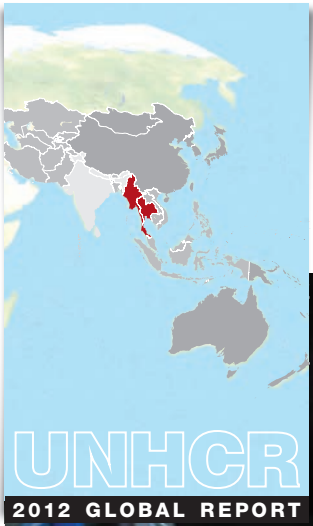# SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Bangladesh

Brunei Darussalam

Cambodia

Indonesia

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Malaysia

Myanmar

Philippines

Singapore

Thailand

Timor-Leste

Viet Nam

UNHCR / P.BEHAN

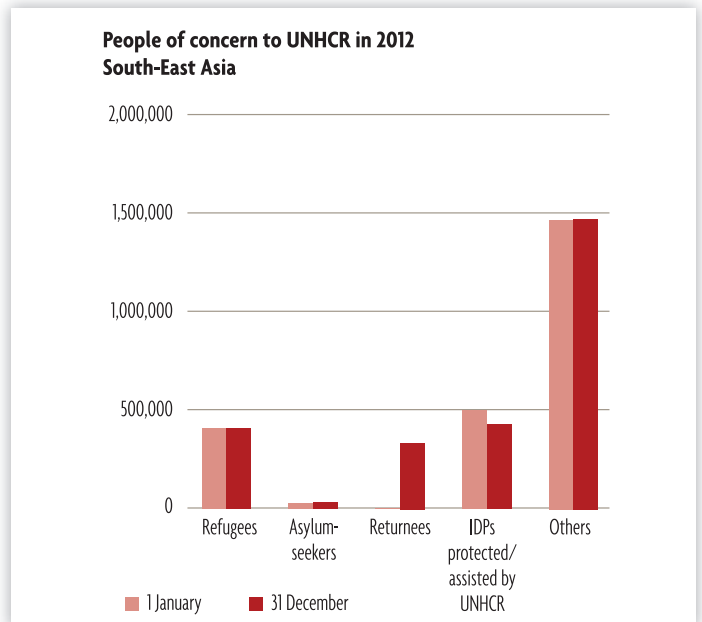**Collecting water** in Thet Khal Pyin IDP camp (Myanmar)

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Highlights

- The Regional Support Office (RSO) for the Bali Process opened in Bangkok in September 2012. The RSO, which is managed by Australia and Indonesia in consultation with UNHCR and IOM, will facilitate regional cooperation under the Bali Process, which aims to counter transnational crime related to human trafficking and people smuggling.

- A total of 8,700 persons without citizenship in the region were naturalized between 2005 and 2012. Among them were individuals from Cambodia who had been registered as refugees.

- With the conclusion of the voluntary repatriation of Montagnard refugees from Cambodia to Viet Nam in 2011, UNHCR established returnee reintegration support programmes in the latter country in 2012. Five community-based education micro-projects were implemented in areas to which the refugees had returned.

- The Philippines became the first State in the subregion to adopt a unified Refugee and Statelessness Determination Procedure.

People of concern to UNHCR in 2012 South-East Asia

Working environment

UNHCR's advocacy with States in South-East Asia was aimed at establishing an effective legal and normative framework governing refugee protection. As countries in the subregion have national asylum systems at varying levels of development, asylum-seekers try to reach those destinations where they stand a better chance of having their protection needs recognized.

The number of irregular maritime movements in the region was higher in 2012 than the year before. In the complex South-East Asian context, where mixed-migration movements prevail, States give precedence to national security and the fight against irregular migration over international protection. Furthermore, the growth of people-smuggling and human-trafficking networks in the subregion has led to a blurring of the distinction between asylum-seekers and economic migrants in the public mind. The Regional Cooperation Framework of the Bali Process being implemented by the Regional Support Office is expected to strengthen cooperation in safeguarding refugee protection while countering irregular movements.

Achievements and impact

Advocacy by UNHCR and other humanitarian actors led to the adoption of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration in November 2012. Fundamental provisions in the declaration prevent those who are seeking refuge from being expelled to face persecution or torture. It also guarantees that people of concern to UNHCR should not be subject to arbitrary detention and are entitled to live in dignity through, for example, being permitted to work to support themselves and their families.

In December 2012, UNHCR and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights jointly hosted a regional workshop in Bangkok to identify good practices in birth registration. The workshop made several recommendations, among them that a report of good practices be published; that ASEAN member States consider implementing those best practices; and that member States help develop and implement UNESCAP's Regional Strategic Plan to improve civil-registration and statistical information systems in Asia and the Pacific.

In order to promote the engagement of civil society in addressing statelessness, a photo exhibition of Greg Constantine's work, *Nowhere People*, was on display at the South-East Asian Human Rights Network Conference in Jakarta in October 2012. In December, UNHCR helped the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APPRN) and Thailand's Mahidol University to conduct training sessions for NGOs to build their awareness and capacity regarding international statutes on refugees and statelessness. UNHCR has also collaborated with the APPRN in the development of the programme for its working group on statelessness.

Constraints

The priority given by States to national-security concerns and combating irregular migration hampered refugee protection and the development of national legal frameworks for dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers in many countries.

The use of detention facilities to hold asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless people, including children and others at risk of exploitation and abuse, is a worrying trend that continues in the region.

Many urban refugees and asylum-seekers face a precarious situation due to limited livelihood opportunities or lack of access to social services in certain countries. UNHCR tries to address these issues by working with national human rights institutions.

Operations

*UNHCR's operations in **Myanmar** and **Thailand** are described in separate chapters.*

In **Bangladesh**, UNHCR continued its advocacy on various outstanding issues, including resumption of resettlement as a solution for some refugees and the promotion of self-reliance for people of concern. There were positive developments in the nutrition, education and health sectors in the camps. Particularly noteworthy was the establishment of a refugee women's self-reliance programme that trained individuals to sew sanitary materials and underwear. Elected refugee leaders played an important role in community management. The majority of the urban refugees remained self-reliant.

Following the completion of the voluntary repatriation programme for Montagnard refugees in 2011, UNHCR's programme in **Cambodia** was re-focused on the promotion of self-reliance among urban refugees through livelihood support programmes. By the end of 2012, the majority of the refugees were engaged in gainful activities, mostly in the informal sector. UNHCR helped Cambodia's Refugee Office to build the capacity of its staff and also provided it with financial assistance. The Refugee Office has progressively taken over responsibility for refugee documentation, including birth registration, and activities in support of refugee self-reliance. UNHCR led the United Nations coordinated advocacy for the inclusion of all people of concern in the country's identity legislation.

In **Indonesia**, the Office reinforced its operational structures for registration, refugee status determination (RSD) and durable solutions. UNHCR's presence outside Jakarta was strengthened to facilitate the processing of asylum requests and to improve the monitoring of irregular movements by sea along the vast archipelago. Consequently, registration was expedited and the existing backlog cleared. While administrative hurdles remained for the confirmation of citizenship in many cases, it is noteworthy that some people born in Indonesia of various ethnicities were issued civil-registration documents.

UNHCR continued to undertake registration, RSD and the provision of civil documentation for people of concern in **Malaysia**. At the same time, it advocated for the country's accession to the Refugee Convention and for refugees to be granted the right to work and to avail themselves of basic services in education and health. At the community level, UNHCR has successfully promoted the participation of refugee women in leadership structures. A variety of community-based assistance programmes in education, health and livelihoods/self-reliance were implemented. A comprehensive survey of Filipino Muslim refugees in Sabah was conducted to determine the extent of their civil-documentation problems, as these were believed to be preventing some refugees from integrating fully into Malaysian society.

Advocacy to expand the favourable protection environment for refugees and people without citizenship bore fruit in **the Philippines** with the adoption of standards for refugee protection and a unified procedure for statelessness determination. Mechanisms were identified to provide asylum-seekers with temporary work permits pending completion of their RSD. An agreement between UNFPA, UNHCR and UNICEF established a framework for collaboration on birth registration. UNHCR continued to co-lead the Protection Cluster in Mindanao, with a focus on the civil registration of displaced persons and community empowerment. An added priority was the emergency response for the displaced who were also affected by Tropical Storm Bopha.

In **Viet Nam**, the monitoring of Montagnard returnees continued in 2012. By the end of the year, some 2,400 former Cambodian refugees without citizenship hosted in camps were naturalized, and some 2,000 of an estimated 3,000 women regained Vietnamese nationality. A total of 37 community-based consultative "clubs" were established in eight provinces in collaboration with the Government as a means to provide counseling to these women and to facilitate their reintegration into the community. UNHCR continued to support national and regional institutions in their work pertaining to the rights of women and children.

| Financial information |

UNHCR's requirements in South-East Asia have grown steadily since 2007 with increasing numbers of people of concern, and amounted to USD 109.7 million for the subregion in 2012. At the beginning of 2012, a slight reduction in the requirements was anticipated, mainly due to the phasing out of the Montagnard refugee programme in Cambodia and the closure of the office in Timor-Leste. However, the situation that has evolved in Myanmar since mid-2012 has increased resource requirements to respond to displacement needs. Total overall expenditure for the subregion in 2012 was USD 65.3 million.

Budget and expenditure in South-East Asia | USD

Operation		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
Bangladesh	Budget	15,054,054	56,387	0	0	**15,110,441**
	Expenditure	7,806,561	54,778	0	0	**7,861,339**
Cambodia	Budget	939,248	10,000	0	0	**949,248**
	Expenditure	726,126	6,182	0	0	**732,308**
Indonesia	Budget	5,738,085	173,602	0	0	**5,911,687**
	Expenditure	3,912,212	134,636	0	0	**4,046,848**
Malaysia	Budget	16,051,888	510,384	0	0	**16,562,272**
	Expenditure	8,326,069	41,935	0	0	**8,368,004**
Myanmar	Budget	40,000	9,952,586	0	24,764,418	**34,757,004**
	Expenditure	0	6,063,649	0	15,818,250	**21,881,899**
Philippines	Budget	788,326	778,277	0	5,942,991	**7,509,594**
	Expenditure	403,819	543,027	0	3,238,128	**4,184,974**
Thailand	Budget	21,640,907	706,230	0	0	**22,347,137**
	Expenditure	13,390,578	352,089	0	0	**13,742,667**
Thailand Regional Office	Budget	5,447,307	0	0	0	**5,447,307**
	Expenditure	3,621,870	0	0	0	**3,621,870**
Timor-Leste	Budget	187,346	19,654	0	0	**207,000**
	Expenditure	5,764	10,000	0	0	**15,764**
Viet Nam	Budget	0	455,500	455,000	0	**910,500**
	Expenditure	0	451,173	370,409	0	**821,582**
	Total budget	**65,887,161**	**12,662,620**	**455,000**	**30,707,409**	**109,712,190**
	Total expenditure	**38,192,999**	**7,657,469**	**370,409**	**19,056,378**	**65,277,255**

Voluntary contributions to South-East Asia | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
SOUTH-EAST ASIA SUBREGION					
Australia	136,500				**136,500**
United States of America				13,400,000	**13,400,000**
South-East Asia subtotal	**136,500**	**0**	**0**	**13,400,000**	**13,536,500**
BANGLADESH					
Australia	349,000				**349,000**
Canada				401,204	**401,204**
European Union	2,666,667				**2,666,667**
Fast Retailing Co., Ltd. (UNIQLO)	94,024				**94,024**
IKEA Foundation	2,201,373				**2,201,373**
International Olympic Committee	33,280				**33,280**
Japan				378,263	**378,263**
Private donors in Japan				158,731	**158,731**
United States of America	1,542,051				**1,542,051**
Bangladesh subtotal	**6,886,394**	**0**	**0**	**938,197**	**7,824,591**
INDONESIA					
Australia	1,536,066				**1,536,066**
Indonesia subtotal	**1,536,066**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,536,066**
MALAYSIA					
Australia	468,669				**468,669**
Educate A Child Programme	133,100				**133,100**
Private donors in Malaysia	1,287				**1,287**
Malaysia subtotal	**603,056**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**603,056**
MYANMAR					
Brazil		120,000			**120,000**
Canada				401,204	**401,204**
Central Emergency Response Fund			6,583,725		**6,583,725**
Charities Aid Foundation				932	**932**
European Union		1,715,686	3,413,801		**5,129,487**
Japan				2,521,750	**2,521,750**
Luxembourg				415,584	**415,584**
Private donors in Canada			95,695		**95,695**
Qatar Charity			322,986		**322,986**
Republic of Korea			236,587		**236,587**
Saudi Arabia		1,000,000			**1,000,000**
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security		345,637			**345,637**
United States of America		710,000	2,790,000		**3,500,000**
USA for UNHCR			1,000,000		**1,000,000**
Myanmar subtotal	**0**	**3,891,323**	**14,442,794**	**3,339,470**	**21,673,587**
PHILIPPINES					
Australia			375,940		**375,940**
Australia for UNHCR			26,163		**26,163**
Canada				200,602	**200,602**
Central Emergency Response Fund			899,974		**899,974**
European Union			435,323		**435,323**
France			65,531		**65,531**
Philippines subtotal	**0**	**0**	**1,802,931**	**200,602**	**2,003,533**

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
THAILAND					
European Union	1,206,634				**1,206,634**
Japan				1,008,700	**1,008,700**
Kuwait	250,000				**250,000**
Luxembourg	266,667				**266,667**
Private donors in Thailand	277,542			3,414,286	**3,691,828**
Switzerland				544,070	**544,070**
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security	69,800				**69,800**
United States of America	320,000				**320,000**
Thailand subtotal	**2,390,642**	**0**	**0**	**4,967,056**	**7,357,698**
THAILAND REGIONAL OFFICE					
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS	183,440				**183,440**
Thailand Regional Office subtotal	**183,440**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**183,440**
VIET NAM					
European Union		121,588			**121,588**
Viet Nam	180,000				**180,000**
Viet Nam subtotal	**180,000**	**121,588**	**0**	**0**	**301,588**
Total	**11,916,098**	**4,012,911**	**16,245,725**	**22,845,325**	**55,020,059**

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM) Reserve.