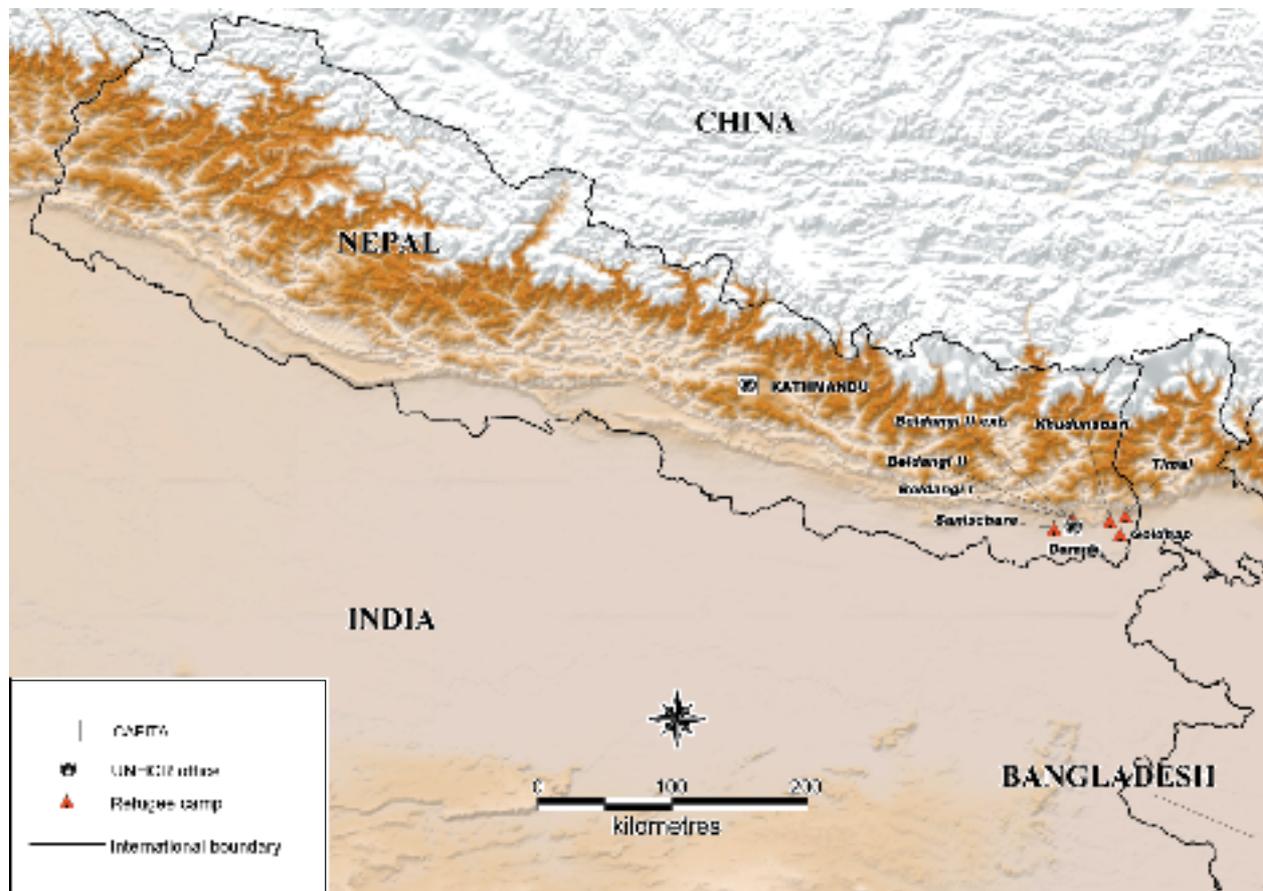


# Nepal



## Main objectives

UNHCR's main objectives in Nepal were to support the Government in identifying and implementing durable solutions for Bhutanese refugees, with a focus on re-registration of camp populations, resettlement of refugees and issuance of basic documents; promote empowerment of refugees and their active involvement in camp management committees, with increased female participation; continue to strengthen prevention and response mechanisms to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); and meet the basic welfare needs of camp and urban refugees while pursuing durable solutions.

## Impact

- UNHCR ensured that basic protection and care were provided for over 106,000 refugees from Bhutan in seven refugee camps located in eastern Nepal as well as over 4,000 newly-arrived Tibetans and 280 urban refugees and asylum-seekers.
- SGBV prevention and response mechanisms were strengthened and access to legal counsel and justice for survivors of all reported cases was ensured,

whilst actively promoting age, gender and diversity mainstreaming.

- Refugee women's participation and involvement in camp management was further strengthened, with 49 per cent female representation in the camp management committees.
- Despite funding constraints, minimum standards of assistance were ensured for refugees through targeted support.
- Refugee-managed primary and secondary schools provided high quality education to refugees aged 5 to 17, with low drop-out rates. All schools had structured initiatives to support the retention of girls, resulting in equal numbers of male and female students.

## Working environment

### The context

The bilateral process of negotiation between the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal showed new signs of life, after the Foreign Ministers of the two countries held informal talks in November 2005 on the sidelines of the

UN General Assembly in New York and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) conference in Dhaka. Bhutan reportedly stated a willingness to accept the return of a small group of eligible refugees. The active engagement of a group of governments in finding solutions for the Bhutanese in Nepal, including the possibility of resettlement to a third country, was another encouraging sign. However, the Nepalese Government insists that repatriation to Bhutan must begin before other solutions are considered. For this reason, despite UNHCR's repeated appeals, Nepal has not yet approved re-registration nor permitted the departure of refugees with special needs for resettlement.

An increase in the number of Tibetans transiting through Nepal was observed in 2005. Almost 4,000 new arrivals were registered with UNHCR, 45 per cent more than in 2004. The Government's suspension of exit permits and other travel documents led to an increase in numbers and prolonged stay at the Tibetan reception centre. UNHCR was able to sustain the level and quality of assistance to Tibetans despite the sharp increase in the number of new arrivals in 2005. However, concerns remained about overcrowding at the centre, particularly in terms of the protection of women and unaccompanied children. This will be addressed as a matter of urgency in 2006.

## Constraints

Providing effective protection and assistance in an increasingly volatile security environment remained a key challenge in 2005. There is a growing risk that refugees and/or staff could be caught in crossfire or escalating violence. Since December 2003, due to the existing armed conflict in Nepal, two of the seven refugee camps were

no longer policed by the authorities. This significantly affected delivery of protection, as security concerns at times impeded UNHCR's regular presence in the camps. Furthermore, frequent strikes disrupted regular delivery of relief materials. The conflict made travel to border regions more difficult, thereby hindering UNHCR's efforts to escort newly-arrived Tibetans from the border areas to the reception centre.

Without freedom of movement within the country, or the right to work, refugees had little alternative to continued dependence on hand-outs in the camps. The refugee community tried to earn a living through the small-scale production of sanitary cloth, woollen blankets, white chalk and jute roofing material.

## Funding

Worldwide funding constraints on UNHCR programmes, coupled with a sharp increase in kerosene prices, threatened the normal delivery of UNHCR's assistance programmes. This prompted the Office to introduce alternative fuel. The change of fuel source and the need to limit assistance to the most vulnerable only placed UNHCR's relations with refugees under severe strain at times.

## Protection and solutions

The protracted stay of the Bhutanese refugees, who lacked any immediate prospect of a durable solution, or indeed any long-term prospect of employment, led to frustration and a change in the social and political atmosphere within the refugee communities. Dissatisfaction and rebellion amongst refugee adolescent boys posed a serious threat to safety and security in the camps.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Bhutan	106,200	106,200	49	40
	Tibetans	20,200	-	48	-
Others of concern	Bhutan	10,000	-	-	-
	Tibetans (recent arrivals)	900	900	-	-
Asylum-seekers	Bhutan	1,000	-	-	-
	Pakistan	200	100	30	23

Budget, income and expenditure Annual programme budget				
Final budget	Income from contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other funds available <sup>2</sup>	Total funds available	Total expenditure
8,057,744	5,057,101	2,357,830	7,414,931	7,414,931

<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.



A Bhutanese refugee weaves traditional shawls at Timai camp in Nepal.  
UNHCR / J. Pagonis

In 2005, the role of women in camp management was augmented, with almost 50 per cent female representation on the camp management committee. The appointment of women to the Community Watch Teams strengthened the protection of women and children, in particular with respect to SGBV. The teams had to increase their responsibilities to compensate for the absence of police.

The system for reporting on SGBV cases was improved and monitoring increased through refugee focal points and, when possible, through UNHCR's targeted presence in the camps. Survivors received legal and medical assistance. As a result of these efforts, reported cases received appropriate attention more rapidly. UNHCR strove to strengthen its ties with a network of local human rights NGOs well placed to help it address SGBV issues and trafficking of refugees. Through the implementation of appropriate preventive measures, awareness and understanding of SGBV has increased in the refugee community.

While Nepal is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, child abuse and neglect in the camps and host communities continued to be a challenge. In addition, the Government has not issued birth certificates to refugee children and has been slow in providing identification documents to other persons of concern residing in Nepal, including nearly 20,000 Tibetans who arrived before 1990. In May UNHCR submitted to the Government a list of over 4,600 people from this group who did not possess refugee cards. UNHCR will continue to advocate for the issuance of refugee cards to all eligible people.

In 2005, UNHCR submitted for resettlement 13 cases of refugees with special needs, including women at risk (such as survivors of sexual and gender-based violence),

an unaccompanied minor, and survivors of violence and torture in Bhutan. Allegedly, over 100 Tibetans were detained by the police and sent to the Department of Immigration for violating Nepal's immigration laws. Twenty-six were prosecuted and all of them received heavy penalties but were subsequently released after paying fines. There were unconfirmed reports of *refoulement*.

## Activities and assistance

**Community services:** Basic vocational training was made available to refugees; however more training courses need to be developed for adolescent boys. A community-based disability programme provided support to approximately 3,400 refugees with various disabilities. The two palliative centres set up in 2004 for children with severe disabilities provided care and support to the children and their families. The centres, catering to the psychosocial needs of the patients, have made noted improvements in their life.

**Domestic needs and household support:** Refugees remain dependent on relief items to meet their household needs, including the monthly distribution of detergent and soap. All newborn babies received a woollen blanket. Some 4,300 Tibetans were given food and shelter during their temporary stay in Kathmandu. All women of reproductive age received sanitary cloth produced by the Bhutanese Refugee Women's Forum in the camps, as well as in the Tibetan reception centre. For cooking and lighting purposes, UNHCR provided over 2.7 million litres of kerosene. Faced with increasing fuel prices, UNHCR began in November to explore alternative options such as bio-briquettes. The general distribution of kerosene ceased in December 2005.

**Education:** Almost all children aged 5 to 17 years were enrolled in refugee-managed primary and secondary schools. The ratio of students to teachers stayed at 35 to 1. Thirty per cent of the teachers were female. The average completion rate was 75 per cent in primary classes. Ten mandate refugees received assistance in language studies and vocational training programmes.

**Food:** UNHCR complemented the basic rations provided by WFP through supplementary feeding for refugees with special needs. Effective quality control and distribution monitoring mechanisms were in place. Over 3,000 tons of vegetables and spices were delivered, and meals were provided to all hospital patients. Women were actively involved in the management of food distribution, making up more than 50 per cent of the distribution committee membership.

**Health and nutrition:** Over 16,200 patients benefited from medical services at a UNHCR-supported hospital. The hospital organized mobile voluntary counselling and testing services in all camps. Targeted supplementary feeding was available for elderly tuberculosis patients in the intensive phase of treatment, and malnourished children under five. The community continued to benefit from a 24-hour ambulance service. Clinical services and community-based awareness-raising programmes were in place to combat HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. For the new Tibetan arrivals, primary medical care was available at the Tibetan reception centre clinic. UNHCR supplied drugs, materials, and salaries for three medical staff; all newly-arrived Tibetans were immunized against tetanus and tuberculosis as appropriate. The UNHCR Health and Nutrition Coordinator provided expert support. Secondary and tertiary care was provided to 24 patients at local hospitals. All registered mandate urban refugees were given a monthly subsistence allowance. In addition, exceptional assistance was provided to all Pakistani refugee children and asylum-seekers with special needs.

**Legal assistance:** Legal assistance was made available through a local implementing partner to survivors of SGBV, while general legal assistance was provided by the Government. UNHCR continued to visit refugees in detention.

**Operational support (to agencies):** Adequate management structures were in place for the support of planned activities. To facilitate programme implementation and assistance delivery, UNHCR contributed towards the operational support costs of implementing partners.

**Sanitation:** Basic hygiene was upheld with the regular repair and maintenance of latrines, regular garbage collection, cleaning campaigns and proper waste management in the health centres. Due to funding constraints, UNHCR targeted vulnerable families when prioritizing its schedule of repair and maintenance work on refugee shelters and latrines.

**Shelter and infrastructure:** Over 30 shelters were constructed for newly-registered refugee families. UNHCR provided maintenance services for more than 3,000 refugee shelters in coordination with operational partners. In addition, over 1,000 tarpaulin sheets were distributed for the repair of refugee huts damaged by storms and rain. All community structures were appropriately maintained. In order to address the issue of overcrowding at the Tibetan reception centre, the construction of new dormitories began in late 2005 and will be completed in 2006.

**Transport and logistics:** Some 800 Tibetan new arrivals were assisted with transportation, food and accommodation in transit to Kathmandu. Over 4,300 people were

assisted with local transportation within Kathmandu. Air transportation was provided to several Tibetans whose lives or safety were in danger. Food was provided to all Tibetans in transit.

**Water:** A regular supply of drinking water was maintained, with periodic testing to ensure safety and quality. No outbreak of water-borne diseases was reported in the camps. One tap was maintained for an average of 133 people (below the UNHCR standard of one for 80).

## Organization and implementation

### Management

At 31 December 2005, 56 staff members were engaged in the operation, comprising 15 internationals (including two JPOs, two UNVs and one consultant) and 41 nationals (including two UNVs).

### Working with others

UNHCR maintained its operational partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs and five locally-based NGOs. UNHCR collaborated closely with UN agencies, especially on HIV/AIDS and protection-related matters. In 2005, UNHCR was actively engaged with other UN agencies in developing several effective public awareness activities. Networks with key groups among NGOs, UN and other organizations were improved and this helped in gaining support in addressing such issues as trafficking, domestic violence and SGBV in the camps.

## Overall assessment

Basic protection and a minimum level of assistance were ensured for Bhutanese refugees, as well as the small urban refugee population and Tibetans in transit. Little progress was made in the search for durable solutions in 2005. Although the renewed bilateral inter-governmental process raised ideas and hopes, these had not been acted upon by the end of the year. The Government's decision in October to cease issuing exit permits and travel documents to some refugees prevented the resettlement of vulnerable Bhutanese and the departure of Tibetans. Nevertheless, more effective protection was ensured for groups at risk. This was achieved through participatory assessments of refugees' needs, open dialogue with women and girls, and the mainstreaming of the age, gender and diversity methodology for programme planning. Active engagement of refugee women in camp management ensured that cost-cutting measures were introduced without undue hardship for vulnerable groups.

In 2005, the United Nations recognized the growing humanitarian needs experienced by internally displaced people in Nepal and therefore established the country's first Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP). In December, UN agencies conducted the first in a series of collaborative field assessment missions, in which UNHCR played a key role. These missions quickly ascertained that forced internal displacement, due to the ongoing conflict, was a widespread problem.

## Offices

Kathmandu  
Damak

## Partners

### Government agencies

Ministry of Home Affairs/Refugee Coordination Unit

### NGOs

Association of Medical Doctors of Asia  
Bar Association – Jhapa  
Caritas Nepal  
Lutheran World Federation  
Nepal Red Cross Society

## Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects	Prior years' projects
	Annual programme budget	Annual and supplementary programme budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,080,953	0
Community services	76,147	7,527
Domestic needs and household support	1,569,281	50,431
Education	440,284	83,965
Food	352,483	62,844
Health and nutrition	674,758	120,741
Legal assistance	63,235	2,976
Operational support (to agencies)	228,709	25,786
Sanitation	11,443	1,955
Shelter and infrastructure	53,603	14,660
Transport and logistics	135,001	60,587
Water	96,275	20,776
Instalments with implementing partners	818,809	(452,248)
<b>Sub-total operational activities</b>	<b>6,600,981</b>	<b>0</b>
Programme support	813,950	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>7,414,931</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cancellation on prior years' expenditure</b>		<b>(59,275)</b>
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>		
Payments made	4,186,122	
Reporting received	3,367,313	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>(818,809)</b>	
<b>Prior years' report</b>		
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>		
Outstanding 1 January		530,783
Reporting received		(452,248)
Refunded to UNHCR		(82,265)
Adjustments		3,730
<b>Balance</b>		<b>0</b>