

# Sri Lanka



## Impact

- In 2003, 76,722 IDPs returned to their places of origin, bringing total spontaneous returns since the signing of the Peace Agreement to 345,734. UNHCR's field presence was a vital means of monitoring returnees, ensuring respect for their rights, and giving them emergency relief assistance.
- The local protection network, comprising various international and national NGOs as well as government institutions, enhanced UNHCR's capacity to address and prevent human rights abuses in return areas. Over 68,000 IDPs and refugees approached the protection network and received advice and legal assistance.
- Humanitarian assistance programmes addressed the immediate needs of over 473,000 IDPs for material assistance (non-food items) upon their return.
- 190,000 stateless Tamils were granted citizenship by the Government of Sri Lanka. UNHCR supported the process by facilitating awareness and information campaigns.

## Main objectives

Promote and protect the rights of refugees, IDPs and returnees, especially targeting traumatized and vulnerable individuals and other groups at risk, with special emphasis on freedom of movement, security, and property rights; address the immediate humanitarian needs of spontaneous returnees through the provision of non-food relief items, emergency shelter, and other activities; improve policies and conditions for refugees, IDPs, returnees and victims of the conflict through capacity-building among government institutions and national NGOs; and stabilize the population, by supporting the current drive towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict and helping to build a platform for economic recovery.

## Working environment

### The context

The cease-fire of February 2002, between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continued to hold, although formal peace talks were suspended in April 2003. The notion of a federal structure within a single state was maintained as the basis for negotiations yet the parties could not agree on the scope of an Interim Administration for the north and east. Nevertheless, the peace process progressed slowly even without formal negotiations, insofar as economic recovery and the engagement of the international community were maintained.

The ensuing international effort to encourage the parties to resume peace negotiations was brought to an end when, in November 2003, the President temporarily suspended Parliament and dismissed three key government ministers. Nevertheless, continued high-level international engagement was demonstrated at the Tokyo donor conference in June 2003, where USD 4.5 billion was pledged. With peace talks suspended, and a political impasse reached, donors negotiated alternative mechanisms so as to maintain a reasonable level of funding for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the areas of Sri Lanka affected by conflict. There was an uninterrupted flow of IDPs returning spontaneously to, and within, the north and east of the country.

## Constraints

In order to achieve lasting peace, several fundamental issues needed to be addressed, including stable governance, security and minority rights. The political uncertainties hindered the search for solutions, and disrupted the transition from humanitarian relief to sustainable development. The following major obstacles still confront the displaced populations: the continuing presence of landmines; inadequate investment in the restoration of basic infrastructure in war-torn areas; insufficient interest in the integration of displaced people who would

prefer to stay where they are; and restitution of property. The return of a sizeable portion of those still displaced will depend on tangible progress at the peace talks, as their home areas lie within the strategic High Security Zones.

## Funding

Donor support for UNHCR's Sri Lanka operation has traditionally been excellent, and the year 2003 was no exception. In order to meet the additional needs of the many spontaneously returning IDPs, UNHCR launched a Supplementary Programme for the period October 2002 to December 2003, adding some USD 8 million, in 2003, to the Office's Annual programme budget of USD 6.4 million. Both programmes received outstanding financial support from donors.

## Achievements and impact

### Protection and solutions

UNHCR strengthened its presence in field locations to improve the monitoring of the human rights situation in all areas of return. It also reinforced the protection network, which includes partnerships with

Persons of concern				
Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Sri Lanka (IDPs)	386,100	-	51	39

Income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme and Supplementary programme budgets					
	Revised budget	Income from contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other funds available <sup>2</sup>	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	6,429,483	3,259,171	3,062,113	6,321,284	6,321,284
SB	7,997,214	8,682,662	2,278,587	10,961,249	7,636,354
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,426,697</b>	<b>11,941,833</b>	<b>5,340,700</b>	<b>17,282,533</b>	<b>13,957,638</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

<sup>2</sup> Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at headquarters.

Note: The Supplementary programme budgets do not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.



IDPs in Tellepelai benefit from a UNHCR agricultural programme for psychiatric patients of the hospital. *UNHCR/R. Chalasani*

the Sri Lankan Government and other national institutions, as well as with international NGOs. The network intervenes to prevent human rights abuses, informs IDPs about their rights and provides access to legal services. In addition, a comprehensive study on land and property was concluded and its recommendations were shared with the Government and the LTTE. This study is part of UNHCR's efforts to ensure that the rights of IDPs receive sufficient attention in the peace negotiations.

UNHCR developed and implemented a rights'-based multi-sectoral approach for SGBV prevention and response in all conflict-affected areas in Sri Lanka. Prevention aspects were addressed through the mobilization of women's groups in welfare centres and return areas as well as through public awareness programmes on SGBV and women's rights. Drop-In Centres and safe houses for victims were set up in the districts of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar and Trincomalee. Victims, both women and children, were able to access health, counselling and legal services.

## Activities and assistance

**Community services:** 111,769 IDPs, mainly women and children, had access to pre-school and

playground facilities, community centres, training in community leadership and joint decision-making, mediation of disputes as well as provision for women to combat SGBV. In addition, projects provided IDPs with access to skills training and income generation opportunities.

**Domestic needs/Household support:** Non-food relief packages (including plastic sheeting and other household necessities) were distributed to 23,285 families (approximately 116,425 persons) in all return areas in Sri Lanka.

**Education:** UNHCR repaired 16 primary schools and provided furniture in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Batticaloa Districts, benefiting 8,869 children. UNHCR also organized two vocational training courses for 600 young IDPs in the Mannar and Trincomalee Districts.

**Fisheries:** Five projects in Mannar and Jaffna Districts provided 1,540 IDPs with fishing equipment, to help them to increase family income.

**Health/Nutrition:** 82,361 IDPs were provided with access to primary and reproductive health care and awareness programmes on HIV/AIDS, through mobile health clinics in LTTE-controlled return areas in Mannar, Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Jaffna

Districts. UNHCR also repaired six primary health clinics, and renovated three maternity/women's wards in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Puttalam Districts, with the result that 32,376 IDPs were able to access medical services.

**Income generation:** 34,942 IDPs were provided with inputs to set up small businesses or begin to generate income from farming, fishing or other skilled occupations. In addition, skills training programmes were conducted for 1,714 vulnerable women and youth.

**Legal assistance:** UNHCR implemented sixty projects with the objective of protecting the rights of IDPs and returnees and enhancing their access to justice. Specific achievements included the referral of 7,984 cases to a governmental human rights commission on issues relating to arrest, disappearances, property disputes, access to food rations from the Government, and child recruitment. Another 3,000 returnees and IDPs were also represented on issues such as documentation, property cases, divorce, and the application of the Emergency Regulations and Prevention of Terrorism Act. UNHCR was able to reach out to tens of thousands of beneficiaries through human rights awareness programmes in the media and at welfare centres and return areas in Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar and Trincomalee Districts.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR funded part of the operational costs of 33 implementing and contractual partners involved in assistance and protection programmes, as well as the costs associated with the services of twenty-one UNVs.

**Sanitation:** A total of 1,137 latrines in return areas and welfare centres were constructed and repaired, benefiting 11,079 persons.

**Shelter/Other infrastructure:** UNHCR constructed temporary shelters for 2,624 families and semi-permanent shelters for 1,353 families in return villages. In addition, 6,577 families were provided with shelter materials for the construction of temporary shelters in return communities and welfare centres. Repairs were carried out on 29.7 kilometres of access roads which were used to facilitate the return of 3,212 families in 2003.

**Transport/Logistics:** In Sri Lanka UNHCR maintained a fleet of eight lorries to move humanitarian supplies into priority return areas. During the year,

the fleet made several hundred trips to deliver and distribute non-food relief items, medical supplies and equipment to returning IDPs, as well as those still housed in government welfare centres. UNHCR also transported equipment and project supplies used by NGOs and other UN agencies to support their projects and emergency delivery.

**Water:** Some 350 tube and open wells were constructed or repaired to improve access to potable water for 69,251 IDPs in return areas and welfare centres. Due to the complex topographical situation of the Jaffna peninsula, some of the planned work could not be conducted and the fund was reallocated to the shelter sector.

## Organization and implementation

### Management

At the end of 2003, UNHCR had eight offices in Colombo, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. The satellite office in Mallavi, initially opened for security reasons when staff were evacuated from Kilinochchi in 1996, was formally closed on 30 June 2003. The country wide workforce consisted of 112 staff (20 international staff, 71 national staff and 21 UNVs).

### Working with others

UNHCR had 33 governmental and non-governmental partners in 2003. Working in concert with other UN agencies and international financial institutions, UNHCR continued to support the Government to strengthen its coordination and oversight of the multiplicity of tasks associated with the issue of returning IDPs. To this end, strategic partnerships and close relationships were maintained with key ministries at the central and district level. The operational framework for the above activities was also linked to the Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (4Rs) initiative. This involved UNHCR's active engagement in addressing transitional issues, in order to ensure that returns are sustainable. In this respect, UNHCR is actively promoting joint planning and cooperation with Multilateral Group actors, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and UN Country Team

members (UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, ILO, WFP, UNFPA, IOM and WHO). Currently, the Multilateral Group is in the process of developing a strategy for the post-conflict period.

## Overall assessment

UNHCR successfully made the shift from an operation that emphasized relief and micro-projects as the primary protection focus of its work to a wide range of protection and human rights concerns. Additionally, the Office was engaged in a variety of relief activities in order to stabilize the returning IDP population. All programme activities were linked to the proactive use of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* as the foundation for UNHCR's protection work in IDP situations. In total, the UNHCR offices in Sri Lanka provided protection and emergency support to more than 473,000 IDPs and returnees.

This shift in orientation has helped pull together protection and assistance into a tighter and more coherent structure than existed previously. Furthermore, UNHCR's operations were directly linked to a joint Government and UNCT strategy to address the immediate needs of the returning IDPs. This was particularly important in an environment in which the gap between the humanitarian and developmental needs of the communities in the conflict-affected areas could not always be bridged effectively. Donor confidence in the Sri Lanka operation remained high, as illustrated by increased contributions in 2003.

### Offices

#### Colombo

Jaffna  
Vavuniya  
Kilinochchi  
Mannar  
Trincomalee  
Batticaloa

### Partners

#### Government agencies

Office of the Commissioner General for Co-ordination of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation  
Ministry of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees  
National Human Rights Commission

#### NGOs

Association of Women with Disabilities  
Bridge Asia Japan  
Campaign for Development and Solidarity – FORUT  
CARE International  
Centre for Policy Alternatives  
CHF International  
Child Vision  
Community Trust Fund  
CordAid  
Danish Refugee Council  
Islamic Relief Committee  
Jaffna Social Action Centre  
Legal Aid Foundation of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka  
Norwegian People's Aid  
Nursery Canara  
Peace and Community Action  
Rural Development Foundation  
*Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya*  
Save the Children Fund Sri Lanka  
Sewa Lanka Foundation  
Society for Socio Economic Development  
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society  
*Surekuma*  
Trincomalee District Gandhi Sevai Association  
Women and Media Collective  
Women's Development Centre  
ZOA Refugee Care Netherlands

#### Others

UNVs

## Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current year's projects				Prior years' projects	
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	notes	Annual and supplementary programme budgets	notes
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	1,760,151	393,433	2,153,584		29,051	
Community Services	110,500	247,437	357,937		42,867	
Crop Production	0	0	0		20,935	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	189,868	1,406,084	1,595,952		2,733	
Education	98,141	0	98,141		26,127	
Fisheries	38,995	0	38,995		1,381	
Health / Nutrition	61,823	204,773	266,596		74,703	
Income Generation	170,326	179,398	349,724		243,441	
Legal Assistance	328,437	512,763	841,200		53,246	
Livestock	0	0	0		9,695	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	487,867	689,951	1,177,818		156,260	
Sanitation	39,478	94,155	133,633		28,778	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	67,698	770,714	838,412		69,207	
Transport / Logistics	233,307	116,004	349,311		163,922	
Water (non-agricultural)	34,460	148,336	182,796		36,119	
Transit Accounts	0	2,698	2,698		(10,048)	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	725,147	1,666,614	2,391,761		(604,244)	
<b>Sub - total Operational</b>	<b>4,346,198</b>	<b>6,432,359</b>	<b>10,778,557</b>		<b>344,173</b>	
Programme Support	1,316,540	198,985	1,515,525		26,430	
<b>Sub - total Disbursements / Deliveries</b>	<b>5,662,738</b>	<b>6,631,344</b>	<b>12,294,082</b>	(3)	<b>370,603</b>	(5)
Unliquidated Obligations	658,546	1,005,010	1,663,556	(3)	0	(5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,321,284</b>	<b>7,636,354</b>	<b>13,957,638</b>	(1) (3)	<b>370,603</b>	
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>						
Payments Made	1,760,750	3,502,826	5,263,576		29,027	
Reporting Received	1,035,604	1,836,212	2,871,816		633,271	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>725,146</b>	<b>1,666,614</b>	<b>2,391,760</b>		<b>(604,244)</b>	
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		756,499	
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		147,397	
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		-4,858	
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>725,146</b>	<b>1,666,614</b>	<b>2,391,760</b>		<b>0</b>	
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>						
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		677,251	(5)
New Obligations	6,321,284	7,636,354	13,957,638	(1)	0	
Disbursements	5,662,738	6,631,344	12,294,082	(3)	370,603	(5)
Cancellations	0	0	0		306,648	(5)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>658,546</b>	<b>1,005,010</b>	<b>1,663,556</b>	(3)	<b>0</b>	(5)

Figures which can be cross-referenced to the Accounts:

- (1) Annex to Statement 1
- (3) Schedule 3
- (5) Schedule 5