



- Bangladesh
- Brunei Darussalam
- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste
- Viet Nam

A refugee from Myanmar recovers mobility at a clinic in Mae La camp, Thailand.



# South-East Asia

## | Working environment |

Although Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, constructive Government policies and international support have resulted in tangible improvements in living conditions for the 28,000 refugees from Myanmar residing in two camps in Cox's Bazar. However, with an estimated 200,000 unregistered people of concern living outside the camps, more needs to be done to achieve international standards both inside and outside the camps.

UNHCR continues to pursue a comprehensive approach to the situation of refugees from Myanmar, endeavouring to attain more equitable living conditions for registered refugees, unregistered people of concern outside the camps and the Bangladeshi host population.

In Cambodia, UNHCR is working with the authorities to enhance the capacity of the Refugee Office established in 2008 under the Ministry of the Interior. The successful implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between Cambodia, Viet Nam and UNHCR has led to significant progress towards a resolution of the situation of the Montagnard refugees in Cambodia.

In Indonesia, UNHCR is helping the Government to prepare for its planned accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Efforts to build national capacity have been advanced by a programme of country-wide training sessions and awareness-raising activities. A steady rise in the number of new arrivals has prompted UNHCR to enhance its protection capacity in various sites across the country.

In Malaysia, UNHCR strives to meet the challenges inherent to delivering protection in an environment of mixed migration without a legal framework for dealing with refugees. Without access to public services, and at risk of arrest, detention and deportation, refugees turn to UNHCR as the primary provider of protection. UNHCR will continue to register, determine refugee status, provide documentation for individuals and

intervene in the event they are arrested. It will strengthen efforts to provide social services and empower refugee communities.

Without prospects for return or local integration, UNHCR will boost resettlement as the only available solution for many refugees. In all aspects of its work, UNHCR engages the Malaysian Government in efforts to create a more favourable protection environment for refugees.

In Myanmar, humanitarian actors continue to face many operational restrictions. Nevertheless, following the High Commissioner's visit in March 2009 it was agreed to upgrade UNHCR's programme in northern Rakhine State in five key areas identified by the Government: health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture and infrastructure.

These efforts in Myanmar will complement UNHCR's reintegration programme for Muslim residents who have returned to the country. The Office will also assist those in the wider community who lack citizenship, as well as contributing to a widening of the humanitarian space in the region. Furthermore, UNHCR is serving communities affected by displacement in south-eastern Myanmar.

Thailand continues to be a major country of asylum for refugees from Myanmar. Protection space remains restricted and UNHCR faces challenges in accessing certain populations of concern. Repatriation of Lao Hmong continues to occur and the Office has no access to those being returned. There have also been cases of asylum-seekers being deported to Cambodia and Myanmar. Close cooperation with the Government has resulted in a revitalization of the registration and screening process governing admission to the camps for Myanmar refugees along the border.

In Viet Nam, UNHCR continues to make visits to the Central Highlands to monitor the situation of Montagnards returning from Cambodia. Advances are being made with regard to the prevention and reduction of statelessness as revisions to the country's nationality laws take effect.

## Strategy

UNHCR will advocate for the rights of people of concern and for adherence to international protection standards with support from regional institutions and civil-society actors. The cornerstone of the protection strategy is to initiate and promote activities that will lead to increased government ownership of refugee protection, particularly in the areas of access to protection and basic services and registration. Moreover, protection strategies will focus on mixed-flow situations, refugee status determination (RSD), access to asylum, detention of refugees and asylum-seekers, and protection and assistance for the most needy urban refugees. Solutions such as resettlement and self-reliance will remain priorities.

The Office continues to map populations in the region affected by statelessness in order to devise strategies to address the problem and promote the rights and well-being of stateless populations.

## Constraints

Thailand continues to host large numbers of refugees from Myanmar while maintaining policies that limit their access to employment and hinder self-reliance. Innovative approaches are needed to address the protracted situation of Myanmar refugees and to develop comprehensive solutions.

The general environment for humanitarian activities in Myanmar remains challenging, especially with regard to reaching populations affected by displacement in south-eastern Myanmar.

In Bangladesh, despite advances in Government policy, the protracted nature of the refugee situation and continuing dependence on the humanitarian programme need to be addressed, as does the situation of the large unregistered population outside the camps.

## Operations

UNHCR operations in **Malaysia**, **Myanmar** and **Thailand** are described in separate country chapters.

In **Bangladesh**, UNHCR will continue its protection and assistance programmes benefiting refugees from Myanmar's northern Rakhine State and small numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers in urban areas. In collaboration with the Government and other partners, the Office will also seek ways to improve the situation of 200,000 unregistered people of concern and promote community-based opportunities for employment and self-reliance that will benefit refugees and the host



population. The aim is to improve prospects for the eventual voluntary repatriation of the refugees.

In **Indonesia**, due to the absence of national refugee legislation and procedures, UNHCR continues to be the primary provider of protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers, undertaking responsibility for registration, status determination and the search for durable solutions. The Office will continue to advocate for humanitarian solutions for Iraqis and Afghans in the country and promote the rights and well-being of the stateless population. In anticipation of the country's accession to the international refugee instruments, UNHCR will work with the local authorities to increase their institutional capacity to manage refugee and asylum issues.

In **Timor-Leste**, UNHCR will continue to assist a small number of asylum-seekers and refugees while also helping the Government to enhance its asylum capacity by establishing refugee admission mechanisms and conducting RSD in accordance with international standards.

Following the expected conclusion of the voluntary repatriation programme for the Montagnard refugees by the end

of 2009, UNHCR will refocus its work in **Cambodia** to improve the Government's capacity to implement and manage its asylum procedures and protect refugees and asylum-seekers.

In **Viet Nam**, while providing community-based support for the Montagnard refugees who have returned from Cambodia in recent years, UNHCR will advocate for a humanitarian and lasting solution for Cambodian refugees who have been residing in the country without legal status since the 1970s. Viet Nam's recent move to reduce statelessness through naturalization of the former Cambodian refugees is progressing, particularly for those residing in camps who were formerly assisted by UNHCR.

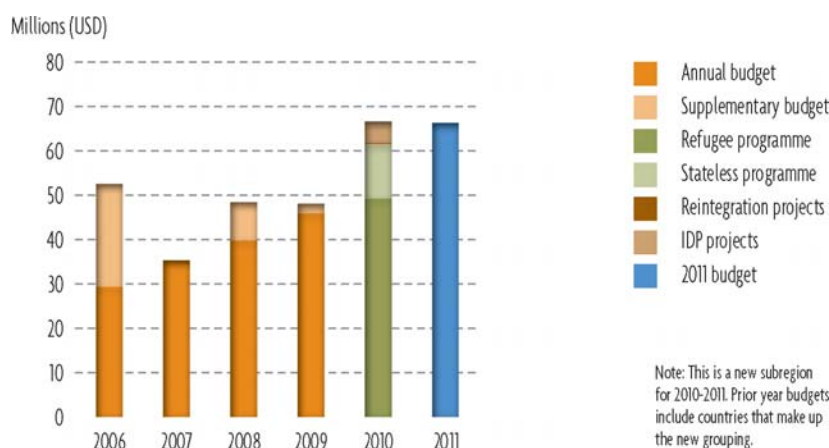
In the **Philippines**, UNHCR will continue to support the process whereby refugees can acquire citizenship. At the same time, it will help refugees to become self-reliant. Support for the Government will be aimed at enhancing its capacity to implement its obligations as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Based on the agreement between UNHCR and the Government, an emergency transit mechanism for accelerated resettlement processing began to operate in the country in 2009 and is expected to continue to do so in 2010.

UNHCR assumed leadership of the protection cluster in response to the emergency caused by the onset of typhoons in the Philippines towards the end of 2009. The Office will support national authorities to ensure the protection needs of affected populations with specific needs are met through effective coordination. UNHCR's activities form part of the joint UN response which will be part of a separate appeal.

### Financial information

Since 2006, UNHCR's requirements in the subregion have been fluctuating due in part to the provision of support for the survivors of natural disasters, in addition to on-going activities for its populations of concern. The requirements for 2010 have grown by USD 18.5 million since 2009 for the subregion. Of South-East Asia's 2010 requirements, 74 per cent is allocated for refugees and asylum-seekers, 18 per cent for stateless populations, and 8 per cent for reintegration and IDP projects.

### UNHCR's budget in South-East Asia 2006 – 2011



### UNHCR budget for South-East Asia (USD)

COUNTRY	2009 REVISED BUDGET <sup>1</sup>	2010					2011
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL	
Bangladesh	6,310,669	8,135,150	49,593	0	0	8,184,743	8,185,000
Cambodia	886,306	618,397	25,312	0	0	643,709	570,000
Indonesia	3,506,388	4,930,984	278,412	0	0	5,209,396	5,243,600
Malaysia	6,725,882	13,995,373	108,841	0	0	14,104,215	14,039,700
Myanmar	10,637,428	0	11,379,044	0	4,804,783	16,183,827	16,233,300
Philippines	323,121	629,687	0	0	0	629,687	645,000
Thailand <sup>2</sup>	18,661,010	20,523,091	240,858	0	0	20,763,949	20,700,000
Timor-Leste	296,244	339,890	0	0	0	339,890	340,000
Viet Nam	474,607	135,436	153,310	350,801	0	639,547	339,500
Regional activities	333,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,154,655</b>	<b>49,308,008</b>	<b>12,235,370</b>	<b>350,801</b>	<b>4,804,783</b>	<b>66,698,962</b>	<b>66,296,100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes supplementary programme requirements in Myanmar of USD 2,152,656.

<sup>2</sup> Includes regional activities in South-East Asia.