

With the end of the 26-year long conflict in Sri Lanka, people who had been displaced numerous times are able to return to their homes in the northern districts.



India  
Nepal  
Sri Lanka

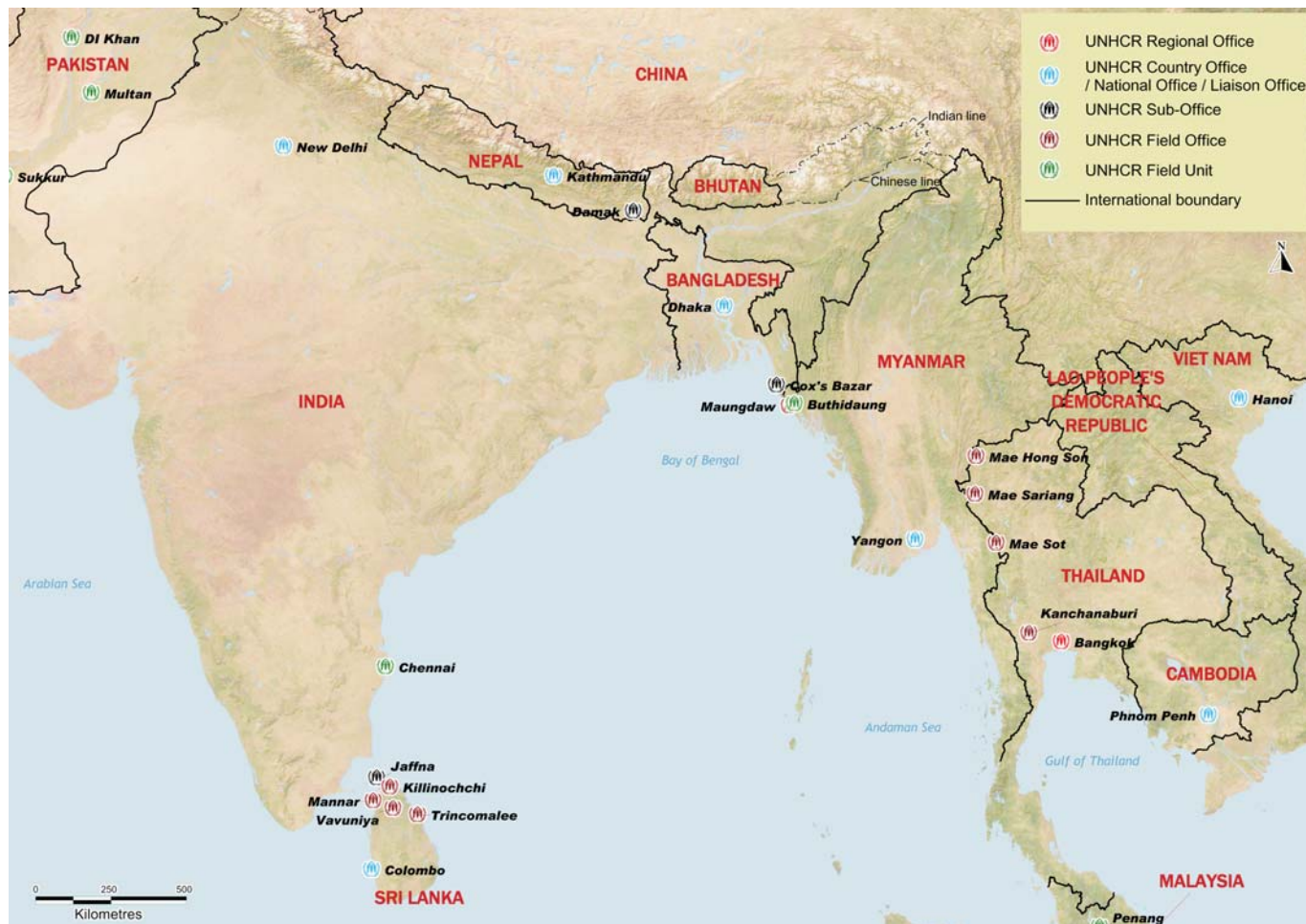
# South Asia

## | Working environment |

A major humanitarian emergency accompanied the end of the 26-year conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2009, when durable solutions were needed for hundreds of thousands of IDPs. 2010 has witnessed a progressive return of IDPs from Government-run camps to their places of origin. By August 2010, only about 35,000 IDPs remained in camps in Sri Lanka, compared with approximately 280,000 at the end of the conflict. Some key obstacles to sustainable return, however, still need to be addressed.

While concerns about national security have grown in India and have an impact on access to asylum, the country continues to play generous host to a large number of refugees. In the absence of a national legal framework for asylum, UNHCR registers and conducts refugee status determination (RSD) among asylum-seekers in New Delhi, including continued new arrivals from Afghanistan and Myanmar. It also supports activities to ensure the protection and well-being of both refugees and asylum-seekers.

Nepal remains in transition, with frequent changes in the composition of the Government. UNHCR has been closely monitoring the drafting of a new constitution, for which the deadline has been extended to May 2011. Some of its provisions on citizenship and fundamental rights, if adopted, carry the risk of significantly increasing the size of the stateless population in Nepal. In spite of this uncertain environment, marked by frequent general strikes and protests, UNHCR and its partners have continued to implement what is now the largest third-country resettlement programme in the world.



## Strategy in 2011

In Sri Lanka, UNHCR will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to IDPs and returnees. However, as the numbers of IDPs in camps and those returning home declines, UNHCR will strengthen its support for the transition from relief to early recovery and development to contribute to the sustainability of return. It will continue to monitor the protection of IDPs remaining in camps and those who have returned. Efforts will also focus on finding durable solutions for those without land, ensuring that land and property issues are addressed and supporting access to justice.

In the longer-term, UNHCR will continue to work with Sri Lanka's communities and help build the capacity of national institutions and NGOs to take over UNHCR's protection, assistance and coordination roles in an effective manner.

It is also expected that as conditions continue to improve in Sri Lanka, the upward trend in the number of Sri Lankan refugees in India and elsewhere choosing to repatriate will increase. These returnees will face problems similar to those of IDP returnees, and will require help to restart their lives, including assistance in obtaining personal documentation.

In India, UNHCR will work to increase efficiency in RSD and ensure that protection outreach services are available to all communities. This will be done through the Women's Protection Centre in New Delhi, and the regular presence of UNHCR staff in centres run by partners. UNHCR will also work to narrow the gap in services between asylum-seekers and refugees. It will encourage both groups to make full use of public health and education services, and help overcome barriers to this access.

Efforts will also be geared towards addressing the requirements of people with specific needs. Livelihood opportunities will be strengthened in order to help refugees improve the quality of their lives. UNHCR will support refugees who wish to repatriate voluntarily, use resettlement to address compelling protection needs that cannot be met in India, and provide legal assistance to eligible refugees who wish to be naturalized.

For the refugees from Bhutan in Nepal, UNHCR will continue to ensure that group resettlement in third countries remains available, while simultaneously pursuing other solutions, and that all refugees have access to information through targeted information sessions. Efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence will continue along with other protection activities in the refugee camps.

UNHCR will intensify advocacy with host communities and the Government to upgrade the capacity of host-community facilities so as to extend services to refugees. Alongside this strategy, UNHCR will work towards the consolidation of camps, with the proposed closure of two in 2011. New Tibetan arrivals transiting through Nepal to a third country (India), where they are able to obtain asylum, will be protected and assisted. Furthermore, UNHCR will continue to advocate for the issuance of appropriate legal documents to persons of concern within the long-staying Tibetan population in Nepal.

On the issue of statelessness, the Office in Nepal will continue to advocate for the adoption of citizenship laws and policies consistent with international standards. It will also work to implement targeted projects to identify segments of the population at risk of being deprived of their citizenship rights, and provide them with assistance in securing citizenship certificates as legal proof of nationality.

## | Constraints |

Though restrictions on humanitarian organizations' access to people of concern in Sri Lanka have eased, the operational environment in the country for the UN and for some international and national NGOs will remain challenging in 2011. This may slow UNHCR's operations, especially if local and international partner NGOs cannot gain access to some areas. Mine action continues, but slow progress in some heavily contaminated return areas may impede the return of some IDPs in the near future.

The steady increase in the number of asylum-seekers from Afghanistan and Myanmar in India over the last three years has tested the limits of the protection space in the country. The introduction of new measures to combat terrorism and address security concerns are also likely to affect refugees and asylum-seekers. In Tamil Nadu, UNHCR's absence from the camps housing Sri Lankan Tamils limits its ability to support their voluntary repatriation, requiring refugees to visit UNHCR's office in Chennai for repatriation-related assistance, while the Office relies on civil society to monitor refugee-related developments.

While the size of the camp population in Nepal has declined rapidly due to resettlement in third countries, maintaining the quality of services in all the camps has become difficult. In addition, anxiety about the future and disruptions in social support networks for those who do not opt for resettlement, have heightened the need for psychosocial support and counselling for individuals, families and communities.

The frequent strikes in Nepal's eastern region, where the refugee camps are situated, will continue to pose challenges for the movement of NGO partners, in preventing refugees from attending resettlement interviews, and the timely delivery of assistance. The frequent changes in government have also had a negative impact on the operation, especially in terms of continuity of dialogue on key issues.

## | Operations |

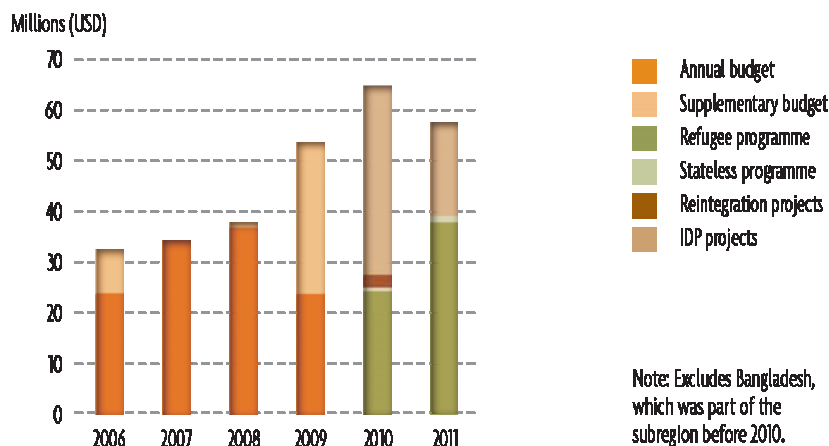
UNHCR's operations in **India**, **Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** are presented in separate country chapters.

## | Financial information |

While UNHCR's requirements in South Asia have increased steadily over the last three years to meet additional requirements, a reduction in the budget can be envisaged following the planned consolidation of some camps in 2011 in Nepal. Likewise, the gradual shift from a humanitarian to an early recovery phase in Sri Lanka will lead to a decrease in UNHCR's IDP operations in the country in 2011.

The budget for 2011 mainly includes the protection and basic needs of a growing population of urban refugees in India, providing for a large resettlement operation and maintaining services in the camps in Nepal, and assisting IDP and refugee returnees in Sri Lanka with cash grants and non-food items.

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



## UNHCR budget for South Asia (USD)

OPERATION	2010 REVISED BUDGET	2011				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
India	9,931,150	12,275,445	94,177	0	0	12,369,622
Nepal	14,641,283	16,399,714	1,367,774	0	0	17,767,488
Sri Lanka	39,748,309	8,952,733	0	0	18,218,961	27,171,694
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,320,743</b>	<b>37,627,892</b>	<b>1,461,951</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18,218,961</b>	<b>57,308,804</b>