

THAILAND

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that the fundamentals of international protection, particularly the principles of asylum and *non-refoulement* are respected and effectively implemented.
- Ensure that refugee populations in the Thai-Myanmar border area are safe from armed incursions, that their protection and assistance needs are adequately met, and that the civilian character of refugee camps is maintained.
- Promptly identify and protect individual asylum-seekers and promote the development of national refugee legislation and status determination procedures consistent with international standards.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

Myanmar Refugees

The rate of new arrivals in the first half of 2001 averaged 737 persons per month, compared to 1,522 persons per month during the same period last year. This suggests that asylum-seekers may be facing greater constraints in crossing the border into Thailand. UNHCR has continued experiencing difficulties in gaining regular access to the Provincial Admission Boards and ascertaining that transparent and uniform procedures are applied for admission of asylum-seekers to the camps.

The Office has stepped up resettlement of the remaining refugees in the Maneeloy Burmese Student Centre (MBSC). A total of 553 persons were resettled during the first half of the year. It is expected that the remaining 377 residents will have been resettled by the end of the year when MBSC is scheduled to close.

According to the agreement between the Thai Government and UNHCR, on the harmonisation of policy on the treatment of Myanmar refugees throughout Thailand, all refugees living outside the camps are to be transferred to the Thai-Myanmar border camps. However, there has been little progress in this regard, and UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to refugees outside camps, pending their transfer by the authorities to the border camps.

The Thai Government and UNHCR are jointly updating the register of all camp populations, enabling UNHCR to intervene more effectively on protection issues on behalf of refugees. The data on vulnerable persons obtained through the registration exercise has assisted NGOs to deliver targeted assistance in camps. Furthermore, a survey of women, children and other vulnerable groups has been conducted, the results of which will be shared with the authorities and NGOs.

While NGOs have been providing the bulk of assistance in the camps, UNHCR has provided support in areas not covered by the NGOs such as environmental protection, waste management and gardening activities. UNHCR has been expanding such activities to cover more camps this year, and environment issues have been incorporated as a subject of the secondary school curriculum. An increasing number of mine incidents and injuries in the Mae Sariang area prompted UNHCR to organise a mine risk education workshop in three camps in Tak province, targeting youth and women's groups. Similar workshops will soon be held in other camps. UNHCR has provided school supplies to all camps in collaboration with NGOs. UNHCR continued to assist provincial hospitals offering medical services to refugees from Myanmar.

Progress as measured against selected indicators

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Camp environment preserved through the collection and disposal of garbage as well as recycling and separation of metals, plastics, etc.	Forty stations in Umpium, 20 stations in Nu Pho and 12 stations in Mae La were set up for the collection and disposal of garbage.
Better response to the needs of the vulnerable refugees residing in the camps.	Sixteen social counsellors were recruited to attend vulnerable cases. All the teams are in place and the recruitment of social workers amongst the refugee population is underway.
Increased awareness of environmental issues as a visible impact on camp conditions.	Books for students and teachers were translated. Teachers were recruited and trained. Implementation of environmental education at the secondary level from level 5 started at the beginning of the school year.
No visible degradation of camp premises and surroundings.	Environmental committees were set up in Umpium, Nu Pho and Mae La camps. An inventory of the trees in Umpium took place. In Mae La, soil analyses were undertaken in order to select seeds and crops, which will be planted in order to prevent erosion.
Registration database includes more relevant information in order to enhance the protection of refugees.	Collection of data on vulnerable persons in all camps was conducted.
Clear comprehension of information on mine education programmes.	Workshops were organised in the three camps in Tak Province, aimed at youth and women's groups.
Orientation seminars conducted for NGOs and Thai authorities (civil and military).	Three workshops were organised with NGOs on education, gender and health/sanitation. Two workshops were held for the Thai military forces in peacekeeping.
Training workshop on financial reporting organised.	One workshop was organised with the Ministry of Interior and UNHCR on the reporting procedures.

Urban refugees

In the absence of national refugee legislation and refugee status determination procedures, UNHCR continues to carry out the status determination of individual asylum-seekers of various nationalities arriving in Thailand. The number of new applications received during the first six months of the year was much higher compared with the same period last year and 72 persons have been recognised. In addition, UNHCR has been undertaking regular visits to monitor, counsel and assist refugees and asylum-seekers in detention.

Greater emphasis has been placed on education of urban refugees this year. As a result, 81 per cent of refugee children are now enrolled in formal and non-formal schools, while the remaining 19 per cent receive informal education from NGOs and relatives.

The quality of medical services at the Bangkok Refugee Centre has been improved to cater for patients visiting the outpatient department of the centre's clinic.

Progress as measured against selected indicators

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
No incidence of delay or rescheduling of departure due to factors under UNHCR's control.	A total of 92 refugees were resettled during the reporting period and no delay occurred.
Refugees enjoy basic standards of living.	An average of 300 refugees received monthly cash allowances. Around 50 home assessments were conducted during the reporting period.
The overall health status of the refugee population remains satisfactory.	A monthly average of 200 refugees benefit from free medical treatment and some 40 refugees per month are referred to hospitals if needed.
Detention conditions improved through counselling services.	Detention centre visits in Bangkok took place every two months in order to provide assistance (cash allowances) and follow up on protection, medical and social problems.
Education programme meets the needs of children coming from various origins.	81 per cent of the children enrolled in Thai schools with successful examination results.
Asylum seekers undergo swift refugee status determination.	Rate of recognition is 29 per cent and rejection is at 42 per cent. Twenty-nine percent of the claims were not pursued and the files closed.
Enhanced expertise of academics on refugee issues.	Agreements were reached with two Thai universities for study and courses on human rights and refugee law.
Enhanced public awareness on refugee issues through the organisation of events.	Organisation of activities in the main camps for World Refugee day with press coverage.

REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR JULY-DECEMBER

The initial objectives for Myanmar and urban refugees in Thailand remain unchanged. UNHCR will continue to place particular emphasis on the following:

- The promotion of effective admission procedures and international refugee

standards, in particular the principle of *non-refoulement*.

- The uniform application of admission criteria to include not only those fleeing fighting but also those fleeing the consequences thereof.
- The effective implementation of the Thai Government's harmonisation policy thereby ensuring fair and equal treatment of all Myanmar asylum-seekers and refugees in Thailand.

FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available ¹	Total Funds Obligated
APB	5,440,249	5,349,583	3,990,884	2,114,200

¹Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the regional, sub-regional and/or country level, opening balance and adjustments.