

Myanmarese refugees in Thailand clear
the ground for a farming project that will
help increase their self-sufficiency.



Bangladesh

Brunei Darussalam

Cambodia

Indonesia

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Malaysia

Myanmar

Philippines

Singapore

Thailand

Timor-Leste

Viet Nam

South-East Asia

| Working environment |

In Bangladesh, constructive Government policies and international support have resulted in visible improvements in the living conditions of over 28,000 refugees from Myanmar's northern Rakhine State living in two camps in Cox's Bazar. However, with an unregistered population estimated at 200,000 outside the camps, it is imperative that standards both in and outside the camps be improved. UNHCR is pursuing a comprehensive approach to attain more equitable living conditions for registered refugees, unregistered people of concern outside the camps, and the Bangladeshi host population.

Cambodia, which is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, is making progress towards the establishment of a national refugee framework. A Refugee Office was established in 2008 under the Ministry of the Interior. Cambodia has also adopted a national refugee law, and the Government is assuming full responsibility for processing and adjudicating refugee cases.

In Indonesia, the increasing numbers of new arrivals in recent years, including some high-profile boat arrivals, have

highlighted the need for a regional approach to address asylum and migration in South-East Asia. Having expanded its protection presence strategically in five locations across the archipelago, UNHCR will strengthen cooperation with the authorities in these regions, in order to bolster their understanding of the Office's protection mandate.

In Malaysia, UNHCR strives to meet the challenges inherent in delivering protection in an environment of mixed migration, without a legal framework for dealing with refugees. Lacking access to public services, and at risk of arrest, detention and deportation, refugees turn to UNHCR as the primary provider of protection. UNHCR will continue to register, determine refugee status, provide documentation and intervene on behalf of individuals in the event of arrests. The Office will strengthen efforts to provide social services and encourage self-reliance among refugee communities. UNHCR will continue to engage with the Malaysian Government to advocate for a more favourable protection environment for refugees in the country.



South-East Asia

Humanitarian actors continue to face operational constraints in Myanmar, where the first elections in 20 years, planned for November 2010, are expected to influence the working environment. UNHCR's programmes are aimed at enhancing the coping capacities of communities in northern Rakhine State and south-eastern Myanmar, through improved access to essential public services such as schools and health centres, as well as through protection interventions and community-based livelihood programmes.

UNHCR has maintained its activities in northern Rakhine State with the support of the international community and the local authorities, and will continue to focus on the priority areas of community services, education, water and health. It will also build on its existing programme in south-east Myanmar, where it will continue to provide essential services to communities affected by displacement.

In Thailand, UNHCR continues to operate in a shrinking protection space and faces challenges in gaining access to some populations of concern and in preventing *refoulement*. Nevertheless, Thailand remains a major country of asylum for refugees from Myanmar, with groups of new arrivals, ranging from a few hundred to several thousands, entering the country on a temporary basis due to tensions in the border area. A gradual increase in the number of non-Myanmar refugees has also been observed.

In Viet Nam, recent favourable revisions to the country's nationality laws will continue to help prevent and reduce statelessness. With the naturalization of Cambodians formerly considered refugees well under way, UNHCR will help the Government to assist ethnic Vietnamese women to reacquire citizenship lost through marriage.

Strategy in 2011

UNHCR will advocate for the rights of people of concern and for adherence to international protection standards, in cooperation with governments concerned, and with the support of regional institutions and civil society actors. It will place emphasis on engaging States in a regional approach to asylum management, so that protection space is improved, and onward movements within the region and beyond are better managed.

This strategy is underpinned by promoting activities designed to increase governmental ownership of refugee protection, particularly in the areas of access to protection, to basic services and to registration. Moreover, protection strategies will focus on mixed-flow situations, refugee status determination (RSD), access to asylum, and the detention of refugees and asylum-seekers, in addition to protecting and assisting the most needy urban refugees and preventing *refoulement*.

The Office continues to map populations in the region affected by statelessness, in order to devise strategies to address the problem and promote the rights and well-being of stateless populations. In addition, UNHCR will encourage action to prevent and reduce statelessness through an exchange of best practices among States in the region.

Constraints

In South-East Asia's complex context of mixed migration, State interests relating to national security and the maintenance of good neighbourly relations continue to constrain efforts to promote refugee protection. The lack of national legal frameworks and of predictable national responses for dealing



with refugees and asylum-seekers in many countries presents another challenge to UNHCR, as it endeavours to protect a growing number of persons of concern.

The increasing use of detention facilities to hold asylum-seekers and refugees, including children and vulnerable groups, is a serious and worrying trend in the region. UNHCR is seeking to address this issue through advocacy and by strengthening ties with civil society. In addition, many urban refugees and asylum-seekers face a precarious situation due to limited livelihood opportunities or access to social services in certain countries.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Bangladesh, Malaysia, Myanmar** and **Thailand** are described in separate country chapters.

In **Indonesia**, due to the absence of national refugee legislation and procedures, UNHCR continues to be the primary provider of protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers, undertaking responsibility for registration, RSD and the search for durable solutions. UNHCR will continue assisting the Government in preparing for its planned accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Efforts to build national capacity will be advanced by a programme of country-wide training sessions.

In **Timor-Leste**, UNHCR will continue to assist the small number of asylum-seekers and refugees. The Office will help the Government to establish refugee admission mechanisms, and enhance its capacity to conduct RSD in accordance with international standards. In anticipation of the country's accession to the Statelessness Conventions, UNHCR will work with the

authorities to strengthen institutional capacity and knowledge on statelessness.

In **Cambodia**, UNHCR will offer greater support to the Government as it builds a national asylum system. Ensuring the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers will remain paramount, and UNHCR will redouble efforts to strengthen the Government's capacity to prevent *refoulement*, as well as implement its own asylum procedures. The Office will continue to assist and try to find solutions for a small population of Montagnard refugees that remains in the country, following the successful implementation of the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between Cambodia, Viet Nam and UNHCR.

In **Viet Nam**, UNHCR continues to make visits to the Central Highlands to monitor the situation of Montagnards who have returned from Cambodia, while providing community-based reintegration support for these returnees. The Office will advocate for a humanitarian and lasting solution for Cambodians who were formerly refugees, and have been residing in the country without legal status since the 1970s, as well as other stateless groups. The last include Vietnamese women who lost their citizenship through marriage.

In the **Philippines**, UNHCR will continue to support the process whereby refugees can acquire citizenship and will help refugees to become self-reliant. Support for the Government will be aimed at enhancing its capacity to implement its obligations as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Based on the agreement between UNHCR and the Government, an

emergency transit mechanism for accelerated resettlement processing began to operate in the country in 2009. Since then, its use has gradually increased, and this trend is expected to continue in 2011.

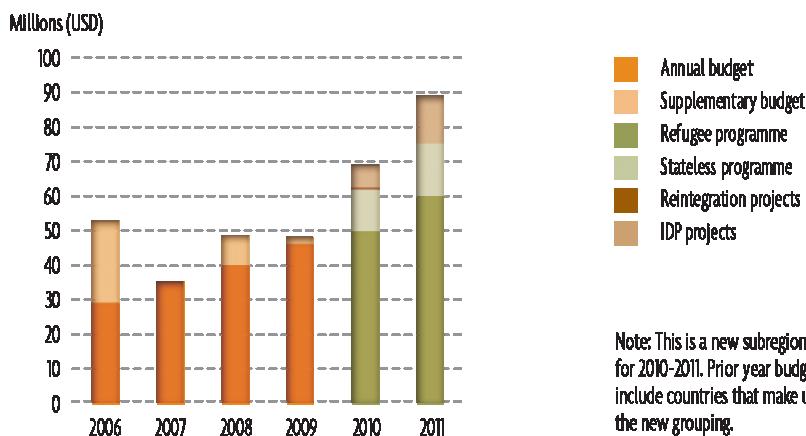
UNHCR assumed leadership of the protection cluster in situations of natural disaster in response to the emergency caused by typhoons in the Philippines towards the end of 2009, and again in the IDP situation in Mindanao in early 2010. The Office will help the authorities to ensure that the protection needs of vulnerable populations are met through effective coordination. UNHCR's activities form part of the joint UN response.

Financial information

UNHCR's requirements in this region have been fluctuating since 2006, due in part to the need to support survivors of vast natural disasters, in addition to ongoing activities for populations of concern. Requirements for 2011 have grown by USD 18.5 million since 2010, of which 74 per cent is allocated to refugees and asylum-seekers, 18 per cent to stateless populations and 7 per cent to reintegration and IDP projects.

For 2011, total requirements for UNHCR operations are some 30 per cent higher than for 2010, reflecting population movements, the new IDP operation in the Philippines, an increase in staffing costs, and the strengthening of local currencies against the US dollar.

UNHCR's budget in South-East Asia 2006 – 2011



UNHCR budget for South-East Asia (USD)

OPERATION	2010 REVISED BUDGET	2011					TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4		
Bangladesh	8,280,743	10,725,295	27,322	0	0	0	10,752,617
Cambodia	643,709	1,097,225	64,641	0	0	0	1,161,866
Indonesia	5,209,396	7,009,602	387,019	0	0	0	7,396,621
Malaysia	14,324,460	16,005,010	399,752	0	0	0	16,404,762
Myanmar	16,438,408	0	11,392,194	0	5,850,187	0	17,242,381
Philippines	2,856,017	749,691	1,111,905	0	7,702,483	0	9,564,079
Thailand Regional Office ¹	20,538,948	24,316,807	988,878	0	0	0	25,305,685
Timor-Leste	339,890	330,016	78,826	0	0	0	408,842
Viet Nam	639,547	0	263,808	377,372	0	0	641,180
Total	69,271,118	60,233,646	14,714,345	377,372	13,552,670		88,878,033

¹ Includes the Office of the Regional Coordinator which provides support to 12 countries in the subregion.