

Thailand

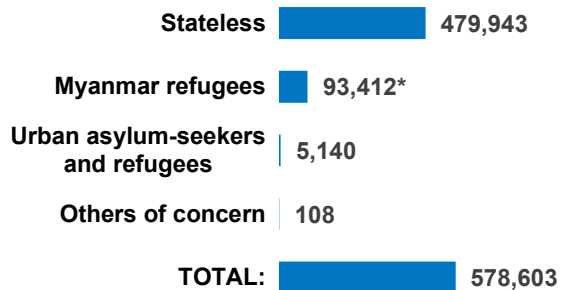
30 June 2020

Populations of concern include **93,412** Myanmar refugees, **5,140** urban asylum-seekers and refugees and **479,943** persons registered by the Royal Thai Government (RTG) as stateless.

Myanmar refugees reside in **9 temporary shelters on the Thai-Myanmar border**, while urban asylum-seekers and refugees and stateless persons reside in **different areas of the country**.

UNHCR works with the RTG, international agencies, NGOs and donors to address the **protection, assistance and durable solutions needs** of these groups.

POPULATIONS OF CONCERN



FUNDING (AS OF 30 JUNE 2020)

USD 19.1 million

requested for the Thailand operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

99 National Staff
20 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in
Bangkok
2 Field Offices in
Mae Hong Son
and **Mae Sot**



PHOTO: UNHCR staff distribute cloth face masks to refugees in Tham Hin Temporary Shelter on the Thai-Myanmar border in June 2020 as part of COVID-19 prevention efforts.
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WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- UNHCR works in **close partnership** with the Royal Thai Government (RTG), UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, and civil society to improve protection and solutions for refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern to UNHCR, while supporting their inclusion in national systems.
- **Strategic alliances** with key international and national NGOs, civil society and faith-based organisations, private sector partners and academia help to address a range of issues including alternatives to detention, improved access to domestic legal and social services, and alternative forms of temporary protection pending solutions.
- **Partners:** Ministry of Interior (MOI), Adventist Development and Relief Agency Thailand (ADRA), Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), Humanity and Inclusion (HI), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Volunteers (UNV).

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- UNHCR maintains a stock of emergency relief supplies, as well as monitoring, assessment and response capacity which allows it to undertake a stand-alone and/or inter-agency emergency response. Protection, medical and SGBV emergency telephone hotlines are active seven days a week for urban persons of concern.

Main Activities

PROTECTION

- In the context of COVID-19 UNHCR has established **inter-agency coordination mechanisms** and COVID-19 **outreach, risk communication and community engagement activities** for all three population groups. In coordination with its partners, UNHCR is advocating that marginalized groups (including persons of concern to UNHCR) in Thailand should be **fully included in government COVID-19 national surveillance, response and planning activities**, and should be able to access COVID-19 testing, clinical care and case management.
- UNHCR and its partners are aware of the increased level of hardship being faced by POCs in Thailand as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and have been **streamlining and increasing support to POCs** to address some of their basic needs. In urban areas during April-June 2020, **1,705 POCs** benefitted from **cash grants** received by household members with specific needs. In addition, UNHCR provided financial support to **314 POCs** to enable them to **access medical care**, while **128 POCs** received **psychosocial support** and **314 POCs** received **legal assistance**.
- A **COVID-19 Impact Assessment** was conducted to strengthen understanding of the situation of urban POCs. This focused on a range of areas, including COVID-19 knowledge, experience, behaviour and norms, health, education, employment and access to basic necessities and is intended to provide a **stronger evidence base** from which to design protection and programme interventions.
- UNHCR procured and distributed **94,000 cloth face masks** to refugees in the nine temporary shelters on the Thai-Myanmar border, while **emergency care assistance** was provided to **1,132 Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs)**. In addition, UNHCR's partner procured **2,260 survival kits for stateless persons and host community members** in 77 villages in Chiang Rai Province.
- UNHCR continued to effectively engage with RTG counterparts, particularly at the technical level, around capacity building for **implementation of a screening mechanism** approved by the Thai Cabinet in December 2019 to distinguish people who need international protection from economic migrants. UNHCR also continued to undertake mandate **registration, RSD, and resettlement activities** using remote procedures developed as part of the COVID-19 response.
- Following the RTG's signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on alternatives to detention for children** in January 2019, there were no children of concern to UNHCR detained in the main Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) for foreigners as of 30 June 2020. In the context of COVID-19, UNHCR continued to **support POCs in immigration detention** and stepped up its advocacy for the increased use of ATD, particularly to reduce the risk of close-quarter contagion in the context of COVID-19.
- During April-June 2020, UNHCR visited or communicated via phone with **newly arrived Rohingya individuals** to assess their protection needs and provide humanitarian items in support of the efforts of the Thai authorities. At the same time, UNHCR advocated for **non-refoulement, ATD and Victim of Trafficking (VOT) screening** as part of its protection interventions and continued to seek longer-term solutions for Rohingya POCs remaining in detention and shelters.
- In anticipation of the reopening of Thai public schools on 01 July 2020, as of 30 June 2020 a total of **467 POC children** were enrolled in **primary education** and **87 POC children** were enrolled in **secondary education**. **77 POC children** were attending **Thai language classes** provided through a partner to equip them with skills to access public schools under Thailand's progressive "Education for All" policy.
- With UNHCR support, **624 birth certificates** were issued by District Offices to the registered and unregistered population in temporary shelters on the Thai-Myanmar border during April-June 2020.

SOLUTIONS

- UNHCR continues to work closely with the Thai and Myanmar governments, refugee community and other stakeholders to unlock a **multi-solutions approach** to find a dignified, sustainable and comprehensive end to this situation of protracted encampment. At the same time, UNHCR continues to **advocate for international protection** to continue to be extended to those who need it while maintaining its focus on delivery of protection activities.
- Despite setbacks caused by COVID-19, UNHCR's partner **submitted 1,678 nationality applications** during April-June 2020. Moreover, UNHCR welcomes the announcement by MOI in June 2020 of a new regulation allowing registered stateless persons to change their residence to other provinces.
- During April-June 2020, new resettlement submissions were made for **125 refugees** in the whole country and **66 refugees** departed on resettlement.

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 to date during 2020:
Australia | Canada | France | Denmark | Ireland | 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, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Thailand and the United States of America.
- UNHCR has raised funds from the private sector since 2008 for POCs both in Thailand and globally.

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