

Mae Sot Field Office

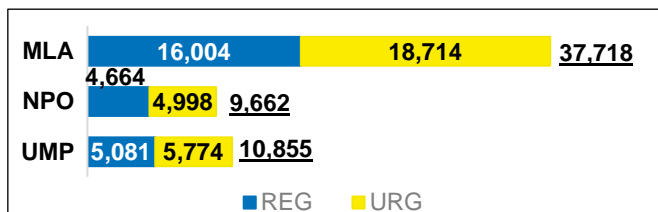
31 December 2019

The Mae Sot Field Office operates in **three temporary shelters** in Tak Province on the Thai-Myanmar border: Mae La (MLA), Nu Po (NPO) and Umpium (UMP).

A total of **55,265 Myanmar refugees** reside in these three temporary shelters, with the majority comprising members of the Karen ethnic minority group in South East Myanmar.

UNHCR works with the Royal Thai Government (RTG), international agencies, NGOs and donors to address the **protection and durable solutions needs** of this group

POPULATION OF CONCERN – VERIFIED REFUGEES



* Registered (REG) refugees comprise individuals registered during the last official group registration process conducted by RTG and UNHCR in 2005 under the authority of the Ministry of Interior (MOI). Verified (VER) refugees comprise Registered (REG) and Unregistered (URG) refugees verified in a joint exercise by UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in 2015.

UNHCR PRESENCE

29 National Staff 4 International Staff



Refugees participating in Facilitated Voluntary Repatriation to Myanmar prepare for departure from Mae La Temporary Shelter in July 2019.
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Temporary Shelters

- **Mae La (MLA)** Temporary Shelter is located in Tha Song Yang District, Tak Province. It was established in 1984, with its size later increasing due to the merging of 6 temporary shelters due to strategic and safety reasons. It is the largest temporary shelter on the Thai-Myanmar border.
- **Nu Po (NPO)** Temporary Shelter is located in Umphang District and is the smallest and most remote temporary shelter in Tak Province. It was established in 1997 to accommodate refugees fleeing offensive attacks in Myanmar. Nu Po also hosts a number of refugees recognized under UNHCR's mandate in Mae Sot who were transferred in March 2005, as per the RTG's policy of having all recognized refugees from Myanmar residing in the temporary shelters.
- **Umpium (UMP)** Temporary Shelter is located in Pho Phra District. It was established in 1999 to accommodate refugees who had been relocated from the previous Huaykalok and Mawker temporary shelters.

Working with Partners

UNHCR works in close partnership with the RTG, UN agencies, humanitarian organizations and civil society to improve protection and solutions for refugees on the Thai-Myanmar border. UNHCR currently has agreements with four partners for its operations on the border:

- **Catholic Relief for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR)** provides protection for separated and unaccompanied refugee children and for children at risk and also works to strengthen community-based child protection capacities.
- **Humanity and Inclusion (HI)** provides Facilitated Voluntary Repatriation (FVR) pre-departure mine risk refresher sessions in the Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRC).
- **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** supports the facilitation of voluntary and dignified return, by maintaining the VRC and organizing transport. IOM also organizes and supports pre-departure medical screenings and provision of UNHCR cash grants and in-kind support.
- **Ministry of Interior (MOI)** provides operational support to local authorities on registration and status determination for the Fast-Track Provincial Admissions Board (PAB).

Protection Activities

- The **registration of refugees** along the Thai-Myanmar border is led by the RTG PAB, with UNHCR support. Since 2008, registration is only open to exceptional serious cases. Identification of such cases is led by UNHCR in close consultation with the MOI.
- In line with amendments to the Civil Registration Act (2008) UNHCR continues to support the RTG in addressing a large backlog of children who have previously not had their births registered, as well as advocating that an inclusive approach is taken to ensure every child has their right to birth registration upheld. During January-December 2019, **12,887 birth certificates** were issued in Mae La, Nu Po and Umpium.
- UNHCR provides support to refugees to **access the Thai justice system**. UNHCR also coordinates with Thai law enforcement and prison authorities in pursuing these responsibilities. Minor disputes, such as family or civil issues and minor crimes, are managed through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in accordance with the Mediation and Dispute Resolution Guidelines (MDRG).
- **Child Protection concerns** are addressed in partnership with COERR with a focus on the protection of verified unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) as well as those with serious protection concerns including sexual and physical abuse.
- UNHCR conducts the assessment and determination of the best interest of children with regard to protection concerns, custody disputes or durable solution-related issues. A multi-agency **Best Interest Determination (BID) panel** meets on a monthly basis to discuss recommendations made for each case.
- UNHCR directly supports and works closely with the **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Committees** including through capacity building activities, direct legal support and other protection interventions. During January-December 2019, 9,871 individuals in Mae La, Nu Po and Umpium temporary shelters received training to improve SGBV prevention and response.

Multi-Solutions Approach

Unlocking of Solutions

- UNHCR is working closely with the Thai and Myanmar governments, the refugee community and other stakeholders to unlock a multi-solutions approach to find a dignified, sustainable and comprehensive **end to the situation of protracted encampment** on the Thai-Myanmar border. This may include the pursuit of access to formal and legal labour opportunities in Thailand under certain conditions.
- UNHCR undertakes **outreach including on access to civil documentation** and facilitates dialogue with the refugee community to empower them to make decisions concerning their future.

Facilitated Voluntary Repatriation

- UNHCR facilitates **voluntary repatriation for refugees** who approach the agency directly, stating that they want to take part in the voluntary return process. Before the return takes place, UNHCR and partners in Myanmar carry out assessments in the areas of return to assess available facilities and prevailing conditions. Factual and impartial information is then shared with all refugees who have registered to return and have the option of changing their minds at any time.
- **Outreach and information-sharing** are a pivotal part of preparation for return movements to support refugees to make informed and voluntary decisions regarding their repatriation.
- Since 2016, the UNHCR Mae Sot Field Office has facilitated the voluntary repatriation of **863 refugees** to Myanmar from Mae La, Nu Po and Umpium temporary shelters.

Resettlement

- There are **270 individuals / 49 cases** in the Mae La, Nu Po and Umpium temporary shelters who have been submitted for resettlement and are pending departure.
- UNHCR **works in collaboration** with the Resettlement Support Center (RSC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and third countries' embassies on the resettlement process.
- **54 refugees with serious protection needs** including lifesaving medical care were submitted between January-December 2019 from Mae La, Nu Po and Umpium temporary shelters.

External/Donor Relations

- Special thanks to major donors of un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as to donors who have contributed directly to the operation in 2019:

France | Denmark | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Germany | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America |

- Un-earmarked, broadly earmarked and direct contributions were also received through private donations from Australia, Bahamas, China, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Thailand and the United States of America.

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