

# REGIONAL BUREAU FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

## FACT SHEET

September 2014

### KEY FIGURES

**63%**

Urban refugees (world average 53%)

**20 (out of 45)**

Signatory countries of the 1951 Refugee Convention

**17**

Countries where UNHCR conducts Refugee Status Determination

**107,407**

New asylum applications received by UNHCR in 2013

**60,187**

RSD decisions rendered by UNHCR in 2013

**32,731**

Resettlement departures from Asia in 2013 (47% of global departures)

**43,500**

Refugees who voluntarily repatriated in 2013



UNHCR PAKISTAN/2013

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### ■ Protracted refugee situations

**Afghan refugees:** 2.6 million Afghan refugees worldwide, incl. 2.5 million in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. Afghan refugees represent 40 per cent of the global protracted refugee population, and 20 percent of the world's total refugee population. Afghans are the third largest group seeking asylum in industrialised countries (19,300 in the first half of 2014). The **Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)** is an internationally-endorsed initiative to address the protracted situation of Afghan refugees, by supporting voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration and assistance to host countries.

Other **long-staying refugees** in Asia are refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia, and refugees from Bhutan in Nepal.

#### ■ Irregular maritime movements

Irregular maritime movements of mixed populations that include persons of concern to UNHCR have been prevalent in the Asia-Pacific region for many years, but movements through South-East Asia, largely originating from the **Bay of Bengal**, have increased at a particularly rapid rate following inter-communal violence in Myanmar in June 2012. Since then, some **87,000** people are estimated to have departed by sea from the Bangladesh-Myanmar border area. Main routes are to the Malaysia/Thailand maritime border, from Malaysia to Indonesia, and to Indonesia and Australia. Over **7,000 persons of concern** to UNHCR have travelled irregularly by sea and are currently held in **detention** facilities.

### FUNDING

**USD 611.2 million**

requested for Asia / Pacific



## ■ Recent emergency

Military operations in the **North Waziristan** region of Pakistan in the second half of 2014 resulted in the displacement of close to 600,000 people, both within tribal areas of Pakistan and across the border into Afghanistan. UNHCR is contributing to the inter-agency response within Pakistan, and assisting refugees in Afghanistan with tents and non-food items.

## ■ Myanmar / Thailand operation

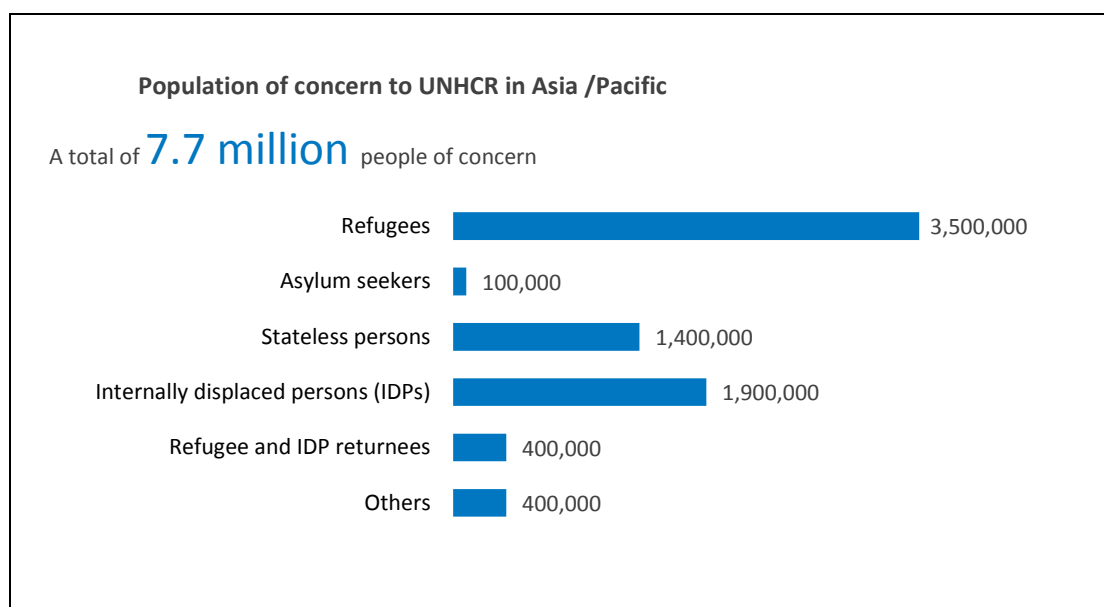
The Myanmar situation remains a key operation in South-East Asia. As part of the UN Country Team, UNHCR is engaged in the emergency response for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in both Kachin and Rakhine States. In all, there are an estimated **400,000 IDPs** in Myanmar, including some 140,000 in Rakhine, living in 79 camps or camp-like settings.

Meanwhile, in light of encouraging political developments, UNHCR is undertaking preparations on both sides of the border for the potential voluntary return of refugees from Thailand to the south-east of Myanmar.

## ■ Statelessness

1.4 million **stateless persons**, or persons at risk of statelessness, in Asia.

The largest group is from **Myanmar's** Rakhine State, where it is estimated that 1.09 million persons are lacking citizenship. Other stateless populations or persons at risk of statelessness are found in Central Asia, largely as result of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union; and in Malaysia (40,000), the Philippines (6,040), Sri Lanka, Thailand (506,000) and Viet Nam (11,500).



## UNHCR Presence

- Total number of countries covered by the Bureau: **45 countries and territories** (including 13 Pacific Island States) across 11 time zones
- Number of countries with UNHCR presence: **20 countries**, with **52 offices** including **4 Regional Offices** (Almaty, Bangkok, Beijing, Canberra)
- Number of Countries with no UNHCR presence: **25 countries**
- After 40 years of existence UNHCR's office in Viet Nam closed at the end of June. Continued support will be provided to the Government through UNHCR's Regional Office in Bangkok
- Coverage of the Bureau extends (east to west) from Japan to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Central Asia, and (north to south) from Mongolia to New Zealand and the Pacific

## The Strategic Priorities of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

- **Protection and Asylum Space:** ensure access to asylum and provision of international protection, including protection against *refoulement*; protection at sea; advocating for the rights of persons of concern
- **Protracted Refugee Situations:** pursue solutions including voluntary return, resettlement and sustainable reintegration.
- **Urban Refugee Situations:** preserve and expand protection space for refugees in urban settings including through regularisation of their status, promoting access to basic services and livelihood opportunities, and targeting protection activities for women and girls.
- **Mixed Migration:** support states in the region in managing mixed flows with protection-oriented responses, especially through the regional cooperation frameworks within the Bali and Almaty processes.
- **Statelessness:** prevent and reduce statelessness and protect the rights of stateless people
- Provide support to governments in registration / **refugee status determination** (RSD) / resettlement
- Support **IDP operations** within an inter-agency context while preparing for responsible disengagement when appropriate
- Enhance UNHCR's **emergency preparedness and response** capacity by strengthening regional coordination mechanisms, including for natural disasters
- Maintain operations in high-risk areas and ensure **staff safety**

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

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### PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING STATELESSNESS

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- Various **mapping and registration initiatives** are ongoing in several countries to identify stateless persons or persons at risk, and reduce statelessness. These initiatives may be designed to assist individuals in submitting an application for citizenship; promote the issuance of civil registration documents and the acquisition of citizenship for marginalized groups; support government entities in civil documentation including birth registration; promote the adoption of citizenship provisions or naturalization practices through legal advocacy; exchange and promote good practices in the region.

- **Significant achievements in Central Asia**

In 2011 a nationwide registration campaign of stateless persons took place in **Turkmenistan**. Since then over 8,000 persons have been registered and 4,713 have received citizenship. This includes 786 persons who were granted citizenship during an International Conference on Migration and Statelessness which took place in June 2014 in Ashgabat. Another 6,000 requests are currently being processed by the Government.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, 14,356 persons exchanged old USSR passports for Kyrgyz passports and 45 persons acquired Kyrgyz Citizenship.

## DURABLE SOLUTIONS

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### Voluntary Repatriation

- **Afghanistan** remains the largest voluntary return operation in UNHCR's history: over 5.8 million since 2002; **38,700** returns in 2013 (10,000 returns so far this year)
- Total voluntary repatriation in Asia (2013) : **43,500** (2012: 100,132)
- Number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who have returned to their areas of origin in 2013: **392,148** (Afghanistan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka) (2012: 459,236)

### Resettlement

- Asia traditionally has the largest number of resettlement departures worldwide: 2013 figures show that the top three countries of departure were **Nepal** (10,828) **Thailand** (8,806) and **Malaysia** (8,537). In 2014, Nepal has already facilitated 5,800 resettlement departures.
- The nationality of the largest groups of resettled refugees worldwide, were: **Myanmar** (16,701 – 1<sup>st</sup> rank) and **Bhutan** (10,665 – 2<sup>nd</sup> rank) **Afghans** ranked sixth with 4,400 departures.

### Promoting access to asylum procedures and services

- UNHCR advocates for alternatives to detention and supports a number of countries in the region with registration, processing of claims and Refugee Status Determination (RSD).
- UNHCR works with governments and civil society to facilitate access by refugees to national health and education systems, as well as a range of activities allowing self-reliance, access to the labor market, skills training and livelihood opportunities.
- UNHCR works with governments to develop, where possible, alternative or temporary stay arrangements, in particular in the context of the current irregular maritime movements.

## ADDRESSING MIXED MIGRATORY AND REFUGEE FLOWS

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### The Bali Process and the Almaty Process

The '**Bali Process** on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime' (*Bali Process*) and the '**Almaty Process** on Mixed Migration and International Protection' (*Almaty Process*) both provide regional platforms for dialogue and cooperation to maintain asylum space and address mixed migratory flows.

#### Bali Process

In South-East Asia, under the auspices of the Bali Process, the operationalization of the Regional Cooperation Framework to reduce irregular migration in the Asia-Pacific region continued to gain momentum, building on the

opening of the Regional Support Office (RSO) in Bangkok in September 2012 under the oversight and direction of the Bali-Process co-chairs, Australia and Indonesia, and with the support of UNHCR and IOM. Under the auspices of the RSO, in March 2014, the Government of Indonesia and UNHCR co-chaired a meeting on 'Mapping Disembarkation Options: Towards Strengthening Cooperation in Managing Irregular Movements by Sea'<sup>1</sup>, in partnership with IOM and the Government of New Zealand.

In parallel to the Bali Process, in April 2014, the Government of Indonesia and UNHCR co-chaired an International Workshop on the Protection of Irregular Movements of Persons at Sea held in Jakarta<sup>2</sup>. The Workshop sought to follow up on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration adopted by the Special Conference of Irregular Movements of Persons by Sea in August 2013.

### Almaty Process

Following the June 2013 second Ministerial Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration in Almaty, Kazakhstan, where government officials from nine Central Asian and neighbouring States explored collaborative responses to challenges of mixed migration and refugee protection in the region, the Chair of the Almaty Process<sup>3</sup> in March 2014 requested all countries participating in the Process to nominate a National Coordinator or Focal Point to follow up on Process-related developments, including the Regional Action Plan and a Regional Cooperation framework. A compilation of documents on the Almaty Process was finalised with a view to communicating a full picture of the Almaty Process configuration and mechanisms to all participant countries.

The Chair, IOM and the UNHCR Regional Representation in Almaty agreed on a number of steps regarding the further development of the Almaty Process, including an agreement to hold a Senior Officials Meeting in November 2014. Working meetings to plan the Senior Officials meeting started in June 2014 with the help of the Support Unit<sup>4</sup>.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ASIA

- The Islamic Republics of **Pakistan** and **Iran**, the largest and third largest refugee-hosting countries in the world (1.6 million and 0.84 million registered refugees respectively), are important contributors to the protection and assistance to refugees. Other countries in Asia have extended hospitality to refugees for a long time, either in camps (Bangladesh, Nepal) or in urban setting (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, People's Republic of China, Thailand, and others).
- Major **government donors** in Asia-Pacific are :
  - Japan:** USD 175,412,466 donated so far in 2014 (USD 253 million in 2013)
  - Australia:** USD 43,822,908 donated so far in 2014 (USD 57 million in 2013)
  - Republic of Korea:** USD 12,937,182 so far in 2014 (USD 6 million in 2013), and
  - New Zealand:** USD 5,440,811 donated so far in 2014 (USD 5 million in 2013).

<sup>1</sup> See UNHCR, Co-Chairs' Summary: "*Mapping Disembarkation Options: Towards Strengthening Cooperation in Managing Irregular Movements by Sea*," 3-4 March 2014 Bangkok, Thailand, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5343abe64.html>.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR: Co-chairs' Summary: *International Workshop on the Protection of Irregular Movements of Persons at Sea Jakarta, Indonesia, 21-22 April 2014*, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53882cb34.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Currently the Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Kazakhstan.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR and IOM have both provided a staff member, in addition to administrative support from the former, to the Support Unit.

- Income from the **private sector** in Asia is rapidly growing:

PSFR income Year	Actual	Forecast for year end
2012	39,057,986	
2013	52,359,157	
2014*	37,094,568	58,504,449

\*Actual at 31 Aug 2014

- Total **funds raised** in the Asia-Pacific region in 2013 (including Private donors) **USD 376 million<sup>1</sup>** (a 32% increase over 2012 income); this represents 7% of UNHCR' budget (USD 5.3 bn) in 2013, and 63 % of Asia-Pacific budget for 2013 (USD 595 million)

## STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS

### The e-Centre in Tokyo: building capacity to strengthen responses to humanitarian emergencies

The UNHCR Regional Centre for Emergency Preparedness, or e-Centre, is based in Tokyo, Japan and was established in 2000. The e-Centre works largely with government and civil society actors throughout the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen emergency response capacity and support inter-agency collaboration. In 2012, the e-Centre catalysed the formation of the Asia-Pacific Emergency Management (APEM) Platform, which today includes 45 leading government and civil society institutions from the e-Centre partner network. Over the last two years the Platform has pursued joint preparedness activities in areas such as urban emergency response, contingency planning, capacity-building of local NGOs and community-based actors, and inter-agency field exercises. Other activities for this year have included technical support and tailored capacity building for field operations, including a strategic focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Later this year the e-Centre, in collaboration with partners, will deliver a pilot workshop on mainstreaming cross-cutting issues in emergency responses. This will be the first time a workshop like this has been done in the Asia-Pacific region.

## LIST OF STATE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTIONS IN ASIA / PACIFIC

### States Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol (date of ratification)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) Afghanistan (30 Aug 2005)               | 11) Nauru (28 June 2011)                   |
| 2) Australia (22 Jan 1954 / 13 Dec 1973)   | 12) New Zealand (30 Jun 1960 / 6 Aug 1973) |
| 3) Cambodia (15 Oct 1992)                  | 13) Papua New Guinea (17 Jul 1986)         |
| 4) China (24 Sep 1982)                     | 14) Philippines (22 Jul 1981)              |
| 5) Fiji (12 June 1972)                     | 15) Samoa (21 Sep 1988 / 29 Nov 1994)      |
| 6) Iran, Islamic Republic of (28 Jul 1976) | 16) Solomon Islands (28Feb1995/12Apr1995)  |
| 7) Japan (03 Oct 1981 / 1 Jan 1982)        | 17) Tajikistan (07 Dec 1993)               |
| 8) Kazakhstan (15 Jan 1999)                | 18) Timor-Leste (07 May 2003)              |
| 9) Kyrgyzstan (08 Oct 1996)                | 19) Turkmenistan (02 Mar 1998)             |
| 10) Korea, Republic of (03 Dec 1992)       | 20) Tuvalu (07 Mar 1986)                   |

### States Parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (date of ratification)

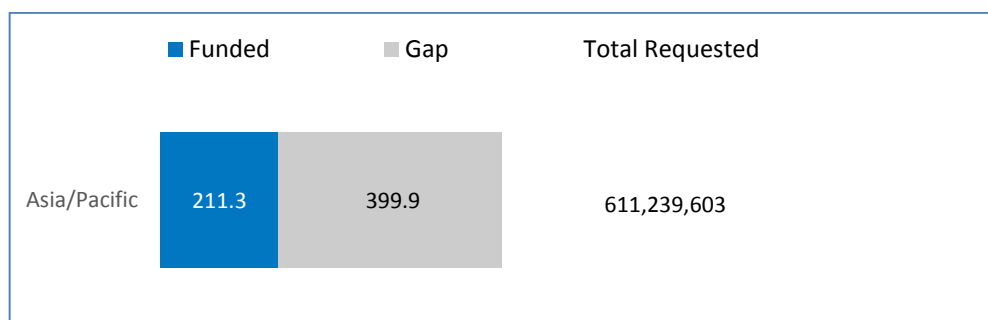
- 1) Australia (13 Dec 1973)
- 2) Fiji (12 Jun 1972)
- 3) Kiribati (29 Nov 1983)
- 4) Korea, Republic of (22 Aug 1962)
- 5) Philippines (22 Sept 2011)
- 6) Turkmenistan (7 December 2011)

### States Parties to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (date of ratification)

- 1) Australia (13 Dec 1973)
- 2) Kiribati (29 Nov 1983)
- 3) Turkmenistan (29 August 2012)
- 4) New Zealand (20 Sept 2006)

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A total of **USD 611.2 million** has been requested for all operations in the Asia /Pacific region



### UNHCR BUDGET FOR ASIA / PACIFIC 2013 – 2014

#### Budget and actual expenditure 2013 (USD)

2013	Budget	Expenditures
Pillar 1 - refugees	301,241,546	162,296,147
Pillar 2 – stateless	22,353,996	10,613,969
Pillar 3 - reintegration	129,728,563	45,463,420
Pillar 4 - IDPs	141,335,541	73,252,954
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>594,659,646</b>	<b>291,626,490</b>

*(expenditure is based on available funds)*

#### Budget 2014 (USD)

2014 Budget	
Pillar 1 - refugees	325,334,046
Pillar 2 – stateless	23,749,244
Pillar 3 - reintegration	123,963,767
Pillar 4 - IDPs	138,192,545
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>611,239,603</b>

*(as of September 2014)*

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds, as well as for those who have contributed to operations the Asia /Pacific with earmarked funding :

#### Donors who have directly contributed to various programmes and operations in Asia /Pacific :

- Australia
- Canada
- China
- CERF
- Denmark
- European Union
- Finland
- Germany
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- private donors
- Republic of Korea
- Russian Federation
- Turkmenistan Saudi Arabia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- UN OCHA
- UN Peacebuilding Fund
- UN Programme on HIV/AIDS
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- Viet Nam



**TOP TEN OPERATIONS IN ASIA / PACIFIC in 2013 – 2014**

(as of September 2014)

Country	Type of Operation	2013 Budget (final)	2014 Budget (as of September 2014)
1. Pakistan	Refugees (mostly from Afghanistan) and IDPs	161,354,322	<b>162,619,685</b>
2. Afghanistan	Return, reintegration and IDPs	131,375,226	<b>152,165,796</b>
3. Islamic Republic of Iran	Refugees (mostly from Afghanistan)	59,588,289	<b>68,669,442</b>
4. Myanmar	Statelessness and internal displacement	68,481,570	<b>68,108,703</b>
5. Thailand	Camp-based refugees (from Myanmar)	28,044,521	<b>32,842,224</b>
6. Malaysia	Urban refugees (mostly from Myanmar)	17,725,665	<b>20,161,428</b>
7. Nepal	Camp-based refugees (from Bhutan)	15,579,191	<b>15,440,453</b>
8. India	Urban refugees	13,007,112	<b>13,638,075</b>
9. Bangladesh	Camp-based refugees (from Myanmar)	13,447,801	<b>12,385,988</b>
10. Sri Lanka	Return & reintegration (IDP & Refugees)	10,253,602	<b>9,128,705</b>

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**Links:**

UNHCR website, Asia-Pacific page <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d8ec6.html>  
 UNHCR website, Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees page <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f9016576.html>