

Sri Lanka

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Improve access to national protection and humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the north and north-east of Sri Lanka; minimise internal population displacement, and provide alternatives to flight from regions of instability; create stability for displaced communities and conditions conducive to long-term solutions; facilitate the return and reintegration of displaced populations, especially the vulnerable; advocate policies protective of the rights of the displaced and victims of the conflict; extend the capacity of the Government, NGOs and displaced communities to respond to displacement and bring about lasting solutions.

Impact

- UNHCR registered a newly displaced population of 170,000 in the Jaffna peninsula and provided emergency assistance to the most needy 11,200.
- IDPs at government welfare centres had increased freedom of movement after UNHCR's interventions with the authorities.
- At the request of the IDP population, UNHCR successfully reached an agreement with the authorities and relocated 4,500 IDPs into new communities, instead of accommodating them at welfare centres.
- Returnee and relocated communities, and IDP-hosting communities, were provided with micro-projects to stimulate coping mechanisms.



Main Refugee Origin/Type of Population	Persons of Concern			
	Total in Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Sri Lanka (IDPs)	706,500	-	-	-

Due to continuous change on the ground, it is hard to estimate the number of IDPs. A rough indicator of the number of IDPs is the number of people receiving government food assistance. However, government statistics do not include IDPs who no longer receive or have never received food assistance. UNHCR estimates that there are approximately 706,500 IDPs in the country. In the north of the country, where UNHCR has a presence, there are some 570,000 IDPs.

Revised Budget	Income and Expenditure (USD)			
	Annual Programme Budget			
	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
5,984,311	6,709,784	379,675	7,089,459	5,963,620

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.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

- The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* were promoted among government officials and humanitarian workers.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

As a result of renewed fighting in the Jaffna peninsula, an estimated 172,000 persons were newly displaced during the year. A total of 1,620 persons sought asylum in India. There was some hope of progress in the peace talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) at the end of the year, facilitated by the Norwegian Government. On 21 December 2000, the LTTE declared a one-month unilateral cease-fire.

A total of 348 government-run welfare centres continued to host over 175,000 IDPs, who stayed on until they could either return to their places of origin or relocate to new sites. Some had already resided in the centres for over five years, and overcrowding remained a serious concern for UNHCR. UNHCR engaged in a dialogue with the authorities to seek durable solutions by means of a more multi-faceted approach. This led to the relocation of 4,500 IDPs in Vavuniya District. During 2000, UNHCR supported the return of a total of 30,000 persons to Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu Districts.

Constraints

Overall security in the country deteriorated and humanitarian workers had to exercise extreme caution. The protracted internal conflict had been eroding community structures and social relationships for 17 years, causing severe damage to the social foundations upon which peace must be built. Co-ordination among concerned actors continued to be a challenge and sometimes hindered effective delivery of protection and assistance. The food supply chain for Jaffna was broken for almost two months due to military operations in the peninsula.

Funding

The operation in Sri Lanka received generous earmarked funds from the donor community. The difficulty was in the timing of contributions, with a shortfall in funding in the second and third quarters. This resulted in a series of reductions and cancellations of activities. There were insufficient relief items and emergency stocks, and badly needed replacement vehicles could not be obtained. Monitoring missions were restricted and return and reintegration activities were cancelled in Jaffna.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

During April and June, at the height of the fighting in Jaffna peninsula, UNHCR successfully established safe access to civilians trapped in battle zones. UNHCR monitored the arrival in government-held areas of 170,000 newly displaced persons in Jaffna peninsula and registered them; 20,000 of them found refuge in newly established government welfare centres while the vast majority stayed with friends and relatives. Working closely with other humanitarian organisations, UNHCR gave emergency relief items to the most needy 11,200 IDPs.

The UNHCR-run Madhu Open Relief Centre hosted roughly 12,000 IDPs, the largest concentration of IDPs in the LTTE-dominated area. UNHCR sought to provide security and safety for the civilians at the Centre through a full-time protection presence, and close liaison with the civil authorities on food and medical assistance. A regular UNHCR presence was also a deterrent to military recruitment in Madhu, including child recruitment.

To facilitate the freedom of movement of IDPs residing at the government welfare centres, UNHCR negotiated with the authorities for the issuance of a three-month pass in some areas (instead of the fortnight's pass or daily pass previously issued). Schoolchildren were issued a monthly pass in place of a daily pass. UNHCR closely monitored conditions in transit centres, where people were detained after 'illegal' movement out of the LTTE-dominated area. Although the condition of the welfare centres varied from district to district, a deterioration of living conditions was observed at most of them due to overcrowding; restrictions on freedom of movement precluded self-sufficiency as the IDPs were unable to interact with local communities. UNHCR provided assistance to IDP-hosting areas to improve their capacity to cope with the new influx.

A total of 37 asylum applications were received by UNHCR, and by the end of the year 16 recognised refugees continued to receive protection and assistance, comprising a limited monthly cash allowance, and assistance for medical and school expenses. The Office made significant efforts to pursue two issues in particular: the introduction of a more formal legal basis for the treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees and the issue of citizenship and/or residence for foreign male spouses of Sri Lankan women. UNHCR continued its role of monitoring the return of rejected Sri Lankan asylum-seekers. It also intervened with the authorities to limit detention of rejected asylum-seekers at the airport, but to no avail.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: Demographic profiles of welfare centres in Madhu, Vavuniya and Trincomalee were completed. The exercise enabled UNHCR to identify the special needs of women and children in these stressful and overcrowded conditions. Eighteen community centres were constructed. One girls' orphanage was rehabilitated, as well as one multi-purpose public building. Training courses were conducted in psychotherapy (counselling for children traumatised by war); leadership of community-based organisations; health and sanitation; and community mobilisation. The activities were designed to rebuild community support mechanisms fragmented by the conflict.

Crop Production: A total of 24 agrarian wells were repaired, two water reservoirs were rehabilitated, irrigation channels were renovated, and 14 water pumps were

provided for highland irrigation. Furthermore, 3,320 grants or loans were provided to farmers.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: Emergency relief items were distributed within two days of UNHCR being granted access to IDPs by the parties to the conflict. A total of 11,200 IDPs were given 30,620 plastic sheets, 9,880 bed sheets, 16,670 mats, 28,260 plates, 22,230 bars of soap, 7,800 saris, 8,360 sarongs and 7,600 children's exercise books.

Education: IDP-hosting communities were helped to expand their existing education capacity. A total of 38 schools were rehabilitated, and 3,200 desks and 5,250 chairs were supplied. Furthermore, 21 vocational training programmes were completed, benefiting 283 persons.

Fisheries: Due to restrictions on fishing in the waters of conflict zones, activities were much reduced. Of 150



loans originally planned, only two were provided for the purchase of equipment for IDPs with previous experience of fishing. One training programme on improved fishing techniques and marine engineering was delivered to 120 men and 90 women. The training proved useful as it enabled maximum utilisation of the short periods when fishing was possible. Two jetties were repaired, benefiting 528 fishermen.

Food: Emergency food and dry rations provided by the Government were stored and distributed to IDPs during the period immediately following displacement. A semi-permanent warehouse was constructed for the protection of basic food items. During the two-month interruption of the food supply chain in Jaffna, stockpiled food was mobilised.

Forestry: Due to intensified conflict, only limited activities were possible, benefiting 150 families. To improve

the diet of IDP communities, a total of 300 orange, 450 lime, 150 mango, 1,800 banana and 2,400 coconut trees were distributed and planted, and training was provided for 150 beneficiaries on the care of fruit trees and vegetable cultivation.

Health/Nutrition: Mobile health clinics visited IDP communities on a weekly basis. A monthly average of 1,200 persons received medical care from the mobile teams. Three rural health clinics were constructed and improvements were made to a rural hospital. A total of 25,000 persons benefited from a basic health awareness programme.

Income Generation: A total of 572 loans were provided to both IDPs and local residents to set up small businesses based on mat-weaving, business, sewing, fish processing and other income-generating activities. The majority of the beneficiaries were women, including 125 households headed by women.

Legal Assistance: Three workshops for security forces were held on humanitarian principles during conflict.

Livestock: Loans were provided for those with animal husbandry skills. A total of 689 loans were provided for poultry rearing, 220 for goat-breeding and 266 for dairy farming. The main beneficiaries were female-headed households (420 of them).

Sanitation: Permanent sanitation facilities were constructed at IDP relocation sites. Sanitation facilities in the welfare centres were also upgraded to minimum standards. As a result, there were no epidemics. A total of 375 new latrines were constructed, and 876 latrines at 14 welfare centres were rehabilitated. Six health awareness-training programmes were completed, targeting IDP-hosting communities, and there was a 32 per cent reduction in recorded cases of water borne diseases. Two public latrines were constructed and 19 were repaired in IDP hosting areas.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: To provide shelter, particularly during the monsoon season, 2,561 temporary shelters and 484 semi-permanent shelters were constructed. A total of 51 IDP families received government assistance. There was also shelter assistance for 550 vulnerable women and their families. A total of 2.5 km of access road were repaired. Six warehouses were maintained for stockpiles of relief items.

Transport/Logistics: UNHCR mounted 52 convoys to facilitate the safe transport of medical, school, agricultural and all essential food supplies across the forward defence lines into the LTTE-dominated areas. Furthermore, 12.5 km of internal access road were rehabilitated, and 40 culverts were constructed.



Water: Due to the protracted conflict, water systems in the country are damaged and maintenance has been neglected. UNHCR's assistance helped to ensure access to potable water for the IDP population. A total of 172 new wells were constructed and 87 existing wells were repaired. One water pump, two water tanks and an ox-drawn water tanker were supplied. There were also improvements to water facilities for 456 female-headed households. No epidemics were reported.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR maintained offices in Colombo, Jaffna, Mallavi (covering Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu), Madhu, Vavuniya and Trincomalee. UNHCR operated with a total of 73 staff, including 13 international staff, three JPOs, eight UNVs and 49 national staff.

Working with Others

UNHCR worked with one government counterpart, one UN agency, six international and five local NGOs. UNHCR entered into a strategic alliance with the World Bank on the North-East Irrigated Agriculture Project, in which UNHCR played a facilitative role. UNHCR worked in close partnership with UNICEF on the protection of children in general, and against the recruitment of child soldiers in particular. With WFP's new involvement in the districts where UNHCR was present during 2000, joint activities were implemented to register the displaced in welfare centres and provide support for relocation communities.

UNHCR initiated dialogue with WFP, UNICEF, *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* and the Asian Development Bank on the establishment of a strategic alliance in 2001. UNHCR was an active member of the UN Country Team and the Relief and Rehabilitation Theme Group bringing together several sister agencies. UNHCR contributed to both the Common Country Assessment and the UN Development Assistance Framework. In collaboration with other specialised agencies, UNHCR put in place a new emergency preparedness mechanism. Ongoing collaboration with the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies was strengthened to improve co-ordination with NGOs.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

UNHCR saw a profound shift of approach in its Sri Lanka operation in 2000 with the use of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* as the foundation for

its protection work. Micro-projects and the Open Relief Centre had been the principal means by which UNHCR had given protection and assistance to the IDP population. UNHCR now supplemented these means by using the *Guiding Principles* to identify problems and analyse patterns of intervention, with the result that protection and assistance could be integrated in a more coherent manner. UNHCR also promoted the use of the *Guiding Principles* by the authorities and humanitarian agencies. The Government accepted these principles as the basis for its policy on the displaced and its Framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. The *Guiding Principles* strengthened UNHCR's protection role in the country.

Seventeen years of conflict have left a part of Sri Lankan society extremely unstable. While long-term development agencies have increasingly taken on work in conflict zones within Government-controlled areas in the south of the country, this encouraging trend has not been observed in LTTE-dominated areas. In Jaffna there was a decrease in assistance activity, due to intense fighting, and UNDP withdrew from the area. UNHCR remained the only organisation to work with people in need through the whole cycle of displacement: from the provision of emergency assistance right through to durable solutions (return or relocation).

Offices

Colombo

Jaffna
Madhu
Mallavi
Trincomalee
Vavuniya

Partners

Government Agencies

Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority of the North

NGOs

Campaign for Development and Solidarity
Care International
Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya
Médecins Sans Frontières (France)
MEMISA
OXFAM
Rural Development Foundation
Sewa Lanka Foundation
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
World University Service of Canada
ZOA Refugee Care

Other

United Nations Volunteers

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects		Prior Years' Projects	
		notes		notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,823,494		0	
Community Services	63,943		114,614	
Crop Production	96,151		297,875	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	258,180		136,427	
Education	193,395		317,981	
Fisheries	3,516		100,381	
Forestry	3,211		3,100	
Health / Nutrition	57,784		170,077	
Income Generation	18,727		131,249	
Legal Assistance	9,688		119	
Livestock	8,206		48,004	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	486,673		136,687	
Sanitation	71,163		38,742	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	220,678		117,605	
Transport / Logistics	60,786		108,584	
Water	142,394		146,657	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	1,014,945		(1,121,882)	
Sub-total Operational	4,532,934		746,220	
Programme Support	764,390		57,650	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	5,297,324	(3)	803,870	(6)
Unliquidated Obligations	666,296	(3)	0	
Total	5,963,620	(1) (3)	803,870	
Instalments with Implementing Partners				
Payments Made	2,122,562		569,525	
Reporting Received	1,107,617		1,691,407	
Balance	1,014,945		(1,121,882)	
Outstanding 1 January	0		1,303,581	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		171,436	
Currency Adjustment	0		(8,883)	
Outstanding 31 December	1,014,945		1,380	
Unliquidated Obligations				
Outstanding 1 January	0		968,620	(6)
New Obligations	5,963,620	(1)	0	
Disbursements	5,297,324	(3)	803,870	(6)
Cancellations	0		164,750	(6)
Outstanding 31 December	666,296	(3)	0	(6)

Figures which cross reference to Accounts:

(1) Annex to Statement 1

(3) Schedule 3

(6) Schedule 6