

THAILAND

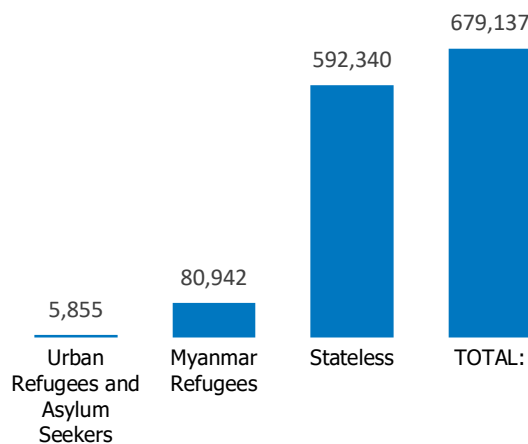
01 July–30 September

Thailand hosts 80,942 Myanmar refugees in nine temporary shelters on the Thai-Myanmar border while 5,855 urban refugees and asylum-seekers reside in other areas.

In addition, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) registered over half a million stateless people, mostly living in highland border areas.

UNHCR works with the RTG, international agencies, NGOs and donors to address the protection assistance and durable solutions needs of these groups.

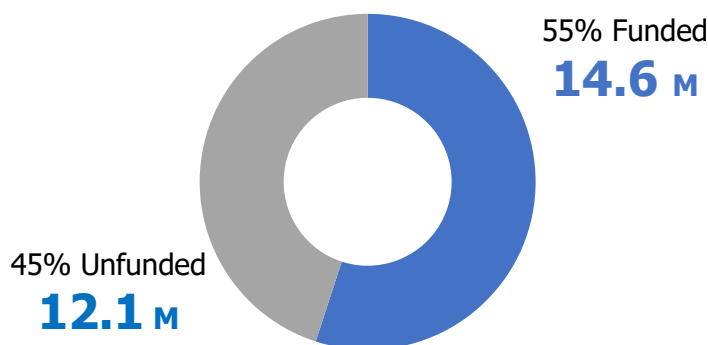
FORCIBLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS PEOPLE Figures (as of 30 September)



FUNDING (AS OF 30 Sep)

USD 26.7 M

Requested for the Thailand Operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

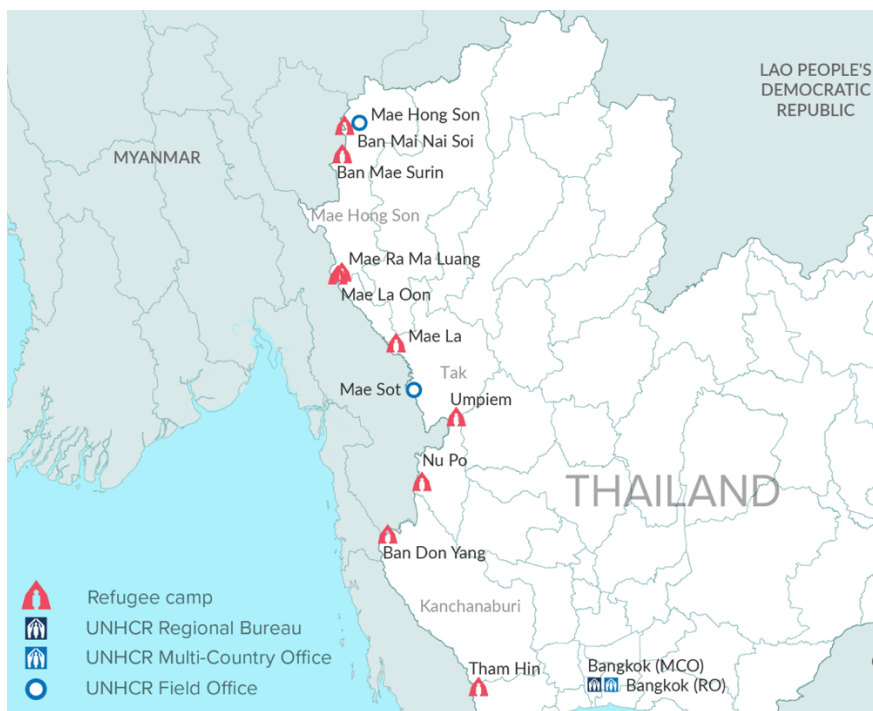
122 National Staff

19 International Staff

Offices:

01 Multi-Country Office in Bangkok

02 Field Offices in Mae Sot and in Mae Hong Son



Population Overview



A stateless family after receiving results of their DNA test in Chang Mai, following obtaining the results, they eligible to apply for nationality application. photo. © Local Community Network/ October 2024

MYANMAR CAMP-BASED REFUGEES

- Refugees residing in the nine government-run temporary shelters on the Thai-Myanmar border are of **mainly Karen and Karenni ethnicity**, some of whom have lived in Thailand since the mid-1980s after fleeing armed conflict between ethnic armed groups and the Myanmar military. Under the national legal framework, they are generally **not permitted to access national institutions** (e.g., health and education) nor to move outside the temporary shelters, including for the purpose of accessing livelihood opportunities. Therefore, they rely on non-governmental organizations, and humanitarian services for their basic needs. **UNHCR** coordinates its response with the Committee for the Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT), a consortium of NGOs that provides food, shelter, health, education, water/sanitation, protection, and livelihoods.
- Registration of refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border is **led by the Royal Thai Government Provincial Admission Board (RTG-PAB)**. Since 2008, registration is only open to exceptional serious protection and/or medical cases. UNHCR identifies and refers such cases to the RTG-PAB in close consultation with the Ministry of Interior.

URBAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

- **UNHCR provides comprehensive protection and assistance** to urban refugees and asylum-seekers from 46 countries, residing mainly in Bangkok and surrounding urban areas. Thailand does not have any established **national legal framework** for the protection of urban refugees and asylum-seekers and has not acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. Asylum-seekers and refugees continue to be at risk of being detained on immigration grounds for illegal entry or overstaying visas as they are considered “illegal” in the country without a national legal framework for protection.

STATELESS PERSONS

- There are over **592,340 people registered as stateless** with the RTG as of the end of June. The next updated numbers of registered stateless population will be shared by RTG by the end of 2024. While statelessness in Thailand has a range of causes, many affected communities migrated to Thailand hundreds of years ago. They are mostly members of ethnic minorities living in mountainous regions, who had not been registered and did not hold any identity documents. These communities face various challenges, including language barriers to accessing civil registration and nationality procedures, difficulties associated with living in remote areas, and a lack of understanding of the importance of civil registration in preventing statelessness.
- Significant reforms to Thailand’s nationality and civil registration laws (e.g., 2008, 2016, 2019) provided a route to restoring nationality to those who could not acquire it. A **progressive nationality strategy was adopted in 2005 to address statelessness**. Consequently, 80,712 registered stateless persons have acquired Thai nationality since 2015. Whilst some progress has been made, stateless persons in Thailand continue to face challenges accessing some of their fundamental rights, including freedom of movement – many stateless individuals face restrictions travelling beyond their registered provincial areas - and healthcare, including gaps in access to national health insurance.
- during the **2023 Global Refugee Forum**, Thailand reiterated its pledge to resolve statelessness and committed to developing a national action plan for the reduction of statelessness within two years.

Main Activities

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Between July to September the situation in Myanmar remained volatile, with ongoing security concerns and instability affecting many areas. Despite the deteriorating conditions inside Myanmar, UNHCR Thailand did not record a large number of new arrivals from Myanmar during the reporting period. UNHCR continues to monitor the situation closely in coordination with partners and remains prepared to respond should the need arise.
- Along the Thai-Myanmar border in Tak province, according to deputy chairperson of the Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP) some 20,000 IDPs (5,025 households) reside in seven designated sites. Along the border in Mae Hong Son province, in northern Thailand, a total of 17,000 IDPs reside in six sites in Shan, Karenni (Kayah) and Karen (Kayin) states on Myanmar side.
- In August and September, Thailand faced **severe flooding across many regions**, triggered by heavy monsoon rains affecting provinces in the north, northeast, and central areas. Over 193,000 households were impacted by floods, which inundated villages and towns and caused extensive

infrastructure damage. The northern provinces, including Chiang Mai and Lamphun, were the hardest hit as rivers overflowed, leading to road closures, business interruptions, and the need for emergency responses in affected areas. UNHCR through its partner Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), dispatched and distributed 1000 care kits (consist of non-food and food items) to Chiang Rai to assist stateless and local communities affected by floods.

- In September, the **UNHCR-led Provincial Protection Sector Working Group (PPSWG)** in Tak province conducted a workshop on Humanitarian Response Coordination for displaced persons from Myanmar. This was a first such workshop for the Thailand-Myanmar border, involving government, military, and humanitarian organizations to discuss refugee protection and share lessons learned from past influxes. The workshop provided an opportunity to engage with local authorities on humanitarian principles and promote an understanding of the value of engaging with humanitarian agencies with experience in emergency response, areas of potential collaboration and the importance of joint preparedness efforts and coordination.



PROTECTION

- UNHCR Thailand, jointly with the Ministry of Interior, completed the verification exercise **of refugees living in the nine temporary shelters**. As of 30 June, **14,198 refugees** expressed interest in resettlement, 1,669 of whom were from Ban Don Yan, 4,216 from Tham Hin and 8,313 from Umpium. While the resettlement programme provides a durable solution to many, some refugees will remain in Thailand. Therefore, UNHCR continues to work to improve the protection environment in Thailand, advocate for their right to work and advocates with the RTG for refugees to have access to Thai public services.
- Between July and September, UNHCR conducted **Best Interest Assessments/Determinations (BIA/BID)** for **384 refugee children** (212 girls and 172 boys) across all temporary shelters for protection or durable solutions.
- In urban areas, UNHCR continues to provide **multipurpose cash grants (MPCG)** to refugees with specific needs. Between July to September, the UNHCR Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) panel provided MPCGs to 241 households covering 707 individuals (356 female and 351male).
- Between July and September, UNHCR provided essential protection support to refugees and asylum seekers through in-person counselling and referrals to critical services. In urban areas, 162 counselling sessions were provided to refugees and asylum-seekers, while in the nine temporary shelters, 418 camp-based refugees received protection counselling. UNHCR's reception for urban refugees continues to offer in-person services by appointment, including card renewals, Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews, decision notifications, and ad hoc counselling.
- UNHCR conducted **in-person counselling and protection monitoring** at five different Immigration Detention Centres (IDC), 10 different Ministry of Social Development and Human Security shelters, and the Welfare Protection Center for Victims of Human Trafficking. In 2024 UNHCR MCO Thailand began issuing UNHCR cards to the Rohingya in the RTG facilities. UNHCR distributed non-food items to the 26 Rohingya in the IDCs and MSDHS Shelter.
- Between July to September, UNHCR provided legal services to seven individuals and facilitated five individuals with access to the Thai justice system in Kanchanaburi. In Mae Sot, UNHCR provided legal services to 299 individuals and facilitated 10 individuals with access to the Thai justice system. In addition, UNHCR field office in Mae Sot provided case management support to 12 GBV survivors. In Mae Hong Son, UNHCR provided legal services to six individuals and facilitated two individuals accessing the Thai justice system. In the four temporary shelter, UNHCR provided counseling to some 209 (126F, 83M) and conducted 21 protection counselling sessions.

- Starting in September, in collaboration with Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR) and Sermpanya Foundation (SPF), UNHCR rolled out an innovative child protection pilot project in Tak province. The film “Being Family” developed by SPF with support from the Global Parenting Initiative (GPI) aims to reduce violence against children and increase positive parenting. The film has demonstrated positive impacts on a range of parenting and family outcomes during an initial study in migrant communities. Section-level film screenings for small-sized and medium-sized groups are taking place following a schedule until the end of the year and several night screenings are also being organized for larger audiences.
- In September, UNHCR participated in the RTG’s **first annual review of the National Screening Mechanism (NSM)**, involving RTG and civil society stakeholders. Recommendations from RTG agencies focused on capacity and resources, whereas recommendations from civil society focused on access to both the system and rights. Final NSM decisions are expected in the coming month on a second batch of five cases that are now under review by the screening committee, following the first batch of four cases – three of which were recognized in August.
- **UNHCR has begun a new collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ)** to conduct mobile registration exercises for stateless communities. This new collaboration shows the commitment of the government and UNHCR **to reach vulnerable populations and facilitate access to civil documentation and coordination** and partnership between different government agencies and international organizations to streamline the statelessness registration processes. As of 30 September 2024, some 230 stateless individuals received support through this new collaboration.
- UNHCR has provided the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) with IT equipment to expedite the civil registration process and issuance of identity cards for stateless populations. Additionally, UNHCR is supporting witness investigations as part of the nationality application process.
- On 30 August 2024, **Thailand officially withdrew its reservation to Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** on the protection of refugee children. Thailand ratified the CRC in 1992 with reservations on several articles, including Article 22, which have been gradually lifted over time. The latest withdrawal aligns with Thailand’s pledges made during the second Global Refugee Forum in 2023.
- In September, MCO Thailand and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific facilitated a workshop for the National Statistical Office (NSO) on including stateless populations in Thailand’s 2025 national census. This is the first-time stateless populations will be included in Thailand’s national census, and the NSO was receptive to incorporating the international recommendations on statelessness statistics, as well as to ensuring that census questions are framed to collect data on individuals’ perceptions of their nationality, status, and documentation, instead of enumerators making judgments on such issues.
- On 27 September, UNHCR and the Employers’ Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) held a training session for 61 employers in Kanchanaburi province on **employment access for stateless persons**. Trainers from the Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour, provided insights on legal hiring practices for stateless individuals. Employers welcomed the opportunity, noting that **hiring stateless persons involved significantly lower recruitment costs** and offered broader sectoral flexibility. UNHCR and ECOT plan to continue raising awareness among employers in other provinces and will conduct follow-up training sessions to prepare stateless persons as potential candidates for interested employers.
- UNHCR Thailand has formalized partnership with Local Community Network (LCN), a grassroots organization established in 2019 to empower and support stateless people.



EDUCATION

- As of September, UNHCR supported 12 urban refugees with tuition fees and living to attend universities in Thailand.
- A second cohort of refugee students have begun their university studies in Thailand, with a total of 12 refugee students receiving DAFI and UNHCR support.
- In urban areas, 524 refugee and asylum-seeker children aged 6-17 were enrolled in primary education, and 102 children aged 6-17 were enrolled in secondary education as of 30 September.
- In partnership with COERR, 95 children attended the **Intensive Preparatory Programme (IPP)**, which aims to equip children with skills to access public schools under Thailand's "Education for All" policy. In addition to learning the Thai language, children are also taught basic science concepts and IT skills. UNHCR also supported the access of 23 refugees over 17 years old to the primary and secondary levels.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- Between July to September, 833 **submissions were made for resettlement** while 393 refugees departed to the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

CLIMATE ACTION

- The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) made significant progress in advancing environmental sustainability, successfully achieving climate neutrality for the seventh consecutive year by **offsetting 100% of greenhouse gas emissions**. All regional offices and institutes have implemented environmental plans, and electricity is now sourced entirely from renewable energy, including on-site production and solar plants in Thailand. **ESCAP is expanding its Environmental Management System (EMS)** to integrate sustainability into programmatic work, emphasizing the importance of reducing emissions and operational footprints in the post-COVID era. This progress reflects the collective efforts of all UN agencies and personnel, reaffirming the commitment to making workplaces greener as One UN.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works in **close partnership** with the Royal Thai Government (RTG), UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, and civil society to improve protection and solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons while advocating for their inclusion in national systems. On the Thai-Myanmar border, UNHCR coordinates with **the Committee for the Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT)**, a consortium of NGOs that provide food, shelter, health, education, water/sanitation, protection, and livelihoods to refugees in the nine temporary shelters.
- **Strategic alliances** with key international and national NGOs, civil society and faith-based organizations, private sector partners, and academia help address a range of issues, including alternatives to detention, improved access to domestic legal and social services, and alternative forms of temporary protection pending solutions.

- **Partners:** Ministry of Interior (MOI), Thailand, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Viet Nam, Adventist Development and Relief Agency Thailand (ADRA), Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), Host International Thailand Foundation (HOST), Humanity and Inclusion (HI), Sermpanya Foundation (SPF), Local Community Network (LCN), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Volunteers (UNV).

EXTERNAL / DONORS RELATIONS

Special thanks to major donors of un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as to donors who have contributed directly to the operation to date during 2023: European Union | Denmark | France | Germany | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | United Kingdom | United States of America

Un-earmarked, broadly earmarked, and direct contributions were also received through private donations from Thailand. UNHCR has raised funds from the private sector since 2008 to support forcibly displaced and stateless people both in Thailand and globally.

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LINKS

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