

THAILAND

Operational highlights

- In line with amendments to Thailand's Civil Registration Act, close to 2,000 birth certificates were issued during the year to children born in refugee camps, as well as to 40 refugee and asylum-seeker children born in urban areas.
- During 2011, some 7,800 refugees from Myanmar living in camps in Thailand were submitted for resettlement; and some 9,200 departed for their new homes, including those submitted in 2010. UNHCR was successful in advocating for more countries to consider resettlement for the urban refugee population, especially those who were in detention. Well over 500 refugees from the urban population were submitted for resettlement.
- Contingency plans were developed and coordination forums involving NGOs, community-based organizations and local authorities set up in preparation for any future influx from Myanmar.
- UNHCR afforded emergency assistance to some 1,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers affected by the floods which inundated large parts of the country. It also provided 5,000 eco-friendly solar lamps and 1,300 plastic sheets for people displaced by the floods.

Persons of concern

Working environment

Despite the social and political tensions affecting Thailand, the general elections held in July passed off relatively peacefully and ushered in a new Government. Soon afterwards, however, the country experienced the worst flooding in many decades. The floods, which did not recede until the end of the year, affected more than 13 million people in 66 provinces and took a heavy toll on the economy. Meanwhile, the political agenda was dominated by domestic concerns, and some key decisions pertaining to refugee issues were kept pending.

Sporadic fighting continued on Myanmar's south-eastern border area in the aftermath of the country's general election



in November 2010, but did not lead to any new influxes into Thailand after April. Significant developments were observed in Myanmar as the Government initiated various political, economic and administrative reforms, including the release of political prisoners and engagement of ethnic groups in peace talks, opening up prospects which could eventually lead to voluntary returns.

Persons of concern

Type of Population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Myanmar	88,100	88,100	50	46
	Various	1,100	1,100	39	32
Asylum-seekers	Myanmar	2,400	12,100	46	33
	Viet Nam	260	260	46	41
	Sri Lanka	170	170	45	32
	China	100	100	49	15
	Various	440	440	39	28
Stateless	Stateless people	506,200	-	-	-
Total		608,770	102,270		

Migration flows into Thailand continued to be of a mixed nature. There was a regular inflow of new arrivals, and the urban-refugee and asylum-seeker populations in 2011 were not significantly different in size and nature from those in 2010. As Thailand is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, UNHCR conducted refugee status determination (RSD), provided legal protection advice, met essential needs and ensured that urban asylum-seekers and refugees enjoyed basic services. The arrest and detention of people of concern to UNHCR in urban areas continued as the Government enforced strict application of its immigration laws, although some individuals were released on bail.

| Achievements and impact |

• Main objectives and targets

In 2011, UNHCR aimed to ensure access to asylum, protection and physical security for all persons of concern. Other key objectives were to strengthen national bodies and procedures in support of a national protection regime and to streamline RSD procedures for non-Myanmar asylum-seekers. UNHCR also sought to improve the social and economic well-being of refugees and to find durable solutions for their plight.

Favourable protection environment

- UNHCR took the lead in protection in the camps along the Thai-Myanmar border through the Protection Coordination Body in Mae Sot and directed protection working groups at the provincial level. The focus was on disseminating humanitarian principles and international protection standards by training stakeholders and

partners. UNHCR's contingency plan and coordination forums to deal with a potential influx of asylum-seekers also helped reinforce preparedness and protection at the border.

- UNHCR collaborated closely with the Government in its efforts to find solutions for more than half a million people who were deemed to be without nationality and had lost their connections with their countries of origin. In this process, over 4,500 persons were granted Thai citizenship. In December, Thailand attended the intergovernmental commemorative events in Geneva and pledged to consider amending its Nationality Act and providing greater access to birth registration and individual documentation services, including late birth registration. It also agreed to pursue efforts to reduce vulnerability to statelessness. Although Thailand is not party to the Statelessness Conventions, amendments to the Civil Registration Act in 2008 provide for universal birth registration, which helps prevent statelessness.

Fair protection processes

- In addition to working with the Government to ensure that children born in refugee camps are registered at birth, UNHCR conducted RSD under its mandate for asylum-seekers other than those from Myanmar. In 2011 around 600 new asylum-seekers were registered and some 500 individuals were recognized as refugees.

Security from violence and exploitation

- In the border camps, UNHCR worked through its partners to visit and follow up on child-protection cases, including those of unaccompanied and separated children. Approximately 6,500 unaccompanied and/or



Young refugees from Myanmar learning about dressmaking in Mae La camp.

UNHCR / T. FALISE

separated children were recorded in the nine camps, of whom some 1,900 were identified in 2011. The Government continued to participate in the best interest determination (BID) process: around 600 BID assessments involving some 800 children were conducted during the year.

- Camp-based legal-assistance centres helped with some 400 cases on a variety of issues, of which some 100 were referred to the Thai judicial system.
- The rigorous implementation of immigration laws towards the end of the year hindered UNHCR's ability to intervene to prevent persons of concern from being detained. Around 400 asylum-seekers and refugees were arrested and transferred to immigration detention centres in 2011. On the other hand, some 200 persons of concern were bailed out from detention with the assistance of NGOs and private individuals during the same period. At the end of the year, approximately 80 asylum-seekers and refugees, including some 20 minors, were in detention. The indefinite nature of detention and the detention of children remain of significant concern to UNHCR. In February, UNHCR set up an inter-agency task force comprised of UN agencies and civil society which advocates for suitable alternatives to detention of refugees and asylum-seekers and better standards of treatment.
- UNHCR continued to provide social, legal and resettlement counselling and psychological support to urban refugees. In 2011, around 2,300 individuals benefited from legal and social counselling. UNHCR-affiliated lawyers provided legal representation in nine court cases.

Basic needs and services

- UNHCR, through its partners, provided voluntary counselling and testing services for Myanmar refugees in five camps, with some 5,800 people benefiting from the service during the year. Some 26,000 refugees participated in HIV and AIDS prevention and awareness campaigns in the camps.
- In the case of urban refugees who lack legal status and hence are unable to seek lawful employment or have access to basic services, UNHCR provided subsistence allowances for close to 1,000 refugees. In addition, some 200 refugees and asylum-seekers in detention and four in prison received allowances for essential items. Emergency cash payments were offered to 200 persons with specific needs. Some 300 refugee women and girls in urban areas were provided with sanitary napkins, and supplementary food was given to some 1,200 refugees.
- Urban refugees and asylum-seekers were able to obtain primary health-care services in close cooperation with national public health centres and through the UNHCR-supported medical clinic. In 2011, the clinic received 4,500 visits, approximately 70 per cent of which were then referred to Thai health facilities. Some 200 children benefited from free vaccinations for refugees and asylum-seekers at public health centres. Psychosocial services were also provided, and some 100 refugees and asylum-seekers diagnosed with mental health issues were referred to hospitals for treatment.

Community participation and self-management

- Confined to camps for more than two decades, refugees from Myanmar face restrictions on their freedom of movement and are not allowed to obtain formal employment. As such, they are forced to rely on support from the international community for food, shelter, medical care, education and other basic needs. UNHCR sought to foster their self-reliance by increasing vocational training, developing livelihood capacities and continuing to advocate with the authorities for access to legal employment outside of the camps.
- In 2011, it was not possible to realize all planned livelihood activities owing to lack of funds, governmental policy restrictions and the non-availability of partners with livelihoods expertise. Nonetheless, more than 200 refugees in three camps were able to participate in agricultural projects. Special attention was paid to identifying female heads of households, persons with disabilities and the elderly who could benefit from these activities. The project benefited from the expertise and technical assistance of Thai institutions.

Durable solutions

- Resettlement in third countries remained an important solution for many refugees. In 2011, UNHCR submitted some 7,800 Myanmar refugees from the camps to eight resettlement countries. More than 10,200 refugees were accepted for resettlement and some 9,200 departed for third countries during the year. As a result, and taking into consideration natural increases in the camp population due to births, the number of officially registered individuals living in the camps was reduced from almost 95,000 at the beginning of 2011 to some 88,000 by the end of the year.
- Resettlement remains the only viable option for urban refugees. UNHCR submitted well over 500 refugees originating from places other than Myanmar for resettlement, and close to 400 departed for third countries in 2011.

| Constraints |

Despite large-scale resettlement, there was no significant reduction in the size of the camp population, as conditions in south-eastern Myanmar did not improve and a steady flow of new arrivals continued. The intermittent functioning of the national screening mechanism for admission to the camps created a situation where a large number of people from Myanmar—estimated at 66,000 at the end of 2011—lived in the camps but remained unregistered. Although granted food support and basic services, their lives were constrained by a lack of legal status.

| Financial information |

The budget for Thailand has grown steadily over the past five years. The UNHCR Regional Office in Thailand has strengthened its capacity by consolidating regional posts in Bangkok, resulting in an increase in the number of regional staff.

| Organization and implementation |

| UNHCR's presence in 2011 |

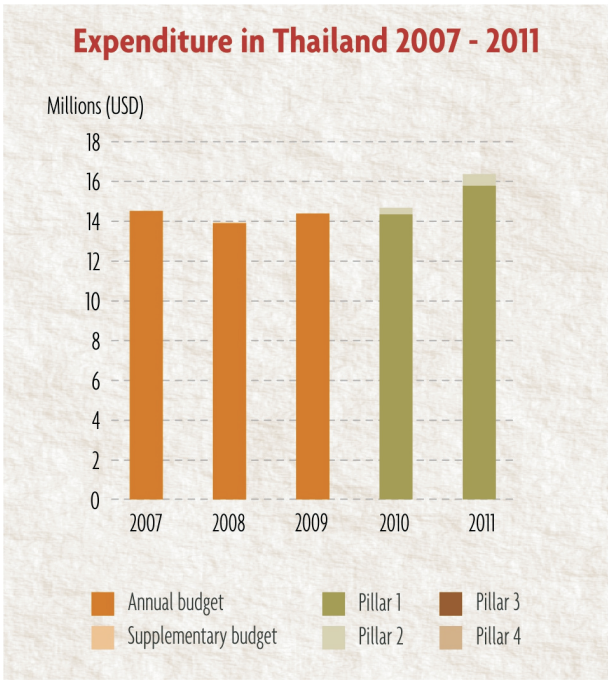
□ Number of offices	6
□ Total staff	191
International	28
National	57
JPOs	4
UNVs	9
Others	93

| Working with others |

UNHCR worked with a number of implementing partners, including governmental agencies and international and national NGOs. It also cooperated closely with operational partners within the framework of the common cooperative arrangement for assistance to Myanmar refugees in the border camps.

| Overall assessment |

The change in Government and an unprecedented natural disaster made it difficult for UNHCR to advocate with the Thai authorities for substantive and positive change on key issues related to asylum in the country. Nevertheless, relations with Government counterparts were strengthened through regular bilateral contacts as well as an annual retreat which brought together high-ranking officials from relevant ministries.



UNHCR and the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT) continued to periodically review and update the Strategic Framework for Durable Solutions, which outlines innovative approaches to the protracted situation of Myanmar refugees, and prepared a progress analysis report to document advances and highlight challenges in the implementation of the Framework. Meanwhile, resettlement continues to provide a positive solution for many refugees in Thailand. While there is cautious optimism about the recent reforms in Myanmar, safeguards must be in place before people are able to return voluntarily, and in safety and dignity.

| Unmet needs |

- In 2011, UNHCR was unable to secure additional staff for RSD due to funding shortfalls, which resulted in further delays in the RSD processing time for asylum-seekers.
- Funding constraints have prevented UNHCR from increasing the subsistence allowance for refugees, which is already well below the minimum wage rate in Thailand. The allowance does not cover refugees' living costs, forcing them to reside in substandard and overcrowded accommodation, with corresponding hygiene issues and health problems.
- Owing to funding and capacity constraints, urban asylum-seeker children had limited opportunities to access formal and/or informal schooling.
- The contents of the sanitary kits for refugee and asylum-seeker girls and women of reproductive age had to be reduced by half.

Partners
Implementing partners
Government agencies: Ministries of Education and the Interior
NGOs: Adventist Development and Relief Agency, <i>Aide Médicale Internationale</i> , American Refugee Committee, Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees, Forum Asia, Handicap International, International Rescue Committee, Jesuit Refugee Service, <i>Malteser International</i> , Right to Play, Shanti Volunteer Association, ZOA Refugee Care
Others: UNOPS, UNV
Operational partners
Government agencies: Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Social Development and Human Security, National Security Council
NGOs: Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand, <i>Solidarités Internationale</i> , Taipei Overseas Peace Service, Thailand Burma Border Consortium, Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment, World Education
Others: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO

Budget, income and expenditure in Thailand | USD

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	Total
FINAL BUDGET	24,592,481	988,878	25,581,359
Income from contributions	7,884,926	0	7,884,926
Other funds available	7,891,322	588,056	8,479,378
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	15,776,248	588,056	16,364,304
EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN			
<i>Favourable protection environment</i>			
Prevention of statelessness	0	293,549	293,549
Cooperation with partners	460,262	269,224	729,486
Access to territory	61,513	0	61,513
Non-refoulement	746,934	0	746,934
Subtotal	1,268,709	562,773	1,831,482
<i>Fair protection processes and documentation</i>			
Registration and profiling	463,488	0	463,488
Access to asylum procedures	35,520	0	35,520
Fair and efficient status determination	622,163	0	622,163
Family reunification	35,520	0	35,520
Civil status documentation	312,926	0	312,926
Subtotal	1,469,617	0	1,469,617
<i>Security from violence and exploitation</i>			
Law enforcement	29,600	0	29,600
Community security management	29,600	0	29,600
Gender-based violence	363,267	0	363,267
Protection of children	626,534	0	626,534
Non-arbitrary detention	52,264	0	52,264
Access to legal remedies	537,758	0	537,758
Subtotal	1,639,023	0	1,639,023
<i>Basic needs and essential services</i>			
Shelter and other infrastructure	76,943	0	76,943
Basic domestic and hygiene items	1,449,890	0	1,449,890
Primary health care	493,010	0	493,010
HIV and AIDS	167,687	0	167,687
Education	612,260	0	612,260
Services for groups with specific needs	337,140	0	337,140
Subtotal	3,136,930	0	3,136,930
<i>Community participation and self-management</i>			
Participatory assessment	1,007,543	0	1,007,543
Self-reliance and livelihoods	941,610	0	941,610
Subtotal	1,949,153	0	1,949,153
<i>Durable solutions</i>			
Durable solutions strategy	291,185	0	291,185
Voluntary return	108,022	0	108,022
Resettlement	1,190,372	0	1,190,372
Subtotal	1,589,579	0	1,589,579

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	Total
<i>External relations</i>			
Public information	442,468	0	442,468
Subtotal	442,468	0	442,468
<i>Logistics and operations support</i>			
Supply chain and logistics	552,594	0	552,594
Programme management and coordination	1,820,109	17,314	1,837,423
Subtotal	2,372,703	17,314	2,390,017
Other objectives	668,887	0	668,887
Balance of instalments with implementing partners	1,239,180	7,968	1,247,148
Total	15,776,249	588,055	16,364,304