

# Asia and the Pacific

South-West Asia

Central Asia

South Asia

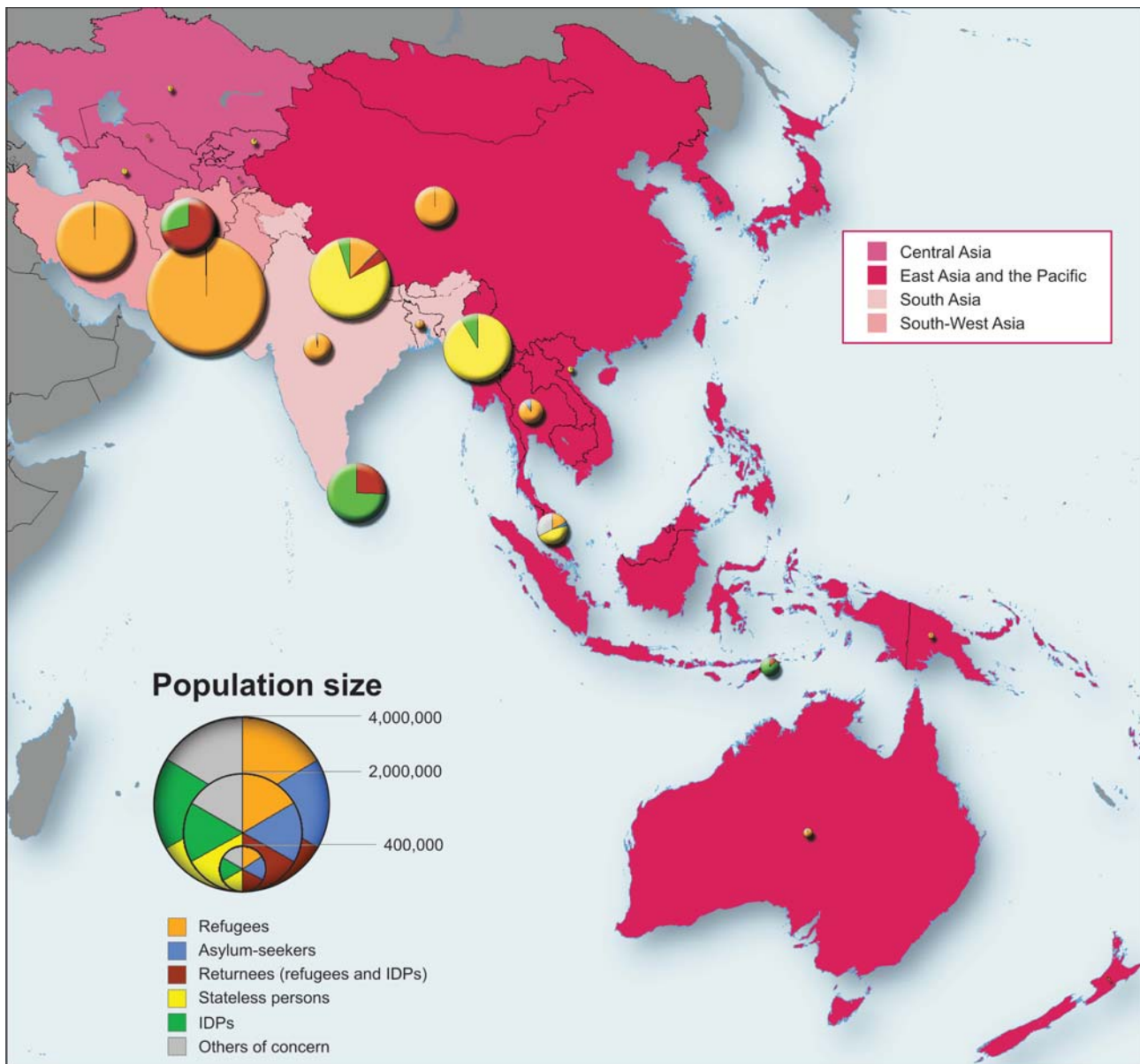
East Asia and the Pacific



## Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget
Asia and the Pacific overall	Canada	550,847
	Sweden	1,455,604
	Sub-total	2,006,452
Total		2,006,452

# Asia and the Pacific



## Operational Highlights

- In 2007, only 167,500 registered refugees returned to Afghanistan from neighbouring countries despite an increase in the return and reintegration cash grant for Afghan refugees to USD 100 per person. That was a similar level to the number of registered returns in 2006, signalling that mass voluntary return has likely come to an end. In addition, some 206,000 unregistered Afghans in Pakistan returned, bringing the total return figure to 373,500.
- The Government of Pakistan and UNHCR registered more than 2.1 million Afghan citizens living in Pakistan, and issued them Proof of Registration (POR) cards valid until the end of 2009.
- With the support of a core group of committed countries, UNHCR and the Government of Nepal moved closer to solutions for more than 100,000 long-staying refugees in seven camps in the eastern part of the country.
- UNHCR led the collective humanitarian response in a difficult security environment in Sri Lanka, where the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2007 peaked at 308,000.
- The Office increased the use of resettlement as a durable solution. In Malaysia, the office surpassed a landmark of 10,000 annual submissions. In Thailand, UNHCR presented 30,400 submissions for resettlement; of these 18,230 were accepted, and 14,610 refugees departed for third countries.

- Some 8,500 persons in a situation akin to statelessness were registered by the Turkmen authorities and are awaiting naturalization or the grant of residence permits.

## Working environment

Only 17 (out of 55) countries in the region have acceded to the international legal instruments for refugee protection. Under the circumstances, UNHCR's main challenge is to plan and implement coherent protection and durable solutions strategies at the national and regional levels with the agreement of concerned States.

Many countries in the region have expressed concern that displacement may increase as UNHCR and Governments pursue durable solutions. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen protection in refugee-hosting areas and more broadly in the region.

The Afghan operation is now at a critical juncture, with over three million registered Afghans remaining in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. With deteriorating security both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, protecting the remaining three million registered Afghans in countries of asylum is a priority. While facilitating voluntary repatriation where and when possible, UNHCR continues supporting the Governments of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to host Afghans.

Within the context of irregular migratory movements, considerations of national security and the priority given to bilateral cooperation have continued to negatively impact asylum and protection in the East Asia and the Pacific region.

The installation of the new interim government in Bangladesh following major upheavals in late 2006 brought a measure of calm to the country in 2007, enabling UNHCR to strengthen dialogue with governmental counterparts. India's agreement to hold high-level bilateral consultations in early 2008 heralded a better relationship with a strategic partner that has a long tradition of hosting refugees.

While governments in Central Asia attach importance to their international obligations, concerns about national security and regional stability have had a negative impact on asylum. The likelihood of instability in the region has compelled UNHCR and its partners to update contingency plans and improve emergency preparedness.

## Achievements and Impact

UNHCR identified host countries in need of assistance and provided them with financial and technical support, in addition to conducting its own operational activities. Host States were helped to boost their protection capacities and support self-reliance among persons of concern.

To follow up on UNHCR's Executive Committee Conclusion 106 on Statelessness, which was drafted in collaboration with many Asian States, the Office helped countries to identify stateless populations. UNHCR also tried to persuade governments to grant nationality to stateless people.

Training in age, gender, and diversity analysis was completed in all countries in the region except Pakistan, where it was postponed for security reasons. All country operations make regular participatory assessments.

- **Ensure international standards of protection are met for all people of concern to UNHCR, taking into account their age, gender or personal background (GSO 1)**

UNHCR worked in all countries in the region to secure access to their territory for refugees and prevent *refoulement*. With most States not party to the international legal instruments for refugee protection, it was particularly important to broaden the humanitarian space for refugees and others of concern through pragmatic, solutions-oriented arrangements.

Over two million Afghans in Pakistan were registered and received Proof of Registration (POR) cards that give them the right to stay in the country through 2009. The Islamic Republic of Iran began re-registering all Afghans in the country in October 2007, giving them the possibility of obtaining work permits which would significantly improve their current situation.

UNHCR upheld IDPs' rights and the voluntary nature of returns in Sri Lanka, largely through its field presence, extensive monitoring and advocacy. The provision of shelter together with UNHCR's lead in coordinating protection have contributed to improving conditions for the displaced and for returnees.

In Myanmar, UNHCR welcomed the resumption by the Government of the distribution of temporary registration cards to residents of Northern Rakhine State, a first step towards improving the legal status of this population.



UNHCR/M. Maguire

Like many other returnees, Sultan Jan who lived 15 years in exile hopes the Afghan Government will give him a plot of land where he can build a permanent home.

In Thailand, the establishment of legal assistance centres with the involvement of the Ministry of Justice strengthened the rule of law in the camps.

- **Realizing the social and economic well-being of persons of concern (GSO 1)**

Although there are only a few camp/settlement situations in the region, the circumstances under which refugees live vary enormously in different countries.

The health and nutrition situation in the refugee camps in Nepal improved in 2007 as a result of additional projects. In 2006, the agreement reached between UNHCR and the authorities in Bangladesh allowed for the involvement of UN agencies and NGOs in various refugee programmes in camps (health, skills training, education and community mobilization). These led to the construction of new shelters to replace decrepit huts, improved water and sanitation systems, and better primary and secondary health care.

In Sri Lanka, UNHCR and its partners faced constraints in reaching IDPs in some parts of the country, who often seek shelter in public buildings or other temporary locations without the necessary sanitary facilities.

Conditions for urban refugees in many parts of the region remained worrying, with great disparities in their treatment between countries. Since possible areas for direct intervention are limited, UNHCR systematically sought the involvement of other UN agencies, NGOs and public services in assisting refugees and supported national systems where possible.

- **Advocate for and support governments in the development and maintenance of an international protection regime, including its implementation at the national level (GSO 2)**

UNHCR developed a closer partnership with the Government of India and strengthened its relationship with the National Human Rights Commission.

Indications by Indonesia that it would accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol improved the climate for asylum in the country.

In the Republic of Korea, the Office signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Human Rights Commission. Concerned by the backlog of cases pending refugee status determination (RSD) – rising from some 600 to 1,200 during the year – UNHCR continued to engage with the Seoul Immigration Office and the judiciary through, *inter alia*, an annual

workshop on RSD with Korean judges, mainly from the Seoul Administrative Court.

UNHCR's Regional Office in Australia began an ambitious programme to build protection capacity in the Pacific region by disseminating knowledge of international asylum principles and instruments and by helping to improve refugee status determination procedures.

- **Redoubling the search for durable solutions (GSO 3)**

In view of the often restrictive conditions and deteriorating security in their countries of origin, refugees in Asia currently have few hopes for large-scale voluntary repatriation. To address these protracted refugee situations, UNHCR designed comprehensive approaches (although specific to each situation). These involved a variety of stakeholders and packages of solutions ranging from voluntary repatriation and linkages with reconstruction and development initiatives to resettlement and self-reliance in the country of asylum.

In Afghanistan, UNHCR helped returnee families with their basic needs through improvements in the shelter and water sectors, targeted support for individuals with specific needs and an increased cash grant. The mainstreaming of reintegration needs in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy is an important first step to facilitate increased interventions by all stakeholders to sustain return.

The completion of a refugee census and the support of the Government of Nepal for a new resettlement policy opened new opportunities for this long-staying refugee population. Large-scale resettlement should start in early 2008.

Resettlement activities in Malaysia and Thailand increased opportunities for durable solutions.

In China, a draft handover agreement on micro-credit schemes benefiting Indo-Chinese refugees was finalized at the end of 2007. The agreement involved the handover of USD 7 million to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, which would continue to implement these schemes, thereby bringing UNHCR's direct engagement to an end by early 2008.

Regarding the reduction of statelessness, significant progress was made with the decision of the Vietnamese Government to proceed with the naturalization of some 9,000 former Cambodian refugees.

In what could be a significant contribution to the search for durable solutions, UNHCR began discussions with the Government of Japan that could lead to it becoming a resettlement country.

- **Establishing effective partnerships (GSO 4)**

In addition to sustaining its relations with NGOs, other UN agencies and regional bodies, UNHCR mobilized the political support of bilateral partners, particularly in the context of protracted situations. The Office also sought to strengthen cooperation in dealing with displacement by inserting a refugee-protection dimension into the regional agenda to combat smuggling and trafficking.

In Malaysia, strengthened networks with civil-society and the media helped develop understanding of refugee issues and opportunities for partnerships in advocacy.

UNHCR's engagement with the Delivering as One pilot initiative in Pakistan led to the inclusion of refugee protection as a cross-cutting theme in the UN Country Team's priorities.

## Constraints

It is now generally recognized that reconstruction and statebuilding in Afghanistan will take decades; this combined with the security situation is significantly affecting the search for solutions for Afghans in South-West Asia. Insecurity in the Pakistani areas bordering Afghanistan led to concerns about involuntary and unsustainable return.

In Nepal, unpredictable security at the local level and the hostility of some groups of refugees in the camps to resettlement resulted in the deaths of six refugees and delayed the implementation of durable solutions. The deployment by the Government of Nepal of security personnel in all of the camps dramatically improved the situation. In Bangladesh, UNHCR was concerned about the protracted nature of the refugee situation in the country and increased its cooperation with the Government and other concerned stakeholders in order to find durable solutions.

In Sri Lanka, an increase in military activities and security measures, the frequent closure of crossing points into implementation areas, curfews and the presence of land mines hampered humanitarian work in some parts of the country.

The concerns of Governments across East Asia and the Pacific relating to national security and the curbing of irregular migration had an impact on the protection of refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR. To varying degrees, it was difficult to ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees would not be *refouled*, and that if allowed entry they would have access to asylum. An equally significant problem was the increasing use of immigration detention facilities for asylum-seekers and refugees (including many children and vulnerable

groups) and the difficulties for UNHCR of reaching those detained.

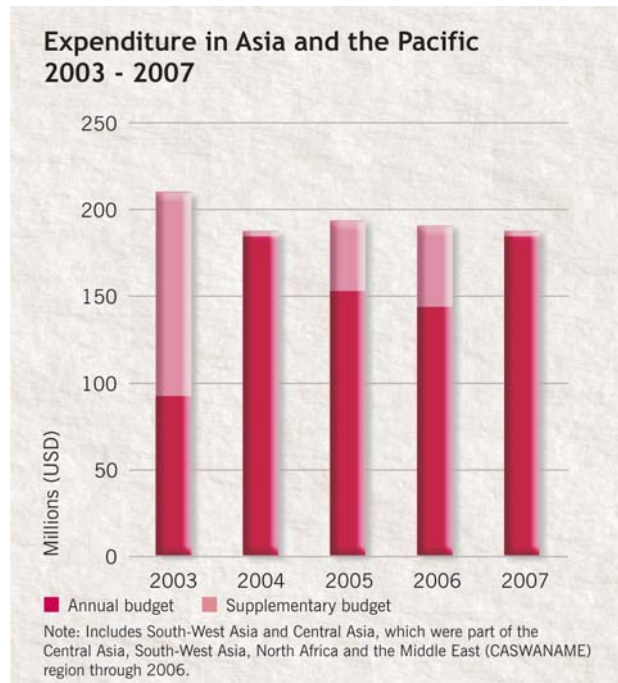
The main constraints for UNHCR in Central Asia continued to be fragile asylum systems and a deteriorating protection environment. In many cases, access to asylum depended on political considerations, rather than the rule of law. In such a climate, resettlement is often the only durable solution.

## Financial information

After the austerity measures introduced the previous year, 2007 proved to be a period of recovery. While the administrative budget remained stable, operational costs increased as the Office coped with the greater needs of beneficiaries. The additional resources made available for special projects in health and nutrition increased expenditure in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Thailand. In Thailand, special project funding for activities to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence allowed the Office to respond to victims' needs and raise awareness of the issue in the refugee camps.

Local fundraising by country offices and national associations help meet additional needs in the Hong Kong SAR, the Republic of Korea, Japan and Australia,

while donors gave strong support for resettlement in Malaysia and Thailand. Donors responded rapidly to the financial needs of the Afghan operation as a result of the higher cash grant to returnees and exceptional assistance to unregistered Afghans returning from Pakistan. In view of funding constraints, UNHCR ended its IDP operation in Timor-Leste in July 2007.



## Budget and expenditure (USD)

Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget <sup>1</sup>	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
South-West Asia						
Afghanistan	70,641,122	0	70,641,122	70,329,927	0	70,329,927
Islamic Republic of Iran	11,455,653	884,782	12,340,435	11,330,581	632,241	11,962,822
Pakistan	20,769,247	2,548,598	23,317,845	20,473,887	1,468,933	21,942,820
Regional activities <sup>2</sup>	1,787,300	0	1,787,300	798,377	0	798,377
Sub-total	104,653,322	3,433,380	108,086,702	102,932,772	2,101,174	105,033,946
Central Asia						
Kazakhstan	1,649,908	0	1,649,908	1,609,095	0	1,609,095
Kyrgyzstan	1,467,816	0	1,467,816	1,423,610	0	1,423,610
Tajikistan	1,018,464	0	1,018,464	937,863	0	937,863
Turkmenistan	873,575	0	873,575	729,288	0	729,288
Uzbekistan	181,775	0	181,775	163,571	0	163,571
Regional activities <sup>3</sup>	991,305	0	991,305	940,411	0	940,411
Sub-total	6,182,843	0	6,182,843	5,803,838	0	5,803,838
South Asia						
Bangladesh	4,078,000	0	4,078,000	3,997,845	0	3,997,845
India	4,010,586	0	4,010,586	3,758,794	0	3,758,794
Nepal	9,459,349	0	9,459,349	9,133,527	0	9,133,527
Sri Lanka	20,841,958	0	20,841,958	20,641,617	0	20,641,617
Sub-total	38,389,893	0	38,389,893	37,531,783	0	37,531,783
East Asia and the Pacific						
Australia and New Zealand	1,189,585	0	1,189,585	1,164,120	0	1,164,120
Cambodia	1,153,566	0	1,153,566	1,070,924	0	1,070,924
China	4,298,926	0	4,298,926	4,046,495	0	4,046,495
Indonesia	2,314,014	0	2,314,014	2,104,689	0	2,104,689
Japan	2,666,128	0	2,666,128	2,652,230	0	2,652,230
Malaysia	4,582,826	0	4,582,826	4,292,330	0	4,292,330
Mongolia	257,710	0	257,710	222,111	0	222,111
Myanmar	6,590,167	0	6,590,167	6,441,560	0	6,441,560
Papua New Guinea	465,702	0	465,702	404,422	0	404,422
Philippines	220,662	0	220,662	192,748	0	192,748
Republic of Korea	809,558	0	809,558	785,389	0	785,389
Singapore	53,095	0	53,095	47,177	0	47,177
Thailand	15,026,774	0	15,026,774	14,504,988	0	14,504,988
Timor-Leste	995,784	0	995,784	937,772	0	937,772
Viet Nam	279,922	0	279,922	220,473	0	220,473
Regional activities <sup>4</sup>	124,555	0	124,555	34,890	0	34,890
Sub-total	41,028,976	0	41,028,976	39,122,321	0	39,122,321
Total	190,255,033	3,433,380	193,688,413	185,390,713	2,101,174	187,491,887

<sup>1</sup> Does not include a seven per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

<sup>2</sup> Includes repatriation of Afghans and comprehensive solutions for Afghan displacement.

<sup>3</sup> Includes institutional and capacity-building activities to strengthen asylum systems.

<sup>4</sup> Includes protection, transport and repatriation activities within Asia, and dissemination of refugee law.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Australia	8,251,684	0	8,251,684
Australia for UNHCR	270,529	0	270,529
Austria	361,812	0	361,812
Belgium	683,060	0	683,060
Canada	5,878,232	0	5,878,232
CERF	6,953,540	622,468	7,576,008
Czech Republic	14,635	0	14,635
Denmark	1,390,157	0	1,390,157
<i>España con ACNUR</i>	992,908	0	992,908
Estonia	47,133	0	47,133
European Commission	20,350,041	0	20,350,041
Finland	567,376	636,115	1,203,491
Germany	4,487,259	0	4,487,259
International Olympic Committee	15,000	0	15,000
Ireland	533,333	0	533,333
Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	17,000	0	17,000
Italy	3,998,569	0	3,998,569
Japan	11,800,000	0	11,800,000
Japan Association for UNHCR	151,452	0	151,452
Luxembourg	478,609	0	478,609
Nepal Investment Bank	13,709	0	13,709
Netherlands	6,990,984	0	6,990,984
New Zealand	386,200	345,960	732,160
Norway	10,986,439	0	10,986,439
OPEC Fund for International Development Fund	27,000	0	27,000
Pakistan	5,606,836	0	5,606,836
Philippines	788	0	788
Poland	100,000	0	100,000
Private donors in Canada	198,932	0	198,932
Private donors in Hong Kong SAR, China	63,022	0	63,022
Private donors in Italy	31,308	0	31,308
Private donors in Japan	6,955	0	6,955
Private donors in Switzerland	8,698	0	8,698
Private donors in the Islamic Republic of Iran	5,465	0	5,465
Private donors in the Republic of Korea	19,916	0	19,916
Private donors in the United Kingdom	80	0	80
Red Crescent Society (Saudi Arabia)	44,968	0	44,968
Republic of Korea	2,234	0	2,234
<i>Shinryo-en</i> Foundation (Japan)	50,000	0	50,000
Spain	1,598,810	0	1,598,810
Sweden	11,215,099	0	11,215,099
Switzerland	1,524,590	0	1,524,590
TOTAL (France)	26,733	0	26,733
TOTAL / CARPA (France)	843,176	0	843,176
UN Trust Fund for Human Security	232,020	0	232,020
UNAIDS	305,156	0	305,156
United Kingdom	676,992	0	676,992
United States	48,820,658	0	48,820,658
USA for UNHCR	91,920	0	91,920
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,121,015</b>	<b>1,604,543</b>	<b>158,725,558</b>

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.