

# East Asia and the Pacific

Australia

Brunei Darussalam

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

Pacific

Thailand

Timor-Leste

Viet Nam

Refugee children from Myanmar read books at a library run by an NGO.



## | OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- In Japan, the Government announced it would pilot a resettlement project for some 90 refugees from Myanmar in Thailand who will be resettled as of 2010 over three years. In 2009, a record number of positive refugee status determination (RSD) decisions were taken.
- In the aftermath of a series of typhoons that hit the Philippines, UNHCR assumed leadership of the protection cluster in order to help the national authorities meet the protection needs of vulnerable people.
- UNHCR conducted RSD in the Hong Kong SAR (China), closing more than 1,000 cases and reducing the number of pending asylum claims to some 700 by the end of 2009.
- Australia and New Zealand maintained strong financial commitments to UNHCR and continued to provide valuable resettlement places for vulnerable refugees.

## Working environment

With irregular migratory movements continuing in the East Asia and the Pacific region, States' concerns about national security and the priority given to bilateral cooperation over refugee protection had a negative impact on asylum with a few positive exceptions. With many countries in the region lacking formal asylum legislation and procedures, UNHCR continued to try and help growing numbers of people of concern in an increasingly fragile protection environment.

In Japan, the Democratic Party of Japan came to power in August 2009 with policies that promote a more favourable asylum system and continued use of official development assistance for human security, including refugee issues.

Australia continued to reform its asylum policy and practices in 2009, despite the arrivals of asylum-seekers by boat that generated intense media, parliamentary and public debate throughout the year.

Increased attention was drawn to the vulnerability of some States in the Pacific to the effects of natural disasters and climate change and the links between these and forced displacement and protection issues.

## Achievements and impact

In the East Asia and the Pacific region, UNHCR continued to advocate for increased protection for all people of concern, unhindered access to asylum and fair and efficient RSD. The Office also advocated for better livelihoods for urban refugees, alternatives to detention for asylum-seekers and refugees, and measures to prevent statelessness.

In Australia, major developments included the introduction of legislation to implement new detention policy, the abolition of detention debt and the introduction of new permission-to-work arrangements for protection-visa applicants. Australia also continued to pursue regional cooperation on the mixed migration phenomenon. UNHCR advocated for the inclusion of refugee protection as a key component of these efforts.

In Cambodia, the Government assumed full responsibility for processing and adjudicating refugee cases when refugee legislation was passed in December 2009. The implementation of a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNHCR and the Governments of Cambodia and Viet Nam in 2005 has led to solutions for almost all Montagnard refugees in Cambodia. Despite these positive developments, the fragility of the country's nascent protection regime was highlighted by deportations amounting to *refoulement* in late 2009.

In China, the Government continued to work on the development of national refugee regulations, which were yet



to be finalized at the end of 2009. In the Hong Kong SAR (China), the Government and UNHCR signed an MOU with the aim of expanding cooperation on RSD as well as building the capacity of Government officials and civil society to ensure that international standards are respected with regard to the treatment of persons of concern to UNHCR.

In Indonesia, the steadily increasing number of new arrivals called for strengthened cooperation with the authorities to build national reception capacity. UNHCR mobilized additional resources at short notice to conduct RSD and to process resettlement cases in order to assist the Government when a boat carrying Sri Lankan asylum-seekers was rescued at sea.

In Japan, the Government announced a pilot resettlement programme for 90 refugees from Myanmar in Thailand to run over a period of three years. UNHCR submitted resettlement cases and supported the Government in preparatory activities. The acceleration of the RSD process reduced the backlog of pending asylum applications. Japan maintained strong financial support to UNHCR.

In New Zealand, the Immigration Act of 2009, which reforms immigration and asylum law and codifies complementary protection obligations, came into force. UNHCR welcomed the opportunity to provide extensive submissions on the legislation.

In Papua New Guinea, a pilot project began individual registration of West Papuan refugees in East Awin. The rehabilitation of a 36 km connecting road, renovation of health facilities in East Awin, and training in fish and poultry farming, have improved living conditions for refugees.

In the Pacific, UNHCR linked up with OHCHR, OCHA and UNICEF to form the first Pacific Regional Humanitarian Protection Cluster. The aim of the cluster is to provide more timely and coordinated responses to emergency situations, including natural disasters, in the Pacific. UNHCR was involved in the UN response to the earthquake of September 2009 which affected Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga.

Capacity-building efforts also continued in Mongolia, where the Government is preparing to accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In the Republic of Korea, an amendment to the Immigration Control Act brought positive changes, such as the right to work for asylum-seekers and humanitarian-status holders. The Ministry of Justice has increased its capacity for RSD, leading to a significant reduction in the backlog of undecided cases.

In Viet Nam, steps were taken to reduce statelessness through naturalization of the Cambodians who had formerly been considered refugees, particularly those residing in camps who had been assisted by UNHCR in the past.

## | Constraints |

Government concerns related to national security and the curbing of irregular migration had an impact on the protection of people of concern to UNHCR. The Office was concerned on the increased instances of *non-refoulement* of asylum-seekers and refugees in the subregion. Difficulties also arose in assuring entry to territory and access to asylum, as well as in making certain that individuals in need of protection could avail themselves of their basic rights to education, health and documentation.

Muslim residents of Myanmar's northern Rakhine State continued to face difficulties in their country of origin and in countries of asylum as efforts to promote a regional approach to address the situation are yet to yield positive results.

The increasing use of detention facilities to hold asylum-seekers and refugees, including children and vulnerable groups, and UNHCR's inability to access them, remain key concerns. The situation of many urban refugees and asylum-seekers is precarious, mainly due to limited livelihood opportunities or access to social services in certain countries.

## | Operations |

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

In **Australia**, UNHCR welcomed ongoing efforts by the Government to improve the protection environment during 2009. Constructive dialogue and advocacy with a wide range of stakeholders was aimed at improving the reception and processing facility on Christmas Island. UNHCR was engaged in extensive information activities to provide factual and balanced information in response to growing public interest in asylum-seekers arriving by boat. **Australia**

and **New Zealand** maintained successful resettlement programmes in 2009 which provided durable solutions for over 6,750 refugees, mostly referred by UNHCR, as well as additional places for family members and other persons in humanitarian need.

In **Cambodia**, UNHCR continued to try and improve the Government's capacity to manage asylum procedures. Asylum and protection space in the country were affected in different ways towards the end of the year, with a positive development in the issuance of the sub-decree on refugee and asylum processing and a drawback with the deportation of a group of asylum-seekers awaiting RSD.

In **China**, UNHCR continued to undertake RSD and provide basic assistance to people of concern. UNHCR launched the first vocational training programme for refugees, which aimed to improve access to education for urban refugees. In the **Hong Kong SAR (China)**, UNHCR resettled a total of 36 cases. The Office continued to implement a complex RSD operation and provided basic care for urban refugees while the Government provided it for asylum-seekers. In the **Macao SAR (China)**, UNHCR assisted the authorities with RSD procedures.

UNHCR was the primary provider of protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in **Indonesia**, and advocated for humanitarian solutions for Iraqis and Afghans in the country. UNHCR worked with the local authorities to increase their capacity to manage refugee and asylum issues in an effort to promote the country's accession to the international refugee instruments.

In **Japan**, the number of refugees who were recognized or received humanitarian status increased by 27 per cent in 2009. UNHCR conducted a study on the integration of Indochinese refugees to help develop local integration programmes for refugees. The provision of social services for refugees and asylum-seekers, including psychological care and legal counselling, was enhanced to meet increasing demands.

A wide range of activities were undertaken to increase public awareness and support for refugee issues in Japan. The eCentre organized 11 regional learning events on emergency preparedness and response. Close cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) resulted in the signing of agreements to reduce the gap between relief and development in several post-conflict situations.

In **Mongolia**, 2009 saw a continuance of capacity-building efforts, including protection workshops and a study trip abroad for Government officials to learn about national asylum processes, in preparation for the country's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In **Papua New Guinea**, UNHCR assisted some 2,300 West Papuan refugees in East Awin. Interventions in the areas of livelihoods, water, health and education focused on households with specific needs. Training was provided in addressing sexual and gender-based violence. Given the absence of a national asylum framework, UNHCR carried out RSD and provided basic assistance to urban asylum-seekers and refugees.

In the **Philippines**, UNHCR supported the process whereby refugees could acquire citizenship or become self-reliant. Based on an agreement between UNHCR and the Government, an emergency transit mechanism for accelerated resettlement processing began to operate in the

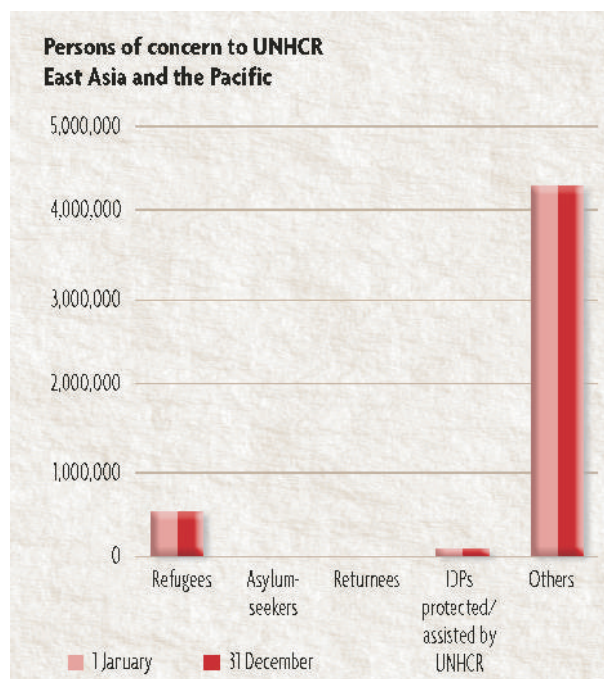
country in 2009. This has facilitated resettlement processing for individual refugees. During the inter-agency intervention for the people affected by a series of typhoons, UNHCR played a lead role in the protection cluster.

In the **Republic of Korea**, UNHCR helped the Government to improve the national RSD system through training and workshops, and by facilitating study visits. While positive changes were made to national legislation, the absence of asylum procedures at ports of entry continued to be of concern in 2009. UNHCR also commissioned a study on statelessness and, together with a separate study by the Ministry of Justice, identified a clear way forward for addressing statelessness in the Republic of Korea. The Government has steadily increased its contributions to UNHCR.

In the **Pacific**, the UNHCR continued to implement its regional strategy to improve the capacity of small island States to manage refugees within broader immigration-management and border-control activities. UNHCR was also instrumental in creating the first Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster—which it co-leads with OHCHR. The cluster promotes the integration of protection principles into regional responses to natural disasters and emergencies.

UNHCR continued to assist the small number of refugees and asylum-seekers in **Timor-Leste**. Efforts to establish refugee admission mechanisms and strengthen the Government's capacity to conduct RSD in accordance with international standards are under way.

In **Viet Nam**, community-based support was provided to the Montagnard refugees who have returned from Cambodia. UNHCR advocated for a humanitarian and lasting solution for Cambodians who have been residing in the country without legal status since the 1970s. Viet Nam's recent move to reduce statelessness through naturalization of the former Cambodian refugees is progressing.



## Financial information

Since 2005, expenditures on annual programmes for the subregion have been largely constant, with some fluctuation resulting partly from UNHCR's involvement in post-natural disaster humanitarian responses in Myanmar and the Philippines, and partly from other developments in the subregion. The Montagnard refugee programme in Cambodia and the returnee reintegration programme in Viet Nam have phased down. Resettlement and protection activities in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand have increased, and have drawn strong support from donors. Japan continued its strong donor support to UNHCR's operations in Asia and Africa.

### Budget and expenditure in East Asia and the Pacific (USD)

Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Australia and New Zealand	1,426,414	0	1,426,414	1,190,071	0	1,190,071
Cambodia	1,106,351	0	1,106,351	1,052,172	0	1,052,172
China	4,889,532	0	4,889,532	4,008,152	0	4,008,152
Indonesia	3,508,182	0	3,508,182	2,834,044	0	2,834,044
Japan	4,628,180	0	4,628,180	4,509,402	0	4,509,402
Malaysia	6,752,314	63,057	6,815,371	6,318,088	63,057	6,381,145
Mongolia	549,610	0	549,610	487,279	0	487,279
Myanmar	8,875,416	2,229,269	11,104,685	8,509,655	1,968,460	10,478,115
Papua New Guinea	1,196,864	0	1,196,864	1,173,138	0	1,173,138
Philippines	683,193	0	683,193	561,350	0	561,350
Republic of Korea	1,033,415	0	1,033,415	901,768	0	901,768
Thailand	18,799,208	0	18,799,208	14,377,184	0	14,377,184
Timor Leste	244,952	0	244,952	203,499	0	203,499
Viet Nam	464,607	0	464,607	394,598	0	394,598
Regional activities <sup>1</sup>	333,000	0	333,000	153,501	0	153,501
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,491,238</b>	<b>2,292,326</b>	<b>56,783,564</b>	<b>46,673,901</b>	<b>2,031,517</b>	<b>48,705,418</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes protection activities, dissemination of refugee law, transport and repatriation activities.

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related"(NAM) reserve.

Voluntary contributions to East Asia and the Pacific (USD)				
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
East Asia and Pacific subregion	United States of America	10,800,000		10,800,000
	<b>East Asia and Pacific subtotal</b>	<b>10,800,000</b>		<b>10,800,000</b>
Australia	Australia	153,097		153,097
	<b>Australia subtotal</b>	<b>153,097</b>		<b>153,097</b>
China	Private donors in China	145		145
	<b>China subtotal</b>	<b>145</b>		<b>145</b>
Indonesia	Australia	658,180		658,180
	<b>Indonesia subtotal</b>	<b>658,180</b>		<b>658,180</b>
Japan	Japan	966,709		966,709
	Japan Association for UNHCR	133,911		133,911
	Private donors in Japan	452		452
	The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ (Japan)	11,282		11,282
	UNIQLO Co., Ltd (Japan)	15,292		15,292
<b>Japan subtotal</b>	<b>1,127,646</b>		<b>1,127,646</b>	
Myanmar	Australia	1,294,964		1,294,964
	Australia for UNHCR		1,329	1,329
	Belgium	280,120		280,120
	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	1,040,158		1,040,158
	European Commission	2,293,615	1,022,886	3,316,500
	Japan	1,446,281		1,446,281
	Japan Association for UNHCR		59,548	59,548
	Private donors in China	54,973	240	55,213
	Private donors in Greece		509	509
	Private donors in Italy		14,099	14,099
	United States of America	1,205,695		1,205,695
<b>Myanmar subtotal</b>	<b>7,615,806</b>	<b>1,098,611</b>	<b>8,714,417</b>	
Malaysia	Australia	659,683		659,683
	Private donors in Malaysia	4,858		4,858
	United States of America	640,559		640,559
<b>Malaysia subtotal</b>	<b>1,305,100</b>		<b>1,305,100</b>	
Papua New Guinea	Private donors in Australia	23,581		23,581
	<b>Papua New Guinea subtotal</b>	<b>23,581</b>		<b>23,581</b>
Thailand	Australia	308,473		308,473
	Australia for UNHCR	1,498		1,498
	European Commission	1,246,604		1,246,604
	France	196,850		196,850
	HQ Online Donations (Switzerland)	328		328
	Japan	1,239,669		1,239,669
	Japan Association for UNHCR	2,884		2,884
	Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	185,020		185,020
	Luxembourg	500,715		500,715
	Private donors in China	194		194
	Private donors in Thailand	1,430,366		1,430,366
	Switzerland	435,161		435,161
	United States of America	2,349,995		2,349,995
<b>Thailand subtotal</b>	<b>7,897,757</b>		<b>7,897,757</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>29,581,312</b>	<b>1,098,611</b>	<b>30,679,923</b>

Note: Contributions listed above exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.