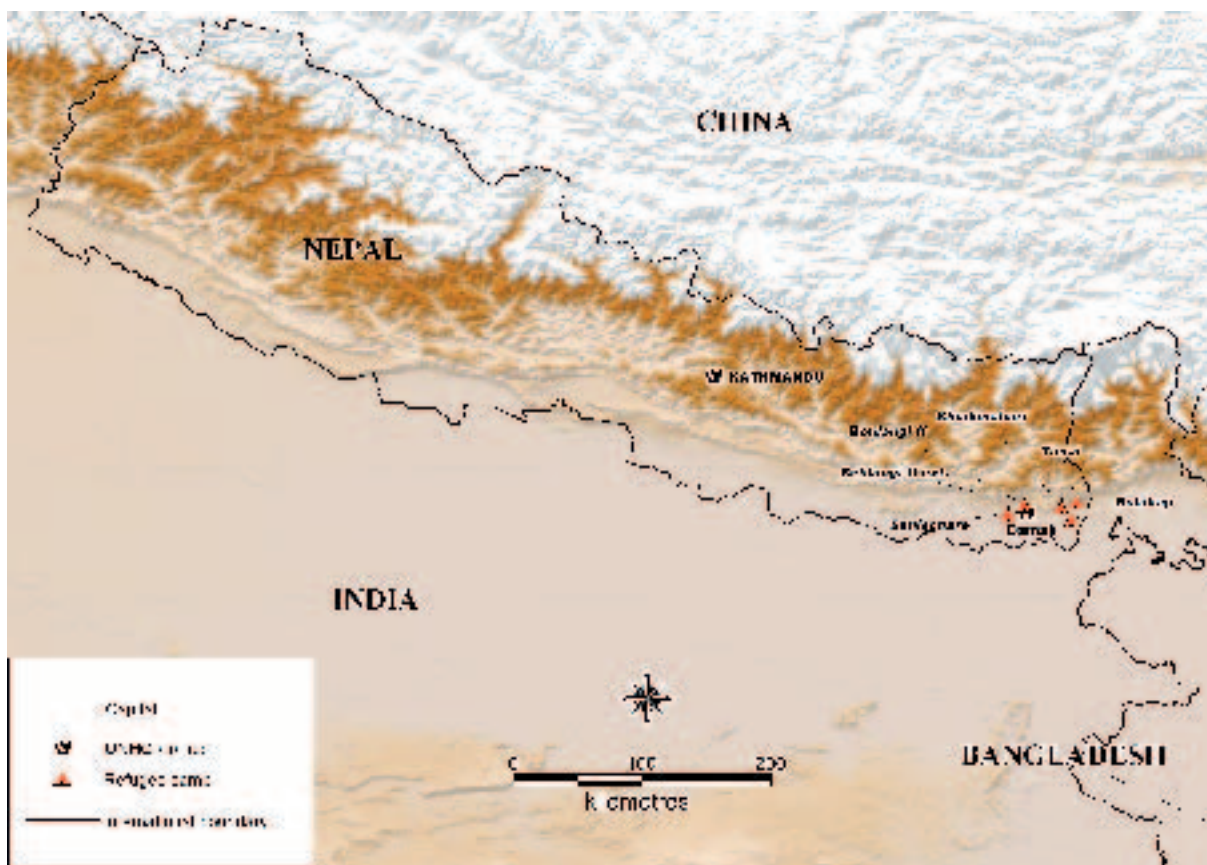


Nepal



Main objectives

Continue to urge the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan to resolve the situation of protracted camp populations; provide international protection and assistance to Bhutanese refugees; implement UNHCR policies related to human rights, protection of refugee women and children and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); protect and assist newly arrived Tibetans in transit in Nepal; provide protection, assistance and refugee status determination (RSD) to asylum-seekers of other nationalities.

the introduction of new election procedures and women's leadership training.

- Efforts to prevent and respond to SGBV were strengthened; awareness of SGBV was increased; increased reporting of incidents of SGBV resulted in an improved judicial response at district level.
- UNHCR assisted over 2,300 Tibetans and facilitated onward travel to a third country.
- Two hundred and twenty-one urban asylum-seekers and refugees of various nationalities were assisted.

Impact

- Protection and assistance were provided to some 105,000 Bhutanese refugees in seven camps located in Jhapa and Morang districts in eastern Nepal.
- Women's participation in the camp management committees increased to over 40 per cent with

Working environment

The context

The level of progress towards durable solutions for the Bhutanese refugees was disappointing. The confrontation between refugees and Bhutanese members of the Joint Verification Team in December 2003 and the ensuing breakdown in the verification exercise halted the repatriation process and, as a result,

bilateral talks between the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan stalled. The resumption of dialogue and expected repatriation (scheduled to begin in February) did not take place.

The High Commissioner's policy statements in October 2003 and 2004 caused controversy. He advocated reduced refugee dependence on assistance and a shift towards self-reliance as a step towards amelioration of a situation of protracted population displacement. Since then, all stakeholders have acquired a greater understanding of UNHCR's viewpoint.

Increasing numbers of urban asylum-seekers arrived in Kathmandu from various destinations. Nepal is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol and still lacks national legislation to govern the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Constraints

The lack of a legislative framework in Nepal continues to affect UNHCR's approach to protection. Each of the three refugee and asylum-seeker groups are administered according to different government directives which, in the case of Bhutanese refugees, restrict legitimate gainful activity.

The Bhutanese and Nepali Governments remained deadlocked, with the bilateral process of conflict resolution at a standstill. Citing security reasons, Bhutan did not initiate repatriation.

The security situation in Nepal has continued to deteriorate, with the insurgency gaining a firmer grip in the eastern districts. Strikes by political parties, students and the public, as well as by insurgents were frequent and of increasing duration, affecting not only the transport of supplies to the refugee camps but also the movement of UNHCR staff and the safe transit in border areas of Tibetans of concern to UNHCR. Security in the camps has continued to be of concern since the police withdrawal in September 2003. Social tensions arising from the protracted situation and refugees' inability to engage in productive activities had other effects such as anti-social conduct by adolescent boys, increased morbidity levels and requests for medical attention, particularly among children.

Funding

The operation was adequately funded and NGO implementing partners contributed over USD 600,000 towards the Bhutanese refugee programme from their own resources.

Persons of concern				
Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Bhutan (refugees)	104,900	104,900	49	39
Tibetans (refugees)	20,000	-	48	-
Bhutan (others of concern)	10,000	-	-	-
Tibetans ¹ (others of concern)	700	700	-	-
Pakistan (asylum-seekers)	200	100	28	27

¹ Recent arrivals

Income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme budget				
Revised budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
6,281,221	4,206,815	2,040,013	6,246,828	6,246,828

¹ Includes income from contributions restricted 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.



Nepal: Over 16,000 shelters, like this one, was repaired with UNHCR assistance. *UNHCR/A. Hollmann*

Achievements and impacts

Protection and solutions

Given the unfavourable political context for durable solutions, protection focused on the improvement of standards of treatment and resolving the

long-standing issues of non-registered refugees, separated children and birth registration. UNHCR advocated a higher quality of asylum, including the right to work, to receive identity documentation and to have access to health and education facilities. Non-registered refugees were granted access to appeals on previous decisions for the first time. SGBV prevention and follow-up were strengthened. The strategy for combating SGBV within the camps was

revised with the participation of all partners. Awareness raising efforts have been extensive, with very encouraging responses from both the refugee community and district judicial authorities and police: camps were thus made safer for refugee women.

Community watch teams in the camps were strengthened and trained to maintain order in the camps after the departure of the police. UNHCR, however, continued to demand an adequate response on the part of authorities to criminal offences, and supported police through capacity-building activities. Camp election procedures were revised to improve women's participation and encourage wider community participation. Separated children were documented and will be put under the legal guardianship of their foster parents in 2005, a process without precedent in the eastern districts of Nepal. Juvenile justice was also introduced for the first time.

Tibetans continued to transit relatively smoothly in Nepal. UNHCR assisted them and monitored their well-being pending onward movement to their destination country (this entailed several border missions).

Activities and assistance

Community services: Skills training was provided to refugees. Three hundred and nineteen hearing-impaired school children were taught sign-language to help integrate them into camp schools. UNHCR launched awareness campaigns involving the refugee community, informal refugee organizations, and young people (including a Children's Forum) on trafficking of women and girls and other issues, including domestic violence and SGBV.

Domestic needs/Household support: Refugees were supplied with kerosene for cooking to reduce local forest degradation. Some 33,000 women of reproductive age were supplied with sanitary napkins, and sanitary cloth production in the camps increased. Each newborn baby was supplied with a woollen blanket. Laundry and bathing soaps were distributed; white chalk and jute mats were produced by refugees in the camps for use in schools. Tibetan new arrivals received a travel allowance and mandate refugees received financial assistance.

Education: Camp schools maintained a gender balance and continued to provide high quality

education from pre-primary to Grade 10. School enrolment was nearly 100 per cent, with over 37,000 students attending and very few failing to complete their education. Student-teacher ratios were maintained at around 36:1.

Food: WFP provided food aid, with UNHCR contributing some 3,480 metric tons of complementary vegetables and condiments, amounting to a daily intake of 2,100 kcal per person. Roughly 5,000 malnourished children, elderly, sick and pregnant refugees received additional sustenance and supplementary feeding was provided to some 3,700 school children for 78 days during the dry season to reduce micronutrient deficiencies.

Health/Nutrition: Refugees and the local population alike used the basic health facilities at the camps. Health care was provided to children in line with internationally accepted standards. UNHCR supported an expanded programme of immunization, growth monitoring, vitamin deficiency correction and community and sexual health education. Vaccination coverage of childhood diseases was almost 100 per cent, and the under-five mortality rate was low for South Asia (0.28 deaths/1000/month). Over 20,000 patients were referred for hospital treatment. On World Aids Day, AIDS-awareness campaigns were conducted in the camps. Tibetans in transit and refugees and asylum-seekers were treated through agreements with local hospitals.

Legal assistance: One implementing partner provided counselling for 50 cases of SGBV and for 24 cases requiring legal representation and advised on the legal guardianship of separated children. A national NGO provided representation to a further 24 refugee detainees. UNHCR vigorously advocated the protection of children and children's rights, especially the issues of legal guardianship and birth registration.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR covered a portion of the operational costs of its implementing partners.

Sanitation: Sanitation facilities were designed with women's needs in mind and to avoid vulnerability to SGBV. Solid waste management and vector control were carried out through the construction and repair of latrines and spraying in the camps. Camp sanitary conditions remained good; vector-borne diseases were kept at negligible levels.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: UNHCR supported the repair of over 6,800 refugee shelters and administrative blocks including some 400 classrooms. Refugees used their own resources to renovate huts in addition to the limited materials supplied. Internal camp roads, drainage, and footbridges were repaired. The Tibetan Reception Centre building was maintained.

Transport/Logistics: Two camp access roads were resurfaced for durability and to reduce the dust which had caused respiratory complaints among refugee and local children alike. Transport costs were covered for Tibetans in transit.

Water: Refugees in the camps received an average of 22 litres of tested and treated drinking water per person per day. The water supply system was operated with the participation of refugees; water-borne diseases were kept to a minimum.

Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR operated with 45 staff in Nepal (eight internationals, two JPOs and 35 nationals). RSD capacity was bolstered through a consultant to assist with a new influx of asylum-seekers.

Working with others

UNHCR worked with one Government counterpart, three national NGOs and three locally-based international NGOs. UNHCR also collaborated closely with the UN Country Team to coordinate on security and programming activities.

Overall assessment

UNHCR's operation continued to be complex and was conducted within a very challenging environment in the absence of progress on solutions for the Bhutanese refugees. In its contacts with all parties, UNHCR has emphasized the need for change, highlighting the Office's proposal of a comprehensive solution to resolve this protracted situation.

Security became a priority with Maoist insurgency activity spreading to eastern districts and beginning to influence the refugee camps.

As there was no progress towards durable solutions for the Bhutanese refugees, UNHCR's programme concentrated on enhancing protection and providing a higher quality of asylum. One significant achievement involved non-registered refugees in the camps; the Government agreed to consider them all as asylum applicants and to give them an opportunity to appeal rejection decisions. Other steps forward included new legal precedents and first-time implementation of legislation by the judicial authorities.

The influx of a large population of urban asylum-seekers adds a new dimension to the challenges faced by UNHCR. Border missions have improved the delivery of assistance to Tibetans in transit and will be continued accordingly. The increasing insecurity created additional burdens on UNHCR's operations, in terms of staff and refugee security, relief delivery and movements of populations at risk within and beyond Nepal's borders.

Offices

Kathmandu

Jhapa / Damak

Partners

Government agencies

Ministry of Home Affairs/National Unit for the Co-ordination of Refugee Affairs

NGOs

Association of Medical Doctors for Asia (Nepal)

CARITAS (Nepal)

Centre for the Victims of Torture

Lutheran World Federation

Nepal Bar Association (Jhapa Unit)

Nepal Red Cross Society

Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office

Financial Report (USD)		
Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects	Prior years' projects
	Annual programme budget	Annual and Supplementary programme budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,264,738	0
Community services	69,610	8,203
Domestic needs / household support	1,393,730	134,978
Education	405,956	46,705
Food	421,463	58,587
Health and nutrition	561,841	113,841
Legal assistance	73,528	8,379
Operational support (to agencies)	254,880	28,873
Sanitation	35,664	5,763
Shelter and infrastructure	142,621	28,547
Transport and logistics	164,316	26,221
Water	75,082	13,453
Instalments with implementing partners	530,783	(473,551)
Sub-total operational activities	5,394,210	0
Programme support	852,618	0
Total disbursements	6,246,828	0
Instalments with implementing partners		
Payments made	3,856,630	
Reporting received	(3,325,847)	
Balance	530,783	
Prior years' report		
Instalments with implementing partners		
Outstanding 1 January		466,844
Payments made		29,607
Reporting received		(473,551)
Refunded to UNHCR		(20,970)
Currency adjustment		(1,930)
Balance		0
Unliquidated obligations		
Outstanding 1 January		147,862
Disbursements		(77,610)
Cancellations		(70,252)
Outstanding 31 December		0