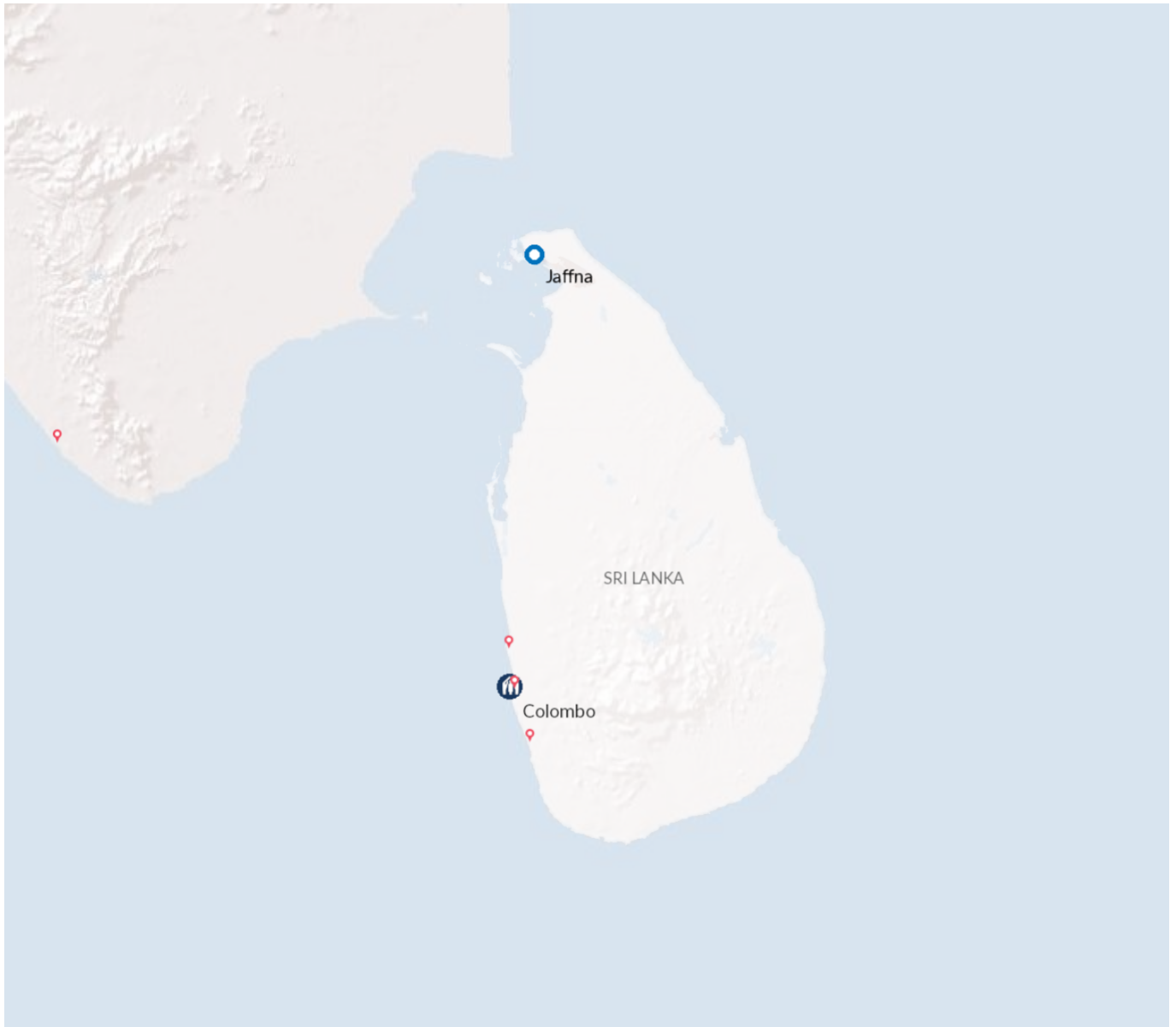




Operation: Sri Lanka

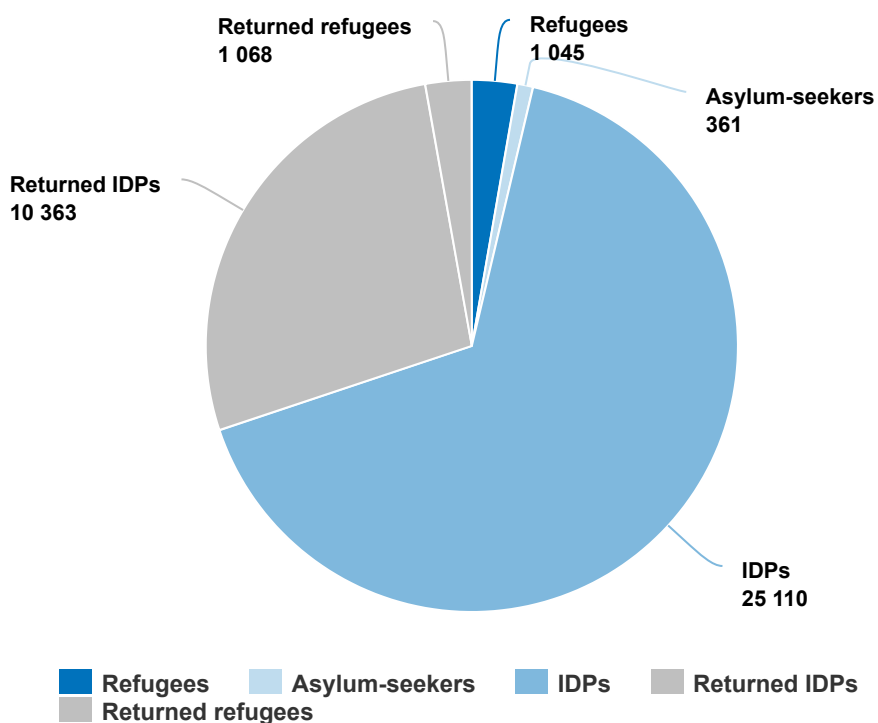


The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

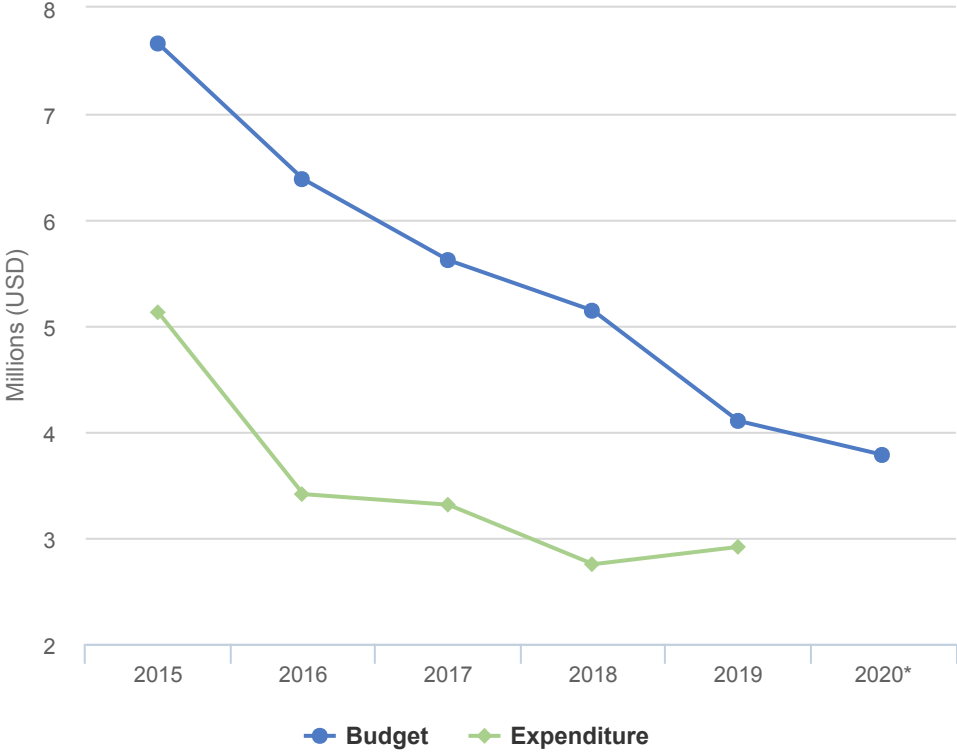
People of Concern

DECREASE IN
10% 2019

2019	37,947
2018	42,286
2017	42,766



Budgets and Expenditure for Sri Lanka



Operational context

Refugees and asylum-seekers

Sri Lanka hosted over 1,400 refugees and asylum-seekers in 2019. On 21 April 2019, over 250 people died in a series of terror attacks that triggered anti-Islamic sentiment and led to a challenging protection environment for people of concern to UNHCR. Asylum-seekers and refugees were particularly affected, with 60% displaced and unable to access support services provided by UNHCR and the Government. These individuals were temporarily relocated for their protection, and most were able to return to their previous residences within 3 months, while some 160 were resettled. Stricter border controls imposed following the April attacks resulted in fewer arrivals during the rest of the year.

During 2019, UNHCR conducted protection counselling, registration, and refugee status determination, and provided documentation and limited material support, to people of concern in Sri Lanka.

Returnees

The Government continued to release land enabling more sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees from abroad, who had fled during the civil conflict. Returnees benefited from limited Government housing and livelihoods support, and UNHCR supported legal services for housing, land and property issues to enable sustainable return.

Population trends

Sri Lanka hosted some 1,050 refugees and 360 asylum-seekers in 2019.

UNHCR registered an average of 50 new arrivals per month during the first three months of the year, followed by a drastic reduction after the April attacks. A total of 300 arrivals were registered for the whole of 2019 (80% of whom were from Pakistan, and 13% from Afghanistan), a 30% decline over 2018.

Over the course of the year, some 1,000 Sri Lankan refugees returned from India. More than 350 refugees departed for third countries, including some 160 for resettlement and almost 200 via complementary pathways.

By the end of 2019, 25,100 people remained internally displaced, primarily due to landlessness or an inability to access occupied lands since the conclusion of the civil war.

Achievements

- Following the terror attacks, UNHCR worked closely with all stakeholders to ensure the safety and needs of people of concern were met.
- UNHCR worked with third country representatives to enable solutions for vulnerable people of concern.
- UNHCR facilitated the return of Sri Lankan refugees, providing them with reintegration support on arrival.
- UNHCR advocated with the Government for refugees' access to education and work rights.
- UNHCR trained government officials on refugee rights

Unmet needs

Material assistance was available for only a portion of those in need, in light of long waiting periods and the inability to work. UNHCR was able to support only primary education for refugee children, without adequate resources to support their secondary education or any education for asylum-seeker children.
