

# South Asia



**Bangladesh**

**India**

**Nepal**

**Sri Lanka**

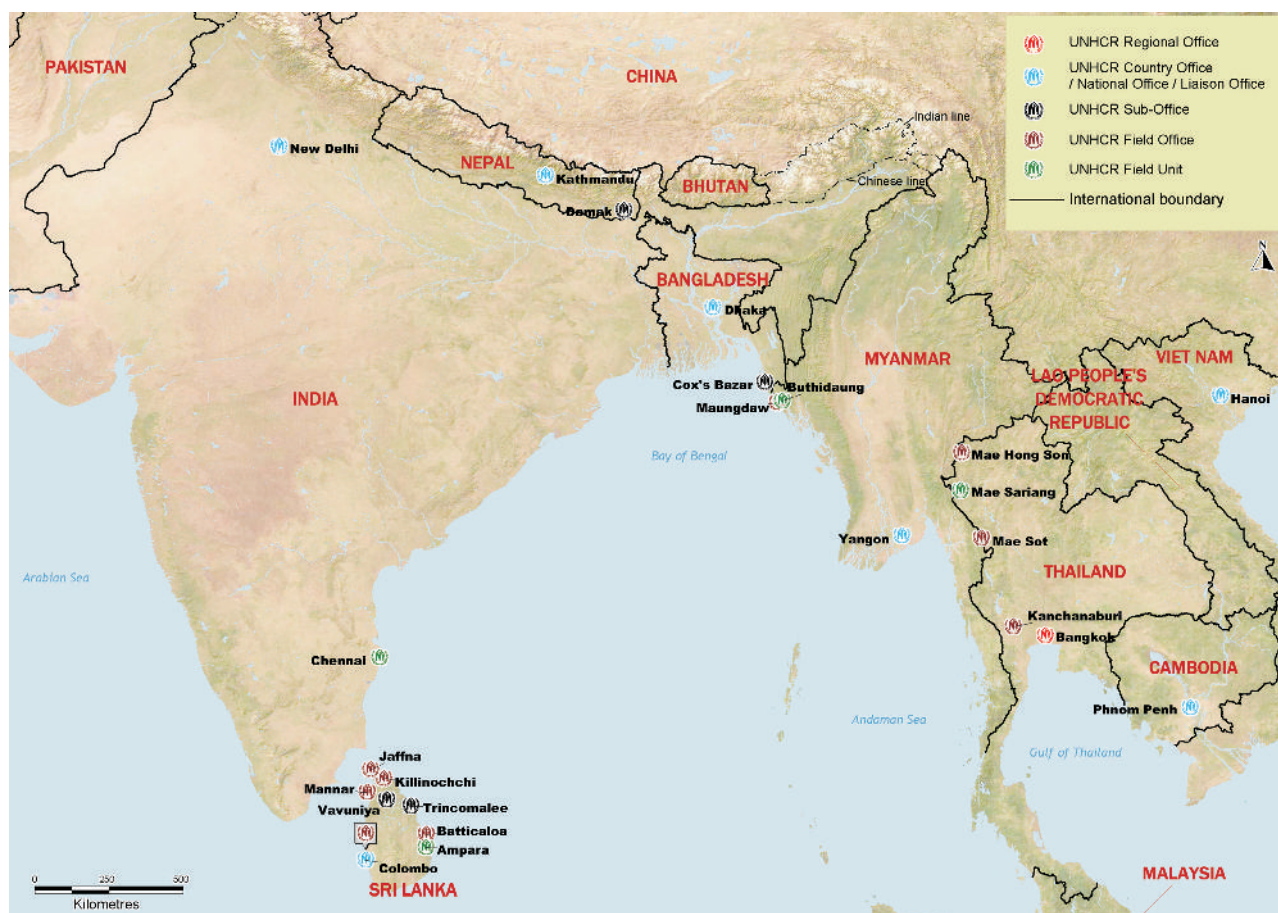




## | OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- As leader of the protection and shelter sectors, including non-food items (NFI) and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) in Sri Lanka, UNHCR coordinated international humanitarian responses in these sectors on behalf of more than 280,000 IDPs during the last phase of the conflict between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). UNHCR's protection monitoring and interventions ensured that the safety and basic rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were respected. UNHCR's advocacy efforts were particularly important in light of the limits placed on humanitarian organizations in terms of humanitarian space and access to people of concern.
- Only one year after the start of large-scale resettlement for refugees in Nepal, more than 25,500 departed to start new lives in third countries. In 2009, some 17,400 refugees were resettled. This resulted in a reduction in the camp population during the year from some 102,000 individuals to nearly 86,000 individuals.
- Bangladesh saw the launch of a two-year USD 33 million UN joint initiative which targets communities in the Teknaf and Ukhiya districts residing outside the camps. These unregistered populations and Bangladeshi host communities are expected to benefit from development assistance in health, education, nutrition and food security, and livelihoods.
- With the Government of India's increasing concerns about security and the rising presence of foreigners in the country, including asylum-seekers approaching the Office, UNHCR streamlined its procedures by outsourcing registration to an implementing partner. The Office also introduced a targeted approach to refugee status determination (RSD) to ensure that asylum-seekers would be registered within three weeks and the processing time for RSD dramatically reduced.
- UNHCR air-lifted 5,000 tents to Sri Lanka to supplement its emergency shelter response for IDPs at the height of the emergency in May 2009. About 16,700 tents and emergency shelter kits were delivered by UNHCR. In addition, the Office provided non-food items (NFIs) to some 38,200 IDP families accommodated in emergency sites.
- UNHCR worked closely with members of Nepal's Constituent Assembly and other key stakeholders to address citizenship provisions in the draft Constitution which could give rise to situations of statelessness.

This Community Technology Access (CTA) centre in Bangladesh allows refugees to use computer technology, including internet access, for education as well as business and livelihood purposes.



## Working environment

The Government of Sri Lanka announced the end of the 26-year long conflict with the LTTE on 17 May 2009. Prior to the end of hostilities, the population from the Vanni region experienced hunger and a shortage of basic amenities in addition to high levels of insecurity. At the same time, the humanitarian community had only very limited access to this population.

The massive flow of IDPs fleeing the conflict zone in April and May created significant challenges as UNHCR and its partners worked to address basic needs. At the height of the emergency more than 280,000 people were accommodated in 42 sites. The sites remained crowded until the Government accelerated the release of vulnerable persons and started the return process in August 2009.

In addition to IDPs in camps, approximately 11,000 persons suspected to have had links to the LTTE were separated and sent to unofficial rehabilitation centres. An additional 29,000 people with specific needs, such as the elderly, children, and pregnant women, were released by the Government into host family and community care. By the end of 2009 approximately 156,000 people had moved back to their districts of origin and their own homes or found shelter with host families.

Nepal's peace process remained fragile in 2009, with differences among the political parties leading to frequent controversies. The Government led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) resigned in early May 2009, and a coalition Government of key remaining parties was formed on 23 May 2009. The long-pending rehabilitation and integration of former Maoist combatants with the Nepalese Army, and the need to address the Terai movement's

demand for ethnic autonomy were key challenges for the Government.

Bangladesh was significantly affected by the global economic crisis. Poorer communities were among the hardest hit, which contributed to growing resentment against refugees. Towards the end of the year an increase in the number of unregistered refugees settling informally outside Kutupalong camp gave rise to humanitarian concerns due to high rates of malnutrition and poor sanitary conditions. The agreement of the Government to consider discussing some form of identification for this population represented an important step forward and reflected constructive cooperation with UNHCR.

Internal security concerns were a key factor for India in 2009. The situation was marked by frequent clashes with Maoist groups, a border dispute with China, and continuing friction in relations with Pakistan following the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai. Nevertheless, India granted asylum to a large number of refugees from neighbouring states. The Government's close ties with Afghanistan led to increased pressure to conduct RSD for Afghans in an expedited manner. Sri Lanka continued to be a focus of attention for India, which provided vast amounts of aid and support including with reconciliation efforts to the war-torn nation. UNHCR's office in Chennai facilitated the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees to those areas which had been declared safe for return.

## Achievements and impact

In Sri Lanka, UNHCR supported and strengthened protection networks composed of UN agencies, local and international NGOs and relevant government bodies.



Protection networks in the districts and Colombo, chaired by UNHCR, helped to identify risks, devise protection strategies and interventions, and undertake advocacy. Indeed, UNHCR's advocacy efforts were particularly important and helped to open up humanitarian space and access for many actors.

In addition to some 25,500 refugees who left Nepal for resettlement in third countries, over 21,000 refugees were referred to resettlement countries. As a key indicator of the success of the resettlement programme to date, the acceptance rate by resettlement countries stands at approximately 99 per cent.

There were numerous protection-related achievements in Bangladesh during the year. UNHCR photo identity cards, which are recognized by law enforcement agencies in the country, were distributed to all registered refugees over five years of age. The new camp management structure was strengthened by training 65 refugee leaders (including 12 women) on leadership and conflict management, resulting in minor disputes being resolved locally and providing more trust among refugee leaders.

The camps in Bangladesh also saw the formation of two youth groups and six women's groups to deal with issues such as livelihoods, sexual and gender-based violence and community self-management. While standard operating procedures on sexual and gender-based violence were revised, this issue and also child protection remained areas requiring further attention. As part of a comprehensive durable solutions plan, 450 refugees were resettled in six countries in 2009.

In India, as a result of the growing number of asylum-seekers and recognized refugees, UNHCR began to re-orient assistance toward those most in need. The Office focused on supporting access to public health and education facilities for asylum-seekers and refugees seeking access to public health and education facilities. It also concentrated on increasing livelihood opportunities for refugees.

All asylum-seekers in India were registered within three weeks of their approaching UNHCR. Resettlement was used as a protection tool, with 549 refugees submitted for resettlement. Only 218 Hindu Sikh Afghan refugees were able to obtain Indian citizenship, largely due to bureaucratic delays. As the conflict in Sri Lanka abated, many refugees from that country in India adopted a wait-and-see approach. Some 820 refugees out of an initial planning figure of 1,000 persons repatriated to Sri Lanka with UNHCR's assistance.

## | Constraints |

Despite regular strikes called by different political parties and social groups in Nepal, UNHCR and its partners were able to reach the refugee camps throughout the year. However, strikes did cause delays in the delivery of food and non-food items to the camps. The resettlement of skilled and experienced refugee workers, especially in health and education, posed a challenge to efforts to maintain the quality of services in the camps.

There was a gradual deterioration in the situation of the unregistered people of concern in Bangladesh due to local anti-refugee sentiment, resulting in an increase in the number of unregistered refugees moving towards a makeshift site around Kutupalong. As the population grew, conditions deteriorated, giving rise to serious humanitarian

concerns due to high rates of malnutrition and poor sanitary conditions.

The intensification of the conflict in Sri Lanka during the early part of the year limited the access of humanitarian agencies to civilians displaced in conflict areas. Access to the camps improved later in the year. The conditions in the sites remained difficult until returns accelerated in October and limited freedom of movement was introduced in early December 2009.

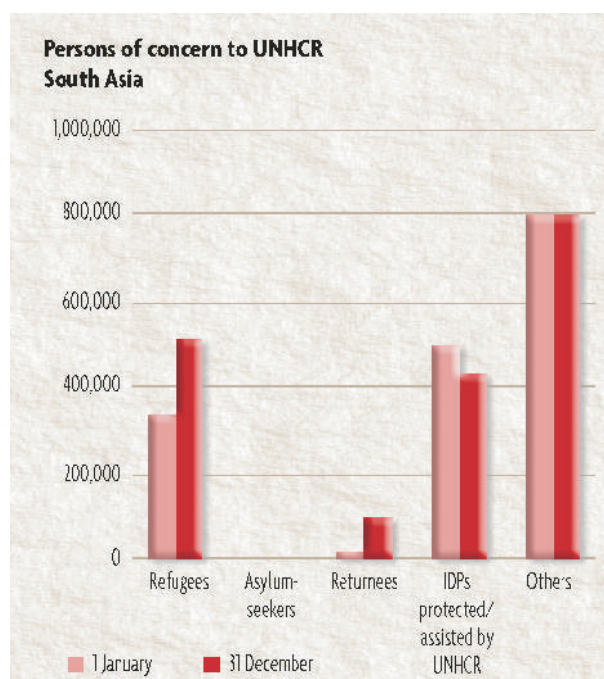
The return process in Sri Lanka was initially hampered by a lack of advance information, which in turn limited planning and coordination among agencies supporting the process. Some initial returns to areas which had not yet been declared safe due to the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance prompted concerns. The lack of access to areas of return for many NGOs created additional burdens for UNHCR, forcing it to implement some programmes directly.

Preserving the protection space for asylum-seekers from Afghanistan in India was a major challenge. The Indian Government considered the holding of elections in Afghanistan as an indication of a return to normalcy in that country, thereby ending the need for Afghans to seek asylum. Extensive interventions were made with the authorities to continue to allow Afghan asylum-seekers access to UNHCR procedures and to reduce the administrative hurdles faced by refugees from Myanmar and Afghanistan in obtaining residence permits, visa renewals and extensions, and to reconsider the imposition of high penalties for overstaying visas.

## | Operations |

The operations in **Nepal, Bangladesh** and **Sri Lanka** are covered in separate chapters.

In **India**, the high number of asylum-seekers approaching UNHCR required a review of the Office's operational procedures, such as the reduction of waiting time for registration to ensure that people with specific needs, as well as those with particular protection concerns, were identified



and fast-tracked for RSD. In parallel, RSD systems were streamlined and staffing was increased.

In order to address increasingly unrealistic refugee expectations, resettlement was reoriented from a durable solution to a protection tool for those whose protection needs could not be met in India. At the same time, direct outreach was extended to all groups and communication was greatly expanded.

## Financial information

UNHCR's budgets for South Asia continued to increase in 2009, largely as a result of the emergency in Sri Lanka, the resettlement operation in Nepal, the need to improve services in the refugee camps in Bangladesh, and the increase in the number of asylum-seekers and recognized refugees in India.

Budget and expenditure in South Asia (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Bangladesh	6,809,089	117,214	<b>6,926,303</b>	6,399,435	117,214	<b>6,516,648</b>
India	5,146,054	0	<b>5,146,054</b>	4,507,540	0	<b>4,507,540</b>
Nepal	12,538,757	0	<b>12,538,757</b>	10,197,944	0	<b>10,197,944</b>
Sri Lanka	5,755,464	32,508,295	<b>38,263,759</b>	5,281,889	29,367,288	<b>34,649,177</b>
Regional activities	100,000	0	<b>100,000</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,349,364</b>	<b>32,625,509</b>	<b>62,974,873</b>	<b>26,386,808</b>	<b>29,484,501</b>	<b>55,871,309</b>

Note: Excludes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the 'New or additional activities-mandate-related'(NAM) reserve.

Voluntary contributions to South Asia (USD)				
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Bangladesh	Australia	840,647		840,647
	Australia for UNHCR	146,133		146,133
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO</i> (Germany)	15,060		15,060
	European Commission	1,857,389		1,857,389
	Germany	431,655		431,655
	HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein (UAE)	18,000		18,000
	Japan	309,917		309,917
	Japan Association for UNHCR	163,436		163,436
	Private donors in China	392,045		392,045
	United States of America	1,309,364		1,309,364
	USA for UNHCR	50,000		50,000
<b>Bangladesh subtotal</b>		<b>5,533,647</b>		<b>5,533,647</b>
India	Australia	43,785		43,785
	HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein (UAE)	125,400		125,400
	United States of America	1,701,692		1,701,692
<b>India subtotal</b>		<b>1,870,877</b>		<b>1,870,877</b>
Sri Lanka	Andorra		10,138	10,138
	Australia		2,019,278	2,019,278
	Australia for UNHCR		355,944	355,944
	Brazil		46,500	46,500
	Canada		1,833,058	1,833,058
	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	895,572	4,964,335	5,859,907
	Denmark		1,054,223	1,054,223
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO</i> (Germany)		110,251	110,251
	<i>España con ACNUR</i> (Spain)		3,380	3,380
	Estonia		58,423	58,423
	European Commission	1,430,615	1,204,317	2,634,932
	France		1,220,472	1,220,472
	Germany		616,711	616,711
	HQ Online Donations (Switzerland)		4,666	4,666

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
	India		2,491,713	2,491,713
	Italy		367,589	367,589
	Japan	1,033,058	934,579	1,967,637
	Liechtenstein		40,052	40,052
	Luxembourg	143,062	399,142	542,203
	Norway		4,020,970	4,020,970
	Private donors in Canada		29,601	29,601
	Private donors in China	44	3,782	3,826
	Private donors in Italy		32,700	32,700
	Private donors in Luxembourg	87		87
	Private donors in Sri Lanka <sup>1</sup>		38,926	38,926
	Private donors in the United Kingdom		9,934	9,934
	Russian Federation	500,000		500,000
	Sweden		1,812,474	1,812,474
	Switzerland	217,581	214,483	432,064
	United Kingdom		2,006,568	2,006,568
	United States of America	1,400,000	7,691,100	9,091,100
	USA for UNHCR		9,989	9,989
	<b>Sri Lanka subtotal</b>	<b>5,620,018</b>	<b>33,605,297</b>	<b>39,225,315</b>
<b>Nepal</b>	Australia	603,275		603,275
	Emergency Relief Fund	49,503		49,503
	European Commission	2,145,923		2,145,923
	Japan	1,859,504		1,859,504
	Japan Association for UNHCR	71,810		71,810
	OPEC Fund for International Development	26,500		26,500
	United Kingdom	75,379		75,379
	United States of America	3,216,269		3,216,269
	<b>Nepal subtotal</b>	<b>8,048,163</b>		<b>8,048,163</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>21,072,704</b>	<b>33,605,297</b>	<b>54,678,001</b>

Note: Contributions listed above exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities-mandate-related" (NAM) reserve.

<sup>1</sup> This includes USD 34,139 given by HSBC Ltd. towards UNHCR operations in Sri Lanka.