

Sri Lanka

Main objectives

Enhance access to national protection and humanitarian assistance for IDPs, while rapidly and effectively responding to the immediate material and protection needs of spontaneous returnees. The latter aim did not feature in the Country Operations Plan 2002, but was added subsequently in response to events triggered by growing confidence in the peace process. Strengthen national capacity through training and direct engagement to assist displaced persons and develop the ability of the national authorities and NGOs to respond effectively to changing needs.

Impact

- UNHCR's field presence was a vital means of monitoring the spontaneous return of 258,882 IDPs to their places of origin, ensuring respect for their rights, and giving them emergency humanitarian assistance.
- Agreements with the National Human Rights Commission and the Legal Aid Foundation of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka increased local capacity to provide protection and address human rights issues.
- Humanitarian assistance programmes addressed the immediate needs of some 72,000 IDP families.

Working environment

The context

Prospects for peace in Sri Lanka were better than at any time since the conflict commenced in 1983. The MOU concluded in February 2002, between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) brought hostilities to an end. The cease-fire rekindled hope of peace and increased the likelihood of the return of displaced persons and refugees from India in conditions of safety and dignity. The subsequent start of peace



talks in Thailand and the lifting by the Government in September, of its proscription of the LTTE, further contributed to increased popular confidence in the peace process. This was demonstrated by the continuing spontaneous return of IDPs and refugees to areas in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Some 258,882 IDPs returned by the end of 2002. In addition, several hundred returnees from Tamil Nadu in southern India spontaneously returned across the Palk Straits, a journey that led to tragic results for some returnees.

While the general human rights situation in Sri Lanka improved, violations continued and remained a grave concern for UNHCR. Large IDP return areas in the North and East of the country were strewn with landmines or remained occupied by Government forces. In addition, the LTTE's forced recruitment continued, in particular the forced recruitment of children, despite statements to the contrary.

Under such circumstances, UNHCR reoriented its operation and restructured its field presence to provide greater protection and timely assistance to the returnees.

Constraints

Addressing the growing material and protection needs of spontaneous returnees during the transition period following the cease-fire agreement was a challenge for both the Government and UNHCR in 2002. The Government launched a number of initiatives to respond to the needs of returning IDPs, including its National Framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation and defined a joint strategy with the UN Country Team to meet the immediate needs of returned IDPs. These initiatives were also meant to address the gap between needs and resources. The gap, however, continued to grow, despite early investment, as resources failed to keep pace with the growing demand.

As provided for in the joint strategy, UNHCR was the lead agency in the provision of protection, relief items and emergency shelter to returnees. In the second half of 2002, it became apparent that the Government's capacities and those of other agencies would fall short of the agreed parameters. UNHCR conducted two major programme revisions in order to address water and sanitation needs as well as other infrastructural needs, such as education and

health facilities, which would otherwise have been neglected.

The Government continued to be the main actor involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. However, its efforts were supplemented by a number of international and national relief organisations. At year's end there was still a need for improved co-ordination among the actors involved in the humanitarian response.

Funding

Donor support for the UNHCR operation in Sri Lanka remained high. The financial requirements as presented in the 2002 Global Appeal were well covered. In order to meet the additional needs, UNHCR launched a Supplementary Programme for the period October 2002 to December 2003, which is also generously supported by donors.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

Providing national protection, access to humanitarian assistance and finding durable solutions for IDPs and returnees remained UNHCR's highest priority in 2002. UNHCR strengthened its presence in field locations to improve the monitoring of the human rights situation in priority areas of return (the North

Persons of Concern	
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country
IDPs	447,100
Returnees (former IDPs)	236,200

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme and Supplementary Programme Budgets					
	Revised Budget	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
AB	6,163,616	5,544,807	1,856,408	7,401,215	5,498,113
SB	1,995,796	3,542,261	0	3,542,261	718,910
Total	8,159,412	9,087,068	1,856,408	10,943,476	6,217,023

¹ Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.

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



IDP returnees in Mannar rebuilding their lives. UNHCR / R. Chalasani

and East). This presence created conditions conducive to return and improved the ability to protect IDP rights. To this end, UNHCR established strategic partnerships with the Office of the Commissioner General for Co-ordination of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (OCG), the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees (MRRR), the National Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Legal Aid Foundation of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (LAF).

The OCG is responsible for implementing and co-ordinating the Government's response to the large-scale return of IDPs under the National Framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. In partnership with the OCG, UNHCR provided technical assistance and improved the formulation and implementation of policies for IDPs and returnees. UNHCR's partnership with MRRR included support for a nationwide survey of IDPs and their registration. The survey's preliminary findings indicated that in 2002 almost one third of the IDP population had returned to their homes in former conflict areas and that most of the others wished to do the same.

The partnership with the HRC and LAF ensured that IDPs were aware of their rights and had access to legal services through the national HRC/LAF

network of offices. Property rights in areas affected by the conflict continued to be a primary issue for many IDPs and returnees. UNHCR commissioned a study to examine the issues of restitution of property, compensation for losses and the documentation of property rights. The preliminary findings of the study (to be released in 2003) will form the basis for a policy and legal recommendations to ensure that IDPs' and returnees' rights are protected.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Some 25,429 IDPs, mainly women and children, had access to a variety of community-based projects such as skills training and income generation opportunities, access to psycho-social services, playgrounds, nursery schools and educational facilities for disabled children.

Crop production: A total of 18 projects provided 3,698 families (219 of them female-headed households) with agricultural inputs to improve their food basket and generate disposable income.

Domestic needs/household support: UNHCR distributed a package of non-food relief items (including plastic sheeting and other household necessities) to 15,838 families (approximately 63,352 persons) in all the areas of return.

Education: UNHCR repaired and rebuilt 15 primary schools and provided school furniture for two schools. Five vocational training programmes were also organised, targeting young people and women heads of household.

Fisheries: A total of five projects provided 163 families with fishing tackle, enabling them to increase their family income.

Health/nutrition: UNHCR constructed and repaired a medical clinic in Jaffna District and a maternity ward in Mullativu District. A boat ambulance was also provided to island villages in Jaffna District.

Income generation: Some 2,044 families were given start-up capital for small businesses to engage in livelihood activities, such as, farming, fishing and other skilled occupations. In addition, skills training programmes were conducted for 184 women-headed households.

Legal assistance: In partnership with the HRC and LAF, UNHCR implemented projects to protect the rights of IDPs and returnees and improve their access to legal services. Specific achievements included the referral to HRC offices of 321 cases pertaining to arrest, disappearances, property issues, access to Government food rations and child recruitment. LAF offices provided representation for 439 clients on access to proper identification documentation, property rights, *habeas corpus* applications and cases filed under the Emergency Regulations and Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Livestock: Livestock was provided to 168 families to improve their food security and economic well-being.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR funded the costs of UNVs and part of the operational costs of all implementing partners involved in the assistance programme.

Sanitation: A total of 350 individual latrines were constructed, including 32 communal facilities. In addition, 80 village latrines were repaired in return areas, benefiting 3,902 families.

Shelter/other infrastructure: UNHCR provided frames and corrugated iron to help 340 families to rebuild or expand their homes in urban areas. It also

supported the government's effort to rehabilitate six community buildings in new return areas. Similarly, to support rural return to villages, materials in the form of pipes and woven palm leaves were provided to 1,247 families. In addition, materials were provided for the repair of shelters in welfare centres, benefiting 1,520 families.

Transport/logistics: UNHCR maintained four lorries to move humanitarian supplies into priority return areas. During the year, UNHCR organised 202 convoys to deliver and distribute non-food relief items, medical supplies and equipment to returning IDPs, as well those still housed in government welfare centres. Transport was provided for equipment and supplies used by NGOs and other implementing partners to support project delivery.

Water: Some 79 wells were constructed (tube or open wells) improving access to potable water for 4,949 families.

Organisation and implementation

Management

The structure of UNHCR's field presence was reviewed in 2002 to strengthen its co-ordination. Another field office was established in Colombo to address protection needs and co-ordinate the Tamil Muslim return to the North. UNHCR maintained offices in Colombo, Jaffna and Vavuniya, and satellite offices in Batticaloa, Kilinochchi, Madhu, Mallavi, Mannar and Trincomalee. The office in Madhu was closed after most of the IDP population in the immediate vicinity returned to their villages of origin. The UNHCR workforce consisted of 107 staff (15 international officers, 73 national officers and 19 UNVs).

Working with others

In 2002, UNHCR worked with two government agencies, five international and seven national NGOs as implementing partners. The most significant development in UNHCR's strategy was its partnerships with the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees, and the Office of the Commissioner General for Co-ordination of Relief,

Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. The Ministry and the Office of the Commissioner General defined and co-ordinated the Government's policy on relief and rehabilitation assistance to IDPs and refugees. They operated in close consultation with the National Co-ordination Committee of the Framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (Triple R Framework). UNHCR was an important member of the Framework Sub-Committee on return and rehabilitation, and is expected to continue its leading role on IDPs and refugee-related matters. As part of its support to the MRRR, UNHCR set up a Policy Planning and Co-ordination Unit to assist the Ministry in managing information flows and formulate countrywide relief and rehabilitation policies and co-ordinate their implementation.

Furthermore the office signed a sub-project agreement with the Legal Aid Foundation and the Human Rights Commission to improve protection monitoring through legal aid centres. Such partnerships with national institutions represented an important step forward in advancing national protection for IDPs and eventually for returning refugees.

The trilateral co-operation between UNHCR, UNDP and the World Bank to reduce the relief-to-development gap, particularly during the transitional phase of post-conflict situations, was of great importance. The three agencies identified repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction as key areas to ensure a smooth transition in Sri Lanka. UNHCR was an active member of the UN Country Team and chaired the UN IDP Working Group. UNHCR continued to work within the setup of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, covering a period from 2002 to 2006.

Overall assessment

The political and security environment created during 2002 provided UNHCR with unique opportunities to find durable solutions for those displaced within Sri Lanka, as well as refugees in southern India. UNHCR's crucial and timely re-orientation of its programmes as well as the successful restructuring and expansion of its field network ensured the success and sustainability of return movements. Equally important: preparations began for a future

large-scale return from India of 84,000 Sri Lankan refugees. Continued donor confidence in the Sri Lanka operation is self-evident, as illustrated in increased contributions.

Offices

Colombo
Batticaloa
Colombo
Jaffna
Kilinochchi
Mallavi
Mannar
Trincomalee
Vavuniya

Partners

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

NGOs
CARE International
Campaign for Development
Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya
Rural Development Foundation
Sewa Lanka Foundation
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
ZOA Refugee Care

Others
Legal Aid Foundation of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka
National Human Rights Commission
UNVs

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Prior Years' Projects		
	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Notes	Annual Programme and Supplementary Programme Budgets	Notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,799,173	106,765	1,905,938		17,406	
Community Services	130,662	0	130,662		216,019	
Crop Production	97,016	0	0		93,401	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	376,745	0	376,745		(1,238)	
Education	33,994	0	33,994		198,409	
Fisheries	15,479	0	0		33,666	
Forestry	0	0	0		(2,027)	
Health / Nutrition	65,893	0	65,893		110,961	
Income Generation	81,187	0	0		18,660	
Legal Assistance	154,813	0	154,813		39,414	
Livestock	9,097	0	9,097		28,936	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	643,419	0	643,419		280,494	
Sanitation	60,404	0	60,404		89,564	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	107,126	0	107,126		180,285	
Transport / Logistics	91,430	0	91,430		140,849	
Water	53,212	0	53,212		29,374	
Transit Account	13,279	0	13,279		0	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	439,023	317,476	756,499		(718,026)	
Sub-total Operational	4,171,952	424,240	4,596,192		756,146	
Programme Support	853,543	90,038	943,581		9,992	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	5,025,495	514,278	5,539,773	(3)	766,138	(5)
Unliquidated Obligations	472,618	204,632	677,250	(3)	0	(5)
Total	5,498,113	718,910	6,217,023	(1) (3)	766,138	
Instalments with Implementing Partners						
Payments Made	1,359,482	317,476	1,676,957		385,092	
Reporting Received	920,458	0	920,458		1,103,118	
Balance	439,023	317,476	756,499		(718,026)	
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		810,308	
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		80,205	
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		(12,077)	
Outstanding 31 December	439,023	317,476	756,499		0	
Unliquidated Obligations						
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		1,324,514	(5)
New Obligations	5,498,113	718,910	6,217,023	(1)	0	
Disbursements	5,025,495	514,278	5,539,773	(3)	766,138	(5)
Cancellations	0	0	0		558,376	(5)
Outstanding 31 December	472,618	204,632	677,250	(3)	0	(5)

Figures which cross-reference to Accounts:

(1) Annex to Statement 1

(3) Schedule 3

(5) Schedule 5