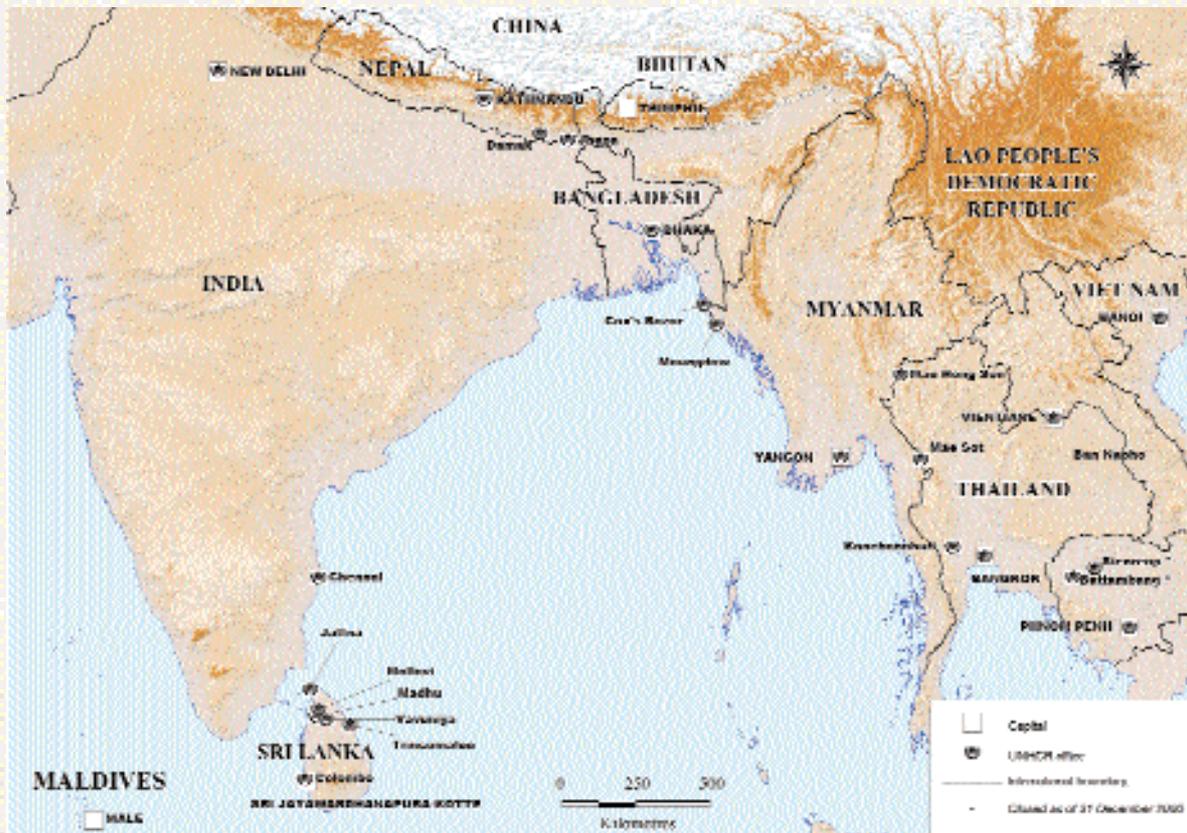


# SOUTH ASIA

## Regional Overview

Bangladesh • India • Myanmar • Nepal • Sri Lanka



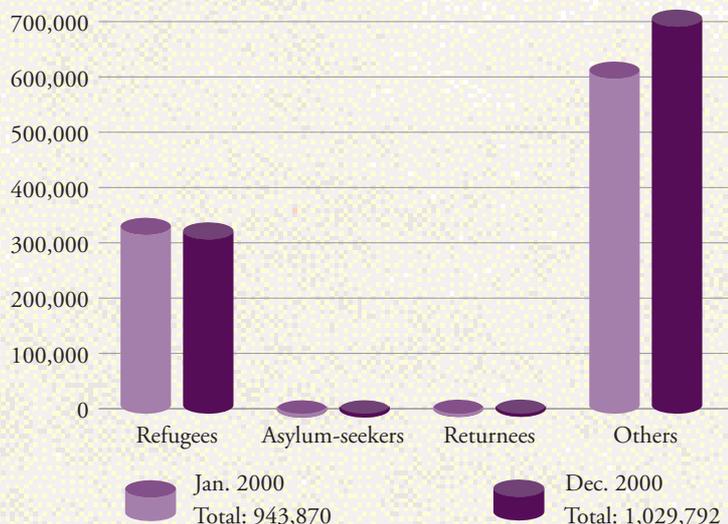
### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Significant progress was made in the pursuit of durable solutions for the protracted refugee situation in Nepal. After the tenth round of bilateral meetings, the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan were able to agree on a joint verification process for Bhutanese in refugee camps in Nepal. In the other countries of the region, limited progress was made in resolving the plight of over one million people, including refugees, returnees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Renewed fighting in the north of Sri Lanka during the first half of the year led to further population displacement. Repatriation of Myanmar Muslim refugees from Bangladesh to Myanmar continued slowly. India continued to host over 14,000 urban refugees.

### CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

An escalation of the conflict between the Sri Lankan Government and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the northern Jaffna peninsula during the first half of the year resulted in over 170,000 persons being newly displaced.

Persons of Concern to UNHCR



No major influx into India was observed, but over 64,000 Sri Lankan refugees remained in over 130 refugee camps in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu.

As the authorities denied renewal to those without valid identity documents, a large number of the approximately 12,700 Afghan urban refugees were faced with increased difficulties in their daily lives.

An agreement was reached at a high level meeting between the authorities of Myanmar and Bangladesh to lift the restriction on the numbers of Myanmar refugees returning per week. However, the return of Myanmar refugees from Bangladesh continued to progress slowly. Only 1,323 refugees returned to Myanmar in 2000; 21,500 remained in Bangladesh at the end of the year.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

The momentum for an early solution to the Bhutanese refugee issue was created with the visit of the High Commissioner to Bhutan and Nepal in the spring. The High Commissioner's visit was followed by ministerial level discussions between Bhutan and Nepal, as well as diplomatic moves by UNHCR and the international community to speedily resolve the issue. Towards the end of the year, the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal were able to resolve their differences over how to jointly determine who could return to Bhutan. This was a significant development for the 97,500 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. Actual verification has since begun, and UNHCR has offered its technical expertise and financial support to both Governments for the process.

In Myanmar, the five-year UN Integrated Plan for Northern Rakhine State, led by the UN Country Team, was replaced by the UNDP-led Basic Needs Assistance Programme scheduled for launch in mid-2001. UNHCR's multi-sectoral assistance activities contributed to the improvement of living standards and the stabilisa-

tion of the Muslim population in Northern Rakhine State. As a result of continued dialogue with the authorities on public policy issues, there was a significant decrease in compulsory labour in the area of UNHCR operation.

In Bangladesh, UNHCR provided protection and assistance focusing on refugee women and children. Productive activities such as kitchen gardening and poultry raising were introduced in refugee camps and contributed to the refugees' self-reliance and well-being. UNHCR was effective in ensuring the voluntary nature of repatriation through timely interventions.

As a part of efforts to improve the quality of asylum in the region, the members of the Eminent Persons Group continued, in their individual capacities, to promote the adoption of the model national refugee law in countries which are members of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation. UNHCR also urged governments in the region to accede to instruments of international refugee law.

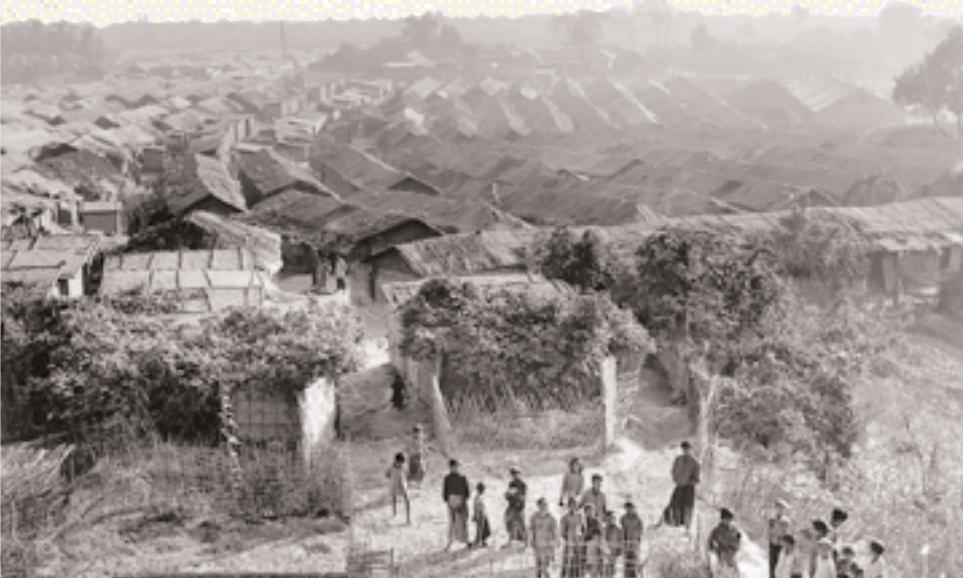
## OPERATIONS

UNHCR's operations in **Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka** are described in separate country chapters.

In **India**, UNHCR continued to provide protection and assistance to approximately 14,000 urban refugees (90 per cent of them Afghans). The conditions in Afghanistan precluded any large-scale voluntary repatriation, and there appeared to be little scope for local settlement. UNHCR continued to work with the Government of India to resolve the issue of the renewal of residence permits. Financial assistance was provided to those refugee most affected by the non-renewal of their residence permits. Efforts were made to pursue other durable solutions for the urban refugees. As a result, 1,290 refugees were resettled, and 37 voluntarily repatriating refugees received assistance. UNHCR endowed a Chair in Refugee Law at the Indian Society of International Law and at the National Law School of India University as part of its efforts to promote the dissemination of refugee law in India.

## FUNDING

Operations in Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Sri Lanka received generous funding in 2000. However, UNHCR's overall funding constraints and late arrival of some of the funds resulted in cash flow prob-



lems and programmes being prioritised and scaled back. As a result, several of UNHCR's own training and promotional activities were cancelled, and late payments to implementing partners led to the cancellation of some of their planned activities.

The 2000 Global Appeal included a box describing the situation of Myanmar Muslims, which indicated total financial requirements for the year in an amount of

USD 13,858,600. The box was intended to facilitate the transition from former Special Programmes to the unified budget structure, which was launched on 1 January 2000. Earmarked contributions against the situation are reflected in the table at the end of this Regional Overview. Total expenditure for the situation amounted to USD 10,196,484 in 2000. A description of the corresponding activities may be found in the relevant country chapters following this Overview.

| Voluntary Contributions - Restricted (USD) |                         |                         |                   |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Donor                                      | Earmarking <sup>1</sup> | Annual Programme Budget |                   |
|  |                         | Income                  | Contribution      |
| Denmark                                    | South Asia              | 1,040,462               | 1,040,462         |
| France                                     | South Asia              | 145,051                 | 145,051           |
| Germany                                    | Sri Lanka               | 245,106                 | 245,106           |
|  | Nepal                   | 583,789                 | 583,789           |
| Japan                                      | Bangladesh              | 900,000                 | 900,000           |
|  | India                   | 600,000                 | 600,000           |
|  | Sri Lanka               | 1,900,000               | 1,900,000         |
|  | Myanmar                 | 2,520,000               | 2,520,000         |
|  | Nepal                   | 1,300,000               | 1,300,000         |
| Netherlands                                | Sri Lanka               | 1,603,878               | 1,603,878         |
| Sweden                                     | South Asia              | 506,757                 | 506,757           |
| Switzerland                                | Sri Lanka               | 303,030                 | 303,030           |
| United Kingdom                             | Sri Lanka               | 857,143                 | 857,143           |
| United States of America                   | South Asia              | 1,083,400               | 1,083,400         |
|  | Myanmar                 | 1,000,000               | 1,000,000         |
|  | Bangladesh              | 300,000                 | 300,000           |
|  | India                   | 380,000                 | 380,000           |
|  | Sri Lanka               | 840,000                 | 840,000           |
|  | Nepal                   | 968,000                 | 968,000           |
| European Commission                        | Bangladesh              | 1,898,697               | 1,956,223         |
|  | Sri Lanka               | 957,704                 | 0                 |
|  | Myanmar                 | 3,510,755               | 3,510,755         |
|  | Nepal                   | 682,263                 | 0                 |
| Action Réfugiés (FRA)                      | Sri Lanka               | 2,923                   | 2,923             |
| Stichting Vluchteling (NET)                | Nepal                   | 67,930                  | 67,930            |
| Parthenon Trust (UK)                       | Myanmar                 | 396,825                 | 396,825           |
| Private Donors Austria                     | Bangladesh              | 3,837                   | 3,837             |
| <b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>                   |                         | <b>24,597,550</b>       | <b>23,015,109</b> |

<sup>1</sup>For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.

<sup>2</sup>Total funds available for obligation in the region also included unearmarked voluntary contributions, broadly earmarked contributions, opening balances and adjustments.

| Budget and Expenditure (USD) |                         |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Country                      | Revised Budget          | Expenditure       |
|                              | Annual Programme Budget |                   |
| Bangladesh                   | 2,609,215               | 2,483,340         |
| India                        | 2,861,042               | 2,839,111         |
| Myanmar                      | 9,040,235               | 8,295,337         |
| Nepal                        | 5,451,478               | 5,432,383         |
| Sri Lanka                    | 5,984,311               | 5,963,620         |
| Regional Projects            | 30,000                  | 8,032             |
| Bureau at Headquarters       | 1,070,350               | 1,182,387         |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>27,046,631</b>       | <b>26,204,210</b> |