

East Asia and the Pacific

Australia
Cambodia
China
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Indonesia
Japan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Malaysia
Mongolia
Myanmar
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Republic of Korea
Singapore
South Pacific
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Viet Nam

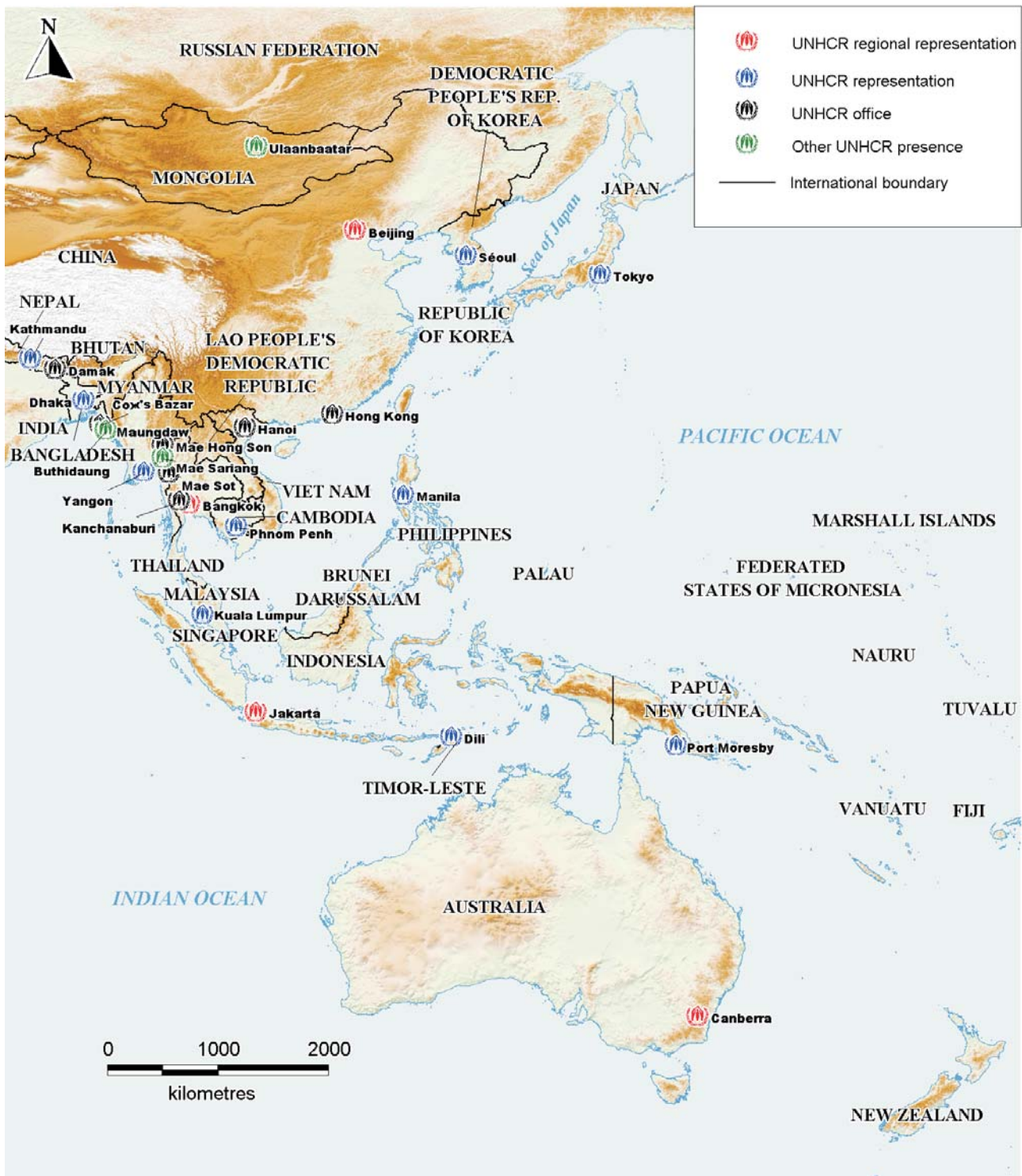
Working environment

In Indonesia, the authorities are cooperating with UNHCR in preparation for the country's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. A series of measures, including training sessions and awareness raising events, are being undertaken to build national capacity.

The smooth implementation of the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between Cambodia, Viet Nam and UNHCR has led to a reduction in the number of Montagnards arriving in Cambodia and a higher rate of return to Viet Nam.

In Myanmar, the operational space remains constrained, with many restrictions imposed on humanitarian actors. Nevertheless, UNHCR is continuing to work in Northern Rakhine State to assist the reintegration of residents who have returned to Myanmar, and assist the wider community who are without citizenship. The Office is also helping individuals and communities affected by displacement in Myanmar's south-eastern region, and in 2008, helped the Government to respond to the devastation wrought by cyclone Nargis.

In Thailand, the asylum space is narrowing. The Office has witnessed an increase in the deportation of Lao Hmong, to whom it has no access, as well as instances of forced returns of asylum-seekers from Myanmar. As illegal immigration remains a major concern for



Thailand, UNHCR and the Thai authorities are exploring ways to ensure protection for people of concern in the context of mixed migratory movements. For the refugees from Myanmar living in the camps at the border, third country resettlement is still the only durable solution available. The number of departures has increased and will reach some 18,000 in 2009.

In Australia, the new Government elected at the end of 2007 brought an end to the Pacific Solution through the closure of the off-shore facilities in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. The authorities have also replaced temporary protection visas with permanent visas, and improved procedures for the off-shore processing of asylum-seekers in territories such as Christmas Island.

At the end of the Olympic Games, China announced its intention to adopt national refugee legislation, the draft of which should be ready for enactment by the beginning of 2009. The Government has asked UNHCR for additional technical support.

Strategy

UNHCR will advocate for the rights of people of concern and uphold international protection standards with the help of regional institutions and civil society actors. Protection strategies will pay particular attention to age and gender considerations, the specific needs of women and children, mixed flows, access to asylum, detention

of asylum-seekers and refugees, refugee status determination (RSD), documentation and standards of treatment. In Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Hong Kong SAR (China), UNHCR will work to improve public understanding of refugee issues and the asylum/migration nexus. The Office will further invest in mobilizing private sector support for UNHCR operations worldwide.

On statelessness, UNHCR will continue to map the phenomenon and address its causes and effects. It will also promote the rights and well-being of stateless populations.

Constraints

Thailand continues to provide temporary shelter to a large number of refugees, but the concerns of the authorities over mixed migratory movements have resulted in the implementation of restrictive policies. These limit the scope for solutions, notably to the protracted situation of refugees from Myanmar.

The environment for humanitarian actors in Myanmar remains constrained. Access to some areas in the southeast, where populations affected by displacement live, remains challenging.

In China, following the Government's security concerns prior to and during the Olympic Games and in the absence of a national refugee legislation or other mechanisms to deal with refugee matters, UNHCR, with the cooperation of resettlement countries, helped to find durable solutions for 127 mandate refugees, some of whom had waited many years. The majority moved to resettlement countries, while a few repatriated voluntarily to their countries of origin.

Operations

UNHCR's programmes in **Myanmar** and **Thailand** are described in separate chapters.

In **Australia**, the Office will work closely with the recently elected Government to consolidate reforms of the asylum system. UNHCR will collaborate with the Government and civil society to strengthen the quality of reception arrangements and enhance the resettlement programme, including through closer interaction with refugees resettled in the country.

In **New Zealand**, the Office will help the Government implement new immigration legislation. It will also advocate for enhanced resettlement programmes.

In both Australia and New Zealand, UNHCR will work with civil society to promote refugee rights and garner financial and other support for UNHCR's work. The Office will continue to implement its regional advocacy and protection strategy for the Pacific, which includes helping vulnerable island states respond to emergencies and climate change, particularly in situations that could lead to forced displacement and statelessness.

In **Cambodia**, UNHCR will pursue the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Montagnards. This population has been reduced due to the decrease in arrivals from and increase in returns to Viet Nam. Cambodia, which is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, has stated it will establish a national asylum system with UNHCR support. Pending the establishment of appropriate structures, UNHCR will continue to undertake RSD for all asylum-seekers jointly with the Government. It will also strengthen its partnerships with the legal community and civil society, besides joining multilateral efforts to find solutions to statelessness and resolve issues related to birth registration and documentation.

In **China**, UNHCR's goals will be to extend international protection to all people of concern, identify durable solutions for them, and assist the Government to implement the foreseen national refugee legislation in full compliance with international refugee law. UNHCR will advocate for *non-refoulement* and will continue to conduct RSD, until the Government's procedures are developed. The Office will seek to ensure that refugees are offered adequate accommodation, education, health care and social counselling.

In the **Hong Kong SAR (China)**, UNHCR will follow up the implementation of the newly signed Memorandum of Understanding and undertake capacity-building activities agreed upon with the Government. The Office will continue to advocate for the adoption of refugee regulations. Though the authorities respect the principle of *non-refoulement*, asylum-seekers are still subject to arrest and detention. UNHCR will work closely with the Government while undertaking RSD and helping refugees in need.

Mongolia has indicated its will to accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Once approved by the National Security Council, the proposal will be presented to Parliament for approval. UNHCR will provide technical assistance to the Government and will advocate for the adoption of the national refugee legislation.

In **Indonesia**, UNHCR will help the authorities manage refugee and asylum issues in the run-up to the country's expected accession to the international refugee instruments. In the absence of national refugee



A young Chinese woman with her baby in a camp built after the Sichuan earthquake.

UNHCR/N. Behring

legislation and procedures, UNHCR will be the primary provider of protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. In this context, it will seek durable solutions for refugees, and continue to advocate for humanitarian solutions for Iraqis and Afghans stranded in the country.

In **Japan**, UNHCR will work with the authorities on improvements to the national asylum system envisaged in the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. The Office will monitor RSD procedures and legal counselling for asylum-seekers, while also providing legal and material assistance to those in need. Finally, it will help the Government to develop a resettlement programme and collaborate with it on a study on statelessness.

In **Malaysia**, UNHCR's activities will range from registration, outreach and RSD to protection—especially of women and children at risk—advocacy and public information. The Office will cultivate the network of refugee support groups in the country, including trade unions, the Bar Council, the Chamber of Commerce, academia and NGOs. It will work to build a strong partnership with the Migration and Refugee Working Group, which will lobby for change in the migration and refugee policies of the country.

UNHCR will provide refugees with specific needs in Malaysia with material, health and education assistance, and make preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence a central part of its operations. As the scope for long-term solutions in the country is limited, UNHCR will promote group-based temporary local solutions with the Government, mainly

for the Rohingyas from Myanmar. The Office will also seek resettlement for those refugees who have no links to Malaysia.

In **Papua New Guinea**, UNHCR will seek local integration for most refugees, in close collaboration with the provincial and central authorities and development actors. In particular, the Office will improve the infrastructure of the East Awin settlements and provide self-reliance opportunities in the framework of the Government's road repair and development programmes for the province. The Office will also focus on strengthening RSD and asylum-related activities. Furthermore, it will help the Government to issue birth certificates to all refugee children; this will reduce the risk of statelessness and ensure access to health care and education.

In the **Philippines**, UNHCR will help the Government to assume its responsibilities under the 1951 Refugee Convention, and pursue naturalization and permanent residence as durable solutions for a number of urban refugees. It will provide legal advice and some financial assistance to people of concern. In a significant development, UNHCR and the Philippine authorities are finalizing an agreement on an Evacuation Transit Mechanism.

In the **Republic of Korea**, UNHCR will assist the Government in strengthening its national asylum system through a newly developed joint capacity-building programme. The Office will continue to support a coordinated local safety network for vulnerable groups. It will also follow up on a workshop on statelessness to engage government counterparts in discussions on the

country's accession to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

With the end of its involvement in the IDP situation in **Timor-Leste** in 2007, UNHCR now focuses on enhancing the capacity of the Government to conduct RSD and deal with refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with international standards.

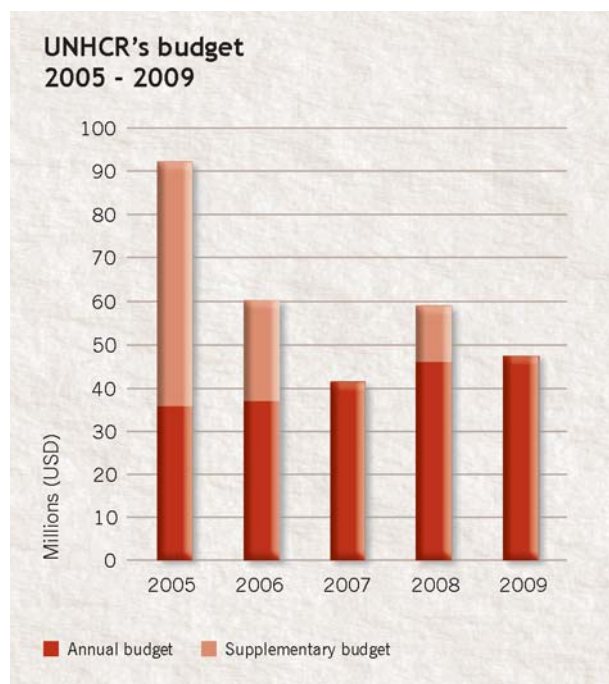
In **Viet Nam**, UNHCR will continue its monitoring activities in the Central Highlands. It will also seek to fulfil its mandate to reduce statelessness in the context of a planned revision of the country's nationality law. Micro-projects will aid returnee reintegration and support local communities. UNHCR will assist the naturalization of Cambodian refugees by implementing micro-projects in the area where they are settled and provide technical support to government authorities. Furthermore, through its capacity-building activities, it will promote a better understanding of refugee law and rights among the national authorities.

Financial information

In 2005 and 2006, UNHCR's requirements in the East Asia and the Pacific subregion exceeded USD 50 million due to UNHCR's support for the Tsunami response. In 2007, the annual budget returned to the pre-Tsunami level of some USD 30 million, but it was increased up to

USD 40 million during the year to meet additional requirements and to support new initiatives to improve the quality of protection delivery and facilitate durable solutions, mainly resettlement.

This level was maintained for the initial 2008 annual budget, but increased to some USD 46 million to cover unmet needs mainly in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The 2009 budget remains at the same level.



Budget (USD)				
Countries	2008			2009
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget
Australia and New Zealand	1,177,900	0	1,177,900	1,399,592
Cambodia	968,563	0	968,563	1,045,404
China	4,771,097	4,672,897	9,443,994	5,200,762
Indonesia	2,203,963	0	2,203,963	2,570,816
Japan	2,958,835	0	2,958,835	3,473,399
Malaysia	5,820,082	0	5,820,082	5,688,940
Mongolia	115,948	0	115,948	139,247
Myanmar	6,175,264	8,109,869	14,285,133	6,400,554
Papua New Guinea	1,008,398	0	1,008,398	965,414
Philippines	201,261	0	201,261	222,621
Republic of Korea	1,001,976	0	1,001,976	1,192,829
Thailand	11,580,394	49,850	11,630,244	17,930,920
Timor-Leste	275,978	0	275,978	295,744
Viet Nam	343,062	0	343,062	474,107
Regional activities ¹	1,089,841	0	1,089,841	400,000
Total	39,692,562	12,832,616	52,525,178	47,400,349

¹ Includes protection activities, dissemination of refugee law, transport and repatriation activities.

Note: Supplementary programme budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.