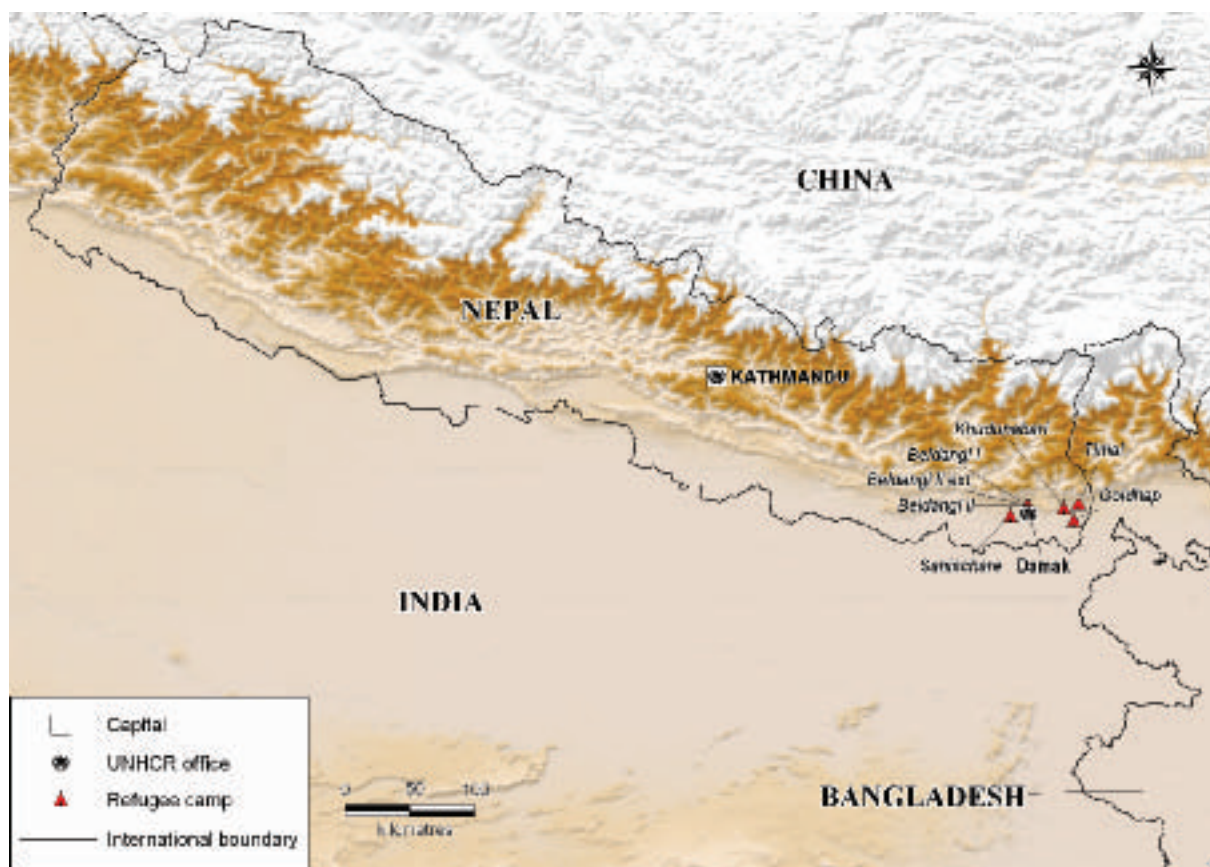


# Nepal



## Main objectives

Urge the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal to resolve the situation of protracted camp populations in Nepal; provide international protection with special attention to the issues related to SGBV; assist Tibetan arrivals in transit; provide legal advice and assistance to asylum-seekers and mandate refugees of other nationalities; and promote accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the adoption of national legislation on refugees.

## Impact

- Protection and assistance were provided to some 103,700 people in seven camps located in Jhapa and Morang Districts of eastern Nepal.
- SGBV prevention and incident referral mechanisms were put in place. Legal counselling and assistance were provided to victims, and the process contributed to the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators.

- UNHCR assisted 1,815 newly arrived Tibetans and facilitated their safe transit to a third country.
- Refugees recognized under UNHCR's mandate were provided with necessary assistance; 33 persons were approved for resettlement and one family of three departed in 2003.
- The proportion of women participating in the camp management committee reached 46 per cent.

## Working environment

### The context

The results of the Bhutan/Nepal joint verification exercise conducted in 2001 for 12,000 residents in one of the seven camps were finally released in June 2003, but these were considered controversial due to the lack of transparency of criteria used. While the majority of the concerned population would be eligible to return, only a small number of the camp residents (2.4 per cent) were considered *bona fide*

Bhutanese citizens. The questionable validity of the results was underlined by the dismissal of appeals raised by the camp residents. UNHCR continued to advocate an early resolution of the situation by proposing a comprehensive solution approach to the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan. Neither Government has adopted the proposal. At the end of 2003, interviews of the remaining camp populations were yet to be scheduled.

In September 2003, the High Commissioner made a policy statement with respect to the Bhutan-Nepal situation. He emphasized that a top priority for UNHCR is a resolution of the stalemate over solutions for more than 100,000 Bhutanese people in camps in Nepal. He pointed out that the Office had not participated in the joint Bhutanese-Nepalese process of verification, nor had it gained access to areas of potential return in Bhutan. The High Commissioner announced that UNHCR would gradually phase out its direct involvement in the camps by the end of 2005 and urged all concerned States to expedite a solution. He also announced that the Office would promote self-reliance projects to facilitate the integration of those who are willing to remain and would support resettlement initiatives for vulnerable persons. In view of the lack of access in Bhutan and the consequent impossibility of monitoring any return process, UNHCR would not promote returns.

On 22 December 2003, the Bhutanese leader of the Nepal-Bhutan Joint Verification Team further dashed the refugees' hopes of repatriation by announcing conditions of return which fell far short of international standards. The announcement provoked a violent reaction on the part of the camps' populations and eventually led to the suspension of the bilateral process between the two countries. As a result, the repatriation of the first group, envisaged for February 2004, was postponed indefinitely.

## Constraints

The security situation has again become a major concern for UNHCR, with the resumption of hostilities between Government forces and the Maoist rebels. A Maoist attack on the police post in a refugee camp in September led to a withdrawal of the police forces from all seven refugee camps. UNHCR has now created a field safety advisor post in its field office in Damak to address both staff and refugee security issues.

## Funding

UNHCR's operations in Nepal were adequately funded. NGO implementing partners contributed some USD 700,000 towards the programme from their own resources.

Persons of concern				
Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Bhutan	113,700	103,700	49	43
Tibet	20,700	700	-	-

Income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme				
Revised budget	Income from contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other funds available <sup>2</sup>	Total funds available	Total expenditure
5,884,592	1,585,967	4,161,088	5,747,055	5,747,055

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

<sup>2</sup> Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at headquarters.

## Achievement and impacts

### Protection and solutions

UNHCR continued to address SGBV issues in collaboration with its implementing partners. The Office increased the number of protection and community services staff in the camps, in order to raise greater awareness, especially among women, of human rights and the availability of legal assistance. Preventive and remedial measures included an improved incident reporting mechanism and individualized support. UNHCR hosted a regional SGBV workshop and conducted relevant training for all stakeholders.

A comprehensive action plan was drawn up to address all aspects of SGBV and other social issues of concern such as prostitution, trafficking, alcoholism and domestic violence. Appropriate measures in these areas were further intensified in collaboration with UNICEF and ILO as part of the UN Country Team's work towards the Secretary-General's Millennium Development Goals.

UNHCR cooperated with the Government of Nepal to ensure safe entry and transit of 1,815 Tibetan new arrivals. However, despite regular interaction and good cooperation, UNHCR was not able to prevent the deportation of some Tibetans. UNHCR provided mandate refugees of various nationalities living in towns with international protection and assisted in securing third country resettlement as the most sustainable solution for the majority.

### Activities and assistance

**Community services:** A range of training, including vocational skills, literacy, and social and gender sensitization training, was organized with the primary aim of increasing the self-reliance of the refugees and their participation in community activities, with particular focus on women's empowerment. Support was provided to vulnerable persons of all gender and age groups, including disabled and mentally depressed refugees. In addition, community services' activities were key components of UNHCR's protection strategy for refugees in the camps. Refugees also participated actively in these efforts.

**Domestic needs/Household support:** Refugees were provided with kerosene for cooking so as to

reduce the degradation of forests around the refugee camps. Some 22,800 refugee women of reproductive age received sanitary napkins, and in line with the High Commissioner's Five Commitments to Refugee Women, efforts were made to increase the quantity of sanitary materials supplied to respond more adequately to needs. All newborn babies received baby blankets. A camp-based refugee women's group produced 6,350 jute mats and 250 boxes of chalk for supplies to camp schools. All schoolchildren received school uniforms. The Tibetan new arrivals and mandate refugees were given financial and medical assistance.

**Education:** School attendance was close to 100 per cent for 6-18 years-olds. A total of 38,860 students (19,740 boys and 19,120 girls, indicating a near equal enrolment rate) were enrolled in camp schools, from primary school up to grade 10. Secondary education was directly funded and provided by a partner agency. Two students had the opportunity to go on to tertiary education under DAFI. Children received primary education using the Bhutanese curriculum, taught by 1,030 refugee teachers. Literacy in the camps was estimated at around 70 per cent, which compared favourably with the rate for Nepal as a whole (45 per cent). Four urban mandate refugee children were assisted with their primary education.

**Food:** While WFP distributed basic and supplementary food rations, UNHCR supplied 3,663 metric tons of seasonal vegetables and condiments. Approximately 3,000 malnourished children, pregnant women and elderly refugees received supplementary food items, such as high-protein biscuits. In addition, 4.5 metric tons of dried skimmed milk was provided for malnourished children under the age of five. A school feeding programme was implemented for approximately 39,000 students for 78 days in the dry season; this resulted in reduced incidences of micro-nutrient deficiencies.

**Health/Nutrition:** The camp population and the local population residing in the vicinity enjoyed the basic health services provided in the camps. SGBV victims were provided with the required health services including psychosocial counselling as per the SGBV protocol developed in 2003. Awareness campaigns on prevention of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and vaccination were organized. UNHCR was part of the thematic group on HIV/AIDS and worked closely within this framework with other UN Agencies and the Government of Nepal. Tibetan new



Bhutanese refugee women attending educational courses in Goldhap camp, Jhapa District.  
*UNHCR/A. Hollmann*

arrivals received basic preventive and curative services at a health clinic situated within the Tibetan Reception Centre and those requiring specialized medical services were referred to hospitals in Kathmandu.

**Legal assistance:** Government officials maintained law and order in the camps, as well as individual records and general statistics on the population. With the help of a government partner, free and confidential access to legal assistance and representation was established and implemented.

**Operational support (to agencies):** UNHCR covered a portion of the operational support costs of partners who undertook programme implementation and overall delivery of assistance.

**Sanitation:** Solid waste management and vector control were carried out through the construction, repair and maintenance of family latrines and spraying in the camps. Approximately 6,600 family latrines were repaired and maintained by refugees themselves. These activities had a significant impact on a clean camp environment and kept the incidence of vector-borne diseases to a negligible level.

**Shelter/Other infrastructure:** A total of 16,098 shelters were repaired and renovated by individual families. Refugee workers also repaired 69 offices. Maintenance and repair of foot-bridges, internal roads, soil erosion control and drainage development works were carried out in all camps. Maintenance and repair works were undertaken at the Tibetan Reception Centre, including upgrading of drainage and sanitation facilities.

**Transport/Logistics:** All camp access roads were repaired and maintained. The mechanical workshop run by a partner agency provided repair and maintenance services to the UNHCR and other partner agencies' vehicle fleets. Warehouses and distribution centres in camps were also maintained, ensuring the smooth and timely delivery of goods and services. Transportation costs were covered for Tibetans in transit.

**Water:** Camp residents were supplied with 22.7 litres per person per day of treated drinking water.



Regular repairs and maintenance of the water supply system were carried out with the active participation of refugees. Due to the regular supply of chlorinated water, water-borne diseases such as cholera, dysentery, diarrhoea, and gastroenteritis were kept to a minimum. Thanks to the proximity of the water points, there were no reports of SGBV during the fetching of water.

## Organization and implementation

### Management

To strengthen protection monitoring in the camps and reduce administrative and transportation costs, UNHCR's sub-office was relocated from Bhadrapur to Damak. The sub-office was thus able to maintain easier access to more than 70 per cent of the refugee population and to most of the offices partners. Furthermore, the number of field staff was increased as part of preventive measures against SGBV.

### Working with others

UNHCR worked with one Government counterpart, three locally-based international NGOs and three national NGOs. Regular monthly coordination meetings helped to ensure the delivery of assistance programmes in a timely manner. UNHCR collaborated closely with WFP and liaised with UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and UNAIDS. UNHCR also discussed issues pertaining to SGBV, joint action on female trafficking and prostitution with UNICEF, the ILO and UNIFEM. UNHCR participated in the UN coordination and security management schemes.

## Overall assessment

In 2003, UNHCR continued to work in a very challenging protection environment. The year began with the Office prioritizing and strengthening its protection capacity, in particular, on SGBV issues, in response to needs highlighted in 2002. Years of a protracted refugee situation, and diminishing international attention, had led to a reduction in overall staff resources to cover the camps, which weakened UNHCR's protection monitoring ability. During 2003, an increased level of staffing was approved

and preventive and remedial mechanisms for SGBV were introduced.

The challenges for UNHCR in Nepal will continue in 2004. Security measures for both refugees and humanitarian workers will need to be further strengthened, in view of the instability of national governance and increased Maoist insurgency. A resolution of the protracted refugee situation must be found, or else regional security will be seriously compromised. The possibility of a humanitarian crisis cannot be excluded. While development actors will be encouraged in 2004 to gradually take over UNHCR's assistance activities, the provision of international protection will remain the core activity of the Office.

UNHCR continued to monitor closely the situation of Tibetan new arrivals. The Office will endeavour to resume border monitoring missions, in order to gather first-hand information. UNHCR will also continue to apprise all government counterparts of its role as well as Nepal's international obligations to uphold the principle of *non-refoulement*.

### Offices

#### Kathmandu

Jhapa/Damak (Bhadrapur was closed in April 2003.)

### Partners

#### Government agencies

Ministry of Home Affairs

National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs

Nepal Bar Association (Jhapa Unit)

#### NGOs

Association of Medical Doctors for Asia (Nepal)

CARITAS (Nepal)

Centre for the Victims of Torture

Lutheran World Federation

Nepal Red Cross Society

Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office

## Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects		Prior years' projects	
	Annual programme budget	notes	Annual and supplementary programme budgets	notes
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	1,124,294		7,517	
Community Services	67,686		16,280	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	1,076,213		472,875	
Education	429,503		120,726	
Food	426,313		126,494	
Health / Nutrition	479,403		159,461	
Legal Assistance	163,554		1,137	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	193,590		53,566	
Sanitation	32,440		10,094	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	131,416		72,618	
Transport / Logistics	151,471		56,375	
Water (non-agricultural)	76,241		32,596	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	466,844		(958,603)	
<b>Sub - total Operational</b>	<b>4,818,968</b>		<b>171,136</b>	
Programme Support	780,225		14,889	
<b>Sub - total Disbursements / Deliveries</b>	<b>5,599,193</b>	(3)	<b>186,025</b>	(5)
Unliquidated Obligations	147,862	(3)	0	(5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,747,055</b>	(1) (3)	<b>186,025</b>	
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>				
Payments Made	3,422,311		123,028	
Reporting Received	2,955,467		1,081,631	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>466,844</b>		<b>(958,603)</b>	
Outstanding 1st January	0		960,537	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		15,380	
Currency Adjustment	0		13,446	
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>466,844</b>		<b>0</b>	
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>				
Outstanding 1st January	0		270,565	(5)
New Obligations	5,747,055	(1)	0	
Disbursements	5,599,193	(3)	186,025	(5)
Cancellations	0		84,540	(5)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>147,862</b>	(3)	<b>0</b>	(5)

Figures which can be cross-referenced to the Accounts:

- (1) Annex to Statement 1
- (3) Schedule 3
- (5) Schedule 5