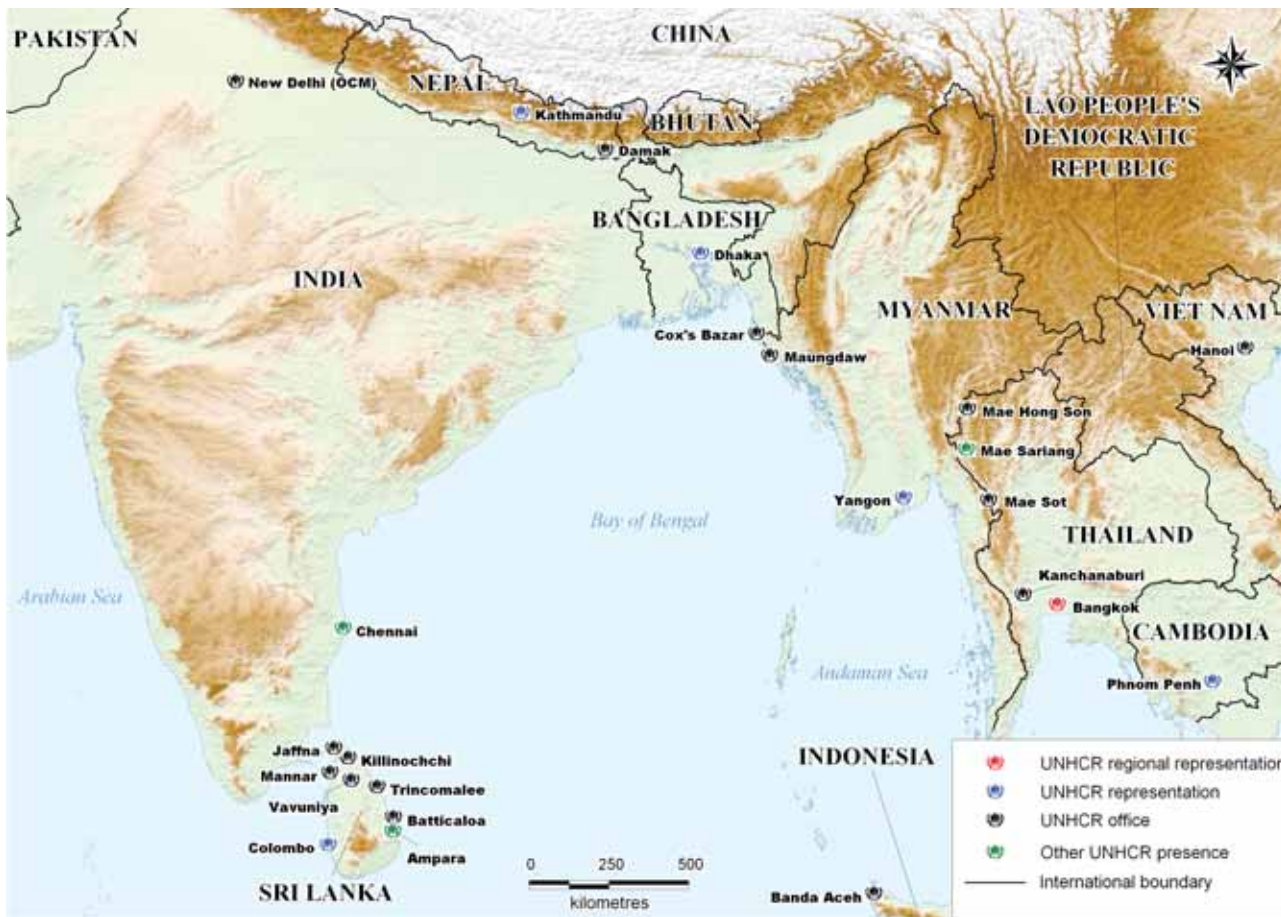


A young girl with dark hair is looking out from a makeshift shelter made of woven fabric. The shelter is constructed from light-colored, textured material, possibly burlap or a similar natural fiber, and is supported by wooden poles. The girl is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame, looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and indistinct, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall tone of the image is somber and evocative, highlighting the living conditions of refugees.

South Asia

Operational highlights

- UNHCR formed a steering group of governments to sharpen the international focus on the refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh. As a result of increased consultations with the Government, UN agencies and international NGOs, who in the past had been barred from working in the camps, were permitted to do so. Individual needs of women, men, boys and girls were identified and redressed through participatory assessments and the completion of the registration in the camps. The registration captured those previously not registered, including newborn children and those arbitrary removed from the registry.
- In India, a positive shift in relations between UNHCR and the Government improved the outlook for refugee protection. There was progress towards durable solutions for Hindu and Sikh refugees from Afghanistan. New protection efforts expanded UNHCR's reach into refugee communities.



- UNHCR led the collective humanitarian response in Sri Lanka in an environment of irregular humanitarian access and unpredictable security conditions. Hostilities between government forces and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam led to the displacement of 200,000 people – adding to the 300,000 displaced since the ceasefire agreement in 2002. More than 18,000 refugees have sought safety in south India.
- In Nepal, effective support from a core group of committed governments allowed the Government

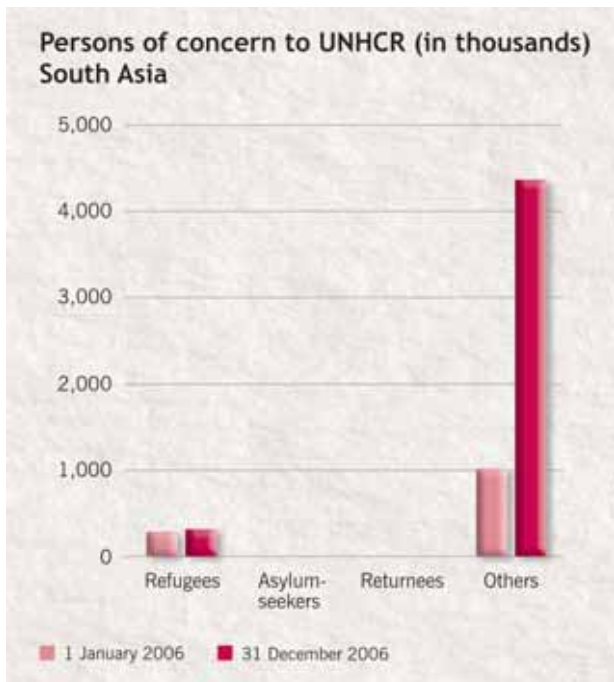
and UNHCR to conduct a census for more than 100,000 refugees who have been living for a decade and a half in seven camps. The Government also agreed to the resettlement of those with special needs.

Working environment

In Nepal, the King relinquished power to a coalition of seven political parties and agreed to reinstate Parliament. A peace accord was subsequently signed by the Government and the Maoist rebels, ending 12 years of bloody conflict. The United Nations is heavily involved in the peace process in areas such as disarmament and election monitoring.

The situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated in 2006, leading to new and massive internal displacement as well as an increase in the number of people fleeing to India. The humanitarian space for UN agencies and NGOs came under increased pressure, as was tragically illustrated by the brutal murder of 17 *Action Internationale Contre La Faïm* (AICF) staff members.

The High Commissioner visited India near the end of 2006 in an environment of increased openness to UNHCR's concerns. The visit reflected the greater interest of the Government of India in dialogue with UNHCR and in developing a legal framework for refugees and asylum-seekers.





UNHCR/G. M. A. Akash

Rohingya refugee in Cox's Bazaar District, Bangladesh.

Achievements and impact

In Nepal, the Government approved the resettlement of vulnerable refugees, offering the potential for lasting solutions for the rest of the population.

UNHCR's involvement with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nepal is focused on areas of return. The Office works closely with OHCHR, OCHA and the Norwegian Refugee Council, among others. Depending on peace and security developments, UNHCR plans to review its involvement with IDPs in Nepal by the end of 2007.

Concerted international attention was instrumental in improving the alarming situation of Muslims from Myanmar's northern Rakhine State in Bangladesh, although challenges remain. The Government agreed to allow international NGOs and other UN agencies to resume work in the camps and improve shelter and sanitation facilities. For the first time, a small number of refugees from the camps were resettled.

Participatory assessments and the completion of registration in the camps in Bangladesh allowed

UNHCR to identify individual refugees' needs and address them. The registration revealed that there were a number of unregistered refugees who shared accommodations and food rations.

A study on the Urdu-speaking Bihari population and their legal status concluded that they should be considered citizens of Bangladesh. While attaining full citizenship for this group remains a challenge, UNHCR successfully negotiated its inclusion in UNDP poverty-reduction programmes.

In India, sustained advocacy campaign for access to naturalization of Afghans of Hindu and Sikh ethnicity and the successful completion of the naturalization process for some in 2006, demonstrates a positive example of the role that states can play in securing solutions for protracted cases.

Constraints

Political turbulence in both Nepal and Bangladesh meant that other national priorities often took precedence over issues related to refugees and asylum.

In Nepal, the rapidly changing political dynamics and uncertainty have posed serious challenges in ensuring the safety and security of the refugees and civilian character of the camps. There is an urgent need to make progress on solutions in light of rising frustrations in the camps, in addition to growing tensions between refugees and local population. The camp population has become increasingly concerned about the stalemate in the bilateral process with regard to return to Bhutan, an issue that remains important in the context of implementation of comprehensive solutions.

All parties to the conflict in Sri Lanka hardened their positions and rhetoric. As a result, humanitarian principles have not always been respected, hampering access by humanitarian agencies who provide protection and assistance to those displaced by the conflict.

Operations

The operations in **Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** are covered under separate chapters.

The registration of all camp-based refugees in **Bangladesh** that was completed in 2006 added 5,000 people to the refugee rolls. With vulnerable groups such as female heads of households identified, protection interventions were more effective and better targeted to respond to their needs.

Training sessions were held for government officials and partners, leading to better management of cases of sexual and gender-based violence. A marked decrease in domestic violence was attributed to increased awareness, UNHCR's presence in the camps and general social education. Sanitary materials were distributed to 81 per cent of all women and girls of reproductive age.

Furthermore, all latrines in both camps for refugees from Myanmar were newly built. The completion of 20 pilot shelters improved shelter for 547 refugees (138 families). All schools were rehabilitated, and most were provided with furniture. Sustained efforts to make local judges and law-enforcement officials aware of refugees' rights resulted in a decline in the number of arbitrary arrests. Lawyers engaged on a pro bono basis helped reduce charges of murder against 44 refugees to lesser ones.

A key area for UNHCR operations in **India** was the promotion of naturalization for Afghan refugees, mainly of Hindu and Sikh origin. A total of 26 refugees so far have been naturalized, 21 of them in 2006. This represents a concrete result of better relations with the Government. However, of the 200 refugees expected to repatriate to Afghanistan in 2006, only 70 did so due to instability in the country.

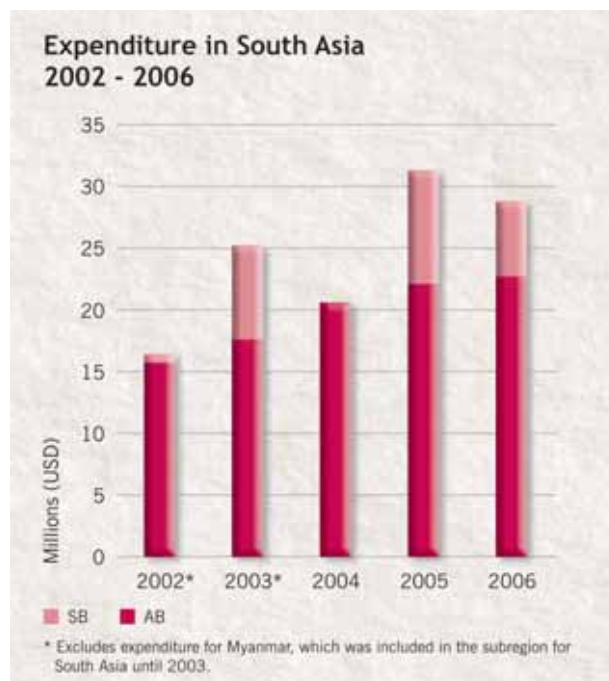
In 2006, UNHCR continued to use resettlement as a protection tool, as a means of resolving protracted cases, and to broaden protection space. The ongoing profiling of all Myanmar refugee women and girls at the Women's Protection Clinic in New Delhi helped to identify those at risk of sexual and other types of violence, provide them with protection and identify individuals in need of resettlement.

Almost 200 urban refugees departed for resettlement in 2006. Of these the largest contingent was made up of Afghans (99), followed by refugees from Myanmar (60). Twenty Somali refugees also departed for resettlement in the reporting year. A sustained push for resettlement resulted in the setting of higher entry quotas by New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States, and in interest in doing so from Norway and other countries.

Financial information

2006 proved to be a difficult budgetary year, with the ExCom-approved budget having to be capped at 80 per cent. Several austerity measures were introduced to meet the crucial needs of refugees within this 80 per cent revised allocation. As a result, programme and budget management were tightly enforced, prioritizing only essential core activities. Restrictive measures were also imposed on the spending of administrative budgets. Overall, on average, the level of expenditures of countries under the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific was 96 per cent of the funds made available for their annual programmes.

UNHCR's expenditures in the subregion of South Asia have been increasing steadily since 2002. A supplementary programme was launched in Sri Lanka in



2002 as UNHCR increased its activities in response to the large-scale spontaneous return movement of IDPs after the ceasefire accord of February 2002. This supplementary programme was increased in 2003 to ensure the sustainability of the return of some 400,000 IDPs. In 2005, another supplementary programme was

created for Sri Lanka for the Tsunami response. The SB for the tsunami response was maintained until June 2006, but at a reduced level, while the AB was increased by USD5 million in September to accommodate new needs as a result of displacement caused by the increase in hostilities.

Budget and expenditure (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	AB	SB ¹	Total	AB	SB	Total
Bangladesh	2,840,715	0	2,840,715	2,655,413	0	2,655,413
India	3,099,017	0	3,099,017	2,965,732	0	2,965,732
Nepal	6,951,181	2,222,938	9,174,119	6,240,177	48,572	6,288,749
Sri Lanka	13,788,431	6,251,637	20,040,068	10,876,974	6,068,402	16,945,376
Total	26,679,344	8,474,575	35,153,919	22,738,296	6,116,974	28,855,270

¹ Does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking	Donor	AB	SB
South Asia			
	Japan	1,000,000	0
	United States	599,111	0
Sub-total		1,599,111	0
Bangladesh			
	Germany	253,807	0
	United States	750,000	0
Sub-total		1,003,807	0
India			
	Australia	48,888	0
	Japan	500,000	0
	Norway	23,962	0
	United States	1,641,661	0
Sub-total		2,214,511	0
Nepal			
	Australia	114,504	101,756
	Denmark	37,500	0
	European Commission	1,317,523	0
	Germany	127,551	0
	Japan	2,000,000	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR	53,388	0
	Luxembourg	197,628	131,752
	New Zealand	10,000	0
	Private donors in Nepal	8,556	0
	Private donors in the United States	2,500	0
	United States	1,500,000	0
Sub-total		5,369,150	233,508

Earmarking	Donor	AB	SB
Sri Lanka			
	CERF	1,989,333	0
	European Commission	2,191,302	0
	Germany	253,807	0
	Japan	1,600,000	0
	Luxembourg	318,066	0
	Netherlands	1,205,000	0
	Norway	772,798	0
	Saudi Red Crescent Society	0	305,000
	Sweden	675,720	0
	United Kingdom	250,000	0
	United States	1,000,000	0
	Sub-total		10,256,025
Total		20,442,605	538,508