



Australia
Cambodia
China
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Indonesia
Japan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Malaysia
Mongolia
Myanmar
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Republic of Korea
Singapore
South Pacific
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Viet Nam

East Asia and the Pacific

Operational highlights

- UNHCR focused on the search for durable solutions in 2007. In Malaysia, the Office reached a landmark of 10,400 resettlement submissions in a year. Thailand saw 30,400 resettlement submissions; 18,230 were accepted and 14,610 refugees departed for their new homes. In Viet Nam, efforts to reduce and prevent statelessness received a boost from the Government's decision to naturalize some 9,000 Cambodian refugees.
- In July 2007, UNHCR ended its involvement with the IDP operation in Timor-Leste due to a lack of resources. However, the smooth handover of the Office's IDP protection and coordination role to the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) averted any negative impact from the disengagement.
- In Hong Kong, some 2,400 asylum-seekers were awaiting refugee status determination (RSD) at the beginning of 2007, which double the number from the previous year. The Office reduced the backlog by revising its standard operating procedures and increasing the number of staff working on RSD and registration.



Working environment

Within the overall context of continuing irregular migratory movements in the East Asia and the Pacific region, States' concerns about national security and the priority given to bilateral cooperation over refugee protection have had a negative impact on asylum and protection.

The presidential election in December in the Republic of Korea resulted in a change of Government. The new President pledged to continue engaging in the six-party negotiations with the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea while, he emphasized reciprocity between the two countries with respect to inter-Korean relations and the provision of aid in the future.

UN-assisted presidential and parliamentary elections were held in Timor-Leste. In Australia, the new Government has reaffirmed its support for multilateral processes, particularly the UN system.

Given the vulnerability of some States in the Pacific to the effects of climate change, there was increasing interest in the links between climate change and forced displacement.



UNHCR

UNHCR-sponsored hairdressing course for refugees in Malaysia.

Achievements and impact

There was steady progress in resettlement activities in Malaysia. Furthermore, the strengthening of ties with civil society and the media helped UNHCR enhance awareness of refugee issues.

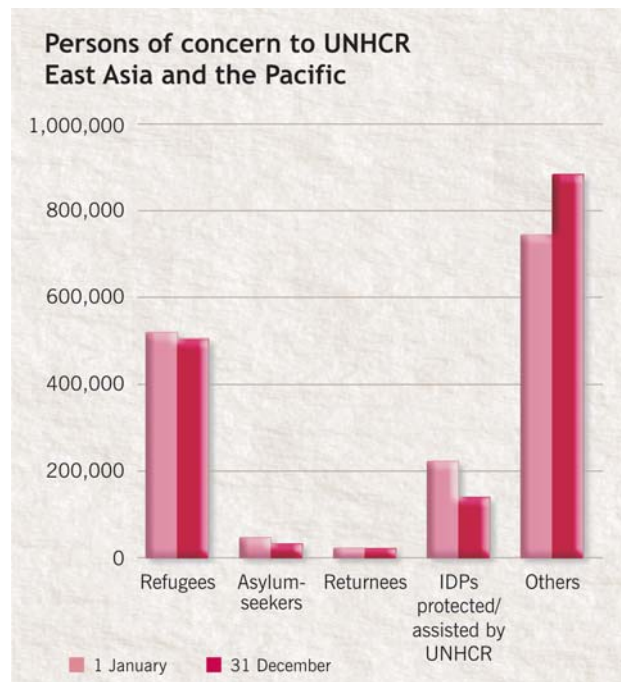
UNHCR's cooperation with the authorities to prepare for Indonesia's accession to the international refugee instruments helped promote asylum issues.

In Thailand, resettlement offered a durable solution to a significant percentage of the Myanmar refugees. At the same time, the establishment of legal assistance centres with the involvement of the Ministry of Justice strengthened the rule of law in the camps.

In Vietnam, significant progress was made in the reduction and prevention of statelessness with the decision of the Vietnamese Government to proceed with the naturalization of some 9,000 former Cambodia refugees.

In Myanmar, UNHCR helped the Government to begin distributing temporary registration cards to the residents of northern Rakhine State.

In July 2007, UNHCR and officials from China's State Council and its ministries of Foreign Affairs, Public Security and Civil Affairs participated in a meeting in Beijing on national refugee legislation. Still to be resolved is the question of which government agency will be responsible for refugee issues.



Constraints

Legitimate government 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. UNHCR had difficulty ensuring the *non-refoulement* of asylum-seekers and refugees, allowing entry and access to asylum, as well as in making certain that individuals in need of protection could avail themselves of their basic rights. An equally significant problem was the increasing use of immigration detention facilities to hold asylum-seekers and refugees (including many children and vulnerable groups), which made it difficult for UNHCR to reach those detained.

Operations

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

In the absence of national refugee legislation and related mechanisms in **Malaysia**, UNHCR performed core protection functions for more than 39,000 registered people of concern (including close to 14,000 newly registered). Efficient refugee status determination and resettlement procedures resulted in almost 15,000 RSD decisions, as well as a substantial increase in the number of submissions for resettlement. Some 10,400 people were submitted, of whom nearly 5,600 departed for their new homes – a four-fold increase from 2006. However, UNHCR's advocacy for alternative solutions with regard to the Rohingya and Myanmar populations is yet to produce the desired results.

The **Regional Protection Hub** in Kuala Lumpur enhanced protection delivery by ensuring regional policy coherence, as well as by providing support for registration. It also raised awareness of international protection issues at various regional fora.

In **Indonesia**, UNHCR boosted its capacity-building activities to assist the Government to prepare for Indonesia's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Durable solutions through resettlement were found for 50 per cent of the 130 long-staying people of concern in the country. Advocacy for access to local medical services led to the acceptance of refugee referrals by public health clinics.

In the first half of the year, UNHCR coordinated protection activities in **Timor-Leste**, contributing to efforts to reduce conflict between communities through community peace projects. UNHCR handed over its IDP protection and coordination role to UNMIT's Human

Rights Section in July 2007. UNHCR's operations in the country reverted to their previous focus on asylum and refugee related matters.

In the **Philippines**, durable solutions were found for five persons through resettlement and one refugee was naturalized. Another 20 are at different stages in the process of finding durable solutions.

In **Singapore**, the Office adjudicated 44 asylum applications, an increase over 2006. UNHCR resettled six refugees on an emergency basis. Following the Office's intervention, the authorities reinstated the Singaporean citizenship of one person.

In **Cambodia**, there were nearly 700 individuals under UNHCR protection in 2007, including 631 Montagnards and 63 urban asylum-seekers. The implementation of the January 2005 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by UNHCR, Cambodia and Viet Nam improved legal protection for refugees in Cambodia and provided options for durable solutions for most of the Montagnards, 97 of whom were resettled. The MOU introduced an effective procedure for voluntary repatriation, helping 37 people in 2006 and 33 in 2007 return to Vietnam.

In **Viet Nam**, UNHCR conducted monitoring missions in the Central Highlands and sponsored training workshops and micro-projects. The Government has agreed to naturalize some 9,000 former Cambodian refugees.

The Regional Office in **Australia** covers New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific. Australia's resettlement programme continued in 2007 and provided durable solutions for approximately 6,000 UNHCR-referred refugees. The Government of **New Zealand** maintained its resettlement intake at 750 places under its 2007-2008 refugee quota, and continued to adhere broadly to UNHCR's resettlement criteria.

UNHCR strengthened its cooperation with civil society and NGOs in Australia and continued to monitor the Government's response to border control and deterrence measures for irregular arrivals by sea. By the end of the year, the new Government announced the end of the 'Pacific Solution', taking steps to close the reception centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

The Office developed a 10-Point Plan and capacity-building strategy to assist **South Pacific States** to deal with asylum-seekers and refugees. The Plan was presented to the Pacific Immigration Directors Conference in August 2007 and discussed with different actors in late 2007.

In **China**, long-awaited regulations to establish a national asylum system could not be finalized by the

end of 2007. The number of urban individual cases, including asylum-seekers and refugees, increased slightly. UNHCR assisted 61 refugees and their families, as well as a few asylum-seekers with specific needs. The Chinese authorities allowed refugees to stay in China pending third-country resettlement. The provision of complementary protection for those asylum-seekers who could not return to their country of origin, and for whom resettlement opportunities are distant, remained problematic.

UNHCR advocated that China respects the principles of asylum and non-refoulement in the context of security restrictions in the lead-up to the Olympic Games. A draft handover agreement on micro-credit schemes benefiting Indo-Chinese refugees was finalized at the end of 2007. The agreement involved the handover of USD 7 million to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, which would continue to implement these schemes, thereby bringing UNHCR's direct engagement with this caseload to an end by early 2008.

In **Japan**, UNHCR engaged with the authorities and civil society on policy and legal matters. The Office held bilateral meetings with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and tripartite meetings with the MOJ and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following extensive consultations supported by the Resettlement Service, in August 2007 the Government established a study group on resettlement. The group was to look into the feasibility of Japan establishing a resettlement programme. The MOJ's practices with regard to the reception of asylum seekers improved, and some 60 asylum-seekers from Myanmar were released from detention in late 2007 following UNHCR's interventions. The number of asylum-seekers in the country rose to some 1,300 by the end of 2007.

At the request of the Regional Office in Beijing, the Government of **Mongolia** established a task force of

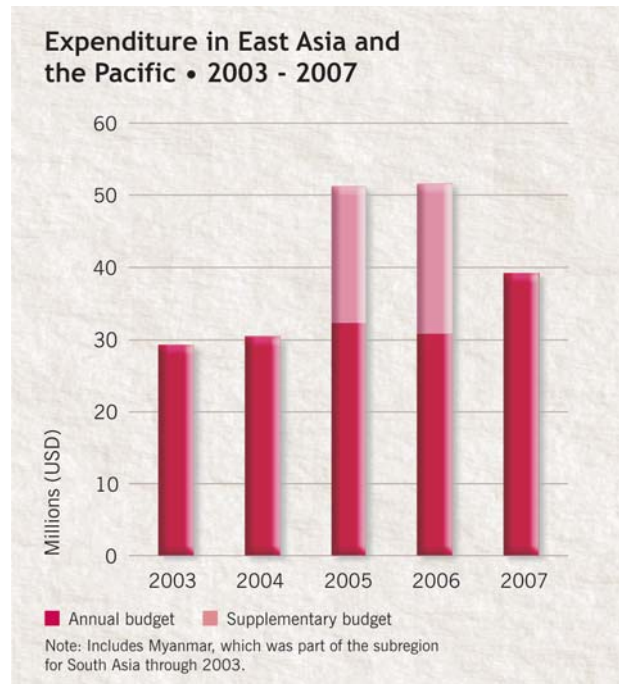
several ministries and specialized government institutions to review accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Standard operating procedures for the processing of people of concern were developed and introduced in 2007.

In **Papua New Guinea**, UNHCR continued to protect and assist 2,700 refugees from the Indonesian province of West Papua living in East Awin. The Office also helped non-Melanesian urban refugees. A workshop aimed at the inclusion of refugees in national development plans was organized in November 2007 and brought together representatives of the Government, UN agencies, NGOs and donors. The situation of 100 urban refugees from the Indonesian province of West Papua (estimated to total approximately 7,500 refugees), became of concern to the Office when this group was asked to move from the land where they had settled 20 years ago. This event underlined the fragile situation of urban refugees, who may be well-integrated but have no legal rights to the land they occupy.

In the **Republic of Korea**, there was limited progress towards the long-planned amendment of the Immigration Control Act. The former Immigration Department of the Ministry of Justice was upgraded and received greater autonomy. With respect to the RSD system, though the Government deployed additional staff at the Seoul Immigration Office, where most claims are received, the backlog of undecided cases rose from some 600 to 1,200 during the year. This situation leaves people with no clear legal status and unable to work or receive public health care. UNHCR continued to engage with the judiciary through an annual workshop on RSD with Korean judges, mainly from the Seoul Administrative Court. Refugee protection activities, including promotion of refugee law, were institutionalized by two MOUs signed by UNHCR with the National Human Rights Commission of Korea and Hanyang University.

Financial information

Funding was adequate for essential activities in the majority of countries in 2007, but not all the priority needs could be met. Over the period 2002-2006, expenditures for the annual programmes for the East Asian sub-region remained fairly constant at approximately USD 30 million. The increase in expenditure in 2007 was mainly due to new and additional resettlement and protection activities in Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia, as well as health and nutrition activities in the subregion. UNHCR phased out from the IDP operation in Timor-Leste in July 2007. A downward trend in the expenditures in Indonesia was due to the termination of UNHCR's tsunami response operation. Local fundraising by country offices in the Hong Kong SAR, Republic of Korea and Japan filled some gaps, while the increase in resettlement activities in Malaysia and Thailand drew strong donor support.



Budget and expenditure (USD)		
Country	Annual budget	
	Final budget	Expenditure
Australia and New Zealand	1,189,585	1,164,120
Cambodia	1,153,566	1,070,924
China	4,298,926	4,046,495
Indonesia	2,314,014	2,104,689
Japan	2,666,128	2,652,230
Malaysia	4,582,826	4,292,330
Mongolia	257,710	222,111
Myanmar	6,590,167	6,441,560
Papua New Guinea	465,702	404,422
Philippines	220,662	192,748
Republic of Korea	809,558	785,389
Singapore	53,095	47,177
Thailand	15,026,774	14,504,988
Timor-Leste	995,784	937,772
Viet Nam	279,922	220,473
Regional activities ¹	124,555	34,890
Total	41,028,976	39,122,321

¹ Includes protection, transport and repatriation activities within Asia, and dissemination of refugee law.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)		
Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget
East Asia and the Pacific	United States	7,607,043
	Sub-total	7,607,043
Regional activities	Japan Association for UNHCR	17,920
	Private donors in Japan	6,955
	Sub-total	24,875
Cambodia	Japan	100,000
	Philippines	788
	Sub-total	100,788
China	Private donors in Hong Kong SAR, China	63,022
	United States	241,890
	Sub-total	304,912
Indonesia	Australia	306,767
	Sub-total	306,767
Malaysia	Australia	316,158
	United States	860,268
	Sub-total	1,176,426
Mongolia	United States	378,310
	Sub-total	378,310
Myanmar	Australia	157,480
	Australia for UNHCR	119,091
	CERF	1,401,748
	European Commission	1,578,947
	Japan	1,200,000
	Switzerland	204,918
	United States	689,000
Sub-total	5,351,185	
Papua New Guinea	Australia for UNHCR	83,663
	Sub-total	83,663
Republic of Korea	Private donors in the Republic of Korea	19,916
	Republic of Korea	2,234
	Sub-total	22,150
Thailand	Australia	1,508,886
	Czech Republic	14,635
	Germany	471,878
	Japan	600,000
	Japan Association for UNHCR	32,154
	Luxembourg	341,997
	Norway	691,816
	Poland	100,000
	Switzerland	204,918
	TOTAL (France)	26,733
	TOTAL / CARPA (France)	843,176
	UNAIDS	155,156
	United States	1,165,230
Sub-total	6,156,578	
Timor-Leste	Australia for UNHCR	1,349
	Sub-total	1,349
Viet Nam	European Commission	42,866
	Sub-total	42,866
Total		21,556,911

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.