
UNHCR News

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PLACE: Colombo, Sri Lanka

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UN Refugee Agency alarmed over incident at Colombo refugee shelter

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is alarmed and concerned by yesterday's incident at a refugee shelter housing mostly women and children on the outskirts of Colombo.

On Tuesday, a group protested outside the shelter housing 31 refugees – most of them women and children – who had been rescued by the Sri Lankan Navy from a boat in Sri Lankan waters in April this year. The refugees were eventually evacuated to safety by the authorities to whom UNHCR is grateful for support and protection extended to refugees.

UNHCR is equally concerned for the safety and security of our partner's staff present during the incident who were providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees.

UNHCR emphasizes that refugees are victims of violence and persecution who need international protection and assistance. UNHCR urges the public and all those concerned with refugees to continue extending protection and to show empathy for civilians fleeing persecution and violence.

In Sri Lanka, the presence of refugees and asylum-seekers is authorized by the Government. In consultation with the authorities, UNHCR provides assistance to refugees until longer-term solutions can be found.

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