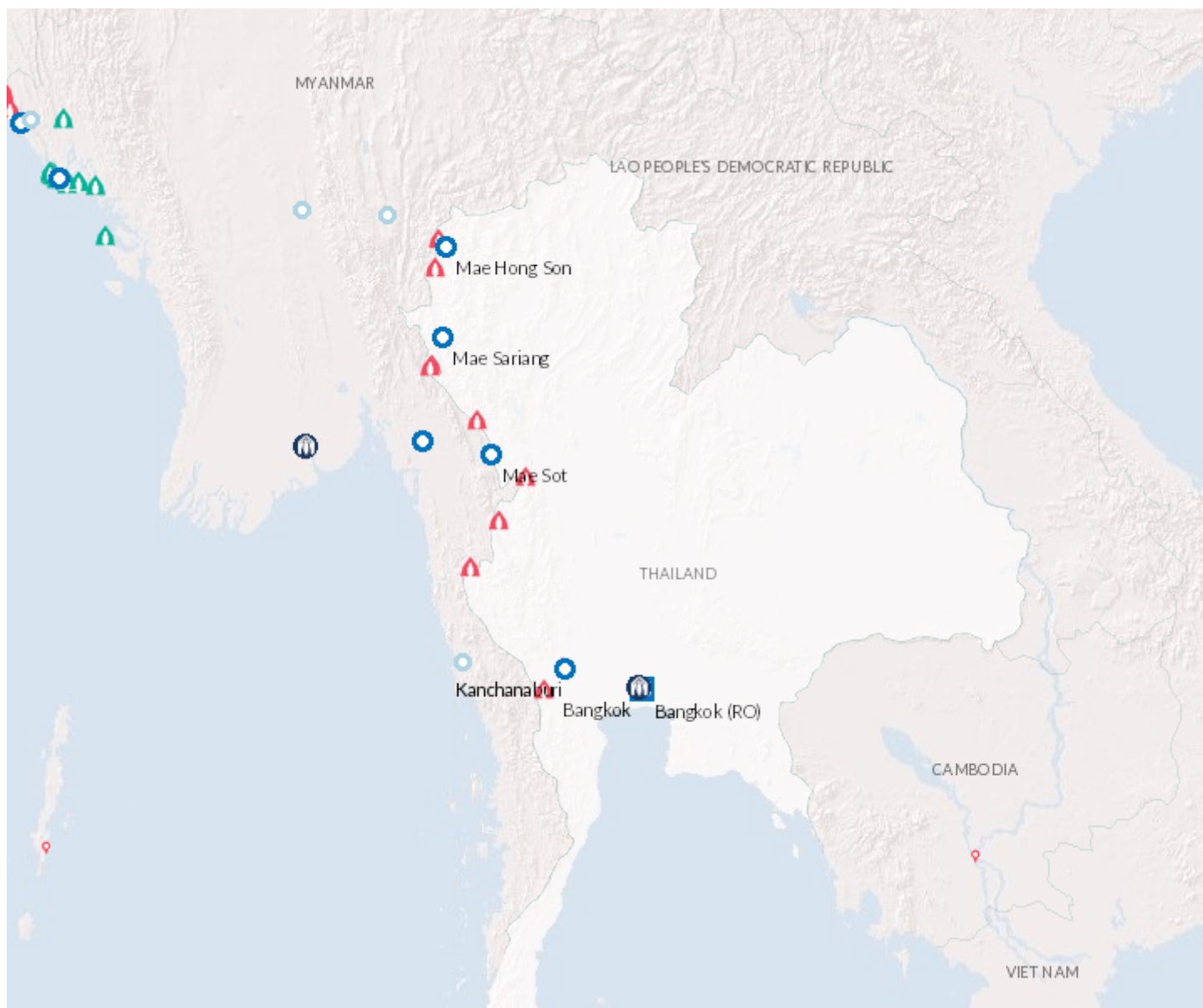


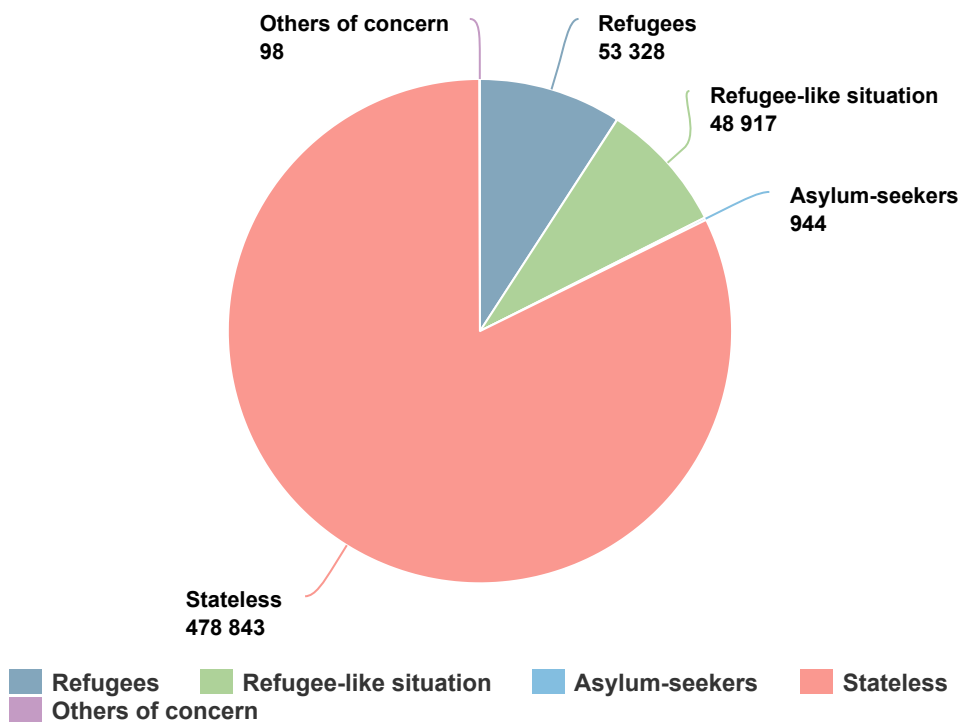
Operation: Thailand



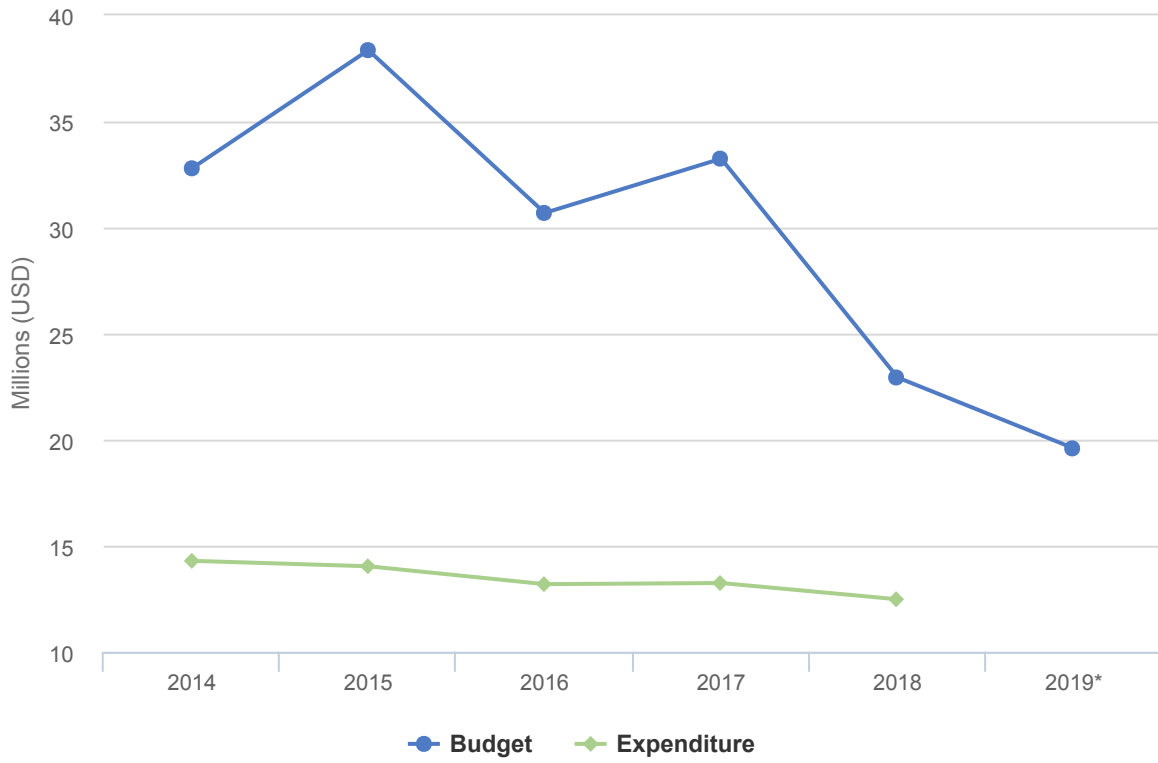
People of Concern

DECREASE IN
2% 2018

2018	582,130
2017	593,241
2016	599,459



Budgets and Expenditure for Thailand



Operational environment

The political, security, and economic context in Thailand remained largely stable throughout 2018.

In the absence of an adequate protective legal framework, urban refugees and asylum-seekers continued to be arrested and detained.

Interest in returns to Myanmar continued to gradually increase, but were hampered by questions about the process, amongst other obstacles.

The Government's strong political will to resolve statelessness resulted in solutions, further reducing the number of stateless persons. Addressing bottlenecks in the system would further accelerate this process.

In 2018, UNHCR started to re-profile its presence at the border; the office in Mae Sariang was closed at year-end, and activities will be covered by the field office in Mae Hong Son as of beginning of 2019.

Population trends

The total population of concern in Thailand stood at some 580,250 at year-end, a slight decrease from the end of 2017. This included close to 102,250 refugees and more than 478,800 stateless persons.

Close to 98,000 verified Myanmar refugees reside in border areas, with reductions largely due to resettlement departures.

The urban population continued to decrease, in part due to resettlement departures and voluntary repatriation. A significant backlog in RSD case processing was resolved, allowing for more efficient assessment of new cases.

The figure of Government-registered stateless persons decreased with nearly 16,160 persons acquiring nationality countrywide in 2018 - a record since the adoption of Thailand's 2005 national strategy to address statelessness.

Key achievements

- UNHCR and partners provided inputs to the Government towards the finalisation of an MoU on alternatives to detention for children.
- Support was provided to the Government in developing a national screening mechanism. Once established, it is hoped that the screening mechanism will regularize in some form the stay of people of concern in Thailand and improve the predictability of asylum space, in line with customary international law and Thailand's human rights obligations.
- 93 refugees returned to Myanmar in 2018, while preparations continued for future movements. Bilateral cooperation mechanisms continued to improve.

Unmet needs

Shortages in funding, but mainly continuing restrictions in formal self-reliance opportunities as well as access to health care, meant that the needs of many urban refugees and asylum-seekers continued to be unaddressed.

With regard to statelessness, due to funding constraints, UNHCR was unable to undertake missions to identify and support stateless persons as often as required.
