

# Annual Results Report

**2024**

**Malaysia**

## Acknowledgements

UNHCR would like to thank all the stakeholders that contributed data and evidence to this report and reviewed their progress against the joint results of the strategy, including forcibly displaced and stateless people, host communities and host governments, United Nations agencies, and international and national non-governmental organizations, civil society and private sector. Their contributions enable us to create positive changes in the lives of the people we serve.

**Contact us**

[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

### **Note:**

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

**Downloaded date:** 28/05/2025

# Table of Contents

## Section 1: Context and Overview

- 1.1 - Changes to the Operational Context
- 1.2 - Progress Against the Desired Impact
- 1.3 - Challenges to Achieving Impacts
- 1.4 - Collaboration and Partnerships

## Section 2: Results

- 2.1 - Outcomes and Achievements
- 2.2 - Age, Gender and Diversity

## Section 3: Resources

- 3.1 - Financial Data
- 3.2 - Resources Overview

## Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

- 4.1 - Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

# Section 1: Context and Overview

## 1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

In 2024, refugees and asylum-seekers continued to seek temporary protection in Malaysia, but the protection environment remained fraught with challenges. While Malaysia's political landscape evolved, the Government's approach to refugee issues remained unchanged. The country did not establish a national asylum framework in 2024, leaving refugees and asylum-seekers without legal status and vulnerable to the risks of arrest and detention. Those who were not registered with UNHCR, particularly new arrivals, had limited or no access to justice or alternatives to detention. Refugees and asylum-seekers faced significant difficulties accessing basic rights and services, with many relying on informal work to survive, making them vulnerable to exploitation. Forcibly displaced and stateless children were unable to enrol in Government schools and access to other public services remained limited.

Negative public discourse about refugees further impacted their safety and hindered UNHCR's ability to protect and assist them. Malaysia did not accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, making it more difficult for stateless people to acquire nationality.

In 2024, the number of people registered with UNHCR rose by 3% compared to 2023, totalling 192,000, including 139,000 refugees and 53,000 asylum-seekers. Half of those registered were men (50%), followed by women (22%), boys (15%), and girls (13%). 89% were from Myanmar, 3% were from Pakistan and 8% from 60 other countries. In addition, an estimated 9,200 stateless people – primarily of Indian Tamil ethnicity – were living in West Malaysia, while no data on stateless people in East Malaysia was publicly available.

## 1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

### 1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

**By 2025, asylum-seekers will have access to territory and asylum procedures, refugees will enjoy access to basic rights, and stateless people will access nationality procedures**

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
<b>1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10.32%	5.71%

In 2024, UNHCR stepped up efforts to promote an inclusive refugee policy and a legal asylum framework. It worked closely with the Government to advance a roadmap towards a national asylum framework by implementing capacity-building initiatives focused on registration and refugee status determination. Through strategic partnerships, UNHCR continued to advocate for access to territory and asylum, access to detention, protection from refoulement and alternatives to detention. It also provided training for the judiciary to improve refugees' access to justice and, in collaboration with the Bar Council, held sessions to educate refugees on their rights and obligations. UNHCR strategically used case processing methods to enhance protection for people with specific needs, increasing the number of cases processed. In 2024, 15,548 people were newly registered and 10,162 refugee status decisions were issued. UNHCR also worked with the UN country team on statelessness issues, presenting the Sabah study on undocumented people to the Sabah Government and supporting advocacy for more inclusive citizenship policies.

### 2. Impact Area: Realizing Rights in Safe Environments

**By 2025, more refugees can exercise their rights to meet basic needs and affordable healthcare, either under a national policy framework that grants refugees access to legal work and national protection systems (including healthcare) or, until such a framework is in place, through a more robust network of alternative assistance, protection services and healthcare providers**

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
<b>2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	52.31%	52.31%
<b>2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	90.86%	90.86%

Refugees in Malaysia faced significant challenges in meeting their basic needs. Without a legal framework, informal work opportunities were scarce, as employers risked being accused of hiring a foreigner without valid work permits – an immigration offence. This left refugees with few options for self-reliance, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and trapping them in a cycle of poverty. It also impacted their ability to access essential services, including safe accommodation.

While UNHCR-registered refugees and asylum-seekers had access to healthcare services, the cost often deterred them from seeking necessary treatment. Unregistered refugees faced even greater barriers, with both financial constraints and a lack of documentation further limiting their access to care. In addition, UNHCR and NGO-supported primary healthcare and referral services were severely overstretched, compounded by disruptions in other funding sources. The resumption of refugee medical insurance in 2024 offered a way to mitigate the financial barriers that refugees who require emergency medical care face.

### 3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

**By 2025, more refugees will have opportunities for growth and self-reliance, and are protected from violence, exploitation, and abuse, through strengthened and expanded community-based feedback and support mechanisms and outreach interventions**

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2024)
<b>3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	0.00%
<b>3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	42.20%	44.12%
<b>3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	30.74%	29.14%
<b>3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40.01%	40.01%

UNHCR’s policy advocacy for refugees’ right to work focused on engaging the private sector to strengthen the business case for their economic inclusion. Businesses across sectors expressed an urgent need to fill vacancies, which indicated potential openings in the labour market for refugees. However, further engagement with the Government on this issue hinged on the impending release of the National Security Council Directive No. 23. As a result, UNHCR increased its efforts to engage with members of Parliament, encouraging discussions on the issue and advocating for updates on the Directive’s implementation.

UNHCR also made notable progress in expanding refugee education in Malaysia despite persistent challenges. Enrolment rates improved, with 44% of refugee children and young people accessing primary education (48% female, 52 %male) and 29% enrolled in secondary education (50% female, and 50% male). UNHCR supported 151 informal learning centres through partnerships with NGOs, civil society and refugee-led organizations, providing basic education, teacher training, learning materials as well as mini grants to keep centres operational. However, these centres still struggled to meet demand, leaving many children without access to education.

Strong partnerships with community-based organizations improved feedback and helped identify people with specific needs, enabling faster processing and assistance. Platforms were also established to progressively include refugee voices in programming and advocacy. While local and State government engagement showed promise in advancing more sustainable responses, it required significant investment in staff time and resources to foster joint collaborations for peacebuilding and inclusion.

### 4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

**By 2025, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people will have access to sustainable solutions, through voluntary repatriation, resettlement, complementary pathways, nationality procedures, and**

## inclusion in national social protection mechanisms

Indicator		
Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2024)
<b>4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	135	87
<b>4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6,674	7,012
<b>4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,572	1,896
<b>4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed</b>		
Stateless Persons	2,964	209

In line with the Global Compact on Refugees and the regional protection and solutions strategy, UNHCR strategically used resettlement to expand protection space and advocate for more inclusive policies, including a national asylum framework. With 23,915 people considered in need of resettlement, UNHCR maintained high resettlement submission rates in 2024, primarily to the United States, submitting 9,125 refugees with heightened protection risks. Departures increased compared to 2022 and 2023, with 8,908 refugees departing on resettlement or complementary pathways. Given the situations in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Myanmar, voluntary repatriation remained an option for only a small number of refugees (87 people) from other countries. In addition, 209 stateless people acquired nationality.

## 1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Without access to legal work, healthcare, formal education, or social protection, refugees were unable to meet their own basic needs. Trapped in poverty, unable to afford even basic medical treatment and vulnerable to exploitation, hate speech and harassment, refugees faced a range of protection risks.

Compounding these challenges, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and limited resources led to longer waiting periods for registration and refugee status determination. Many people who applied for asylum in 2024 were not registered within the same year. In response, UNHCR prioritized registration and refugee status determination according to its case processing strategy and available capacity. However, the lack of legal status meant that refugees and asylum-seekers remained at risk of arrest, detention and deportation without proper documentation.

Further complicating protection efforts, UNHCR continued to be denied access to detention centres to assess the international protection needs of asylum-seekers and faced challenges in securing the release of asylum-seekers and refugees. Increased immigration raids and prolonged detentions also likely resulted in additional deportations that UNHCR is unaware of.

In addition to these ongoing issues, 9,153 citizenship applications remained pending by year-end. Due to resource constraints, UNHCR's partner was unable to follow up on the status of these applications.

## 1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

UNHCR worked closely with partners, including local authorities, NGOs and community-based organizations, to provide services, coordinate refugee responses and identify vulnerable refugees requiring urgent assistance. It strengthened its partnerships with UN agencies and the private sector to fill gaps resulting from resource constraints, while building partnerships to advance priorities. These priorities included refugees' inclusion in national systems, access to territory, asylum, and justice, and UNHCR's access to immigration detention. To advance these goals, UNHCR engaged with federal ministries, parliamentarians, state authorities, law enforcement, human rights actors such as the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, the Inter-Agency Preparedness Coordination Group, Malaysian Bar, diplomatic community and civil society. UNHCR worked with the judiciary, developing capacity-building activities for magistrates and judges on refugee protection. In tandem, UNHCR collaborated with the Government on capacity-building initiatives related to registration and refugee status determination. UNHCR also coordinated with resettlement countries, IOM and the IRC's Resettlement Support Centre to explore third-country solutions.



## Section 2: Results

### 2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

#### 1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

**By 2025, the quality of reception, registration, documentation and profiling for 65,000 people is better and access to territory is maintained annually**

##### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	81.54%	100.00%	76.55%
<b>1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	91.35%	92.00%	91.20%
<b>1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97.81%	96.00%	95.95%

##### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15,548
<b>01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97,551

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

To mitigate the risk of arrest and detention for refugees and asylum-seekers and facilitate their access to services, UNHCR renewed and issued 97,551 documents and prioritized registration for 15,548 people, 80% of whom had heightened protection risks and vulnerabilities.

In general, people registered with UNHCR were released from detention facilities, though this was not always systematic. Despite ongoing advocacy with relevant stakeholders on refugees' access to territory and asylum, new arrivals entering the territory continued to be detained without access to asylum procedures. UNHCR was also not authorized to assess the international protection needs of asylum-seekers in detention. In response, UNHCR stepped up its advocacy for alternatives to detention at all levels with authorities.

UNHCR's continuous engagement with the Government on the roadmap towards a national asylum framework led to policy and technical discussions on data sharing, registration and documentation. Capacity-building efforts were also implemented, benefitting 83 government officers through joint

registration. However, despite these efforts, no substantive headway was made on the implementation of a government-led asylum framework. On a positive note, 91% of children under five were registered with civil authorities.

## 2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

**By 2025, refugees benefit from wider access to protection and durable solutions through the strategic application of refugee status determination, while advocacy for a national asylum policy/framework continues**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	140.00	270.00	189.00
<b>2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugee status determination (RSD) was used strategically, aligned with both the global RSD strategy and UNHCR's updated case processing approach. Priority was given to asylum-seekers when RSD could provide protection or solutions benefits, or when processing was necessary to maintain the integrity of the procedure, particularly for people with a lower presumption of inclusion such as asylum-seekers from Pakistan. The prioritization of cases based on recorded specific needs was complemented by internal referrals when RSD was deemed necessary. Partners and refugee community organizations played a role by identifying and referring asylum-seekers in need of RSD to secure specific protection or solutions benefits.

During the year, 3,372 RSD interviews took place, following strict standards to ensure fairness, security and accuracy. 10,162 RSD decisions were made at either first instance or at appeal stages, with 1,622 recognized refugees put forward for resettlement consideration and a further 192 households referred for other protection or assistance support.

The average processing time from the identification of a need for individual RSD to notification of the first

instance decision was 189 days, which is well within the global standard of 270 days. Asylum-seekers had access to legal representation and an effective appeal mechanism. UNHCR staff continued to engage with Government counterparts as part of its roadmap towards a national asylum framework, which focuses on capacity sharing. This included delivering tailored training on registration, identity management and other aspects of refugee management to several cohorts of government officials, as well as the first four modules of a specialized training curriculum on RSD for members of the Government's newly established Refugee Registration Taskforce

### 3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

**By 2025, laws and policies on refugee protection and nationality acquisition are established and strengthened**

#### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol</b>			
None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned
<b>3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness</b>			
None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned

#### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness</b>	
Stateless Persons	Yes

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

The revised National Security Council Directive No. 23 outlined a Government-led refugee registration system, alongside provisions for temporary legal stay and access to basic services. By year-end, UNHCR had been informed of the directive's approval and its broad goals. However, the expected benefits for refugee protection had yet to materialize.

To support the Government's efforts to build a comprehensive national asylum system aligned with international standards, UNHCR organized introductory training for government officials on refugee status determination, pursued a formal data sharing agreement, and sought to foster greater involvement and participation from the civil service, including senior government leaders, in the asylum process. To promote a positive narrative on refugee issues, UNHCR also strategically engaged with Parliamentary institutions and policymakers.

In December 2024, the Malaysian Parliament passed a constitutional amendment that granted Malaysian women the same right as Malaysian men to right to pass nationality to children born overseas, thereby addressing gender inequality in nationality law. However, the amendment also included provisions that

would restrict the acquisition of nationality. UNHCR provided technical advice to civil society organizations, which led the push for more gender-equal laws, in collaboration with other UN agencies and human rights bodies.

## 4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

**By 2025, the risk of sexual and gender-based violence is reduced and the response to survivors is strengthened through enhanced community-based approaches and quality, survivor-centred services**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	56.00%	56.00%	56.00%
<b>4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%
<b>4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	77.84%	80.00%	69.97%

### Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
<b>04.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,999

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, more than 805 people reported experiencing gender-based violence, with 70% of cases linked to intimate partner violence. Among the survivors who consented to further assistance, 87% received individualized support, most of whom were in immediate danger and required urgent intervention. UNHCR and its partners supported slightly more gender-based violence survivors than in 2023, with 671 people receiving psychological and social support, 69 accessing legal interventions, 109 receiving emergency cash assistance, and 223 benefitting from temporary shelter. In addition, one partner organization started using proGres for case management.

Efforts to engage law enforcement in providing safe and non-discriminatory legal redress faced setbacks, and resource constraints limited UNHCR's ability to expand outreach to other states as planned. However, improved coordination with One Stop Crisis Centres at major hospitals across Klang Valley, Penang, and Johor States, with the highest refugee populations, ensured survivors received essential medical and social support.

Aligned with its Strategic Directions, UNHCR also enhanced women's participation and leadership, focusing on strengthening refugee women-led initiatives. Specialized training was provided to 80 women leaders, while community-based psychological and social interventions provided individual assistance to 197 women

at risk, including gender-based violence survivors.

One sexual exploitation and abuse complaint was recorded and the survivor was assisted accordingly. In addition, 98% of UNHCR staff and 100% of interpreters and security personnel completed training in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, along with 45 refugee community leaders.

UNHCR doubled its gender-based violence awareness efforts by training two more Johor-based cohorts in the Engaging Men through Accountable Practices prevention strategy. To sustain their engagement, selected facilitators and participants will be recruited as outreach volunteers in 2025.

## 5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

**By 2025, children protection is enhanced through tailored individual and community-based services with increased access to national social protection**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	31.90%	50.00%	22.82%
<b>5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	17.33%	30.00%	24.40%
<b>5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	38.78%	50.00%	38.99%

### Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2024)
<b>05.1.1 Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,077

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, UNHCR identified 932 children at risk of harm, including 55% who were child brides, 21% who were unaccompanied and separated children, and 10% who experienced violence, abuse and neglect. These at-risk children accounted for 5% of those registered with UNHCR, with 68% being female and 72% Rohingya. Reports of child marriage nearly doubled compared to 2023, with 63% of those affected becoming parents within 12 months of marriage and 47% involving people who had moved from Bangladesh. This increase was linked to deteriorating security conditions in refugee camps and rising poverty in Malaysia, exacerbated by weak child marriage laws and law enforcement.

Although all identified children were informed about available services and safety plans, only 23% of those who consented to individual assistance were supported by best interests procedures. This was due to the limited capacity of child protection actors and the reluctance of children and caregivers, mainly child brides, to accept support. Among those assisted, 39% were placed in alternative care arrangements while 86%

benefited from psychological and social support services.

Efforts to mitigate child protection risks and strengthen community child protection capacities led to a significant expansion of family strengthening programmes, reaching 479 caregivers – double the number in 2023. In addition, 9,549 children (24%) participated in child protection programmes. As part of its efforts to mainstream child protection into the education sector, 40% of community learning centres implemented child safeguarding procedures and 153 teachers received specialized training in child protection, including on online safety. Furthermore, all best interest determination reviewers received refresher training, and 27 new best interest determination panel members were recruited to support best interest procedures.

## 6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

**By 2025, the risks related to the arrest and detention of asylum-seekers and refugees, including children, are fewer with greater access to justice and legal assistance**

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-Seekers	168

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Malaysia continued to face challenges in accessing justice and protection and remained at risk of arrest, prosecution, detention and deportation. Restrictive policies and barriers to entry resulted in refugees, including children, being detained upon arrival.

UNHCR's access to immigration detention centres for registration and its ability to release asylum-seekers systematically were hindered. Deportations continued, with one person known to UNHCR deported in 2024. This situation was exacerbated by an increase in raids. UNHCR's concerns about deportations and its access to the immigration detention centres were disregarded despite sustained advocacy.

A shrinking protection space for refugees further limited UNHCR's ability to secure the release of refugees, with only 966 people released from detention in 2024. Meanwhile, UNHCR intervened on behalf of 168 people through 306 court cases to provide legal representation and counselling, though many more required representations. Losing access to prison facilities further hindered UNHCR's assistance for those charged with immigration-related offences.

Despite these constraints, UNHCR held several consultations, training sessions, and dialogues with law enforcement agencies, including the police, prosecution division and judiciary to strengthen their understanding of UNHCR's mandate and to identify areas for collaboration. To improve access to justice for forcibly displaced and stateless people, UNHCR explored strategic and creative approaches, including community-driven solutions.

## 7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

By 2025, community mobilization is strengthened and expanded through the establishment of trained community volunteers and the expansion of outreach centres and mobile community outreach services. This will lead to greater participation of women and young people, reinforcing UNHCR's commitment to a multi-faceted approach to accountability to affected people

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Extensive	Extensive	Extensive
<b>7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	80.00%	80.00%
<b>7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	30.01%	40.00%	37.98%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5,547
<b>07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback &amp; response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,127
<b>07.3.1 Number of people who received protection services</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	178,199

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Amid a challenging protection environment, UNHCR saw a 40% decline in the number of refugees and asylum-seekers it could engage with. This decline occurred despite efforts to strengthen community capacity, primarily due to challenges in capacity and resources

In 2024, UNHCR focused on amplifying refugee voices and enhancing outreach, particularly in and around the Klang Valley to foster social cohesion. Direct outreach reached 5,547 people through 221 sessions, while a partner organization reached out to 2,538 people. These sessions included outreach activities, meetings with community representatives, focus group discussions and cultural orientation sessions. Information was shared through platforms like UNHCR's Refugee Malaysia website, its Malaysia Telegram account, and WhatsApp groups, with support from trained outreach volunteers. To further foster integration, cultural orientation modules were developed and piloted, with two community mobilizers assisting in training sessions.

The community-based protection team assessed and responded to 2,127 referrals for people with specific needs by their community. This marked a 107% increase compared to 2023. Many of these referrals

involved expedited registration requests due to medical concerns. Feedback and observations from all outreach and community engagement activities were recorded on the community feedback collection tool so that refugee voices could be incorporated in UNHCR's protection programming.

The Malaysian Refugee Advisory Board provided valuable feedback on the quality of services at UNHCR's reception area and trained security personnel to enhance their understanding of the refugee experience, leading to service improvements. Board Members were selected based on age, gender and diversity considerations, including the distinct refugee population demographics in Malaysia. Meanwhile, the refugee women's group initiated regular capacity-building activities focused on women's empowerment. UNHCR also engaged with local councils and relevant stakeholders, including State executive committee members, members of Parliament, religious figures and NGOs, to address social cohesion issues and collaborate on peace-building activities, particularly in light of the growing number of refugee evictions from apartments

## 8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

**By 2025, refugees and asylum-seekers with heightened risks can access support services that provide timely assistance to meet basic and essential needs**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1.08%	1.20%	1.09%
<b>8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	94.38%	99.30%	94.38%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,089

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugees faced significant challenges in meeting their own essential needs. Findings from a joint project with the World Bank implemented between 2021 to 2024 indicated that up to 93% of surveyed refugee households could be living below Malaysia's national poverty line (MYR 2,589/USD628). It also found refugee households' actual income was often short of the level they deemed necessary to meet basic needs. In addition to one-off cash assistance provided to 469 people released from detention in 2024, UNHCR maintained multipurpose cash assistance to 438 households comprising 1,620 people, which was distributed directly and through its partners Malaysian Relief Agency and Tzu-Chi Foundation.

The multipurpose cash programme remains a critical lifeline for highly vulnerable refugees, offering them flexibility to prioritize their needs, while also serving as a key entry point for case management and identifying alternative solutions such as community support for housing.



Post-distribution monitoring findings indicate that forcibly displaced people primarily used cash assistance to cover rent, purchase food and medical needs, and debt repayment. Over 40% reported a significant improvement in their living conditions and a reduction in stress levels as a result.

To enhance coordination and prevent duplication, UNHCR provided support to IOM by sharing knowledge and resources to standardize service provision. IOM has since adopted the use of UNHCR's scorecard assessment tool and transfer values and is currently conducting assessments and disbursements in the Klang Valley. Both agencies liaise regularly to ensure beneficiaries do not receive overlapping assistance. Other options for cash support are scarce, with some NGO partners providing ad-hoc assistance with minimal transfer values.

Refugees' access to clean cooking fuel was derived through the Results Monitoring Survey conducted in 2023, which is in line with the widespread availability of liquid petroleum gas in Malaysia

## 10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

**By 2025, access to affordable comprehensive health services has improved through stronger multi-sectoral collaboration, capacity building and expanded strategic partnerships**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	67.16%	90.00%	67.16%
<b>10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	99.30%	99.30%	99.30%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>10.1.1 Number of individual consultations in UNHCR supported health care services</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40,087
<b>10.2.1 Number of consultations in UNHCR supported mental health and psychosocial support services</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	749

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugees and asylum-seekers faced ongoing challenges in accessing healthcare, primarily due to high costs. UNHCR remained committed to strengthening healthcare access for refugees and asylum-seekers, ensuring their inclusion in essential medical services while mitigating financial hardships through sustainable health financing solutions.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and NGO health partners, UNHCR participated in regular coordination meetings to address public health issues, ensure a coordinated approach and promote

refugees' inclusion in the national health system. UNHCR also worked with the Ministry of Health and private sector partners to introduce refugee medical insurance as a financial protection tool, which sought to safeguard refugees against unforeseen medical emergencies and reduce hospitalization costs.

Despite a high proportion of refugee births attended by skilled health personnel, delivery care remained largely unaffordable for refugees who had little assistance in covering the costs. UNHCR worked collaboratively with NGO partners and the Ministry of Health to improve the uptake of family planning, particularly long-acting reversible contraceptives, among refugees, with more than 2300 units distributed, with a utilization rate of 40%. Similarly, while refugee children were included in selected childhood vaccination programmes, access to vaccines remained inconsistent – particularly for the measles vaccine – leading to multiple outbreaks affecting both refugee and host communities.

Support from the Malaysia-UN SDG Trust Fund enhanced UNHCR's capacity to facilitate access to secondary healthcare through partnerships, enabling 221 people to receive life-saving medical support. UNHCR also contributed to reproductive health services by facilitating access to long-acting reversible contraceptives through Ministry of Health facilities and NGO partners, which benefited 902 women in need of family planning support.

## 11. Outcome Area: Education

**By 2025, education opportunities have expanded with sustained support, and efforts continue to include asylum-seeker and refugee children in the national education system**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1.17%	2.00%	1.30%
<b>11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	8.00%	0.00%

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>11.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from education programming</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14,142

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2024, there has been little progress in expanding education opportunities for refugees and asylum-seekers. The gross enrolment rate remained stagnant at approximately 30%, with 40% of students enrolled in primary education (48% female, 52% male), 27% in secondary education (50% female, 50% male), and 20% in pre-primary education (48% female, 52% male).

Refugees and asylum-seekers continued to rely on 151 informal community-based learning centres to educate their children. These centres, while essential, remained severely underfunded, often reliant on volunteer teachers and lacking standardized curricula. As a result, the quality of education varied

significantly, and many refugee children struggled to acquire the necessary skills to advance academically.

Access to secondary and tertiary education remained particularly limited, with few pathways for older refugee students to continue their education. Some NGOs and international organizations provided scholarships and vocational training, but these opportunities were scarce, highly competitive and insufficient to meet the overwhelming demand. Nevertheless, civil society organizations, UNHCR and refugee-led initiatives continued to play a vital role in providing educational support. However, the current capacity of learning centres remained inadequate, leaving approximately 27,000 refugee children still out of school

### 13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

**By 2025, there is a framework that includes provisions for legal work opportunities and for improved livelihoods prospects**

#### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
<b>13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13.14%	14.00%	13.14%
<b>13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4.26%	5.00%	4.26%

#### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
<b>13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	146

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

While awaiting further policy developments related to the NSC Directive No. 23, UNHCR continued to pursue initiatives that positively contributed to refugees’ economic inclusion. This was through strategic partnerships with the private sector. Notably, UNHCR successfully engaged with Touch n’ Go Digital, the largest eWallet service provider in Malaysia, to extend their services to registered refugees. The full roll-out of services was expected to launch in 2025.

UNHCR also nurtured a working relationship with the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) to enhance advocacy within the private sector. Through a joint initiative between UNHCR, MEF, and partner organizations (Fugee and Picha Eats), a letter signed by MEF and 44 Malaysian businesses indicating their support for refugees’ legal work was submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office and to the Minister of Human Resources.

Efforts also continued to finalize a project funded by the World Bank through the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, which aimed to survey the livelihood outcomes of refugees and their surrounding

host communities. The final report was expected to launch in 2025.

A livelihoods programme by education partner Dignity for Children's STEP programme provided 146 young people with employability skills and apprenticeship placements. UNHCR also worked with the Asia School of Business to develop an adult functional literacy curriculum for basic conversational Malay. A pilot session comprising three refugee women groups tested the curriculum's relevance and the use of WhatsApp as an accessible teaching medium.

In 2024, refugees' unemployment rates were up to seven times higher than their host communities'. Access to informal employment opportunities remained limited due to businesses' fear of hiring refugees, who fall into the category of 'foreigners without a valid work permit.' Available informal work opportunities were often unstable and left workers at greater risk of exploitation and abuse.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

By 2025, refugees and asylum-seekers expressing interest to voluntarily return to their country of origin benefit from information and individual counselling

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	312

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

As most refugees in Malaysia come from countries where the situation remains volatile and not conducive for returns in safety and dignity, voluntary repatriation remained a solution for only a limited number of people in 2024.

By year-end, 312 people had expressed their wish to return to their countries of origin and were provided with up-to-date information on the situation there through voluntary repatriation counselling sessions, including on available assistance upon return and the nature of that assistance.

In addition, updated information was disseminated to refugees via the UNHCR Refugee Malaysia website and various communication with community channels. In 2024, 87 people departed on voluntary repatriation following the issuance of voluntary repatriation forms that facilitated their exit from Malaysia.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

By 2025, refugees identified with heightened vulnerabilities and resettlement needs are submitted for resettlement consideration in a timely manner, while others are assisted to access complementary pathways initiatives

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2024)	Actual (2024)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	11,578	9,125	9,125

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2024)
15.1.1 Country issues machine-readable travel documents	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	No

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR continued to use resettlement strategically and leveraged efforts the resettlement scale up to expand the protection space for refugees in Malaysia. Case processing methods were used to ensure people with heightened protection risks could access protection and solutions. UNHCR submitted 9,125 refugees to various resettlement countries in 2024, with most submitted to the United States. This figure concludes the scaled-up resettlement processing in Malaysia over the past three years, with 9,451 submitted in 2022 and 11,597 submitted in 2023. Processing times from resettlement submission to departures have decreased since 2022, due to a United States pilot project to reduce waiting times, which went down from an average of 4.4 years to 3.4 years in 2023 and 3.1 years in 2024.

The number of people departing on complementary pathways also increased in 2024, up from 1,572 in 2023 to 1,896 in 2024. These pathways included education, labour mobility, family reunification, and community and private sponsorship. UNHCR strengthened two-way communication with refugees, provided counselling to people regarding their resettlement cases and facilitated complementary pathways arrangements in collaboration with relevant countries.

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

In UNHCR programs, language barriers, ethnic diversity, literacy, and geographical challenges hinder meaningful refugee participation. To address this, UNHCR adopted a blended approach to its work supporting forcibly displaced people by combining in-person and remote engagement and ensuring clear, transparent communication through multiple channels. Trust was built through regular contact, both online and offline, and by creating safe spaces for refugees to discuss sensitive issues

To better understand, identify and respond to refugees’ specific needs, while empowering communities to be actively involved in addressing protection and solutions challenges, UNHCR engaged directly with 5,547 refugees in Myanmar (38% female, 62% male) spanning diverse age groups (from 10 to over 60) and representing more than 50 nationalities through undertaking participatory assessments with refugee communities, cultural orientation and training of outreach volunteers.

Alongside regular consultations with refugee leaders, UNHCR ensured and accelerated meaningful engagement with young people, women, older people, and people with disabilities, including by managing platforms such as the Refugee Advisory Board, the Women for Women network, the outreach volunteer programme, Rohingya Women Engagement, and the Youth platform.

UNHCR implemented the Engaging Men in Accountable Practice approach to prevent gender-based violence for the third year, with 60 Rohingya and Myanmar Muslims taking part in transformative gender equality training.

To enhance data-driven responses, UNHCR introduced a community feedback collection tool, which strengthened data collation for organizational learning. The tool's dashboard, accessible to some senior UNHCR staff, includes a section on response and intervention based on community feedback. These initiatives helped promote a better understanding of the protection needs, community dynamics and current capacities while providing secure spaces for refugees to voice their concerns.

## Section 3: Resources

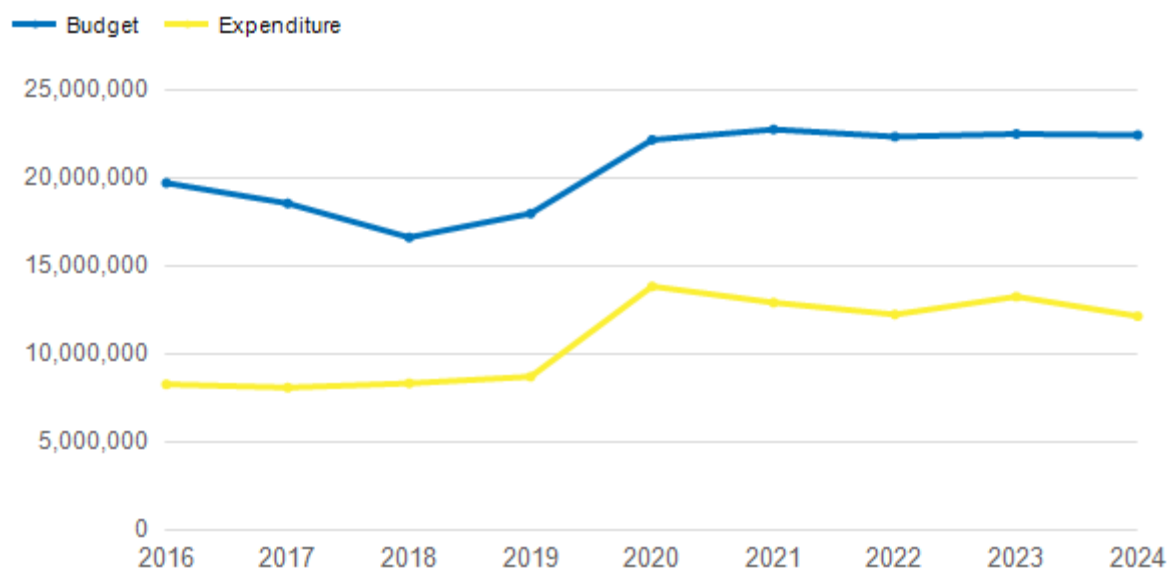
### 3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

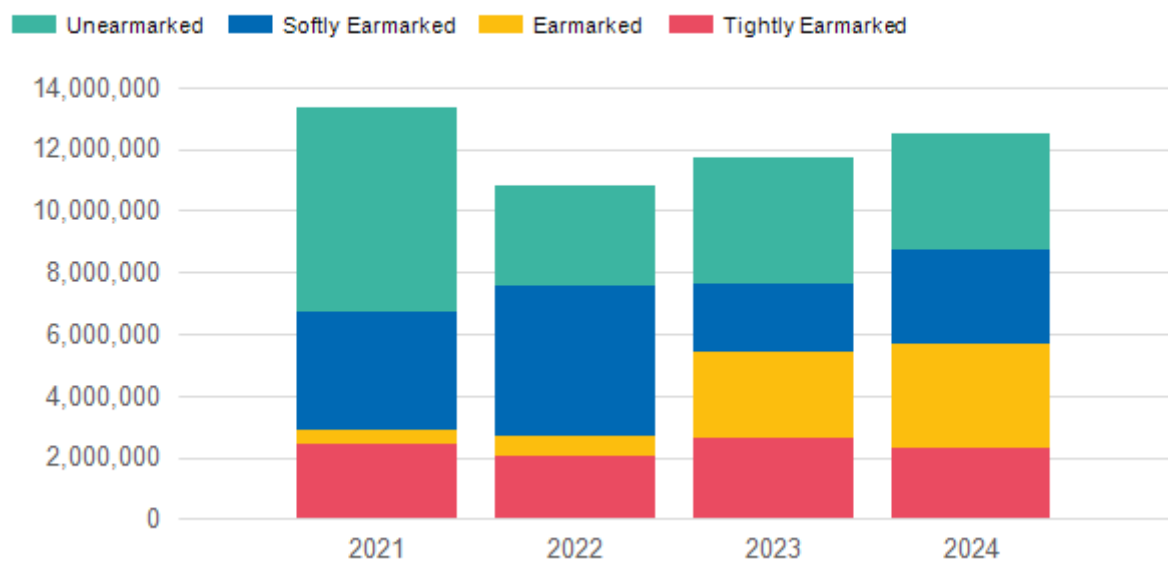
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	7,877,230	4,085,692	51.87%	4,085,691	100.00%
IA2: Assist	6,038,822	2,759,471	45.70%	2,759,471	100.00%
IA3: Empower	6,130,211	3,105,541	50.66%	3,105,541	100.00%
IA4: Solve	2,360,862	2,172,368	92.02%	2,172,368	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,407,125</b>	<b>12,123,071</b>	<b>54.10%</b>	<b>12,123,071</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	1,600,002	1,244,167	77.76%	1,244,167	100.00%
OA2: Status	2,820,904	1,177,978	41.76%	1,177,978	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	1,771,901	1,057,596	59.69%	1,057,596	100.00%
OA4: GBV	916,994	442,252	48.23%	442,252	100.00%
OA5: Children	928,123	554,678	59.76%	554,678	100.00%
OA6: Justice	1,684,424	605,950	35.97%	605,950	100.00%
OA7: Community	1,312,696	563,834	42.95%	563,834	100.00%
OA8: Well-being	1,919,378	430,668	22.44%	430,668	100.00%
OA10: Health	4,119,444	2,328,803	56.53%	2,328,803	100.00%
OA11: Education	2,439,722	1,029,470	42.20%	1,029,470	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	532,676	515,306	96.74%	515,306	100.00%
OA14: Return	1,423,516	174,489	12.26%	174,489	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	937,346	1,997,878	213.14%	1,997,878	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,407,125</b>	<b>12,123,071</b>	<b>54.10%</b>	<b>12,123,071</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



### 3.2. Resources Overview

UNHCR’s operational presence in Malaysia in 2024 remained consistent with previous years. By year-end, the total available funds amounted to \$11.8million, leaving a gap of \$10.6 million (representing 47% of the of the budgeted needs. UNHCR directed 11% of the available funds to implementing partners in Malaysia who were addressing critical needs in health, education, livelihoods, cash assistance, sexual and gender-based violence, child protection and community-based protection programming while the remaining 89% was implemented directly by UNHCR.

UNHCR partnered with nine local NGOs as implementing partners and funded two community-led



organizations through grant agreements. Resource prioritization was guided by planning parameters set by headquarters and UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. Strategic directions considered available resources, operational, protection and reputational risks, ongoing negotiations with the Government, the political landscape, the impact on refugee protection services and the public's perception of refugees.

## Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

### 4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Looking ahead, UNHCR will continue mobilizing resources and partnerships in Malaysia. While refugee needs are increasing, resources remain constrained. However, expanding and cultivating partnerships, in line with UNHCR's "supportive and catalytic role" under the Global Compact on Refugees, can unlock additional resources.

To enhance the impact of its work, UNHCR will focus on strengthening both internal and external communication and coordination with refugees and other stakeholders. This will ensure that cross-sectoral advocacy reaches beyond the Government to maximize its effectiveness.

To maintain the effectiveness, efficiency, integrity and sustainability of UNHCR's support for forcibly displaced people, investing in staff and partner capacity-building must be prioritized. This will be critical to advancing more sustainable responses.

A strong foundation for effective data collection systems, harmonized data processing and data analysis, is also essential. UNHCR will aim to align its resources, activities and strategic directions, prioritizing activities that have the potential to be expanded over individual case management.



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)