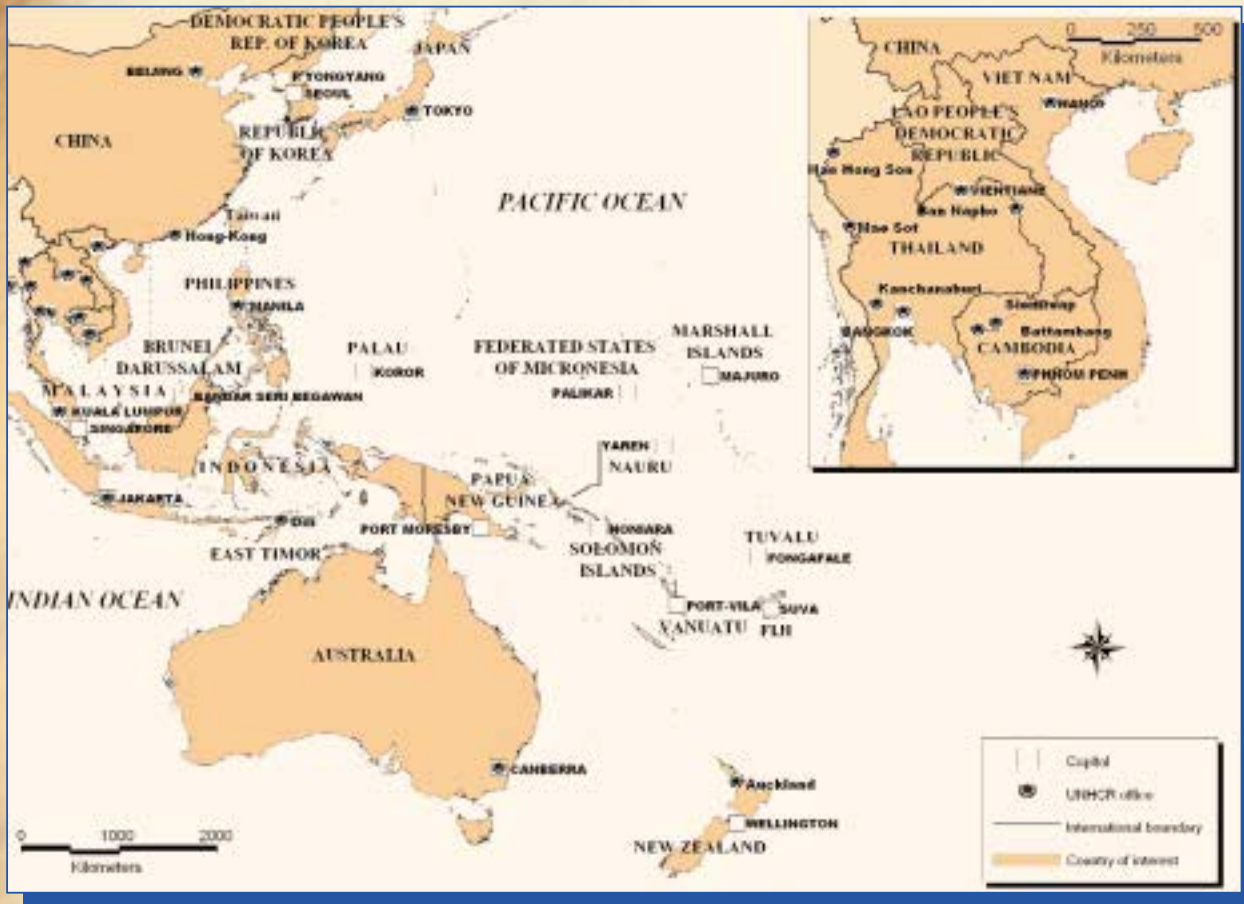


# EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- Australia,
- Lao People's Democratic Republic,
- Singapore,
- Cambodia,
- Malaysia,
- Solomon Islands,
- China,
- New Zealand,
- Thailand,
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea,
- Papua New Guinea,
- Vietnam.
- Indonesia,
- the Philippines,
- Republic of Korea,
- Japan,

## EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL OVERVIEW

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL OVERVIEW



### Recent Developments

Vast numbers of people were displaced from and within East Timor following the pro-independence ballot in August 1999 and the subsequent turbulent transition of East Timor to independence in October 1999. UNHCR established an early field presence in East Timor in June 1999 and then in West Timor in September. An emergency operation was launched to provide protection, multi-sectoral relief, repatriation and reintegration assistance, and other solutions for some 350,000 displaced persons in East Timor and 200,000 refugees in West Timor (of whom 150,000 are expected to return).

The East Asian economic downturn, coupled with differences in job opportunities between states within the region, heightens the risk of irregular migratory movements and displacement, and con-

tinues to impact on asylum practices in the region. This requires close monitoring.

In this context, UNHCR continues to co-sponsor and actively support the Asia Pacific Consultations (APC) process. Since its inaugural session in Canberra in November 1996, the APC has convened meetings in Bangkok in July 1997 and June 1998. The APC is now recognised as a relevant informal regional forum for discussion of a diverse range of issues relating to migration and refugees. The validity of the process was acknowledged at the fifth plenary session held in Kathmandu in June 1999. The meeting decided that the Consultations should convene sub-regional and expert group meetings prior to the next plenary session scheduled for mid-2000, to discuss specific issues such as trafficking of migrants and burden-sharing.

### Strategic Objectives

UNHCR's principal objectives within the region during the year 2000 will be to ensure that the fundamental protection principles of non-refoulement and asylum are respected; that the quality of asylum is improved; and that states adopt a more consistent, concerted approach to refugee issues. To this end, a range of advocacy, promotion, and capacity-building strategies will be launched. UNHCR will seek to persuade governments to accede to international instruments on refugees and on statelessness, and continue to support regional consultative mechanisms for dealing with refugee and migration issues.

The region receives a steady flow of individual asylum-seekers who rely largely on UNHCR's statutory functions in states which are either not signatories to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol, or which do not have in place institutionalised refugee status determination procedures. Besides, promoting new accessions through close contact with concerned governments, UNHCR will advocate the introduction, and alignment of refugee legislation and status determination procedures. Meanwhile, UNHCR's field offices will retain the capacity to recognise and protect individual asylum-seekers as necessary.

UNHCR will also continue to organise emergency preparedness and contingency planning workshops and seminars in the region as a tangible expression of UNHCR's willingness to work with concerned governments on humanitarian measures to prepare for, and respond to, sudden outflows, and to stabilise populations at risk of displacement.

### Operations

The following paragraphs summarise UNHCR's objectives and activities by country, except for those countries covered in subsequent separate chapters (i.e. **Cambodia, Thailand**, and the situation related to **East Timor**).

UNHCR Regional Office in **Australia** will continue to cover **New Zealand, Papua New Guinea** and the **South Pacific** countries. Activities will remain focused on resettlement, external relations, and the provision of protection-related advice. A number of training workshops on refugee issues will be conducted for governmental and non-governmental audiences in tandem with promotional activities. In 2000, special emphasis will be placed on public awareness and private sector fund-raising initiatives, especially during the Sydney Olympics.

UNHCR will continue to actively seek lasting solutions for some 295,000 Vietnamese refugees in **China** in the form of naturalisation for the vast majority, and repatriation for a few who may still wish to return to Vietnam. Loans will be secured to fund projects designed to increase the self-reliance of refugees. The Regional Office in Beijing will provide technical advice on the selection and monitoring of these projects, which will be financed by a revolving fund. UNHCR will also support the enactment and implementation of the national refugee law currently under review by the State Council, by providing legal advice and promoting refugee law as well as public awareness activities.

Following the achievement of self-reliance by the remaining Vietnamese refugees and persons not meeting internationally recognised refugee crite-



ria, UNHCR will retain its presence in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region in 2000, to facilitate advocacy and help determine the refugee status of asylum-seekers.

Returnee reintegration assistance and monitoring will continue in the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** during the course of 2000 focusing, in particular, on the group of some 1,200 Laotians expected to return from Ban Napho camp in Thailand by the end of 1999.

The Liaison Office in **Vietnam** is overseen by the Regional Office in Bangkok. In 2000, UNHCR will maintain a limited presence in Hanoi for protection monitoring and advocacy.

The principal objectives of the Regional Office in Tokyo will remain protection, public information and fund-raising in both **Japan** and the **Republic of Korea**. UNHCR will provide advisory support for the development of national refugee legislation and refugee status determination procedures and will

organise refugee law seminars for the benefit of government officials, academics, lawyers and NGOs. Another major objective of the Regional Office will be to strengthen the existing Government and NGO emergency preparedness and response capacity in Japan, and to work towards the establishment of a regional Emergency Training Centre for Asia.

In **Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore** (covered by the UNHCR Regional Office in Jakarta) UNHCR will closely monitor potential population displacements and support emergency preparedness, capacity-building and contingency planning initiatives. Furthermore, UNHCR will continue to provide protection and limited material assistance to refugees and needy asylum-seekers; offer advice on refugee status recognition processes; and promote the agency's mandate and goals through training and public awareness activities. (Activities related to the Supplementary Programme for East Timor, Indonesia and northern Australia are presented in a separate chapter).

<b>EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b>			
<b>BUDGET (USD)</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Annual Programme</b>	<b>Supplementary Programme**</b>	<b>Total</b>
Australia and New Zealand	951,205	240,100	1,191,305
Cambodia	3,739,571		3,739,571
China	1,804,840		1,804,840
Indonesia (including East Timor)	698,277	15,443,098	16,141,375
Japan	2,685,316		2,685,316
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	1,087,490		1,087,490
Malaysia	683,898		683,898
Papua New Guinea	44,500		44,500
Philippines	354,650		354,650
Singapore	60,700		60,700
Thailand	5,987,452		5,987,452
Vietnam	130,856		130,856
Regional Project*	253,100		253,100
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>18,481,855</b>	<b>15,683,198</b>	<b>34,165,053</b>
<b>Bureau at Headquarters</b>	<b>777,295</b>	<b>194,900</b>	<b>972,195</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,259,150</b>	<b>15,878,098</b>	<b>35,137,248</b>

\* Covers general protection activities and dissemination of refugee law in East Asia, assistance to refugees in the South Pacific and scholarships for refugee students.  
 \*\* Covers needs for the period 1 January to 30 June 2000.