

FOREWORD

By the end of 2018, Asia and the Pacific was home to more than 60% of the world's population. As a continent characterised by people on the move seeking new opportunities, there are a host of challenges regarding mixed movements, which often include young and highly mobile populations traveling across the region in search of solutions.

The region hosts approximately 9.5 million people of concern to UNHCR. It presents a set of complex situations, all requiring UNHCR's presence across the spectrum of forced displacement, from emergencies to situations where longer-term solutions are needed, and situations of statelessness.

The region's long-standing tradition of hospitality towards refugees remains strong. This was demonstrated when Bangladesh welcomed approximately 725,000 stateless Rohingya refugees from Myanmar who had fled an eruption of violence in late August 2017. UNHCR's operational context and focus in Bangladesh has dramatically altered to deal with the emergency. In 2019, it will require significant support to respond to the continuing humanitarian needs and work on finding solutions to this crisis, which lie in Myanmar.

In view of the enormous scale and diversity of the challenges facing the people of Rakhine State and the urgent need to find solutions, in 2018 UNHCR began to promote the concept of "A Solidarity Approach for the People of Rakhine State". The approach aims to bring together a broad range of stakeholders in support of

Rohingya refugees make their way down a footpath during a heavy monsoon downpour in Kutupalong refugee settlement, Cox's Bazar district.

resilience, solutions and a decent life for the people of Rakhine State, wherever they may be.

Statelessness remains a significant challenge across the region and will require UNHCR's continued efforts and advocacy work with national governments in 2019. The High-Level Event on Statelessness will mark the mid-point of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024. UNHCR will use the event as an opportunity to strengthen its engagement with States and work with them to ensure they make, and act on, concrete commitments to prevent and eradicate statelessness by 2024.

It has been 40 years since the start of the large-scale displacement of Afghans in 1979, yet with 2.6 million Afghans worldwide, Afghan refugees still constitute just over 13% of the global refugee population. More than ever, the situation requires long-term solutions that create conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation. In line with this,

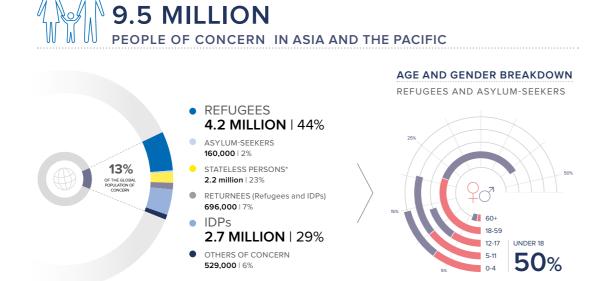
in late 2018, Afghanistan committed to apply the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). This welcome development will complement the "Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries" (SSAR). The SSAR has been the main multi-year regional framework for solutions to Afghan refugees living in protracted situations, mainly in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, as well as for addressing the mixed nature of population movements.

Building on previous years, in 2019 UNHCR will continue to provide assistance and protection to people of concern, finding solutions for them and strengthening partnerships with a range of actors.

As UNHCR confronts some of the greatest challenges to its work around the world, it appeals to the international community for continued support of refugees, stateless persons and displaced populations in the Asia and the Pacific region.

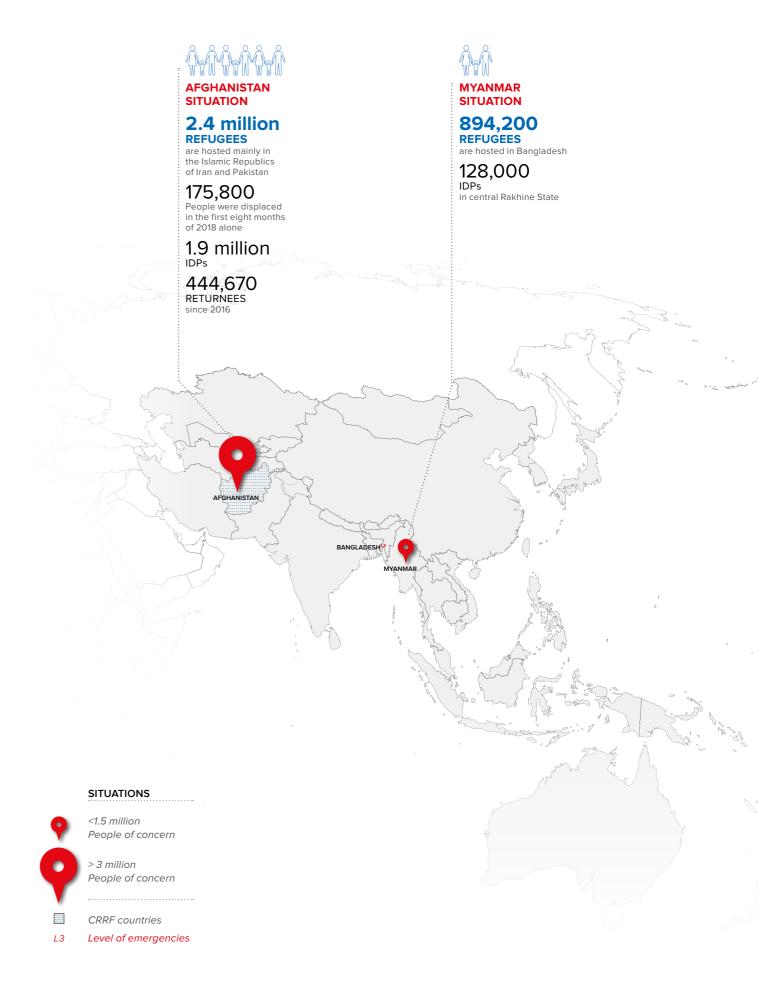
Indrika Ratwatte

Director of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific



 * The stateless population includes 932,000 Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh and 126,000 stateless IDPs in Myanmar who are counted in refugee and IDP populations.

Official population figures as of January 2018



Population figures for the situations on this map are the most up-to-date in 2018

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MAJOR SITUATIONS

While Asia and the Pacific continues to enjoy overall economic growth and rising living standards, in 2019 millions of people will remain without a nationality, documentation or a place to call home. The region was home to 9.5 million people of concern to UNHCR towards the end of 2018–including 4.2 million refugees, 2.7 million IDPs and 2.2 million stateless persons. Most of the region's refugees are from Afghanistan and Myanmar: two very different UNHCR operations that illustrate the complexity of the Office's work in Asia and the Pacific and why its presence is necessary.

Violence in Afghanistan continues to displace families and prevents many from returning home. As some have been displaced from their homes for several years, even decades, the situation demands innovative longer-term solutions from UNHCR. The Office's focus remains on creating conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation and supporting communities hosting Afghan refugees.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar who fled to Bangladesh to escape violence are living in extremely overcrowded and precarious conditions in settlements and camps. Their needs are comprehensive and require the Office's extensive emergency assistance and that of a wide range of partners. The region is also home to around half of the world's stateless persons.

Afghanistan situation



Afghans remain the largest refugee population of concern to UNHCR in Asia and the Pacific, with some 1.4 million Afghan refugees hosted by Pakistan and close to

1 million by the Islamic Republic of Iran.
Both countries also host large numbers of undocumented Afghans, some of whom may also need international protection.
Additionally, it is estimated that there are 1.9 million IDPs in Afghanistan as of September 2018. In 2018, the volatile security situation in Afghanistan continued to drive displacement, with more than 175,800 people forced to flee their homes in the first eight months of the year.

While the SSAR remains the overarching framework for solutions to Afghan displacement, due to the record number of displaced people worldwide, there is a growing recognition that forced displacement is not just a humanitarian but also a political, peacebuilding and development challenge. The global compact on refugees and the associated CRRF, along with the global compact for migration, will complement the SSAR in providing a comprehensive framework for addressing the mixed nature of population movements in a holistic manner. Mobilizing resources and political support for Afghan refugees is increasingly challenged by other humanitarian crises around the world. The SSAR will seek to build on these global initiatives and expand partnerships to find solutions to Afghan displacement.

Safe from the Start Program of the Start Program of

Gul Bibi is a strong advocate for women in her Afghan community in Quetta, Pakistan. Thanks to tailoring skills learned at a UNHCR and UNIQLO-funded training centre, she is able to support her family. Gul Bibi is an example of change happening in her community.

UNIQLO mobilizes comprehensive support for the refugee cause

Since 2007, the scope of UNHCR's partnership with UNIQLO has grown in a unique and comprehensive manner. Under the current global partnership agreement, UNIQLO's contribution of \$10 million has strengthened UNHCR's livelihoods programme in the Asia and the Pacific region, by providing emergency response in the form of in-kind donations. Additionally, 65 refugees are currently employed in UNIQLO stores globally, and more than 120,000 students have been taught refugee issues by UNIQLO employees in Japan. This multifaceted partnership serves as a model for how UNHCR will continue to partner with the private sector to mobilize comprehensive support for the refugee cause.

Pakistan hosts more than 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees, and fewer of them are leaving the country to return home. Through the UNHCR-facilitated voluntary repatriation programme, 58,800 Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan in 2017, primarily from Pakistan. But, nine months into 2018, only around 13,300 had returned, mostly from Pakistan (89%), with the remaining 11% returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran. UNHCR has facilitated and supported the voluntary return of more than 5.2 million Afghan refugees since 2002. It will continue to do so in 2019, though the rate of return is expected to remain modest due to insecurity in Afghanistan.

In Pakistan, the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) initiative continues to play a major role in promoting social cohesion between refugees and host communities. The Government also registered nearly 880,000 undocumented Afghans, providing them with Afghan Citizen Cards (ACCs), which do not confer refugee status but regularize temporary stay in Pakistan.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to extend protection and assistance to close to 1 million Afghan and Iragi refugees. It has also taken steps to regularize the large undocumented Afghan population residing within its borders. It is implementing inclusive social protection policies that facilitate access for all Afghan children to school and enable all refugees to enrol in the national universal public health insurance scheme. UNHCR will support the Government's efforts by covering the insurance premium fees of identified extremely vulnerable refugees while working with the Government to seek sustainable solutions.

The SSAR helps facilitate voluntary return and sustainable reintegration for Afghan refugees, while providing assistance to host countries.



Trailblazing health scheme benefits refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the few countries to provide medical insurance for refugees on the same basis as its own citizens.

"This initiative by the Government of Iran is certainly exemplary, particularly as it has resulted in the inclusion of refugees in its national health system," says Irina Korenyak, a UNHCR official in the Islamic Republic of Iran.





An Iranian doctor visits Afghan refugees at a health centre in Savejbolagh in Alborz province, northwest of Tehran.

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5.2

million

Afghan refugees

since 2002 with

UNHCR support.

voluntary returned

Myanmar situation

900,000 stateless Rohingya refugees estimated in Bangladesh in 2019 including 200,000 who fled Rakhine

State previously.



The refugee emergency in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh remains a major operational focus for UNHCR, where it will continue its support to the Government of

Bangladesh in providing protection and lifesaving assistance. More than a year after the start of the current crisis, Rohingya refugees continue to flee to Bangladesh, albeit in smaller numbers than in 2017. UNHCR projects that there will be approximately 900,000 stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh in 2019, including an estimated 200,000 who fled Rakhine State in previous waves of displacement.

As part of its strategic priorities in Bangladesh, in 2019 UNHCR will work to secure the legal identity of Rohingya refugees, which has been denied in Myanmar, strengthening the protective environment for refugees and ensuring they can enjoy basic human rights.

Moreover, the Office will improve the living

conditions for refugees in settlements while bolstering peaceful coexistence with host communities, empowering refugees and supporting the establishment of governance systems that promote resilience.

There is an urgent need for solutions to the significant challenges facing the people of Rakhine State, including voluntary repatriation or other solutions that will allow refugees to live safe and dignified lives. In this regard, the "Solidarity Approach for the People of Rakhine State" presents several opportunities for States and other actors, including regional organisations, international financial institutions, NGOs, refugees, influential individuals and private sector actors to help identify comprehensive solutions for the people of Rakhine State, both inside and outside Myanmar. UNHCR will aim to build consensus among the diverse groups of stakeholders around a coherent approach, ensuring relevant actors are consulted throughout the process.

There will be a focus on putting into action the tripartite memorandum of

Teacher works overtime to give Rohingya girls a chance to learn

Alinesa got a late start on her own education. Now a devoted teacher, she is intent on helping young refugees get the schooling they need.

"I'm so happy to get this chance to study. I didn't know how to read or write before I came here. Now I'm learning," says Rosina Akhter.

According to a UNHCR report, only 61% of refugee children worldwide are enrolled in primary school, 23% in secondary and 1% in tertiary education.



Working to help young Rohingya refugee girls get some schooling in displacement. Recently arrived Rohingya refugee, Rosina Akhter, 12, is in school for the first time in her life.

understanding (MoU) signed by UNHCR, UNDP and the Government of Myanmar in June 2018. The MoU established a framework for cooperation aimed at creating conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable repatriation of Rohingya refugees. In September 2018, following authorization from the Government of Myanmar, UNHCR and UNDP began assessments in 23 villages. This was the first step of a phased implementation of the MoU that also aims to foster social cohesion. UNHCR is continuing to engage with the Government of Myanmar to increase access for humanitarian and development agencies. While acknowledging the Government's challenges and constraints, UNHCR will stress that gradual but steady progress is necessary and that with the completion of the first phase, assessments should be quickly expanded to other areas.

REGIONAL STRATEGY

The humanitarian needs of people of concern to UNHCR in the Asia and the Pacific region are vast, diverse and show no immediate signs of abating. In the first half of 2018, 11,500 more people were forced to flee to Bangladesh from Myanmar because of violence and insecurity. In 2018, some 336,000 people left their homes and belongings to find safety as IDPs in another part of their country (Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Philippines). The Office will continue to strengthen protection, provide assistance and seek solutions for refugees and other people of concern, in line with its Global Strategic Priorities. With the specific opportunities and challenges of the Asia and the Pacific region in mind, UNHCR has identified the following priorities for its work in 2019.

Safeguarding access to protection and asylum

While advocating for States to establish or improve their asylum procedures, and supporting that process, UNHCR will continue to promote protection-sensitive systems for managing mixed movements in the region. It will also continue to undertake refugee status determination in countries without national asylum procedures.

The Office will work with States and other stakeholders to identify alternatives to detaining asylum-seekers, ensure people of concern are protected, and establish mechanisms that achieve solutions for them, including regional schemes beyond resettlement to third countries, such as labour mobility agreements. Strengthening the protection of refugee communities and internally displaced will remain a key priority in 2019.

In September 2018, the Government of Pakistan approved the extension of the validity of "proof of registration" cards until the end of June 2019.

In South-East Asia, UNHCR will remain actively involved in the Bali Process.
The 7th ministerial conference of the Bali Process in August 2018 provided an opportunity for relevant States to reaffirm the commitments of the 2016 Bali Declaration. Furthermore, it provided a platform to seek support from regional States and actors for sharing responsibility of the Rohingya refugee crisis through the "Solidarity Approach for the People of Rakhine State", as outlined above. UNHCR will continue

336,000 IDPs in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and the Philippines in the first half of 2018.

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1,500Sri Lankan
refugees returned
home in 2017.
By mid-2018 there
had been 675
returns recorded.

its engagement with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to address the root causes of displacement in Rakhine State and ensure that the return of Rohingya refugees is sustainable.

In Central Asia, as part of ongoing efforts to safeguard access to asylum procedures, UNHCR and IOM will continue to support the chair of the Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration. Furthermore, they will continue to collaborate with other organizations and initiatives that engage border officials from the five central Asian countries to strengthen border management systems.

Seeking durable solutions for protracted refugee situations

The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and the country's limited absorption capacity for returnees mean UNHCR does not promote refugee returns. However, it will continue to assist those who choose to voluntarily return in 2019, in accordance with its mandate and within the framework of the SSAR and CRRF.

In 2017, more than 1,500 Sri Lankan refugees returned home—the largest number of returnees in five years. By mid-2018, there were 675 returns recorded, therefore, returns in 2018 are expected to exceed 2017. UNHCR will continue to work closely with the Sri Lankan and Indian authorities to enhance opportunities for return in 2019.

From the start of the large-scale third-country resettlement programme in 2008 to August 2018, more than 113,000 Bhutanese refugees arrived in eight resettlement countries, with 85% travelling to the United States of America. By the end of 2018, the resettlement programme will come to an end. An estimated 6,500 refugees remain in Damak, Nepal, and UNHCR will continue to identify durable and dignified solutions to bring this protracted displacement situation to closure.



Using telecommunications to improve clinical healthcare in refugee camps in Nepal

The implementation of resettlement programmes to third countries meant the number of Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal's camps was declining. UNHCR sought new and innovative ways to provide health services efficiently and effectively to the remaining Bhutanese refugee population in Nepal. UNHCR tested "telemedicine" to strengthen night-time emergency medical services for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. The project used information and communications technology to enable night medical staff to treat non-emergency cases by distance, allowing doctors to communicate directly with specialists in government-run secondary and tertiary health care centres. This helped to reach more patients more effectively and reduced the number of referrals.



A UNHCR Health Associate interviews local staff to better understand how night-time emergency medical services can be improved in the Beldangi refugee camp located among the settlements in Damak, Jhapa District, Nepal.



UNHCR continues to advocate for alternative pathways for refugees in the region. For example, it supports scholarship programmes sponsored by the Government of Japan that enable Syrian refugees to pursue post-graduate education. The programme started in 2017 and is expected to continue in 2019.

Ensuring protection and durable solutions for IDPs

There are 2.7 million IDPs in the region, with an estimated 1.9 million in Afghanistan. The situation in the country is expected to remain critical for IDPs in 2019, requiring continued support from UNHCR for their specific needs. The Office will provide core relief items to IDP families in the country. UNHCR will also continue to support community-based protection measures to reduce protection risks and vulnerabilities while fostering peaceful coexistence and the reintegration of returnees and IDPs with local host communities, including persons with specific needs. These measures will continue to include: community support facilities and infrastructure, in-cash and in-kind support for subsistence, promoting representation in community decision-making structures, and skills development for employment, particularly focused on women and youth.

In the Philippines, more than 106,000 IDPs remain on the southern island of Mindanao, including those affected by the Marawi conflict. UNHCR is focused on supporting the Government in promoting the voluntary, safe and dignified return of 77,170 displaced families, or finding alternative solutions for those who used to reside in the most affected areas and are unable to return.

In Myanmar, the Office will continue to work with partners and the Government to protect and assist approximately 107,000 IDPs in Kachin and northern Shan States. In central Rakhine State, there are an estimated 128,000 IDPs and UNHCR will continue to urge the Government to develop a plan to close the IDP camps, in line with the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

Reducing and preventing statelessness and protecting stateless persons

With 2.2 million stateless persons in the Asia and the Pacific region, addressing statelessness remains a key strategic priority, and for which UNHCR maintains close cooperation with ASEAN. The most urgent situation in the region is that of the Rohingya in Myanmar where, as a direct result of their statelessness, they suffer entrenched discrimination, marginalisation and the denial of a wide range of basic human rights, which has resulted in successive waves of displacement. UNHCR will continue its work with the Government to address the root causes of displacement and work to ensure Rohingya can meaningfully enjoy their fundamental human rights and, ultimately, a pathway to citizenship.

As 2019 marks the mid-way point of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024, UNHCR will strengthen its engagement with States across the region and other partners to achieve the campaign's goals, build on the region's related successes and encourage new commitments.

There were

2.2 million
stateless persons
in the Asia and the
Pacific region by
mid-2018.



77,170displaced families in Mindanao,
Philppines, will be supported to voluntary return or find alternatives solutions in 2019.

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"In all my life, I've not known even five minutes of peace."

Four generations of a Rohingya refugee family describe how statelessness has clouded their lives and hopes of returning to Myanmar. Her eyes milky with age, 90-year-old Gul Zahar looks back on a lifetime of injustices that have stalked her family. Back home in Myanmar, Gul's family lacked basic rights and freedoms. She first fled to Bangladesh in 1978, then again in 1991, and once more in August 2018, when her village was torched in a deadly attack. Now a great-grandmother, she lives in a one-room shelter in this Bangladesh refugee settlement with four generations of her extended family.

"It's been a lifetime of sorrow," she says.



Oli Ahmed, 53, his mother, Gul Zahar, 90, and his son, Mohammad Siddiq, 25, pose for a photo in the family's shelter in Bangladesh.

470,000 stateless persons registered in Thailand.

The Royal Thai Government continues to express strong political will to resolve the issue of statelessness. It has endorsed UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign and has become a leader among the Campaign's "group of friends". It provided nationality to more than 110,000 stateless persons between 2008 and mid-2018. UNHCR will continue to work with the Royal Thai Government to speed up the processing of nationality applications for the 470,000-plus registered stateless persons in the country.

In Central Asia, between 2014 and mid-2018, a total of 46,200 people had their statelessness situation resolved. In addition, in June 2018, all five countries in Central Asia reaffirmed their willingness to work towards the reduction and prevention of childhood statelessness at a regional conference on the right to legal identity and prevention of statelessness. Building on these positive achievements made in Central Asia, UNHCR will continue to prioritize the reduction of statelessness in the sub-region in 2019.

CONSTRAINTS

Insecurity in Afghanistan makes humanitarian access difficult in some parts of the country. UNHCR staff, and particularly national staff, are also vulnerable to attacks and injury.

In Bangladesh, the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar remain overcrowded, and facilities are overstretched. Existing coordination mechanisms must be adapted to enable different national and international stakeholders to work together more effectively in pursuit of common goals in the areas of protection, humanitarian assistance, development, resilience and support for host communities.

In Myanmar, particularly in northern Rakhine State, UNHCR will continue to advocate for effective humanitarian access. It will continue to work towards the successful implementation of the tripartite MoU between UNHCR, UNDP, and the Government of Myanmar.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Budget

- \$775 million, accounting for 9% of UNHCR's overall budget.
- +11% compared to 2018 current budget mainly due to \$77.1 million increase for the continued response to the needs of Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh, and despite a reduced budget due to limited humanitarian access in Afghanistan which is affecting the implementation of the reintegration programme.

Regional budget breakdown per Pillar

- 79% of the regional budget is allocated to Pillar 1 (refugee programmes).
- 12% to Pillar 3 (reintegration projects) in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- 4% to Pillar 2 (stateless programmes).
- 4% to Pillar 4 (IDP projects).

Sub-regional needs

- 52% of the regional budget (\$403 million) is allocated to the South-East Asia. sub-region mainly related to the Myanmar situation.
- 41% of the regional budget (\$320 million) is planned for the South-West Asia sub-region mainly to cover the needs related to the Afghanistan situation.

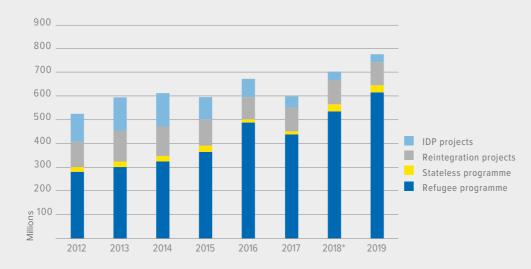
Major rights groups

- 53% of the regional budget (\$409 million) is allocated to cover the basic needs and essential services for people of concern and to deliver lifesaving assistance.
- 23% of the regional budget is planned for durable solutions and community empowerment and self-reliance (\$82 million and \$93 million respectively).



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BUDGETS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2012-2019 | USD millions



* As of 30 June 2018

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2019 BUDGET BY RIGHTS GROUP | USD millions



BUDGETS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC | USD

	ALL PILLARS	PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	PILLAR 4	
	2018			2019		
OPERATION	Current budget (as of 30 June 2018)	Refugee programmes	Stateless programmes	Reintegration projects	IDP projects	TOTAL
CENTRAL ASIA						
Kazakhstan Regional Office ¹	5,520,373	4,328,075	1,200,774	-	-	5,528,849
Kyrgyzstan	913,899	539,101	274,735	-	-	813,836
Tajikistan	2,181,727	1,317,877	1,015,585	-	-	2,333,462
SUBTOTAL	8,615,999	6,185,054	2,491,094	-	-	8,676,147
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC						
Australia Regional Office ²	3,074,491	3,107,803	46,818	_	-	3,154,621
China	4,871,650	4,963,622	136,379	-	-	5,100,000
Japan	3,504,112	3,474,354	64,777	-	-	3,539,131
Republic of Korea	1,734,528	1,980,508	92,319	-	-	2,072,827
Regional activities	1,082,333	2,782,579	-	-	-	2,782,579
SUBTOTAL	14,267,114	16,308,866	340,292	-	-	16,649,158
SOUTH ASIA						
India	15,814,434	16,019,427	148,804	-	-	16,168,231
Nepal	6,727,104	5,019,071	480,929	-	-	5,500,000
Sri Lanka	5,141,830	4,071,629	31,136	-	-	4,102,765
SUBTOTAL	27,683,367	25,110,127	660,869	-	-	25,770,996
SOUTH-EAST ASIA						
Bangladesh	220,442,812	307,553,397	-	-	-	307,553,397
Indonesia	7,190,917	7,864,301	365,047	-	-	8,229,348
Malaysia	16,593,397	17,088,602	863,183	-	-	17,951,785
Myanmar	46,116,560	6,973,421	22,230,162	-	9,520,417	38,724,000
Philippines	4,051,402	397,796	392,338	-	2,867,883	3,658,017
Thailand	24,932,669	18,632,009	920,504	-	-	19,552,513
Thailand Regional Office ³	7,260,299	7,106,737	913,146	-	-	8,019,883
SUBTOTAL	326,588,056	365,616,263	25,684,380	-	12,388,301	403,688,943
SOUTH-WEST ASIA						
Afghanistan	125,834,134	29,156,568	-	71,229,102	21,320,010	121,705,680
Iran, Islamic Republic of	98,756,622	98,916,706	-	-	-	98,916,706
Pakistan	99,201,669	73,015,649	558,163	25,627,856	-	99,201,669
SUBTOTAL	323,792,426	201,088,924	558,163	96,856,958	21,320,010	319,824,055
TOTAL	700,946,962	614,309,233	29,734,798	96,856,958	33,708,311	774,609,300

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² Covers New Zealand, the Pacific Island countries and Papua New Guinea.
³ Includes activities in Cambodia, Mongolia and Viet Nam.