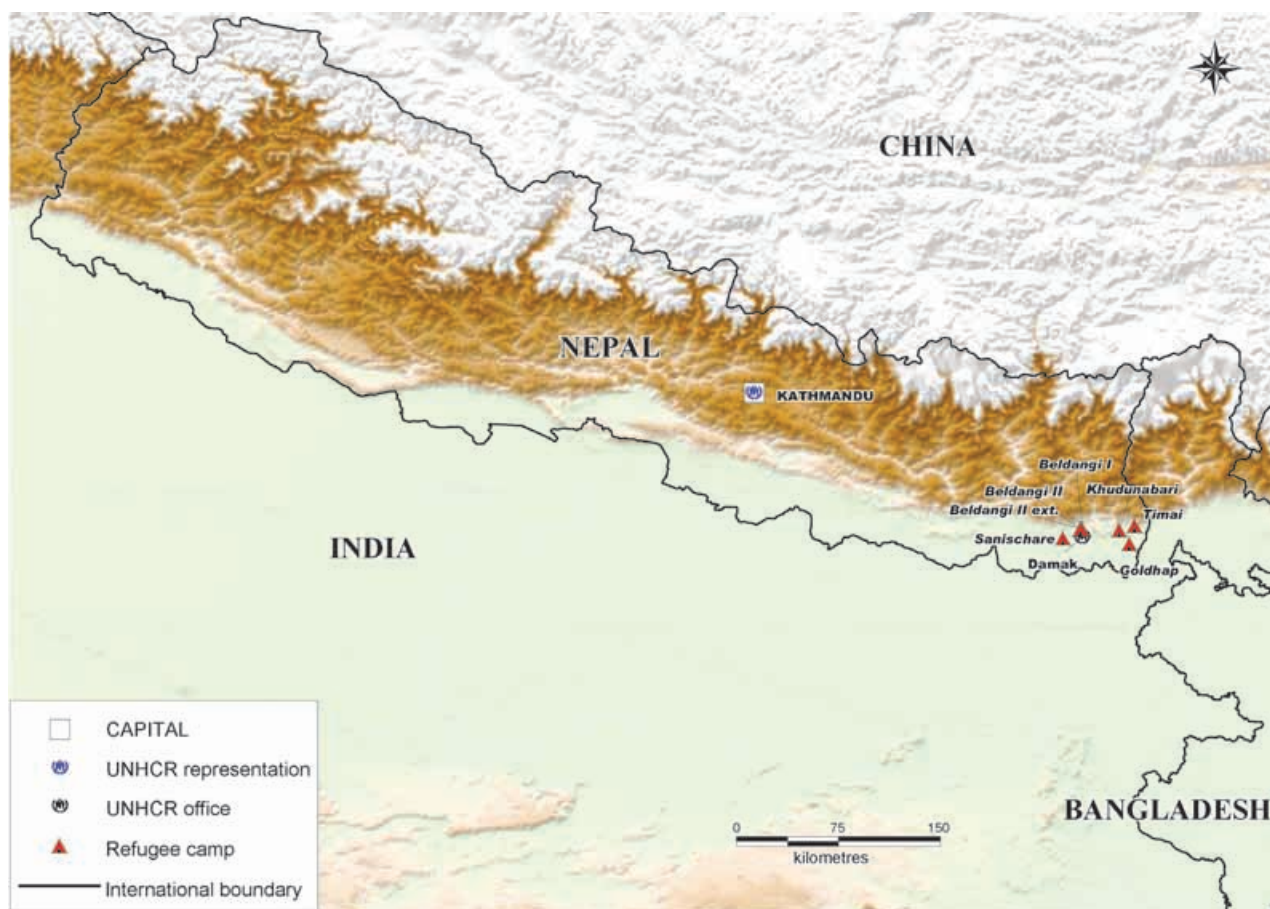


# NEPAL



## Operational highlights

- Group resettlement for refugees living in camps started in March. Some 8,000 of the 60,000 people who expressed an interest in resettlement departed for third countries in 2008.
- In September, the Government of Nepal and UNHCR completed the registration of some 1,000 people who had not been counted at the last census and dependants of recognized refugees.
- In December, the authorities completed the distribution of photo identity cards to all registered refugees above 16 years of age.
- UNHCR assisted some 600 Tibetans transiting through Nepal to India.
- In Kathmandu, the Office protected and assisted some 300 refugees and asylum-seekers, including through assessment of their claims. Twenty-four vulnerable refugees were resettled in third countries after paying substantial fines for overstaying their visas.
- In April, UNHCR officially discontinued its direct involvement with the remaining internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nepal. However, it continues to advocate for effective implementation of the 2007 National IDP Policy.

### Persons of concern

Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Bhutan	102,100	102,100	49	33
	Tibetans	20,000	-	50	-
	Various	250	240	35	35
Refugee-like situations	Bhutan	2,500	-	50	-
Asylum-seekers	Bhutan	900	-	39	34
	Various	30	30	38	25
Stateless	Stateless persons	800,000 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-
Others persons of concern	Tibetans in transit	60	60	54	44
<b>Total</b>		<b>925,840</b>	<b>102,430</b>		

<sup>1</sup> This number represents an estimate of the Nepalese who still remain de facto stateless after the issuance of approximately 2.6 million Citizenship Certificates in 2007.

## | Working environment |

The year 2008 was marked by a number of significant political developments in Nepal. The former Maoist rebels' party won a relative majority in April elections for the Constituent Assembly and formed a coalition Government. The new Assembly declared Nepal a federal democratic republic and abolished the country's 240-year-old monarchy.

However, prospects of stability are still far from clear, for reasons including tensions within and between political parties; the failure to ensure the full and equal participation in politics of all groups; difficulties in the integration of former rebel combatants into the Nepal Army; and the de facto control by separatist and other armed groups of large parts of the Terai region bordering India.

In the refugee camps in eastern Nepal, violence by anti-resettlement groups reached its peak in early 2008, when violent attacks on processing centres and buses carrying refugees were carried out in an attempt to derail the resettlement process. Strong condemnation by the Government of Nepal, resettlement countries and UNHCR, followed by an increase in the presence of security forces in the camps, enabled resettlement activities to continue without further incident.

In March, a devastating fire destroyed almost all the huts and communal buildings in Goldhap camp. More than a dozen people were injured, but there was no loss of life. The camp was rebuilt through emergency response measures and normal life was re-established by July.

## | Achievements and impact |

### ● *Main objectives*

In 2008, UNHCR's main objectives were to seek durable solutions for refugees in situations of protracted displacement, while ensuring that they received adequate protection and assistance in the camps. The Office also aimed to protect urban refugees and asylum-seekers pending assessment of their claims, and identify appropriate durable solutions for refugees. UNHCR worked to improve the health and nutrition of the refugees in the camps and supported efforts to find solutions for people displaced by conflict within Nepal.

### ● *Protection and solutions*

There was some general improvement in the overall human rights situation in Nepal, but the country has to yet to formally establish an international protection regime for refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR continued to advocate for Nepal's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

Thanks to the cooperation of the Government and the support of a core group of countries committed to finding durable solutions for refugees in Nepal, the resettlement of camp-based refugees began—despite some initial violent resistance by segments of the refugee population. UNHCR made sure that refugees had access to comprehensive information in order to make a free and informed decision regarding solutions for themselves and their families.

The Office protected and assisted some 300 urban refugees and asylum-seekers. It intervened regularly with government counterparts to promote Nepal's adherence to its *non-refoulement* obligations towards newly arrived

Tibetans, and to facilitate their safe transit to India.

Targeted advocacy amongst government authorities, members of the international community and civil society led to greater awareness about statelessness issues and promoted their engagement in efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness in Nepal. Some 925 persons received citizenship certificates in two pilot projects focusing on disadvantaged groups.

### ● *Activities and assistance*

**Community services:** Targeted programmes addressed the needs of different refugee groups. Those affected by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) received medical, legal and psychosocial support. New camp management committees were elected. Women held more than half the decision-making positions in the camps, while greater social diversity was achieved through the relatively higher participation of lower-caste groups and higher female representation among them.

Youth centres organized sports activities, distributed HIV and AIDS information materials and conducted team-building workshops and awareness activities to address social issues such as SGBV, trafficking and alcohol abuse. Sports tournaments promoted youth partnerships within the camps and harmonious relationships between young people in the camps and host communities.

**Domestic needs and household support:** Most refugees remained dependent on assistance to meet their household needs. All refugee families received cooking-fuel briquettes, and all refugee women and girls of reproductive age were provided with sanitary napkins and underwear. The production of relief items in the camps created income-generating opportunities, particularly for vulnerable refugee women, such as mothers of malnourished children, single mothers and economically marginalized refugees.

**Education:** 99 per cent of children of school-going age were enrolled in refugee-managed primary and secondary institutions. The drop-out rate remained at less than 2 per cent in 2008. Adequate educational and recreational materials were distributed throughout the year. Children with disabilities were integrated into regular educational activities, which were enriched by sports and extra-curricular activities. Thanks to extra budgetary funding, almost 3,000 refugee students in grades 11 and 12 received a cash grant to cover admission and tuition fees for higher secondary education in local schools. English language classes for some 6,000 interested refugees have started in the camps.

**Food:** While WFP provided basic rations for all refugees, UNHCR supplemented the rations of people with specific needs. Every refugee was given 260 grams of vegetables per week, and children with severe malnutrition were provided with therapeutic feeding. The Office maintained well-established mechanisms of quality control and distribution monitoring.

**Health and nutrition:** All malnourished children below the age of five, pregnant and breast-feeding women, tuberculosis patients and medically vulnerable refugees received supplementary feeding in the camps.



**Refugee in Sanischare camp, Nepal.**  
He and his family are in the last phase of their approval process for resettlement.

UNHCR / J. RAE

Chronically ill patients received specific medication. Of the nearly 20 per cent of refugee patients who needed referrals, the vast majority were sent to primary health centres, and a small number to secondary and tertiary centres. More than 360 refugee patients benefited from consultations with a psychiatrist. Health education sessions focused on avian flu, communicable diseases, personal hygiene, breast-feeding and nutrition.

Reproductive health services were maintained by recruiting qualified staff nurses; strengthening outreach activities; ensuring the availability and use of emergency drug kits; and supplying information, education and communication materials.

**Legal assistance:** All refugees in need of legal assistance, including all victims of SGBV, received counselling and representation if required. Nepal Bar Association lawyers advised 176 refugees and represented 124 cases in court. Legal aid clinics, organized twice a month in the camps, raised refugees' awareness of issues pertaining to naturalization, family law and the laws governing common crimes. Refugees, local authorities and police personnel were trained to be aware of refugees' rights and responsibilities in the prevention of, and response to, SGBV.

**Operational support (to agencies):** Adequate management structures supported all planned activities, and UNHCR contributed towards the operational costs of implementing partners.

**Sanitation:** Latrines were maintained, garbage was collected and cleanup campaigns conducted regularly. The waste from health centres was safely disposed of. More than 1,780 latrines were repaired and 999 roofs replaced. About 100 waste-disposal pits were maintained to ensure proper solid-waste management. Additionally, 271 refugee families were included in a pilot bio-compost project, helping them to manage household-waste disposal and earn income by selling the composted material produced.

**Shelter and infrastructure:** All families in the camps had adequate shelter: 13 per cent of huts were renovated and another 530, which had been damaged by natural calamities and accidents, were repaired. Internal roads and footbridges were kept in good condition. With an increase in the number of refugees departing for resettlement, the Shelter Management Panels reallocated 102 vacated huts to vulnerable families, while 474 huts were dismantled and their plots allocated for gardening.

**Transport and logistics:** Access to the refugee camps was unhindered, despite a difficult operational environment. Sufficient stocks of relief items and the participation of women in their distribution ensured smooth and fair deliveries.

**Water:** No outbreak of waterborne diseases was reported. The availability of drinking water in the camps was within acceptable standards and its quality was regularly tested.

A new deep borehole was built in Beldangi-II Extension camp, while the boreholes in the remaining camps were cleaned. A drinking water project and a waste disposal management project were initiated to contribute to coexistence between refugee and host communities.

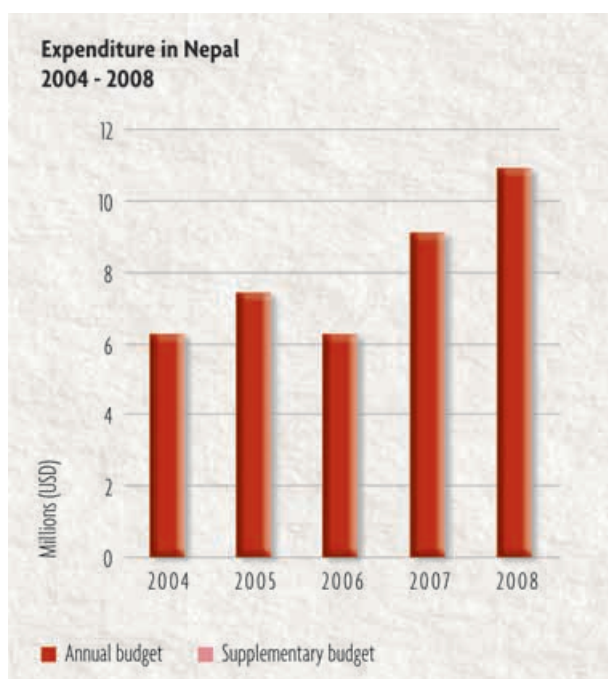
#### ● *Constraints*

The continuation of the peace process did not translate into the desired state of law and order and did not create a more favourable working environment. The unstable political situation, frequent general strikes, road blockades and the flooding of the Koshi river affected UNHCR's operations, delaying project implementation and increasing costs. However, there were no major disruptions in the delivery of assistance to the refugee camps and, as in the past, UNHCR's role as a humanitarian agency, with the need to have access to the camps, was generally respected by the protesting groups.

Despite the adequate assistance provided to urban refugees, the uncertainty surrounding possible durable solutions resulted in considerable agitation amongst them, with occasional aggressive demonstrations in front of the office in Kathmandu.

### | Financial information |

The operation in Nepal was fully funded. Additional resources ensured the deployment of solutions staff and the implementation of programmes to improve refugees' health and nutrition, including anaemia and water sanitation projects, and to prevent and combat HIV and AIDS. Expenditure in 2008 continued to rise after a temporary impact of the 2006 austerity measures.



### | Organization and implementation |

With resettlement activities gaining momentum, the number of UNHCR staff was increased from 84 to a total of 148 (32 internationals, including JPOs, deployees and UNVs, and 116 nationals, including national UNVs and UNOPS deployments). UNHCR's Representation Office in Kathmandu was responsible for the overall management of the country operation as well as for liaising with the Government, diplomatic missions and other entities. Operations in eastern Nepal were coordinated by the office in Damak.

### | Working with others |

The Office consolidated implementing arrangements with 15 partners: three international, including UNDP/UNV and UNOPS, 11 national NGOs and the National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It also started new partnerships with three additional national NGOs, including two indigenous organizations based in rural Nepal.

### | Overall assessment |

The start of group resettlement has opened up the possibility of durable solutions for a large number of refugees in Nepal. Meanwhile, registration and the distribution of individual identity documents improved protection significantly. Nonetheless, it is important that efforts be pursued to open up voluntary repatriation opportunities.

#### Partners

##### Implementing partners

**Government:** the National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of Home Affairs

**NGOs:** Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (Nepal), CARITAS (Nepal), Nepal Bar Association – Jhapa Unit, Lutheran World Federation, Federation of Women Entrepreneurs-Associations of Nepal, General Welfare Pratisthan, Knight Chess Club, ProPublic, Informal Sector Service Centre, Forum for Protection of Public Interest, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization, Fatima Foundation and Nepal Chepang Association.

**Others:** Tribhuvan University – Faculty of Law, UNDP/UNV, UNOPS

##### Operational partners

**NGOs:** NRC, ICMC

**Others:** IOM, WFP and the UN Country Team

Budget, income and expenditure in Nepal (USD)					
	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available <sup>1</sup>	Total expenditure
Annual budget	11,542,864	9,121,151	1,730,946	10,852,097	10,849,696
Anaemia control and prevention SB	138,000	0	54,249	54,249	54,249
Water and sanitation SB	115,000	0	54,274	54,274	54,274
<b>Supplementary budget subtotal</b>	<b>253,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>108,523</b>	<b>108,523</b>	<b>108,523</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>11,795,864</b>	<b>9,121,151</b>	<b>1,839,469</b>	<b>10,960,620</b>	<b>10,958,219</b>

Note: Supplementary programmes do not include seven per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

<sup>1</sup> Total funds available include currency adjustments.

Financial report for UNHCR's operations in Nepal (USD)				
Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' project
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,712,632	0	2,712,632	0
Community services	116,747	0	116,747	71,317
Domestic needs and household support	1,061,686	0	1,061,686	187,332
Education	648,819	0	648,819	165,250
Food	143,045	0	143,045	32,643
Health and nutrition	1,138,071	54,249	1,192,320	369,075
Legal assistance	869,979	0	869,979	52,381
Operational support (to agencies)	233,986	0	233,986	34,696
Sanitation	23,033	10,237	33,270	1,564
Shelter and infrastructure	294,360	0	294,360	43,980
Transport and logistics	178,506	0	178,506	45,805
Water	77,257	44,036	121,293	17,890
Instalments to implementing partners	1,752,077	1	1,752,078	(1,021,933)
<b>Subtotal operational activities</b>	<b>9,250,198</b>	<b>108,523</b>	<b>9,358,721</b>	<b>0</b>
Programme support	1,599,498	0	1,599,498	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>10,849,696</b>	<b>108,523</b>	<b>10,958,219</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cancellation on previous years' expenditure</b>				<b>(15,134)</b>
<b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>				
Payments made	5,606,889	54,274	5,661,163	
Reporting received	(3,854,812)	(54,274)	(3,909,086)	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>1,752,077</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,752,077</b>	
Outstanding 1st January				1,114,237
Reporting received				(1,021,933)
Refunded to UNHCR				(41,942)
Currency adjustment				(8,154)
<b>Outstanding 31st December</b>				<b>42,208</b>