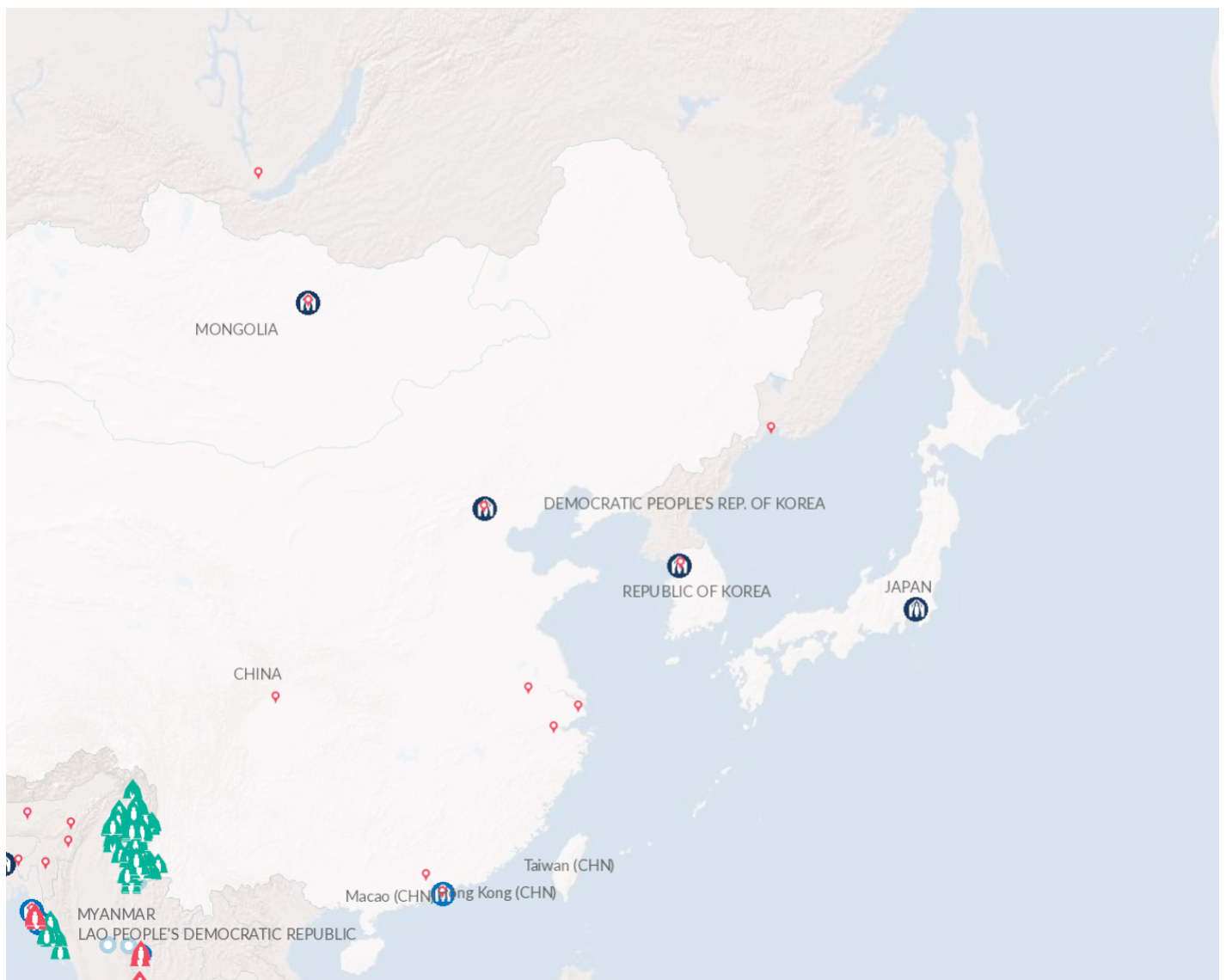


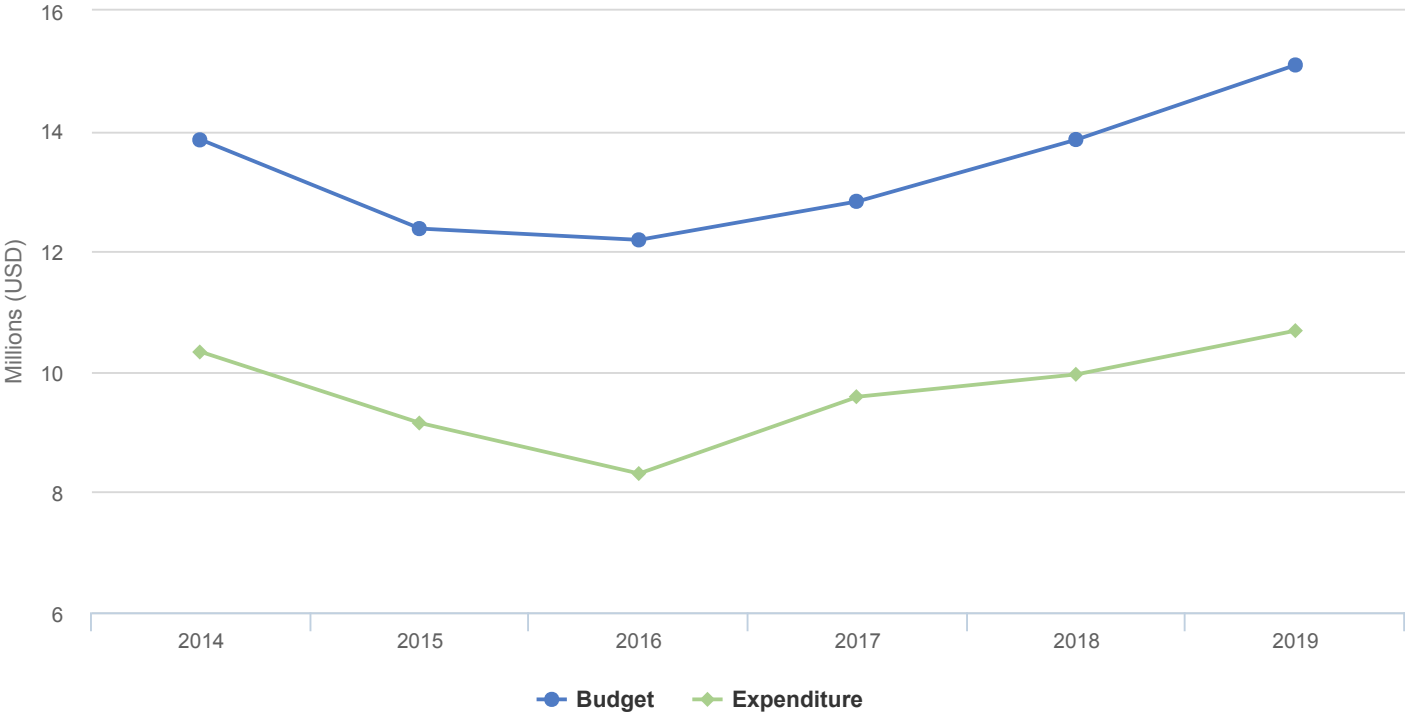
## Subregion: East Asia and the Pacific

| Australia | China (including Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions) | Japan | New Zealand | Pacific Island States | Papua New Guinea | Republic of Korea |

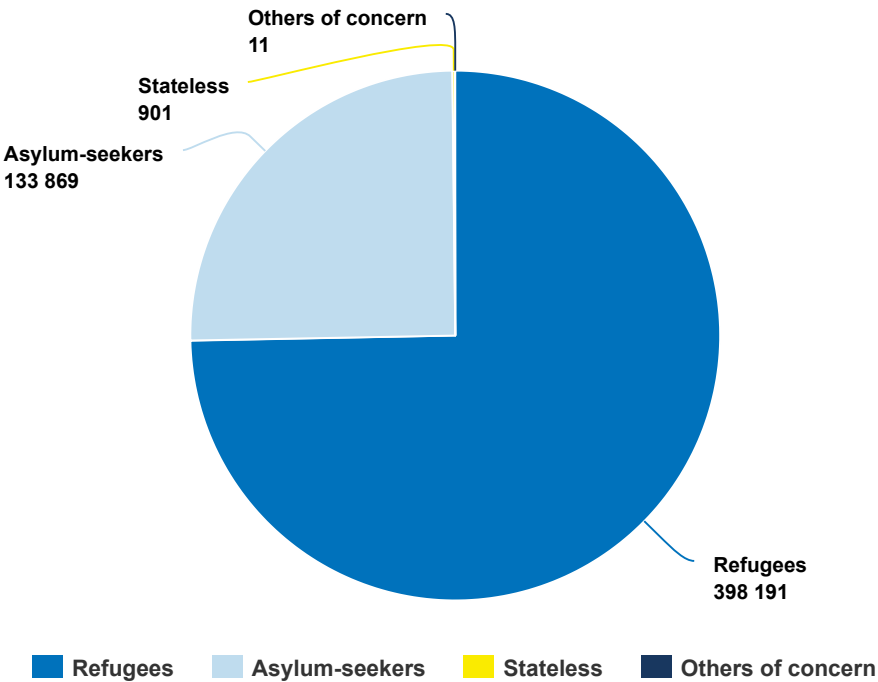


*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*

# Budgets and Expenditure in Subregion East Asia and the Pacific



# People of Concern - 2019



## Response in 2019

In 2019, UNHCR advocated with countries in East Asia and the Pacific to strengthen national asylum systems, address case backlogs and enable durable solutions.

### *East Asia*

The Republic of Korea received asylum-seekers from a range of countries in 2019 and processed their claims through its national asylum system. The Republic of Korea issued over 9,000 refugee status determination (RSD) decisions in 2019, and registered over 19,000 new applications (15,450) and appeals (4,060) during the same period. The country maintained its resettlement programme, offering durable solutions to refugees in need. Some 150 refugees have been resettled to the Republic of Korea since its pilot program was initiated in 2015, of which 37 arrived in 2019.

Japan received asylum-seekers from a range of countries and processed their claims through its national asylum system. Japan also maintained its resettlement program, admitting 190 refugees since 2010, including 20 in 2019 alone. In June 2019 Japan expanded its resettlement programme by doubling of its quota to 60 places and expanding its selection criteria. Japan also supported complementary pathways, admitting some 50 Syrian refugee students through education visas, together with their families, since 2017. At the end of 2019, nearly 700 individuals in Japan had been identified as stateless with lawful residence to remain in the country. UNHCR continued to support the efforts of partners and stakeholders, including the Government of Japan, civil society, academia and the private sector, in further developing assistance and protection mechanisms to meet identified needs.

In mainland China, UNHCR registered 900 people of concern from 38 countries during 2019, providing them with support and assistance. Hong Kong SAR was host to 200 people of concern, of whom 130 were refugees and another 70 had their claims substantiated through the Government's unified screening mechanism but had not been identified as mandate refugees. A further 300 claims and around 3,700 appeals remained pending with the authorities. Macao SAR has not granted refugee status in the past, and two claims remained pending before the authorities. China continued to host some 303,100 refugees who fled from Indo-China in the 1970s and were socially and economically integrated in the country.

Countries in the East Asia region continued to promote the protection and well-being of all people of concern through different forms of support to UNHCR and to host countries worldwide. Countries in the region also made substantive pledges at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2019, demonstrating a commitment to include refugees and people of concern in development planning and to strengthen national asylum systems.

Despite the hospitality displayed within the region, various challenges remained. Due to legal restrictions in China, refugees and asylum-seekers were unable to work and therefore depended on UNHCR for the most basic assistance. This support was inevitably insufficient to meet all identified needs for shelter, health care, education and domestic items. UNHCR lacked the necessary human resources to fully meet requests for technical support from partners, as well as to carry out advocacy and awareness-raising on protection matters.

### *The Pacific*

In the Pacific, UNHCR focused on training and awareness-raising and the promotion of refugee policy and legislation through bilateral engagement as well as through regional entities such as the Pacific Immigration Development Conference. UNHCR provided technical expertise, while establishing effective partnerships and raising awareness on the protection and nationality dimensions of climate-related displacement.

UNHCR worked with the Australian and New Zealand Governments to increase refugee resettlement and funding for UNHCR's refugee programmes, with GRF pledges also focusing on capacity building areas. The Office broadened partnerships with civil society with the aim of strengthening refugee rights, resettlement as a protection tool, and

meaningful refugee integration. Arrivals by sea to Australia remained close to zero due to Australia's adherence to a policy of maritime interception and return. Collaboration on appropriate solutions for the refugee population transferred to Papua New Guinea and Nauru continued with UNHCR's engagement focused on enabling solutions, namely voluntary relocation to the United States of America and other resettlement opportunities.

Given limited global resettlement opportunities, UNHCR worked with partners such as the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative and Talent Beyond Boundaries to advocate with both the Australian and New Zealand Governments for expanded resettlement and complementary pathways.

## **Operations in East Asia and the Pacific in 2019**

UNHCR maintained a close partnership with the Government of Japan, including providing technical support to the national asylum system through a high-level protection dialogue and training for the Immigration Services Agency. UNHCR advocated for the expansion of Japan's resettlement programme and developed partnerships with universities to explore complementary pathways through scholarships. UNHCR worked with influential individuals, corporate partners and media outlets in Japan to advocate and raise awareness on national refugee matters as well as issues globally, in close collaboration with the Japan Association for UNHCR (J4U). UNHCR's work with J4U also extended to other support, especially fundraising from individual donors and corporate and foundation partners. The Government of Japan continued its political and financial support to UNHCR, and announced substantive pledges at the GRF in 2019 in the areas of solutions, the humanitarian-development nexus, responsibility-sharing and education.

UNHCR worked closely with the Government of the Republic of Korea in preparation for the GRF, including organizing two platforms - one with GRF co-convenor government embassies and one with civil society - to stimulate discussions on pledges and good practices. The Korean Government ultimately made a number of important pledges at the GRF, such as committing support to UNHCR's programmes around the world and strengthening its existing domestic asylum system, among others. UNHCR also advocated with the Government to expand its pilot resettlement programme and to explore complementary pathways, such as through education channels. The Office also provided technical support for the national asylum system, as well as engaging with the media to raise public awareness on refugee matters.

In China, UNHCR worked with the National Immigration Administration (established in 2018) on the development of national asylum legislation and the eventual handover of asylum procedures. UNHCR continued registering people of concern and processing asylum claims, as well as supporting people of concern in detention. UNHCR advocated with a range of stakeholders to find solutions for refugees in China, leading to the departure of nearly 30 individuals through complementary pathways or resettlement. UNHCR provided technical support to the Hong Kong SAR authorities with regard to the unified screening mechanism. UNHCR also advocated for refugees' right to work, leading to the issuance of 40 work permits to refugees in Hong Kong SAR. Private sector partners offered their support for refugees to access employment and pro bono legal aid in Hong Kong SAR.

In 2019, a record 27,400 protection visa applications were lodged in Australia, exacerbating an existing backlog. Nevertheless, 4,355 protection visas were granted during the year to applicants mainly from Iraq and the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. The Government accepted over 7,000 referrals for resettlement during the year. Some 3,300 refugees were resettled in Australia in 2019.

At the end 2019, 500 people of concern remained in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, while over 1,150 people had been temporarily transferred to Australia, including for medical treatment. An additional 700 refugees transferred to Nauru and Papua New Guinea were relocated to the United States of America. Although the population in immigration detention in Australia, including many people of concern to UNHCR, remained steady at approximately 1,450 people, the average period of immigration detention surpassed 500 days for the first time. Several people of concern had been detained for more than 10 years.

New Zealand received approximately 550 new asylum applications in 2019, compared to 350 in 2018. The Government increased the number of people resettled to New Zealand and focused efforts on preparation for the sustainable growth of the resettlement programme. Pacific Island States made progress in developing their refugee and statelessness-related responses and protection mechanisms. UNHCR supported several States in developing national policy or legislation and engaged with others in policy discussions and capacity-building initiatives. The number of spontaneous refugee arrivals in the Pacific remained small and variable but continued to pose challenges for reception and settlement. Support was tailored to the needs of each Pacific Island State, utilizing mandate RSD and resettlement as tools for protection. Analysis was conducted on the feasibility and appropriateness of cash assistance, with due consideration to the economic, legal and social context of each State. In Papua New Guinea, for example, UNHCR provided technical support to the National Disaster Centre and the UN Country Team for contingency planning; conducted national and local refugee needs assessments; and supported the response for asylum-seekers arriving in the western province.

## 2019 Voluntary Contributions to East Asia and the Pacific | USD

Earmarking / Donor	All pillars	Total
<b>East Asia and the Pacific overall</b>		
United States of America	2,000,000	2,000,000
<b><i>East Asia and the Pacific overall subtotal</i></b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>
<b>China Regional Office</b>		
China	7,203	7,203
<b><i>China Regional Office subtotal</i></b>	<b>7,203</b>	<b>7,203</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,007,203</b>	<b>2,007,203</b>

Note:

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