable solutions for all people of concern in Asia. At the same time, it seeks to promote public tolerance and support for refugees and mobilize funding from both public and private sources.

In a positive development, a group of Myanmar refugees arrived in Japan in September 2010 as part of a pilot resettlement programme. There has also been some modest progress in refugee protection and the resolution of statelessness issues in Central Asia. However, the perception of asylum as a political matter, coupled with heightened national security concerns, presents significant challenges in the protection of people of concern in the region.

PACIFIC



Heavy rains in July 2010—**caused unprecedented floods** across vast parts of Pakistan, washing away entire villages.

UNHCR / R. TABASSUM

| Strategic priorities in 2011 |

- *Safeguard protection and asylum space, including in mixed migration contexts and urban settings*

In 2011, UNHCR will promote comprehensive regional approaches to protection, which address root causes in countries of origin, seek to improve conditions of stay in countries of asylum, and pursue wider options for solutions for refugees in the region. Advocacy for increased humanitarian space and greater government responsibility for protection, particularly in the areas of access, basic services and registration, will underpin UNHCR's strategy.

Asylum and protection space has been difficult to maintain in a number of cities across Asia for urban refugees, who face numerous protection risks including arbitrary arrest and detention, sexual exploitation and abuse, deportation, violence and trafficking.

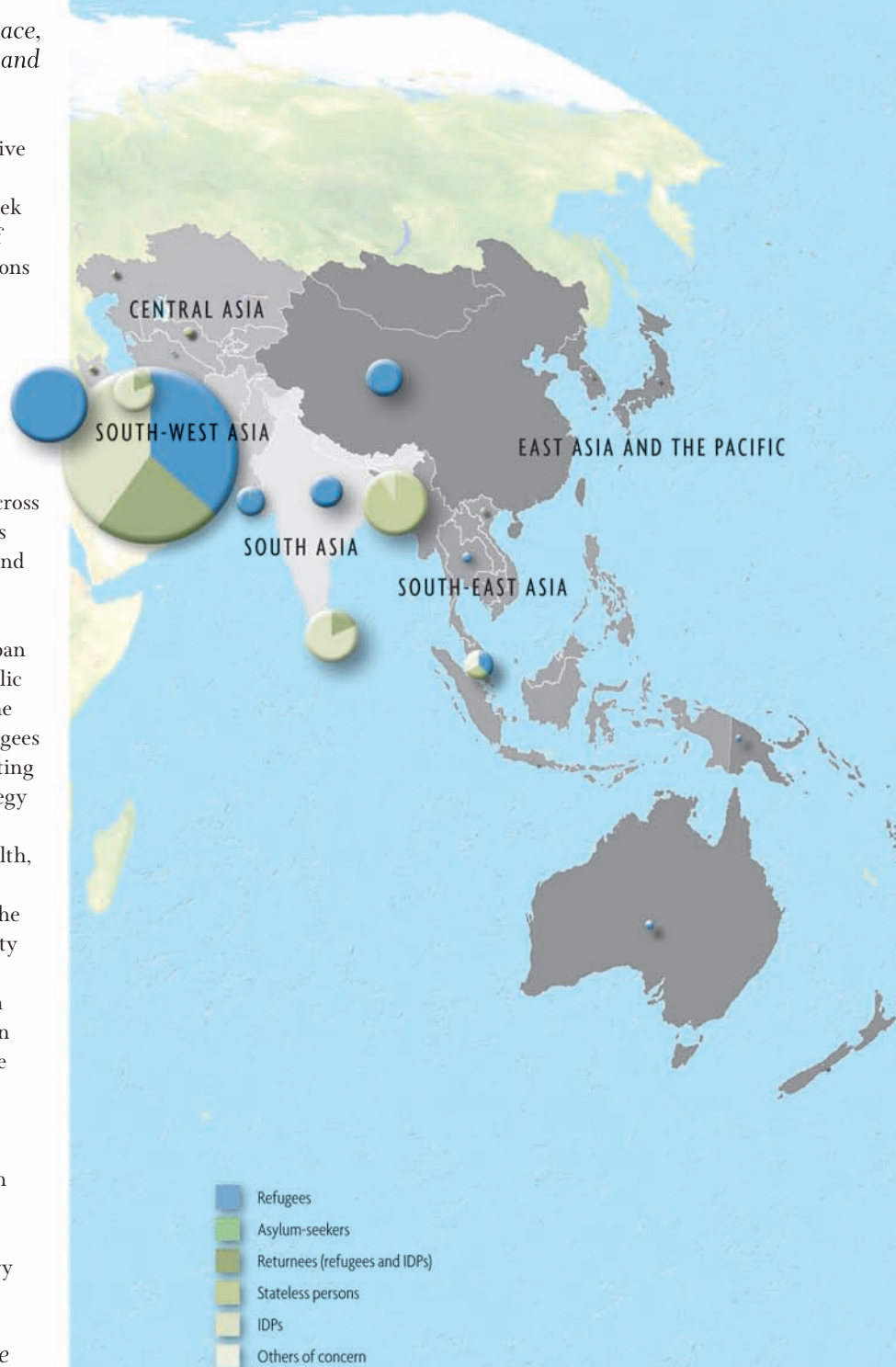
In line with UNHCR's new policy on urban refugees, offices in India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia and Tajikistan will examine current gaps in the protection of urban refugees to devise strategies that will include facilitating self-reliance. A key component of this strategy is the forging of new partnerships with non-traditional stakeholders, including health, education and social welfare ministries; municipal and local authorities, including the police; and NGOs experienced in community development.

UNHCR's strategy to strengthen asylum space in Central Asia in 2011 will be based on the recommendations elaborated during the planned Regional Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration in Central Asia. A main objective of the Conference is to develop an implementation strategy for the 10-Point Plan of Action in Central Asia, which will focus on the establishment of a protection-sensitive entry system.

- *Find solutions for protracted refugee situations*

Maintaining protection space and achieving durable solutions in some of the most protracted refugee situations will remain a priority for UNHCR in Asia.

The adoption by the Government of Pakistan in March 2010 of a repatriation and management strategy for Afghan refugees in Pakistan marked a major step towards addressing their protection and durable solution needs. The strategy has a new focus on the management of the protracted refugee situation by exploring migration alternatives and various visa regimes and documentation



Population size



options. The strategy comprises the extension of the Tripartite Agreement and the Proof of Registration (POR) card system for 1.7 million Afghan refugees until the end of 2012. It also includes a population profiling exercise for the Afghan population, with an emphasis on protection.

UNHCR will help the Government to issue new cards to unregistered family members of POR cardholders, and provide approximately one million birth certificates to registered Afghan children. UNHCR will also continue implementing its Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNHCR will engage with interested donor countries and the United Nations Country Team with a view to coordinating international funding initiatives in support of ongoing assistance to refugees. This initiative could include a programme to provide development assistance to refugee-hosting communities, similar to the Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas initiative in Pakistan. In Bangladesh, UNHCR will pursue a comprehensive approach to attain more equitable living conditions between registered refugees, unregistered persons of concern outside the camps, and the Bangladeshi host population in Cox's Bazaar district.

The large-scale resettlement programme for refugees from Bhutan in camps in Nepal is contributing to the resolution of this protracted refugee situation. UNHCR will also intensify advocacy with the authorities to upgrade host community facilities so as to extend services to the remaining refugees. To this end, UNHCR will work with the Government towards the consolidation of camps.

The situation of refugees from Myanmar in camps in Thailand is one of the most protracted in the world. The introduction in 2005, of third country resettlement for eligible persons in this group has provided resettlement solutions for more than 65,000 individuals, and some 12,000 more departures are expected in 2011. But the camp population is not likely to decrease rapidly, due to the steady flow of new entrants. UNHCR will continue to work with relevant actors to support policy changes aimed at finding durable solutions for these refugees, and at increasing protection space.

● *Ensure protection and durable solutions for IDPs*

Since the onset of violence in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, some 225,000 IDPs have returned to their places of origin, but approximately 75,000 remain displaced. Many are still without appropriate shelter, due to a lack of security in their areas of return. UNHCR, as the shelter and protection cluster lead, is helping with the implementation of an

emergency shelter programme, as well as with the provision of transitional shelters. Protection activities include restoration of personal identity, civil status and property documents, as well as free legal counselling.

At the request of the Government of the Philippines, UNHCR is responding to the IDP situation in Mindanao in the southern Philippines through the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. It has established a presence in Mindanao by opening an office in Cotabato. UNHCR will also implement protection-related quick impact projects in displacement sites and areas of return, focusing on the most vulnerable.

While many people in Pakistan affected by military operations in 2009 were expected to return home in 2010, a significant number will remain with host families and in makeshift shelters due to the disastrous floods in June 2010. The key areas of UNHCR's involvement will be those of facilitating return; protection monitoring; distribution of non-food items (NFIs); and emergency shelter. At the same time, relief activities will continue for persons affected by the floods, especially in the areas of shelter, the distribution of NFIs and protection.

In Sri Lanka, UNHCR will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to IDPs and returnees, progressively shifting its focus to support voluntary repatriation of refugees, from India and elsewhere, which is expected to increase substantially. Their return home is expected to rise sharply in 2011. There will also be a focus on ensuring that land and property issues are properly addressed.

● *Build protection capacity in natural disaster response*

Following UNHCR's decision to extend its protection expertise to leading and supporting, as required, the inter-agency protection cluster in natural disaster situations, the region has been afflicted by two major flood situations: in the Philippines in September 2009, and in Pakistan in June 2010. UNHCR's experience in the Philippines has illustrated that the Office can play a useful role supporting governments' responses to natural disasters, especially in making sure that the most vulnerable receive attention. Effective partnerships with regional and national disaster management structures will constitute a key element of UNHCR's response capabilities.

In the Pacific Island countries, UNHCR is working with regional actors in disaster risk management to strengthen the United Nations' collective response capacity. As co-lead of the Pacific region protection cluster, UNHCR will support efforts to integrate protection considerations into emergency responses to natural disasters in the Pacific.

Financial information

The budget for Asia and the Pacific increased significantly in 2009 due to the large supplementary programmes to assist IDPs in Pakistan and Sri Lanka which continued into 2010. Two new supplementary programmes were established in 2010 for the Kyrgyzstan crisis, and for emergency assistance to flood victims in Pakistan. The initial budget of USD 470 million expanded to well over USD 500 million during the third quarter of the year and it is expected that there will be more increases in the last quarter of 2010. These new operations were not foreseen at the time of Annual Programme Review for 2011. As such, the Annual Budget for Asia of USD 426.9 is expected to increase significantly.

○ *Maintain operations in high-risk areas*

UNHCR operations in South-West Asia continue to be dominated by growing insecurity, affecting access to beneficiaries. In Afghanistan, the security situation continues to allow access to only about half the country. In Pakistan, the devastating floods wreaked havoc in an already precarious humanitarian situation, further constricting humanitarian access.

In light of security imperatives, UNHCR will strive to maintain its operational flexibility, placing emphasis on transforming the nature of partnerships with local actors, recognizing their skills and comparative advantage in reaching out to affected communities. Strengthening the capabilities of national staff will also remain essential.

Operating in the challenging environment of Afghanistan, where the line separating the civilian from the military has become blurred, UNHCR continues to follow a highly disciplined approach, with careful and strategic choices in programme delivery. It seeks to send clear messages on the humanitarian and impartial functions of the Office in the interest of enhancing staff safety.

○ *Reduce and prevent statelessness and protect stateless persons*

UNHCR will strengthen efforts to engage countries in Central Asia to accede to international instruments protecting the rights of stateless persons. Country-specific action plans will be prepared in line with a comprehensive regional strategy for the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

In Nepal, UNHCR will continue to cooperate with the UN Country Team to pursue advocacy for the adoption of citizenship laws in line with international standards. It will

also identify those who are especially vulnerable to deprivation of their citizenship rights, and provide them with legal and administrative assistance in securing legal proof of nationality in the form of citizenship certificates.

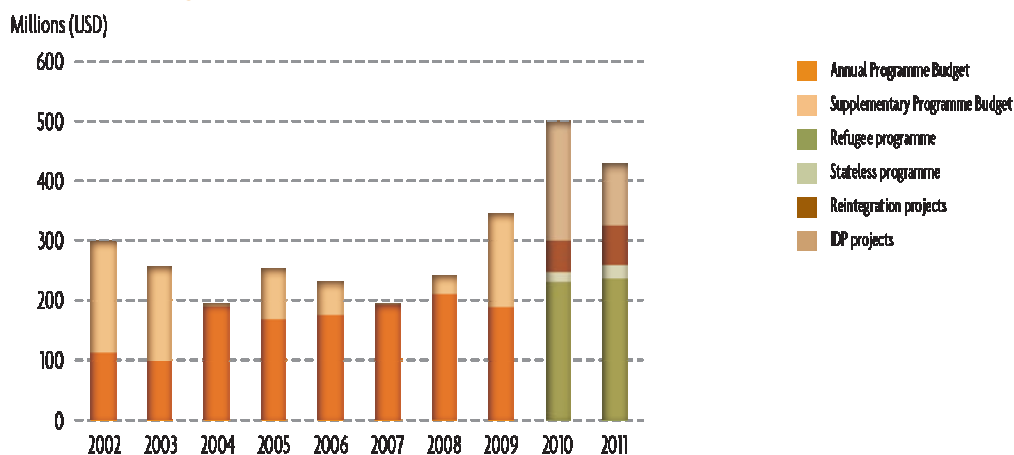
The approximately 740,000 Muslim residents without citizenship in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State require continued humanitarian assistance. UNHCR will work towards improved access to essential public services, such as schools and health centres, as well as through protection interventions and community-based livelihood programmes. UNHCR has maintained its activities in northern Rakhine State with the support of the international community and the local authorities, and will continue to focus on the priority areas of community services, education, water and health.

| Challenges |

The Asia-Pacific region has a low level of accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and implementation of their Convention obligations remains a challenge for some signatory States. While due recognition should be given to the hospitality shown by States not party to the Convention who have hosted large numbers of refugees for prolonged periods, the fragility of protection environments for asylum-seekers in the region constrains UNHCR's operations and compromises the principle of non-refoulement.

The changed environment in which UNHCR is currently operating, where security and related concerns need to be taken into account, poses new challenges in the region. Furthermore, the region's political volatility and its vulnerability to natural disasters have the potential to make heavy demands on UNHCR's resources and protection capacity. ■

UNHCR's budget in Asia and the Pacific 2002 - 2011



UNHCR'S BUDGET IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (USD)

Operation	Revised budget	PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	PILLAR 4	Total
		Refugee programme	Stateless programme	Reintegration projects	IDP projects	
	2010	2011				
SOUTH-WEST ASIA						
Afghanistan	106,256,686	31,739,109	0	45,070,684	23,326,337	100,136,130
Iran, Islamic Republic of	37,018,562	39,951,111	0	0	0	39,951,111
Pakistan	190,034,475	42,724,345	815,199	22,373,910	46,251,697	112,165,151
Subtotal	333,309,723	114,414,565	815,199	67,444,594	69,578,034	252,252,392
CENTRAL ASIA						
Kazakhstan Regional Office ¹	4,131,110	5,189,160	1,493,118	0	0	6,682,278
Kyrgyzstan	12,232,559	2,064,966	407,745	0	0	2,472,711
Tajikistan	1,286,362	1,698,956	175,042	0	0	1,873,998
Turkmenistan	584,164	365,582	446,307	0	0	811,889
Subtotal	18,234,194	9,318,664	2,522,212	0	0	11,840,876
SOUTH ASIA						
India	9,931,150	12,275,445	94,177	0	0	12,369,622
Nepal	14,641,283	16,399,714	1,367,774	0	0	17,767,488
Sri Lanka	39,748,309	8,952,733	0	0	18,218,961	27,171,694
Subtotal	64,320,743	37,627,892	1,461,951	0	18,218,961	57,308,804
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC						
Australia Regional Office ²	1,334,301	1,822,508	0	0	0	1,822,508
China Regional Office ³	4,982,733	4,796,873	200,275	0	0	4,997,148
Japan	4,990,673	4,507,567	850,011	0	0	5,357,578
Mongolia	220,522	170,107	38,614	0	0	208,721
Papua New Guinea	1,274,675	2,307,891	0	0	0	2,307,891
Republic of Korea	1,223,389	1,663,569	79,497	0	0	1,743,066
Regional activities	150,000	200,000	0	0	0	200,000
Subtotal	14,176,294	15,468,515	1,168,397	0	0	16,636,912
SOUTH-EAST ASIA						
Bangladesh	8,280,743	10,725,295	27,322	0	0	10,752,617
Cambodia	643,709	1,097,225	64,641	0	0	1,161,866
Indonesia	5,209,396	7,009,602	387,019	0	0	7,396,621
Malaysia	14,324,460	16,005,010	399,752	0	0	16,404,762
Myanmar	16,438,408	0	11,392,194	0	5,850,187	17,242,381
Philippines	2,856,017	749,691	1,111,905	0	7,702,483	9,564,079
Thailand Regional Office ⁴	20,538,948	24,316,807	988,878	0	0	25,305,685
Timor-Leste	339,890	330,016	78,826	0	0	408,842
Viet Nam	639,547	0	263,808	377,372	0	641,180
Subtotal	69,271,118	60,233,646	14,714,345	377,372	13,552,670	88,878,033
Total	499,312,071	237,063,282	20,682,104	67,821,966	101,349,665	426,917,017

¹ Includes the Office of the Regional Coordinator which provides support to countries in the subregion.

² Includes activities in New Zealand and 13 Pacific Island countries as well as additional support to Papua New Guinea.

³ Provides support to Mongolia.

⁴ Includes the Office of the Regional Coordinator which provides support to 12 countries in the subregion.