

Sri Lanka

Operational highlights

- The security situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated in 2006. A dramatic upsurge in violence and widespread human rights violations led to the displacement of some 200,000 people within the country. UNHCR assisted most of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) with emergency shelter and non-food items.
- The Office improved protection by monitoring and documenting violations of human rights, particularly cases of sexual and gender-based violence. It also helped IDPs to obtain civil documents.
- UNHCR established more than 56 emergency sites for the newly displaced. In coordination with other agencies, it ensured that food, health care and other services were provided to most IDPs.
- The Office advised the Government of Sri Lanka on international standards of treatment for the internally displaced. This helped preserve the civilian character of IDP camp sites. The military was given guidelines on how to ensure the voluntariness of returns.
- UNHCR helped relocate 900 families displaced prior to the events in 2006.



close most of the welfare centres which house IDPs had to be put on hold. The 67,000 IDPs currently in the centres are considered the most vulnerable of the 300,000 people still displaced in Sri Lanka.

Working environment

The meeting between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Geneva in February 2006 did not produce the expected results. The breakdown of negotiations led to the resumption of inter-communal violence, notably in Trincomalee, a district in the eastern region, in April of 2006.

The surge in violence forced UNHCR to shift its focus from durable solutions to emergency response. Plans to

Achievements and impact

Main objectives

- Ensure protection of all conflict-affected IDPs.
- Pursue appropriate durable solutions for all IDPs.
- Provide emergency assistance to the displaced and reduce ethnic tensions.

Protection and solutions

UNHCR documented and reported cases of abuse against IDPs and intervened where possible. The organization's lead role in protection was critical in ensuring the stability and safety of IDPs. It intervened to seek redress for abuses, deter further mistreatment, advocate respect for IDPs' human rights and ensure their access to basic services.

The Office supported the Government's efforts to register IDPs both to obtain accurate population statistics and to ensure that those in need of assistance received it. Registration gave UNHCR a better understanding of IDPs' return or relocation plans. The registration drive began in Batticaloa and Ampara districts in 2006 and will continue in Trincomalee and the north in 2007. UNHCR is advocating for the introduction of registration cards with photographs.

The confidence-building and stabilization measures were conceived in early 2006, when it became increasingly clear that displacement was being fuelled by ethnic violence, which seemed to be altering the demographic distribution in the north and east. To preserve the multi-ethnic character of these regions, a new set of protection measures was required. The initiative evolved into policy guidelines for the Government and an operational framework for UNHCR and its humanitarian partners. With the primary goal to build confidence among different ethnic groups but also between IDPs and security forces, these measures included pre-return assessments, go-and-see visits, village profiling and registration, return monitoring, and quick-impact projects.

Activities and assistance

Community services: UNHCR covered the upkeep costs and improved security in the welfare centres to ensure they met international standards. UNHCR implemented community services projects, including activities aimed at preventing sexual and gender-based violence, which helped some 9,000 beneficiaries.

Crop production: A total of 1,069 small landholder farming families in divisions of Somadewi, Sri Parakum and Kallru were assisted in paddy cultivation throughout the year. This included improving the drainage channels and procurement of agricultural equipment.

Furthermore, a pilot drip irrigation project in Kinniya was successfully completed and is expected to improve income, food security, self-reliance and living standards among farmers. The scheme reduced the costs of cultivation and water consumption.

Domestic needs and household support: UNHCR provided newly displaced persons with non-food items, thereby enabling individuals and families to cook hot meals and take shelter from the elements. By offering basic commodities, shelter materials and help with infrastructure, UNHCR helped prevent further displacement. The Office coordinated the provision of non-food assistance by various agencies, NGOs and the Government.

Health and nutrition: UNHCR sent mobile health clinics to areas neither the Government nor other agencies could reach. The mobile clinics also disseminated information on HIV and AIDS. Some 46,000 people received basic medical assistance in this way, including the provision of 100 cataract lenses.

Income generation: The Government asked UNHCR to help fishermen whose livelihoods had been disrupted by a ban on fishing in Trincomalee. The fishermen were given a chance to build alternative livelihoods by learning new skills. Some 41.5 kilometres of roads were improved giving 1,200 fishermen the opportunity to earn daily wages. Mangroves were cultivated to protect the coastal environment.

Legal assistance: In the absence of an international human rights monitoring mission, UNHCR played an important role in documenting and reporting human rights abuses against IDPs, and intervened when necessary. UNHCR's protection work and the coordination role have had a stabilizing effect and have increased levels of physical safety for the IDPs. The Office's life-saving interventions included interceding in individual protection cases, helping the Government register IDPs and assisting them to obtain civil documentation and legal aid. The Office also set up mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

UNHCR helped over 3,500 IDPs, refugee returnees and relocated individuals receive legal advice, and assisted in some 800 court cases. Mobile legal clinics helped another 2,300. Birth, marriage, death and land ownership certificates were provided to 3,000 people.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
IDPs		469,200	469,200	51	-
Returnees (IDPs)		89,400	89,400	51	-
Total		558,600	558,600		

Training and awareness programmes on human rights were held for 1,240 government officials and over 850 students.

Operational support (to agencies): To increase implementing partners' operational capacity, UNHCR provided them with office equipment and training in programme and financial management. Ten United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) added to the existing human resources for protection.

Sanitation: In coordination with the health authorities, UNHCR constructed 24 communal and 69 individual toilets to benefit some 800 people.

Shelter: Emergency shelter assistance became crucial as the level of displacement increased rapidly. UNHCR took the lead in coordinating the emergency shelter and camp management sectors. A total of 3,000 lightweight tents and 20,000 tarpaulins were supplied from UNHCR's emergency stocks in Dubai and Copenhagen.

UNHCR helped to clear 340 acres of land and to build five community halls, 11 kilometres of access roads and 607 semi-permanent shelters. It also built 132 emergency shelters and renovated an additional 463. Forty-seven families received emergency shelter materials.

Transport and logistics: The provision of material support in a timely manner improved physical protection and supported sustainable returns and relocation. The distribution of relief items to extremely vulnerable host-community families reduced frictions between IDPs and the communities in which they took refuge. Funds under this sector were also used to maintain UNHCR's vehicle fleet and central and regional warehouses.

Water: UNHCR helped to dig 41 traditional wells and eight tube wells to service IDP campsites and semi-permanent shelters.

Constraints

Access to conflict-affected areas was limited and relief agencies were barred from entering certain areas, hampering the implementation and monitoring of projects. The situation was made more intractable because many IDPs suffered multiple displacements in 2006. The general climate of fear and high security risks, especially since relief workers were targeted, hurt humanitarian programmes.

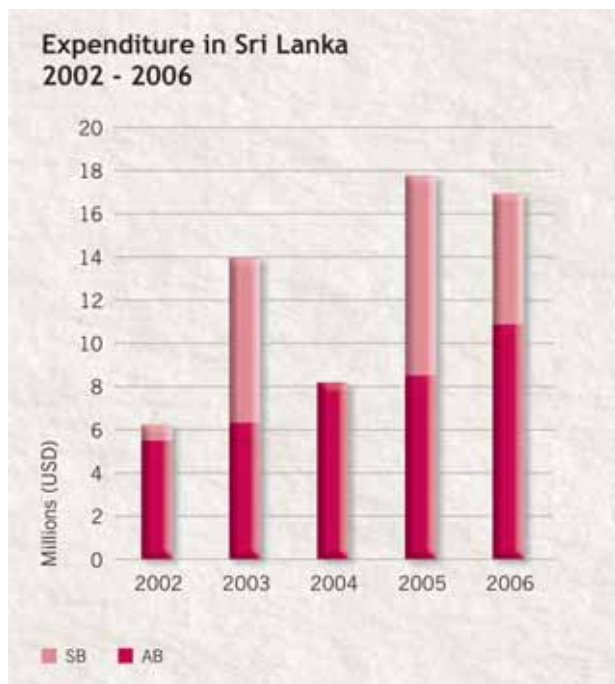


Continued fighting in the North and East of Sri Lanka in 2006 caused the displacement of some 200,000 people.

Financial information

UNHCR participated in the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) launched in August 2006. Donors' generous response to the plan allowed UNHCR to increase its field network and build its emergency response capacity.

The increase of UNHCR activities in 2002-2003 had been in response to a large-scale spontaneous return movement, prompted by the ceasefire accord of February 2002. In support of this, UNHCR launched an assistance programme in October 2002 that ensured sustainability for the 400,000 IDPs who had returned, both through livelihood possibilities and advocacy for property restitution. By 2004, those IDPs who wished and could return had already done so and as such UNHCR began to consolidate and scale back its programmes. The sharp increase in expenditures in 2005 reflected an increased level of activities as a result of the December 2004 tsunami that killed over 30,000 people and displaced over 500,000.



Organization and implementation

Management

In 2006, UNHCR had seven field offices in Sri Lanka including the Representation Office in Colombo. While in January 2006 the workforce consisted of 79 national and 18 international staff, by December a total of 20 regular posts, including three international, were discontinued. By July 2006, 10 international and 40 national staff were added under temporary positions to assist during the new emergency. As UNHCR's coordination responsibility for the tsunami emergency ceased, the UNHCR was planning to discontinue its presence in Ampara, however it had to be maintained due to the emergency situation in the area.

Working with others

UNHCR and the other members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in Sri Lanka developed the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP), which was endorsed by the Government. The Office also forged new partnerships with the Government to deal with the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Besides its partnership with the Ministry of Nation-Building and Infrastructure Development, UNHCR signed agreements with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. During the High Commissioner's visit in July, guidelines on confidence-building and stabilization measures were presented to both parties to the conflict and were broadly accepted and adopted

by an inter-ministerial committee. UNHCR organized workshops to disseminate the information among the various government departments on the guidelines.

Formal partnerships with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and UNDP were established to identify options and implement solutions in areas unaffected by the recent conflict.

To implement its programmes, UNHCR formed partnerships with 18 national and international agencies, chosen on the basis of their operational capacity and their knowledge of, and working relations with, specific IDP groups. As the situation worsened during the emergency, eight more partners were engaged, mostly local agencies already working with IDPs. The local expertise of its partners was crucial to the success of UNHCR's work.

Overall assessment

The assumption in 2005 that Sri Lanka would be moving towards peace and the consequent underestimation of the need for staff and resources had an adverse impact on operations. The massive displacement in 2006 affected the entire country, particularly Trincomalee and Batticaloa areas. Staff worked long hours in dangerous conditions to address the situation. The operational budget of UNHCR Sri Lanka was inadequate to cope with the new needs. Subsequently, with agreement from the Government, the UN launched the CHAP. Of the USD 66 million that agencies requested in the appeal, UNHCR received USD 5.8 million.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies: Ministry of Disaster Management, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic resources, Ministry of Nation-Building and Infrastructure Development.

NGOs: Campaign for Development and Solidarity, Centre for Policy Alternative, Centre on Housing Rights, Danish Refugee Council, Eastern Rehabilitation Organization, Foundation for Co-existence, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Jaffna Social Action Centre, Muslim Aid, National Centre for Victims of War, Non Violent Peaceforce, Norwegian Refugee Council, Peace and Community Action, Rural Development Foundation, Samaritan's Purse, USA, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, The Refugee and Rehabilitation Organization, Women in need.

Operational partners

NGOs: Oxfam, Save the Children Fund.

Others: Asian Development Bank, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*, ILO, International Committee of the Red Cross, OCHA, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, WFP, World Bank.

Budget, income and expenditure (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	13,788,431	10,256,025	3,159,494	13,415,519	10,876,974
SB ³	6,251,637	305,000	5,763,401	6,068,402	6,068,402
Total	20,040,068	10,561,026	8,922,895	19,483,921	16,945,376

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

³ The SB figures apply to the Indian Ocean Earthquake – Tsunami Emergency. The budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Previous years' projects
	AB	SB	Total	AB and SB
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,888,619	1,219,093	4,107,711	0
Community services	446,311	618,309	1,064,620	262,522
Crop production	0	7,742	7,742	0
Domestic needs and household support	1,617,042	553,624	2,170,665	0
Health and nutrition	40,096	0	40,096	0
Income generation	35,537	0	35,537	25,136
Legal assistance	1,387,666	14,593	1,402,259	289,697
Operational support (to agencies)	702,664	295,846	998,510	1,524
Sanitation	0	365,587	365,587	0
Shelter and infrastructure	602,804	2,463,288	3,066,092	193,095
Transport and logistics	518,121	17,099	535,220	13,481
Water	2,096	52,857	54,953	5,080
Instalments with implementing partners	1,091,544	460,365	1,551,908	(790,535)
Sub-total operational activities	9,332,500	6,068,402	15,400,902	0
Programme support	1,544,474	0	1,544,474	0
Total expenditure	10,876,974	6,068,402	16,945,376	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure				(348,401)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	3,187,950	4,169,622	7,357,572	
Reporting received	(2,096,406)	(3,709,258)	(5,805,664)	
Balance	1,091,544	460,365	1,551,908	
Previous years' report				
Instalments with implementing partners				
Outstanding 1st January				1,089,166
Reporting received				(790,535)
Refunded to UNHCR				(183,516)
Adjustments				0
Balance				115,115