



East Asia and the Pacific

Australia

China

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Japan

Mongolia

New Zealand

Pacific Island States

Papua New Guinea

Republic of Korea



18-year-old Kamama Dimasalan, a young IDP in Mindanao, Philippines, prepares corn to sell at the market to help support his family.

| OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS |

- To mark the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 30th anniversary of Japan's accession to it, in November 2011 the Japanese Diet adopted its first Resolution focusing on refugee protection and assistance.
- In December, the National Assembly in the Republic of Korea passed the country's first stand-alone Refugee Act. The new law is significant in its comprehensiveness and

reflects a commitment to adhere to international standards in refugee protection.

- Discussions with States on a regional approach to refugees and irregular movements in the Asia-Pacific region resulted in the endorsement by the Bali Process of a Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF). Talks on making the RCF operational, particularly through a Regional Support Office (RSO), continued throughout 2011.

| Working environment |

The general operating environment in this subregion was characterized by various protection challenges which required UNHCR to advocate continuously for enhanced protection space for persons of concern, unhindered access to asylum, and fair and efficient refugee status determination (RSD).

The detention of asylum-seekers, often for long periods of time, occurred in several countries in the region and remained the main protection challenge during the year. Prolonged detention affected the mental health of many asylum-seekers and refugees in custody, and there were several incidents of self-harm. UNHCR persistently advocated with States to identify alternatives to detention.

The growth in the number of boat movements and tragic maritime incidents in 2011 shaped asylum debates in South-East Asia and the Pacific, alerting States and international organizations to the urgent necessity of developing cooperative regional approaches.

| Achievements and impact |

In addition to pursuing its key protection objectives in the subregion, the Office worked to highlight the need to improve livelihoods for urban refugees, identify alternatives to detention for people of concern, and prevent statelessness.

In Australia, UNHCR conducted monitoring missions to immigration detention centres and convened an expert round table to advocate for alternatives to detention. In October, Australia announced that it would expand the use of bridging visas to allow more asylum-seekers to live outside detention, in the community, while their claims were being processed. Australia has also begun streamlining its previous “dual” RSD system so that the same processes—including appeal rights—would apply to people arriving, whether by boat or by plane.

In recognition of the challenges of dealing unilaterally or bilaterally with a phenomenon that affects many countries, States involved in the Bali Process made substantive progress in developing a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to managing irregular migration in a protection-sensitive manner. Following the endorsement of the concept of the RCF in early 2011, Bali Process members took another step towards making it operational by approving the establishment of the RSO in October 2011. UNHCR played an important advocacy role throughout this process, calling for core protection principles and practices to be integrated in regional cooperation arrangements under the RCF.

Australia and Malaysia signed a bilateral “Arrangement on transfer and resettlement” in July 2011 with the stated aim of deterring smuggling and trafficking activities in the region. However, following the decision of the High Court of Australia that this arrangement was at variance with the the 1958 Migration Act, the anticipated transfer of 800 boat arrivals from Australia to Malaysia was not implemented.

The Government of China worked on the development of national refugee regulations. In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, UNHCR and the Chinese Government co-organized and hosted a



symposium on refugee law with the participation of state ministries, academia, UN agencies and civil society.

A memorandum of understanding between the Hong Kong SAR (China) and UNHCR on training of government secondees helped to reinforce UNHCR’s RSD role under the Office’s mandate, while enhancing protection and assistance for asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR also ran learning programmes on international protection, RSD and interviewing victims of violence for trainees from Hong Kong’s Immigration Training Institutes. UNHCR advocated for the authorities to accept enhanced international refugee protection obligations in the territory under the model of “one country, two systems”.

UNHCR worked closely with the Government of Japan, the Parliamentarian League and civil society and welcomed Japan’s unwavering commitment to finding solutions for refugees both internationally and nationally, despite grave domestic challenges following the earthquake and tsunami in March. In addition to the Diet Resolution passed in November, the Government made positive pledges at the intergovernmental event in December.

Evidence of the Japanese asylum system’s progress included the record numbers of asylum applications and RSD decisions; shortened processing time for first instance RSD; a reduction in the number of asylum-seekers in detention; and the signing of an MOU on alternatives to detention by the Government and civil society.

UNHCR helped the Government of Japan to implement its three-year pilot resettlement project, offering technical advice and facilitating coordination between the authorities and other stakeholders. The project provided a durable solution for 90 refugees over three years. In September, a second group of Myanmar refugees began their integration process in Japan.

In New Zealand, UNHCR monitored the implementation of the revised Immigration Act, which includes provisions for complementary protection and streamlines appeals procedures. UNHCR also provided input for the development of New Zealand’s forthcoming national refugee resettlement strategy.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea adopted a comprehensive Refugee Act at the end of 2011 and UNHCR actively engaged in the whole process by providing comprehensive comments and coordinating with the Government and the civil society. The law covers many of the previously unregulated areas of asylum in the country and can be seen as significant progress for refugee protection. While the impact of the law will depend on how it is implemented, UNHCR stands ready to provide technical support to the Government where needed.

In Papua New Guinea, following a comprehensive needs assessment amongst West Papuan refugees in East Awin, interventions were targeted towards gaps in several areas of protection (including SGBV), access to land, livelihoods, health, education, water and sanitation, in anticipation of UNHCR’s disengagement in 2012. At the intergovernmental commemorative meeting in December 2011, the Government pledged to withdraw seven reservations to the 1951 Convention and to waive or substantially reduce citizenship fees in order to ease the naturalization of

West Papuan refugees residing in East Awin. UNHCR gained further ground by advocating with the Government for the establishment of RSD procedures and mechanisms.

Progress was made on immigration legislation and refugee policies in several of the *Pacific Island States*. Nauru acceded to the 1951 Convention during the year.

| Constraints |

Concerns related to national security and the curbing of irregular migration had an impact on the protection of people of concern to UNHCR in the region. The increasing use of detention facilities to hold asylum-seekers and refugees, including children and vulnerable groups, and UNHCR’s inability to access them, remained key concerns. Alleviating the situation of many urban refugees and asylum-seekers was challenging, mainly due to limited livelihood opportunities and lack of access to social services in some countries.

| Operations |

In **Australia**, UNHCR continued to advocate for alternatives to detention and fair and efficient RSD, as well as for protection principles to be included in any “offshore” processing arrangements. Raising public awareness of asylum and refugee issues by positioning these within a broader regional and global context also remained a priority, with a particular focus on promoting the 1951 Convention in its 60th anniversary year.

Resettlement programmes in Australia and **New Zealand** for 2011 were maintained at the same levels as in the previous year; however, the ongoing effects of the Christchurch

Budget and expenditure in East Asia and the Pacific | USD

Country		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
Australia Regional Office¹	Budget	1,873,700	0	0	1,873,700
	Expenditure	1,746,162	0	0	1,746,162
China Regional Office²	Budget	4,735,766	200,275	0	4,936,041
	Expenditure	3,745,868	109,564	0	3,855,432
Japan	Budget	4,357,567	850,011	460,000	5,667,578
	Expenditure	3,544,760	592,237	444,056	4,581,053
Mongolia	Budget	170,108	38,614	0	208,722
	Expenditure	104,618	16,149	0	120,767
Papua New Guinea	Budget	2,474,307	0	0	2,474,307
	Expenditure	1,266,687	0	0	1,266,687
Republic of Korea	Budget	1,593,569	80,497	0	1,674,066
	Expenditure	1,255,510	80,294	0	1,335,804
Regional activities	Budget	200,000	0	0	200,000
	Expenditure	46,656	0	0	46,656
Total budget		15,405,017	1,169,397	460,000	17,034,414
Total expenditure		11,710,261	798,244	444,056	12,952,561

¹Includes activities in New Zealand and 13 Pacific Island countries as well as additional support to Papua New Guinea.

²Provides support to Mongolia.

earthquakes impacted on New Zealand's ability to fill its annual quota. Stakeholder consultations, and joint public information and community outreach activities with key NGOs and other protection partners in Australia and New Zealand helped UNHCR strengthen cooperation in relation to the main protection challenges.

In **China**, UNHCR conducted RSD and provided basic assistance to people of concern, renewing efforts to improve the protection space for asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR gave refugee protection training to Government officials. Following advocacy with the Government for refugee children's access to education, there were indications that the authorities would facilitate their enrolment in public schools.

In the **Hong Kong SAR (China)**, UNHCR operated a complex RSD programme and provided basic care for urban refugees, including shelter and living allowances, while the Government provided assistance to asylum-seekers. Throughout the year, UNHCR had full access to people of concern in the territory. More than 40 cases were accepted for resettlement in third countries.

In the **Macao SAR (China)**, UNHCR helped the authorities to conduct RSD for a limited number of asylum-seekers.

In **Mongolia**, capacity-building efforts supported the Government's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention. UNHCR moved ahead with preparations to phase out its presence in the country in 2012 and consolidate operations under the coverage of the Beijing Regional Office.

To promote and advocate for Mongolia's accession to the 1951 Convention and strengthen the protection space, capacity-building efforts in 2011 included three training workshops for academics, NGOs and executive assistants to parliamentarians.

In **Japan**, the number of asylum applications in 2011 was the highest since the country started RSD, almost tripling between 2010 and 2011. In this context, speedier RSD decisions reduced the number of pending cases at the first instance. UNHCR provided technical support to the Ministry of Justice through training and workshops. In an effort to supplement the Government's programme,

UNHCR supported legal and social counselling and provided educational and material assistance to vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees through NGO partners. However, the earthquake and tsunami, and the ensuing effects on the economy, adversely affected the livelihoods of asylum-seekers; as a consequence, their need for counselling and assistance services increased, straining the limited capacity of service providers.

The Regional Centre for Emergency Preparedness (eCentre) in Tokyo promoted emergency preparedness in the context of forced displacement in Asia and the Pacific. In 2011, the eCentre worked with a wide network of partners to conduct field-based training, organize relevant symposia and workshops, develop learning materials, provide technical support to States and NGO partners, and promote networks of emergency responders in Asia and the Pacific.

The eCentre also organized regional consultations with eCentre alumni and partners from governments and civil society, with a view to consolidating strategic partnerships in the region and identifying areas for future collaboration.

During the year, UNHCR Japan concluded a global partnership agreement with Fast Retailing/UNIQLO, a top Japanese clothing manufacturer and retailer. In addition to cash and clothing contributions, in 2011 the company provided four refugees with paid internships in Japan, and subsequently offered employment to two of them.

In **Papua New Guinea**, UNHCR assisted some 2,300 West Papuan refugees in East Awin. Interventions included: upgrading of health facilities, education, livelihoods and community management structures. UNHCR helped to establish a network of community advocates and three Village Courts to ensure access to justice, strengthen measures to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and provide a safe haven through the establishment of a safe house. Efforts to promote durable solutions for West Papuan refugees through economic self-sufficiency were intensified, and road access to and from the East Awin settlement was improved to allow refugees to trade their agricultural products and access services. Access to refugees in the settlement and border areas remained a major challenge for UNHCR due to the remoteness of these locations.

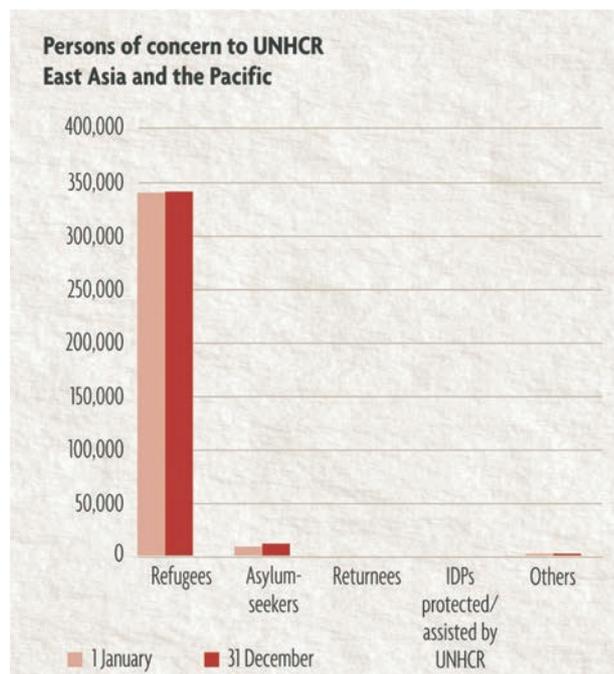
In an effort to promote durable solutions for all West Papuans, UNHCR advocated for the development of a Refugee Policy which would address the situation of some 6,400 refugees living in urban and border areas whose status needs to be regularized.

UNHCR lobbied the authorities for the waiving or reduction of prohibitive citizenship fees to facilitate refugee naturalization. The Office also continued to advocate for land allocation for West Papuan refugees in urban areas.

In the absence of a national framework, UNHCR undertook RSD for non-Melanesian refugees and provided basic assistance to urban refugees and asylum-seekers.

In cooperation with the UNHCR eCentre in Tokyo the Office organized a learning programme on Protection in emergencies with over 30 participants from the Government and the civil society.

In the **Republic of Korea**, UNHCR's advocacy and training resulted in important advancements in the legal aid sector and the adjudication of asylum cases by the national court system. A delegation from the Korean judiciary participated for the first time in the International Association of Refugee Law Judges World Conference in Slovenia, reflecting the



increased interest and engagement by Korean courts in asylum matters. The Seoul Administrative Court, the first court of appeal of a negative administrative-level decision, initiated a number of reform projects and is taking the lead in ensuring higher standards in the national RSD process.

In cooperation with the Korean Red Cross, UNHCR launched the first extensive assistance programme for asylum-seekers, which could serve as a model for a future Korean Government programmes.

In March 2011, UNHCR became the first UN agency in the Republic of Korea to obtain direct tax deductible status, which allows private donors to receive tax benefits for their donations to the organization. Following this development, the number of individual donors has increased sharply and private-sector contributions to UNHCR have doubled. UNHCR participated in a large-scale fund-raising telethon called the Hope TV campaign, organized by the Seoul Broadcasting Service, which helped to raise awareness about refugee situations as well as the work of UNHCR.

In the *Pacific Island States*, the key focus of regional cooperation was on training and awareness-raising for

border officials and the review of legislation, mainly through engagement with the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference. As co-lead of the Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster, UNHCR has strengthened its role in contingency planning in conjunction with national and regional organizations, including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, other members of the UN Country and Regional Teams in the Pacific, and National Disaster Management Offices.

Financial information

Operations in the East Asia and the Pacific subregion were mainly supported through broadly earmarked or unearmarked funds. At the end of the year, the budget of the subregion was 76 per cent funded. Although essential and critical needs to sustain operations in the region were met through vigorous prioritization, underfunding made it impossible for UNHCR to improve the situation of urban refugees by strengthening advocacy and services.

Voluntary contributions to East Asia and the Pacific | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC SUBREGION				
United States of America			8,350,000	8,350,000
East Asia and the Pacific subtotal	0	0	8,350,000	8,350,000
AUSTRALIA REGIONAL OFFICE				
Australia	322,911			322,911
Australia Regional Office subtotal	322,911	0	0	322,911
CHINA REGIONAL OFFICE				
Private donors in China	1,989			1,989
China Regional Office subtotal	1,989	0	0	1,989
JAPAN				
Australia for UNHCR		996		996
Espana con ACNUR		3,691		3,691
Japan Association for UNHCR	66,311	303,314	48,348	417,973
Private donors in Canada		1,019		1,019
Private donors in China		2,569		2,569
Private donors in Italy		56,338		56,338
Private donors in Japan			13,415	13,415
Private donors in Jordan		5,810		5,810
Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe		28,490		28,490
Japan subtotal	66,311	402,227	61,762	530,301
PAPUA NEW GUINEA				
UN Delivering as One	88,803			88,803
Papua New Guinea subtotal	88,803	0	0	88,803
Total	480,014	402,227	8,411,762	9,294,004