


# Asia and the Pacific

South Asia

East Asia and the Pacific



Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking	Donor	AB	SB
Asia			
	Australia	3,571,969	0
	Australia for UNHCR	104	0
	Canada	909,091	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR	9,829	25,513
	Norway	884,956	0
	Private donors in Italy	0	1,064
	Sweden	1,256,281	0
	USA for UNHCR	0	1,000
Total		6,632,231	27,577

# Asia and the Pacific

## Operational highlights

- The Government of Nepal allowed UNHCR to conduct a census of the camp population.
- Considerable progress was made in finding durable solutions for Myanmar refugees in Thailand and Malaysia, and to a lesser extent in Bangladesh, through the strategic use of resettlement.
- UNHCR signed a long-awaited agreement with the Government of Bangladesh to improve conditions in the two camps in the country for Muslim refugees from Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State.
- Renewed fighting in Sri Lanka resulted in the displacement of some 200,000 people. UNHCR led the humanitarian response in a challenging environment of irregular humanitarian access and unpredictable security conditions.
- While a political solution to the complex crisis in Timor-Leste was awaited, some 25,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) remained in emergency shelter in camps.
- In Myanmar, UNHCR signed a memorandum of understanding with its new government counterpart on operations to benefit communities affected by displacement in the south-east of the country.



The complex political crisis and accompanying insecurity in Timor-Leste saw the displacement of some 150,000 people in Dili and surrounding districts. Instability in a number of other areas highlighted the need for UNHCR and its partners to update contingency plans and stay focused on emergency preparedness.

While the right to asylum and the humanitarian space were respected in most countries in the region during the year, several specific situations gave rise to concern. These included the precarious circumstances of North Koreans in transit countries and the Lao Hmong in Thailand. Secondary movements of asylum-seekers in the region, such as Rohingyas from Myanmar and Sri Lankans, also drew increased attention.

UNHCR worked to preserve asylum while addressing States' fears that facilities for onward movement could be abused by illegal migrants and human traffickers. UNHCR was pleased that a number of countries, including the Republic of Korea, India and China, were on their way to establishing national asylum systems or refugee legislation.

## Working environment

Population displacement remained a major feature in the Asia and Pacific region in 2006. Conflicts were resolved peacefully in some cases, as in the Indonesian province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam and Nepal. In the latter, the signing of a peace accord between the Government and Maoist rebels ended 12 years of conflict.

In Sri Lanka, however, the resumption of fighting between government and Tamil rebel forces caused massive internal displacement and refugee outflows. Serious concerns emerged about humanitarian access, protection of IDPs and security of staff.



UNHCR/D. Sansoni

Building shelters for the newly displaced in Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

documents, the provision of public health services to refugees and asylum-seekers at reduced rates and the release of asylum-seekers from detention. The establishment of a regional protection hub in Malaysia helped improve protection delivery by ensuring regional coherence and coordination.

- *Strengthen host country capacity to undertake refugee status determination*

UNHCR helped build the institutional capacity of governments to deal with asylum-seekers and refugees, so that they are able to assume full responsibility for status determination.

- *Addressing situations of statelessness*

In 2006, a comprehensive study on the legal status of the Bihari, an Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh, found them entitled to Bangladeshi citizenship. The Office promoted the inclusion of this community in UNDP poverty-reduction programmes while advocating for their right to citizenship.

There was good news for former Cambodian refugees in Viet Nam with the Government's announcement that they would be given Vietnamese nationality. As for the stateless residents of Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State, UNHCR started negotiating the issuance of temporary registration certificates to all eligible persons in 2007. In Nepal, UNHCR dedicated resources to identify stateless populations and recommend solutions.

## Achievements and impact

**Global Strategic Objective (GSO) No. 1: Advocate for and support governments in the development and maintenance of an international protection regime including its implementation at the national level**

- *Preserving asylum space*

UNHCR's primary objective in Asia in 2006 was to support national refugee protection regimes by helping States strengthen their institutional capacity. For instance, UNHCR has worked with the Government of India on national refugee legislation.

Despite occasional setbacks, the Office's dialogue with governments and other partners in the region contributed to an understanding of the protection needs of refugees. It also promoted the adoption of concrete measures, such as acceptance of the validity of UNHCR

**GSO No. 2: Ensure international standards of protection are met for all persons of concern to UNHCR, taking into account their age, gender or personal background**

- *Protection against refoulement, improving physical security, reducing incidents of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence*

In most countries in the region, mechanisms were put in place to improve protection in camps and urban settings. These included standard operating procedures to protect children and deal with sexual and gender-based violence. In Thailand, initiatives such as the legal aid centres and administration of justice projects responded to the needs of refugee women and children. In Bangladesh, Malaysia and Nepal, registration and other screening mechanisms identified

those in need of special protection. In India, the Women's Protection Clinic's outreach programmes helped identify and find solutions to the problems of Myanmar refugee women.

Recent incidents in China and Thailand, including the refoulement of Sri Lankan refugees from China and the detention of 155 Lao Hmong refugees under threat of refoulement in Thailand, show that enlarging the humanitarian and asylum space remains a challenging task.

- *Preventing malnutrition and reducing the prevalence and impact of HIV and AIDS*

The establishment of a regional HIV and AIDS position in Bangkok strengthened the development and implementation of a regional strategy on HIV and AIDS, as well as country-specific programmes.

The Director of UNHCR's Bureau for Asia and the Pacific participated in a UN regional directors' HIV mission to Nepal, demonstrating the Office's commitment to joint UN programming on AIDS. UNHCR also advocated for a stronger national response to HIV and AIDS with the Government of Nepal. The first UNHCR-led inter-agency assessment of IDPs and HIV was conducted in Nepal and demonstrated the critical importance of strong protection mechanisms, especially for women and children, in reducing HIV-related vulnerability.

UNHCR scaled up HIV and AIDS prevention and care activities in large urban refugee populations in India and Malaysia. In Thailand, UNHCR supported prevention, care and treatment in three camps housing more than 70,000 refugees. Finally, sustained advocacy for the greater inclusion of refugees in national HIV programmes saw progress in Thailand, India and Malaysia.

- *Securing civil, social and economic rights (self-reliance) with particular attention to the rights of women and children*

Participatory assessments with refugees throughout the region aimed to ensure age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in programme design and implementation. Health indicators met UNHCR standards in most settings. Considerable progress was made in reducing morbidity and mortality among children under the age of five; however, acute respiratory infections remain very prevalent among refugees in the region, in particular in Nepal and Bangladesh. Reproductive health services have improved greatly, especially in ante-natal and post-natal care, and there have been improvements in the treatment of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. More will be done to enable women to give birth in a safe and clean environment in 2007.

- *Ensuring the right to education*

In Malaysia, refugees from the Indonesian province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam who had been given temporary protection have been granted access to public education. Advocacy for access for other groups is complemented by support to community-based schooling projects. The Government of Bangladesh agreed to increase primary schooling in the refugee camps by one additional grade. Adult literacy classes and vocational skills training have also been introduced. UNHCR continues to advocate for access to higher education for Myanmar refugees in the camps in Thailand.

- *Increasing and improving the level and quality of registration of persons of concern*

Most countries in Asia have benefited from Project Profile and completed the registration of refugees. In Malaysia, registration through community outreach programmes resulted in better service to asylum-seekers, particularly those with special needs. The *ProGres* registration software was used in 2006 in Bangladesh and all refugees in the camps in Cox's Bazaar have been registered. The Government agreed to replace family books by identity cards in 2007 and to issue birth certificates to all refugee children. The refugee census being conducted in cooperation with the authorities in Nepal was expected to be completed in May 2007.

### **GSO No. 3: Redoubling the search for durable solutions**

- *Promoting the creation of conditions conducive to return*

In 2006, UNHCR worked with the Myanmar Government to improve conditions in Northern Rakhine State to allow voluntary repatriation from Bangladesh to resume. To this end it encouraged the Government to issue legal documents to returnees and all other *de facto* stateless persons.

- *Developing and implementing comprehensive strategies for protracted situations*

In Nepal, effective support from a group of countries committed to UNHCR's objectives resulted in a few firsts: the beginning of the census of all refugees, the resettlement of small groups of vulnerable refugees and the offer of group resettlement for the majority of the population. In Bangladesh, a framework for durable solutions was being devised with the support of the Government and the UN Country Team. The two-year strategy focuses on improving the human rights situation of Rohingya refugees and promoting durable solutions for this protracted situation.



Efforts involving all stakeholders were made to identify solutions for the Myanmar refugees in Thailand. In addition to large-scale resettlement, initiatives to identify self-reliance activities were pursued with the Government and in cooperation with ILO.

- *Strengthen local integration*

Following UNHCR's sustained advocacy, the naturalization of Hindu and Sikh Afghans in India and the successful completion of the naturalization process for some in 2006 demonstrated that States can secure solutions in cases of prolonged exile.

- *Enhancing the use of resettlement as a strategic protection tool and burden sharing mechanism*

In a spirit of burden sharing, resettlement countries have provided UNHCR with places for most of the remaining Afghans in India. Likewise, Myanmar refugees in Thailand and Malaysia are in the process of finding durable solutions through group resettlement. In Indonesia, UNHCR searched for durable solutions for some 240 refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan who have been stranded there for years.

**GSO No. 4: Establish effective partnerships and frameworks for action to respond to the challenges of protecting and finding solutions for persons internally displaced due to conflict and abuses of human rights; protecting refugees in broader migration movements; and bridging the gap between relief and development**

- *Supporting and leading efforts to provide protection and solutions for internally displaced persons as part of a collaborative response*

Following its emergency intervention in Timor-Leste, UNHCR's goal was to create an environment at the community level that was conducive to return and reconciliation. In Sri Lanka, the Office led the collective humanitarian response to the unfolding crisis. Irregular humanitarian access and unpredictable security represented major hurdles in the way of emergency relief and protection for more than 200,000 newly displaced people. In Myanmar, UNHCR secured limited access to displaced communities in three provinces in the south-east of the country, where it is carrying out quick-impact projects in over 300 villages.

In Nepal, UNHCR is part of a collaborative UN effort to support the return of IDPs. Workshops promoting dialogue and raising awareness of protection principles were conducted by UNHCR and its partners in selected areas of return.

- *Protecting refugees within broader migration movements*

Throughout Asia, UNHCR sought the incorporation of migration and refugee policy concerns in development, aid and investment plans. By increasing its participation in regional forums, such as the Bali Process and the Asia-Pacific Consultations, UNHCR offered its assistance to governments to address their migration and security concerns without adversely affecting the rights of people with a well-founded fear of persecution to physical safety and protection. In September 2006, UNHCR organized and co-chaired with the Asia-Pacific Consultations Coordinator a workshop on capacity building and regionalization in today's complex migratory context.

- *Mobilizing development actors in returnee-impacted areas*

In Sri Lanka, the conclusion of a tripartite agreement between the World Bank, the Government and UNHCR facilitated the relocation of thousands of families who had been displaced before 2006. In Northern Rakhine State, Myanmar, UNHCR participated in a joint plan of action with development actors, UNICEF and WFP.

## Constraints

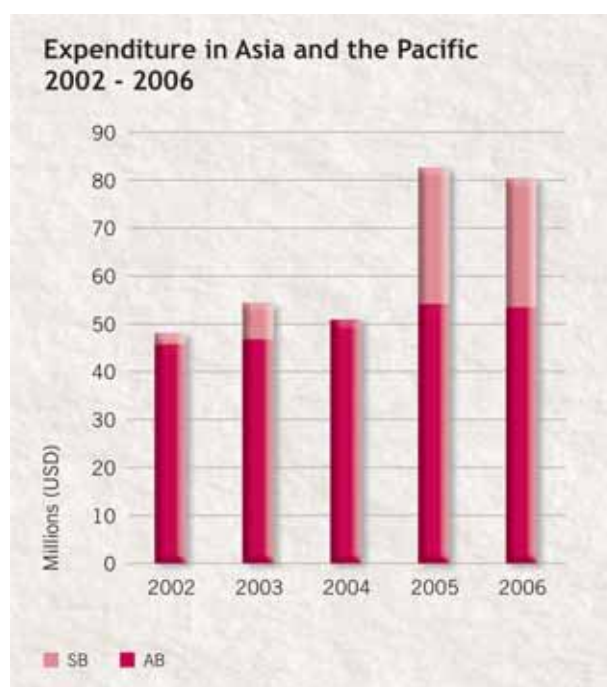
The ongoing lack of security in Timor-Leste and the growing numbers of asylum seekers in Malaysia and Indonesia posed additional burdens on available resources. Restricted access to detention facilities in Malaysia limited possibilities for monitoring and protection. Despite a positive and functional working relationship with the Thai authorities, recent changes in policy have hurt the protection of refugees, who continued to be denied some of their rights.

In Nepal, the impact of the political turmoil outside the camps filtered through, but did not compromise the civilian character of the camps. The camp population has, however, become increasingly concerned about the stalemate in the bilateral process between Nepal and Bhutan and its consequences for their repatriation. Resettlement in a third country is a growing possibility for the majority of the camp population, but clarity on this issue is urgent as tensions are on the rise inside the camps between those who favour different solutions – and between refugees and the local population.

All parties in the Sri Lanka conflict hardened their position, with the result that humanitarian principles were often undermined. Mention has already been made of the difficult operating environment for humanitarian actors such as UNHCR.

## Financial information

The annual budgets approved for Asia and the Pacific for the last five years have remained more or less at the same level. On the other hand, the Indian Ocean Tsunami emergency in 2005 and 2006, and new emergencies in Timor-Leste and Sri Lanka in 2006 accounted for the rise in overall expenditure levels in the region. As a result of reduced budgets in 2006, however, several critical refugee assistance initiatives could not be implemented. For example, the USD 300,000 cut from the budget for Papua New Guinea postponed the implementation of the planned three-year exit strategy. This aimed at the local integration of 2,700 refugees from the Indonesian province of Papua by providing development and livelihood opportunities through training and microcredit projects. Similarly, a USD 2 million cut from the budget for Thailand delayed urgently needed improvements in sanitation in the refugee camps there.



Budget and expenditure (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	AB	SB <sup>1</sup>	Total	AB	SB	Total
<b>South Asia</b>						
Bangladesh	2,840,715	0	2,840,715	2,655,413	0	2,655,413
India	3,099,017	0	3,099,017	2,965,732	0	2,965,732
Nepal	6,951,181	2,222,938	9,174,119	6,240,177	48,572	6,288,749
Sri Lanka	13,788,431	6,251,637	20,040,068	10,876,974	6,068,402	16,945,376
<b>Sub-total South Asia</b>	<b>26,679,344</b>	<b>8,474,575</b>	<b>35,153,919</b>	<b>22,738,296</b>	<b>6,116,974</b>	<b>28,855,270</b>
<b>East Asia and the Pacific</b>						
Australia and New Zealand	1,036,042	0	1,036,042	977,757	0	977,757
Cambodia	1,328,674	0	1,328,674	1,125,209	0	1,125,209
China	3,768,703	0	3,768,703	3,533,990	0	3,533,990
Indonesia	2,897,346	18,616,938	21,514,284	2,299,855	16,245,122	18,544,977
Japan	4,100,718	0	4,100,718	2,709,333	0	2,709,333
Malaysia	3,953,127	0	3,953,127	3,153,246	0	3,153,246
Mongolia	70,157	0	70,157	68,743	0	68,743
Myanmar	5,069,737	0	5,069,737	4,203,326	0	4,203,326
Papua New Guinea	491,794	0	491,794	431,044	0	431,044
Philippines	216,241	0	216,241	200,911	0	200,911
Republic of Korea	790,770	0	790,770	700,744	0	700,744
Singapore	46,309	0	46,309	37,163	0	37,163
Thailand	12,300,874	0	12,300,874	10,559,707	0	10,559,707
Timor-Leste	197,782	4,571,000	4,768,782	196,996	4,570,224	4,767,220
Viet Nam	564,657	0	564,657	521,075	0	521,075
Regional activities <sup>2</sup>	15,000	0	15,000	10,486	0	10,486
<b>Sub-total East Asia and the Pacific</b>	<b>36,847,932</b>	<b>23,187,938</b>	<b>60,035,870</b>	<b>30,729,585</b>	<b>20,815,346</b>	<b>51,544,931</b>
<b>Total Asia and the Pacific</b>	<b>63,527,276</b>	<b>31,662,513</b>	<b>95,189,789</b>	<b>53,467,881</b>	<b>26,932,320</b>	<b>80,400,201</b>

<sup>1</sup> Does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

<sup>2</sup> Includes protection, transport and repatriation activities and dissemination of refugee law in Asia.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Donor	AB	SB	Total
Australia	4,502,844	388,857	4,891,701
Australia for UNHCR	7,908	114,842	122,750
Canada	909,091	0	909,091
CERF	1,989,333	1,241,949	3,231,282
Denmark	37,500	0	37,500
European Commission	4,537,250	1,884,422	6,421,672
<i>Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian</i> (Portugal)	0	150,000	150,000
Germany	635,165	64,267	699,433
Ireland	0	100,503	100,503
Italy	811,122	0	811,122
Japan	9,000,000	2,004,512	11,004,512
Japan Association for UNHCR	109,765	29,160	138,926
Liechtenstein	38,760	0	38,760
Luxembourg	845,075	131,752	976,828
Netherlands	1,205,000	0	1,205,000
New Zealand	10,000	0	10,000
Norway	5,363,409	486,990	5,850,399
Online donations (Headquarters)	0	7,894	7,894
Philippines	1,819	0	1,819
Private donors in Australia	1,633	0	1,633
Private donors in Hong Kong SAR, China	14,931	0	14,931
Private donors in Italy	0	1,064	1,064
Private donors in Nepal	8,556	0	8,556
Private donors in Portugal	0	1,282	1,282
Private donors in the Republic of Korea	5,506	0	5,506
Private donors in the United States	2,500	0	2,500
Republic of Korea	9,800	0	9,800
Saudi Red Crescent Society	0	305,000	305,000
Sweden	1,932,001	0	1,932,001
Switzerland	393,701	0	393,701
TOTAL (France)	283,826	0	283,826
TOTAL / CARPA (France)	2,345,600	0	2,345,600
United Kingdom	531,006	0	531,006
United States	15,149,125	0	15,149,125
USA for UNHCR	1,400	1,000	2,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,683,627</b>	<b>6,913,496</b>	<b>57,597,122</b>