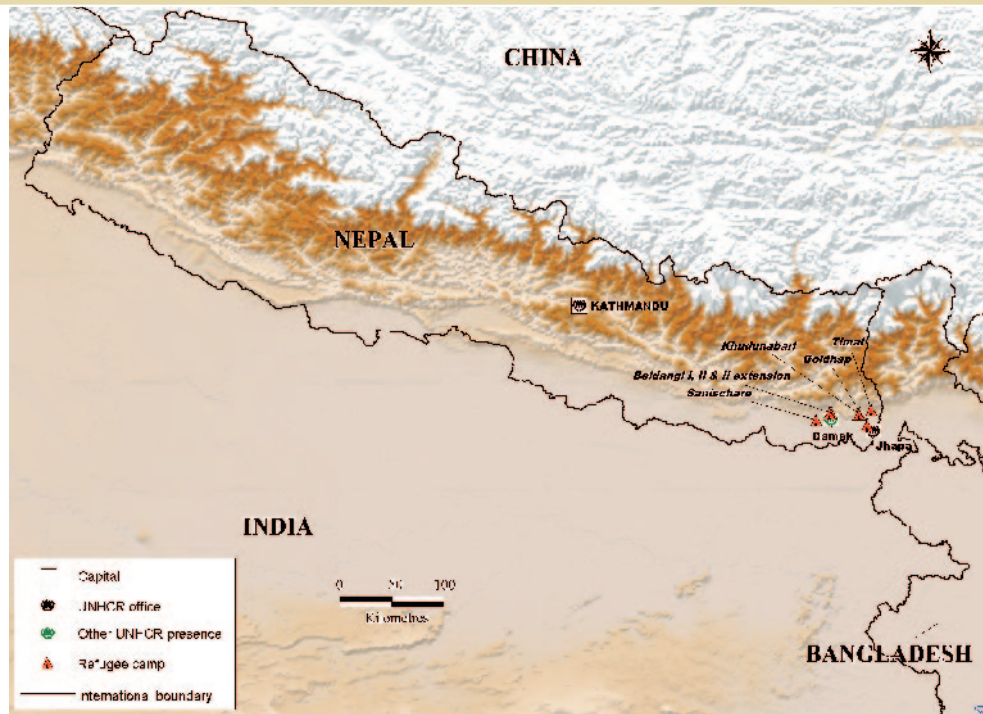


# Nepal

## Main Objectives

- Urge the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal to resume the bilateral verification of refugees as soon as possible, with a view to solving the Bhutanese refugee issue.
- Provide protection and basic assistance to Bhutanese refugees pending durable solutions.
- Promote self-reliance among Bhutanese refugees and encourage their active involvement in camp management.
- Continue to assist Tibetans in Nepal.
- Conduct refugee status determination (RSD) and provide legal advice and assistance to urban refugees.
- Promote accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the adoption of national legislation on refugees.



## Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Bhutanese Refugees	102,800	104,900
Tibetans	2,500	2,200
Other Refugees / Asylum-Seekers	70	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>105,370</b>	<b>107,160</b>

**Total Requirements: USD 5,352,879**

## Working Environment

### Recent Developments

Solutions to the plight of Bhutanese refugees continue to depend on the outcome of bilateral negotiations between the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal. The joint verification undertaken by the two Governments, to classify and identify those eligible for return to Bhutan commenced in March 2001. The verification of the refugee population in one of the seven camps was successfully concluded in mid-December 2001. Further ministerial level bilateral talks were then to decide on eligibility criteria for return, whereupon repatriation could begin. However, as the two parties failed to harmonise their respective positions on returnee criteria

and no further verification has been conducted since mid-December 2001. This situation has led to heightened tension and frustration among the refugee population.

The situation of some individual asylum-seekers remains difficult. An increasing number of foreigners have been detained for having entered or stayed illegally in the country. There have been some indications to suggest that Nepal is being used as a transit country for further movement to the west. While those recognised under UNHCR's mandate are allowed to remain, they do not have the right to work and their longer-term prospects in Nepal are therefore extremely limited.

## Constraints

UNHCR works in an increasingly volatile security situation as a result of turmoil and unrest in different parts of the country. Ensuring the security and safety of refugees and staff has become the main preoccupation of the Office. While this has not had a major impact on UNHCR's assistance activities, the deteriorating security situation could further complicate a resolution of the refugee situation.

## Strategy

### Protection and Solutions

UNHCR will continue to ensure that the basic rights of Bhutanese refugees are respected in accordance with internationally recognised principles and standards. UNHCR will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees accommodated in seven camps, so long as they are not allowed to work, and remain dependent on external assistance. Given the protracted nature of this 11-year old operation, UNHCR will gradually phase down its activities while continuing to provide basic needs. UNHCR will continue to impress on the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal the need to agree on the implementation of durable solutions. In particular, UNHCR will urge both Governments to resume the joint verification process. The Office will restart its support for the Bhutan-Nepal joint verification team as soon as the team resumes its activities.

UNHCR will continue to ensure that Tibetans receive proper treatment and adequate assistance. UNHCR will continue to assist the Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs to issue identification cards to those Tibetans who arrived in Nepal before 1990.

UNHCR will assist a small number of mandate refugees with voluntary repatriation or

resettlement. UNHCR will continue to advocate non-refoulement and ensure that detention of asylum-seekers is kept to a minimum.

The Eminent Persons Group (EPG), consisting of prominent academics, former judges and former high ranking government officials has worked to raise awareness of refugee and migratory issues in the region. The EPG members in Nepal will continue to encourage the authorities to adopt a model national law on refugees and to accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

### Assistance

Efforts will be made to rationalise and streamline assistance for Bhutanese refugees. Refugees will play an active role in camp management, community development projects, and the daily delivery of assistance. The emphasis will be on participation and self-reliance.

UNHCR will continue to provide kerosene for cooking purposes and to reduce environmental degradation. Refugee shelters and essential health facilities will be rehabilitated as required. Refugees will continue to be actively involved in the provision of health services and the rehabilitation of shelter and camp facilities. Extremely vulnerable refugees, including the elderly, the physically disabled and



Refugees from Bhutan often play traditional games. UNHCR / H.J. Davies

the mentally ill, will continue to be identified, assisted or referred to appropriate institutions. UNHCR will ensure access to primary education for all refugee children in camps and will arrange training for refugee teachers.

Basic assistance in the form of food, shelter and health care, and when necessary subsistence allowances, will be provided to needy asylum-seekers and mandate refugees.

## Desired Impact

Bhutanese refugees in Nepal will receive adequate protection and basic assistance until a comprehensive bilateral agreement allows for their voluntary repatriation or the application of other durable solutions. Refugees will participate actively in camp management and in community development projects. Women will play a greater role in management and decision-making. All children will have access to education.

Asylum-seekers are to have access to RSD. They will be provided with basic assistance and counselling to identify possible durable solutions to their plight.

## Organisational and Implementation

### Management Structure

In 2003, UNHCR will operate with 36 staff in Nepal (eight internationals, including two JPOs, and 28 nationals). The office in Kathmandu is responsible for overall management of the programme as well as liaison with the Government, diplomatic missions and NGOs. Operational activities for the Bhutanese refugees are co-ordinated through an office in Bhadrapur (in Jhapa, eastern Nepal) and supported by a field presence in Damak.

### Co-ordination

UNHCR works with three national and two international NGOs. On all refugee matters, UNHCR co-ordinates with the Ministry of Home Affairs, through its Refugee Co-ordination Unit in Jhapa. Other UN agencies, such as UNFPA, UNICEF and

WHO, provide technical assistance to UNHCR in their respective areas of expertise. WFP provides basic food rations; various international and national NGOs handle other forms of assistance. Each camp has a Camp Management Committee, a Refugee Women Focal Point, and Sub-Committees through which the refugees participate in camp management, distribution of relief items, health and sanitary services, and social services for vulnerable individuals.

### Offices

#### Kathmandu

Jhapa

### Partners

#### Government Agency

Ministry of Home Affairs/National Unit for the Co-ordination of Refugees Affairs

#### NGOs

Association of Medical Doctors of Asia

CARITAS Nepal

Lutheran World Federation

Nepal Red Cross Society

Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office

### Budget (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	728,809
Community Services	87,866
Domestic Needs	1,154,708
Education	507,980
Food	536,294
Health	597,598
Legal Assistance	316,139
Operational Support (to Agencies)	245,899
Sanitation	60,364
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	232,157
Transport / Logistics	270,076
Water	90,619
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>4,828,509</b>
Programme Support	524,370
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,352,879</b>