

# SRI LANKA OPERATION

## AT A GLANCE



### Main Objectives and Activities

Improve the access of displaced women, men, and children in the north and the north-east of Sri Lanka to national protection and lasting solutions, by minimising internal displacement and providing alternatives to flight; stabilise internal displacement and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) through the continuous presence of UNHCR field teams; maintain dialogue with the Sri Lankan authorities and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the conflict zones for the benefit of the IDPs; and provide relief and rehabilitation assistance to those affected by the conflict, and continue to search for durable solutions for urban refugees, while providing them with basic services and support.



### Persons of Concern

MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED	PER CENT FEMALE	PER CENT < 18
Urban Refugees	21	21	71	29
Others of Concern*	612,500	612,500	40	30
Returned in 1999	95	-	-	-

\* Internally displaced persons. According to the Sri Lankan Government, some 800,000 persons were displaced internally.

### Impact

- About 2,000 people were returned or relocated to Trincomalee District. UNHCR facilitated and monitored the safe return of 12,000 IDPs to Jaffna District from the Vanni area dominated by the LTTE.
- Access of displaced persons to national protection improved, and restrictions on movement in government welfare centres were reduced. Women's self-help groups were created in these centres.
- Internal displacement was diminished owing to UNHCR's field presence, quick impact micro-projects, and the availability of the Open Relief Centre (ORC).

### Income and Expenditure (USD)

WORKING BUDGET*	INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS	OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE**	TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE*
7,627,301	6,630,622	973,664	7,604,286	7,560,719

\* Includes costs at Headquarters.

\*\* Includes opening balance and adjustments.

## WORKING ENVIRONMENT

### The Context

UNHCR's operational presence in Sri Lanka began in 1987, providing relief aid to returnees from India and facilitating their reintegration. Between 1987 and 1991, more than 50,000 returnees were assisted, and a further 50,000 refugees returned to the country between 1992 and 1995. However, in 1995 the resumption of hostilities between the Sri Lankan authorities and the separatist LTTE curtailed further repatriation from India, and led to the repeated displacement of large numbers of persons within Sri Lanka. At the request of the Government of Sri Lanka, UNHCR extended its activities to include IDPs in areas where it was already working. UNHCR's activities for the internally displaced were endorsed by the United Nations Secretary-General in 1991 and reaffirmed in 1997.

In mid-1996, following the re-establishment of full government control in the Jaffna Peninsula, the conflict shifted to the Vanni region. Large numbers of persons began returning to Jaffna, either with government assistance or on their own, and significant numbers of displaced persons left the Vanni region to move to safer areas in Mannar and Vavuniya Districts.

The Sri Lankan Army launched an offensive against the LTTE in the Vanni region in March 1999 and gained full control over large areas in Mannar District. Some 9,700 IDPs in the Madhu Open Relief Centre (ORC) were able to return to their homes, thus prompting the closure of the centre in May. However, the LTTE regained control of large areas of the Vanni region in November, and approximately 16,000 IDPs again sought shelter in the ORC. Over the course of the year, some 5,000 persons fled to India from this area.

According to the Sri Lankan Government, some 800,000 persons are now internally displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict. Some 40 per cent are in the northern Jaffna Peninsula; another 40 per cent are in the districts of Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Vavuniya. The remaining displaced persons are spread across the districts of Anuradhapura, Puttalam, Trincomalee, and other areas.

### Constraints

The lack of available information on military operations impeded UNHCR's progress towards lasting solutions, and the programme had to be constantly reviewed and adjusted. New population displacement and lack of

access to certain areas affected the implementation of the micro-projects, and the escalation in military activity also raised concerns for the safety of UNHCR staff.

### Funding

Unpredictable and late funding adversely affected UNHCR's operational capacity in Sri Lanka. Though the programme was in the end well funded, at mid-year only 20 per cent of required funds had been received. This delayed implementation of many micro-projects which, owing to seasonal and other constraints, could not be resumed or accelerated when funds were eventually received.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

### Protection and Solutions

There was new population displacement during 1999, but work to protect IDPs yielded positive results. Through its presence and access to displaced persons, either through the ORCs or through its operations, UNHCR was able to create confidence, and thereby exert a stabilising effect. The ORC in Madhu provided emergency relief and offered an area of relative tranquillity and security for thousands of displaced persons in the midst of ongoing conflict. Quick impact micro-projects continued to be a flexible policy tool to help minimise displacement. Some projects were implemented to improve infrastructure (transport, water, sanitation, education, health) while others fostered economic independence (vocational training, crop production, agriculture, fisheries, self-employment). These micro-projects benefited both displaced persons and the local community (approximately 260,000 altogether) and helped to reduce tension.

UNHCR worked for temporary as well as long-term solutions through its presence and contact with the government authorities and the LTTE. Protection activities were underpinned by a statistical profile of the population in the government welfare centres, and by co-ordination committees and women's groups which were set up to identify and address needs. The security of IDPs was enhanced by dialogue with the authorities and the LTTE.

Workshops and publications promoted awareness of international protection standards, with an emphasis on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and children's rights. UNHCR's advocacy activities involved identifying solutions and addressing specific

protection needs for individual IDPs on a case-by-case basis. A regular information programme was conducted for military personnel on the role and mandate of the UN and UNHCR as well as on international humanitarian principles. A survey of displaced persons in welfare centres in Trincomalee District was conducted to establish a profile of the population, in order to identify better solutions and strategies.

At year's end, UNHCR was caring for 21 urban refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan, and Lebanon. National legislation on asylum does not yet exist in Sri Lanka, and the determination of refugee status was conducted exclusively by UNHCR. Since local integration was not possible, third-country resettlement was the only durable solution available; 12 refugees were resettled during the year. Refugees recognised by UNHCR still lacked access to employment, social security, medical facilities, and public schooling.

### Activities and Assistance

**Community Services:** Local communities were helped to cope with population displacement. Nineteen community centres and one vocational training centre were constructed or repaired, benefiting a total of 17,511 persons. Leadership and gender awareness training was provided, and teachers were trained in psychosocial counselling. Special programmes were implemented for vulnerable groups: 30 tricycles and 75 prostheses were provided for disabled people; widows were able to draw on revolving loan funds; the elderly received 221 wooden beds; and traumatised persons were involved in therapeutic gardening.

**Crop Production:** To encourage financial independence, traditional agricultural income-generating activities were continued in 1999. More than 1,200 loans were provided for crop production, and approximately 1,500 families received loans in kind for gardening (onions, pulses, vegetables, rice, and other seeds). Complementary agricultural infrastructure was rehabilitated: 23 water tanks and water distribution channels were repaired, sluice gates were renovated, and three irrigation dams and channels were mended, benefiting 27,600 people.

**Domestic Needs/Household Support:** Relief items were supplied to IDPs in welfare centres and to those resettling or returning to their places of origin. Family packs containing bed sheets, soap, towels, mats, plastic utensils, a plastic bucket, a jerry can, plastic sheeting, clothing, sanitary pads, exercise books, and kitchen

utensils were distributed to 7,100 families (32,000 persons). People forced to move by the conflict also received relief items.

**Education:** In order to provide educational facilities for the increasing numbers of displaced children, schools were expanded. Through the micro-project programme, some 11,471 children benefited from the renovation or construction of schools and classrooms. A total of 2,216 school furniture sets were provided to schools, benefiting 4,695 children. Vocational training was provided for unemployed women and young people: 501 people received training in building skills, domestic electric wiring, and in the repair of motors, tractors, pumps, and radios. Leadership training programmes were also offered.

**Fisheries:** Loans and grants in kind were provided to IDPs to help them resume their traditional income-generating activities; 752 persons were supplied with fishing nets and gear, and 40 persons were trained in net weaving. A total of 500 loans for fisheries projects were provided, and four fish market halls were repaired.

**Forestry:** Reforestation projects were undertaken in areas damaged by the conflict or overuse. In Vavuniya, 255 families received perennial plants that benefited 912 persons.

**Health/Nutrition:** A mobile medical clinic made regular visits in Trincomalee District to remote villages without medical facilities. In sometimes dangerous areas without reliable public transport, the mobile clinic provided vital services not otherwise available. Preventive public health measures included chlorinating sources of drinking water, home visits, and health education seminars. There were more than 2,400 consultations per month.

In Madhu District, mobile health services provided preventative and curative services to children and nursing mothers who had no access to regular medical facilities. Immunisation programmes and nutritional surveys were undertaken. In Kilinochchi District, an average of 1,600 patients was treated monthly, and a laboratory facility was provided. National staff were trained, enabling them to provide a wide range of diagnostic tests. An average of 570 tests was carried out monthly. In Jaffna District, 27 hospital buildings were renovated, benefiting 96,070 people.

**Income Generation:** Most displaced persons could not

engage in traditional forms of employment because of the continued conflict, so loans were provided to set up small businesses such as small-scale trading and home production of handicrafts. A total of 1,687 revolving loans were provided. Two training programmes on credit schemes were conducted for 280 people. In Jaffna District, six rural production plants were repaired using funds from the micro-project scheme.

**Livestock:** Beneficiaries who had traditionally been involved in animal husbandry were given cash grants; 207 loans were provided, benefiting 773 persons. Grants in kind of chicks, dairy cattle, and goats were given to 577 small farmers.

**Operational Support (to Agencies):** Implementing partners were given funds for operating expenses, maintenance and repair of project vehicles, and office supplies. UNHCR also funded activities to increase donor visibility.

**Sanitation:** Micro-projects were implemented in Mullaitivu District to renovate or construct latrines. Most of the work was for schools and public buildings, with limited assistance provided to welfare centres. Fourteen latrines were renovated or constructed, six wells deepened, and one additional water tub constructed for the benefit of 4,889 people.

**Shelter/Other Infrastructure:** Shelter assistance was provided to persons who were temporarily displaced, and to IDPs who were returning or relocating. In Trincomalee District, 120 shelters were constructed for displaced persons; in Jaffna District roofing material for 2,000 houses was given to returnees. In Mannar District, 400 families were given shelter material and those returning to Vavuniya and Trincomalee Districts received temporary shelter assistance.

**Transport/Logistics:** UNHCR convoys transported essential items such as kerosene, soap, drugs, food items (excluding rice), and plastic sheeting as emergency assistance to displaced persons in the Vanni region where access was restricted. School examination papers were also transported across forward defence lines to reach the displaced. To facilitate the movement of people and goods, and improve access to towns, markets, and schools, 25 kilometres of road were rehabilitated and one dam constructed, benefiting 6,998 persons.

**Water:** More than 52,000 persons, especially women and children, benefited from UNHCR's water projects, which included the construction or renovation of 217 wells, one tube well, and 12 dug wells. Silt was removed from 50 wells, 11 wells were deepened, and two water supply systems, two tanks, and one pump house were constructed using funds from the micro-project scheme. UNHCR also provided limited assistance to welfare centres to upgrade the water supply.

## ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Management

UNHCR maintained offices in Colombo and in the five field locations of Jaffna, Mallavi, Madhu, Trincomalee, and Vavuniya with 18 international staff (including one JPO and six UN Volunteers) and 44 national staff. In view of the possibility of the return from India of Tamil refugees, as well as renewed flight to India, UNHCR's offices in India and Sri Lanka maintained a regular exchange of information and conducted joint field visits.

### Working with Others

UNHCR closely collaborated with UN sister agencies within the framework of the UN Resident Coordinator's Emergency Task Force, and actively contributed to the Common Country Assessment document and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). UNHCR closely co-ordinated its assistance activities and interventions with the ICRC. UNHCR contributed to the development of the Framework for Relief, Reconciliation, and Rehabilitation led by the World Bank, which will support the Sri Lankan Government's efforts to provide assistance to communities affected by the conflict.

Implementing partners and operational agencies worked closely with the local community in assessing needs and implementing programmes with a view to empowering communities. In accordance with the goals of PARinAC, training was held for operational partners to put into practice the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The Open Relief Centres, which relied on the Government and the LTTE to respect their integrity as safe havens, proved to be an effective protection tool,



providing shelter and an alternative to flight for thousands of displaced persons. UNHCR's intensified focus on the application of its protection mandate thus proved indispensable. Effective impact and timely interventions were predicated on continual dialogue

with the authorities and the LTTE and co-ordination with operational partners. UNHCR worked actively to prepare the ground for increased involvement of developmental agencies including through the UNDAF process and the World Bank's framework project.

### Offices

Colombo  
Jaffna  
Kilinochchi/Mullaitivu at Mallavi  
Madhu  
Trincomalee  
Vavuniya

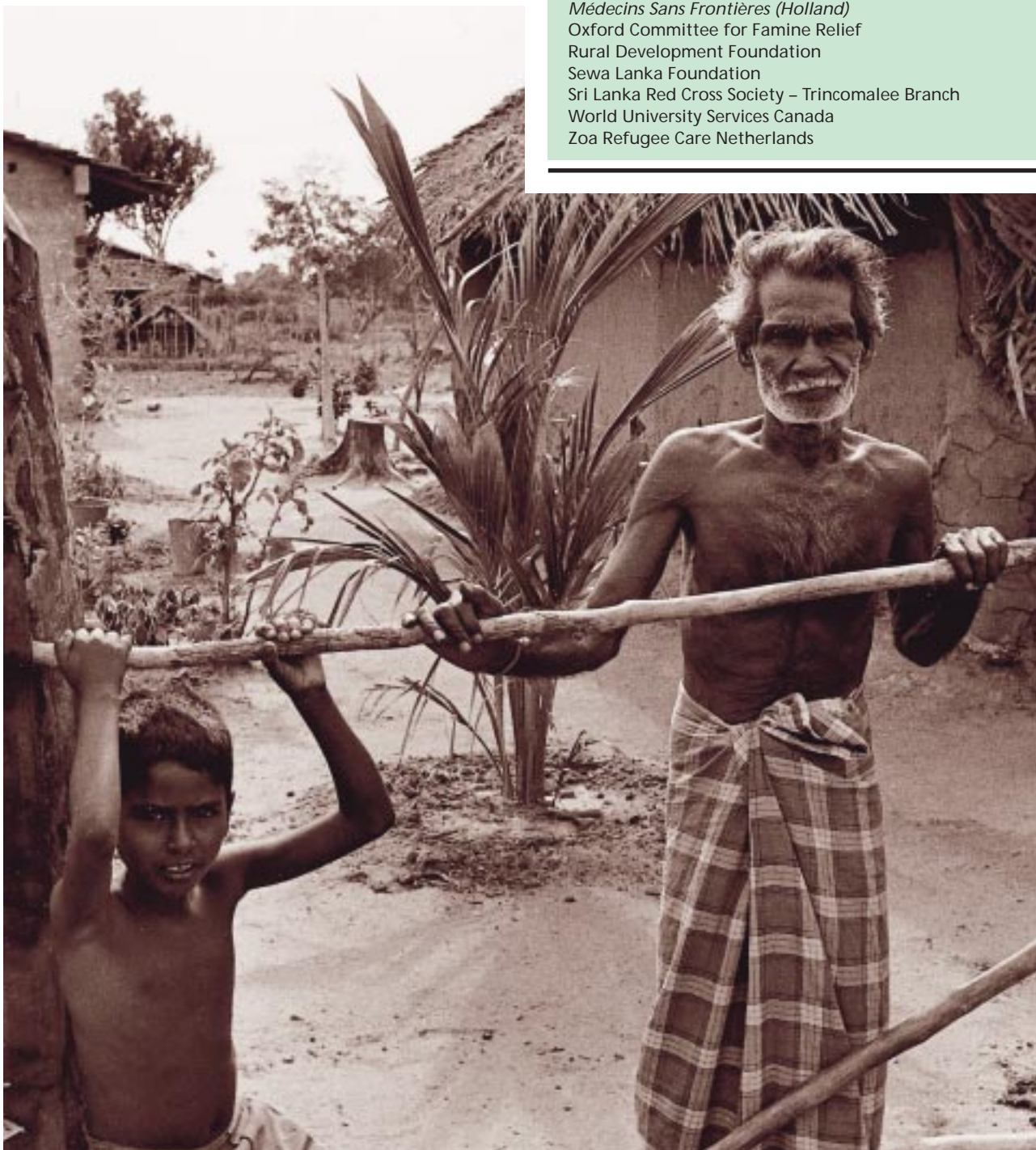
### Partners

#### Government Agencies

Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority of the North

#### NGOs

Campaign for Development and Solidarity  
Care International  
Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shamadana Sangamaya  
*Médecins Sans Frontières (France)*  
*Médecins Sans Frontières (Holland)*  
Oxford Committee for Famine Relief  
Rural Development Foundation  
Sewa Lanka Foundation  
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society – Trincomalee Branch  
World University Services Canada  
Zoa Refugee Care Netherlands



## Voluntary Contributions (USD)

Donor	Income	Contribution
Australia	817,857	817,857
France	81,436	81,436
Germany	400,000	400,000
Japan	1,550,000	1,550,000
The Netherlands	237,332	237,332
Switzerland	324,675	324,675
United Kingdom	800,000	800,000
United States of America	1,360,000	1,360,000
European Commission	1,059,322	2,118,644
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,630,622</b>	<b>7,689,944</b>

## Financial Report (USD)

Programme Overview	Current Year's Projects		Prior Years' Projects	
		notes		notes
Opening Balance	724,387	(1)		
Income from Contributions	6,630,622	(1)		
Other Funds Available	249,277			
Total Funds Available	7,604,286	(5)		
Expenditure	7,560,719	(1) (5)		
Closing Balance	43,567	(1) (5)		
<b>Expenditure Breakdown</b>				
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination*	2,553,934		80,422	
Community Services	106,003		94,523	
Crop Production	227,344		260,151	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	19,768		35,150	
Education	287,860		259,453	
Fisheries	44,617		63,818	
Forestry	962		0	
Health / Nutrition	106,594		115,984	
Income Generation	127,470		102,900	
Livestock	29,426		45,098	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	495,936		96,188	
Sanitation	26,843		4,734	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	157,192		2,480	
Transport / Logistics	82,146		199,195	
Water	96,195		70,629	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	1,303,229		(1,001,736)	
<b>Sub - total Operational</b>	<b>5,665,519</b>		<b>428,989</b>	
Administrative Support*	927,216		12,618	
<b>Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries</b>	<b>6,592,735</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>441,607</b>	<b>(6)</b>
Unliquidated Obligations	967,984	(5)	0	(6)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,560,719</b>	<b>(1) (5)</b>	<b>441,607</b>	
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>				
Payments Made	2,840,978		207,020	
Reporting Received	1,537,749		1,208,757	
Balance	1,303,229		(1,001,736)	
Outstanding 1 January	0		1,254,517	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		235,921	
Currency Adjustment	0		(16,860)	
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>1,303,229</b>		<b>0</b>	
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>				
Outstanding 1 January	0		601,200	(6)
New Obligations	7,560,719	(1) (5)	0	
Disbursements	6,592,735	(5)	441,607	(6)
Cancellations	0		159,593	(6)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>967,984</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(6)</b>

\* Includes costs at Headquarters.

Figures which cross reference to accounts

(1) Annex 1 to Statement 1

(5) Schedule 5

(6) Schedule 6