

# INDIA

30-April-2021

UNHCR continues to work diligently and advocate with the Government of India for the **inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in the national vaccination programme and ensure no one is left behind in COVID-19 response.**

**6 awareness sessions** were conducted with 111 children and child protection committee members on protection against **child labour and prevention of child marriage.**

**361 refugees and asylum seekers** were facilitated and supported to **access medical facilities** provided by the government in April.

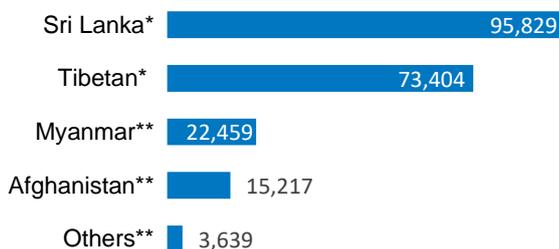
**10 Youth Clubs** in Delhi carried out two campaigns: **#StopTheSpread** to fight against COVID and **'Save The Planet'**.

**499 individuals** were registered by UNHCR India in April 2021.

In April, a **health camp** was conducted in Hyderabad, benefitting 148 refugees and asylum seekers

## POPULATION OF CONCERN (208,065)

### Origin<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Country or Territory of Origin

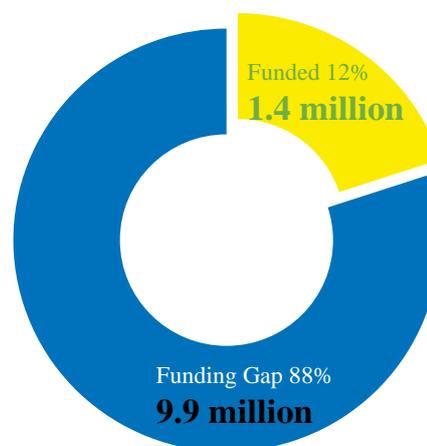
\*Refugees registered and assisted by the Government of India. Statistics with regard to Sri Lankan refugees and Tibetan are taken from MHA Annual Report 2019-2020 <https://www.mha.gov.in/document/annual-reports/annual-report-ministry-of-home-affairs-2019-2020>

\*\* Refugee and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR India (as of 31 Mar 2021)

## FUNDING (AS OF 20 APRIL 2021)

**USD 11.3 million**

UNHCR India financial requirement for 2021



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

28 National Staff

6 International Staff

32 Affiliate Workforce (29 National 3 International)

### Offices:

1 Country Office in New Delhi

1 Field Office in Chennai



*Yasamin, an Afghan medical community service provider reaches out to refugees and asylum seekers living in Delhi by providing valuable health and COVID-19 related information (©UNHCR/Daniel Ginsanmung)*

## Working with Partners

UNHCR coordinates protection and assistance for refugees and asylum seekers in collaboration with:

- **Government of India:** Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs.
- **UN:** UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and contributes to India-United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) for 2018-2022.
- **Formal partnership agreements with eight national NGOs:** Bosco Organisation for Social Concern and Operation (BOSCO), Socio-Legal Information Centre (SLIC), Bal Raksha Bharat (Save the Children), Fair Trade Forum India (FTF-I), Development and Justice Initiative (DAJI), Gandhi National Memorial Society (GNMS), ActionAid (AA), and Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI).

## Main Activities

### Registration and Refugee Status Determination

- As of April 2021, 41,810 refugees and asylum-seekers are registered with UNHCR India. 499 individuals were registered with UNHCR India in April. The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary suspension of issuance of hard copies of UNHCR registration documents.
- UNHCR India uses biometrics to enrol, identify and manage the identities of persons of concern by capturing all fingerprints and irises of an individual. 81% of the active eligible refugee and asylum-seeking population are enrolled in Biometric. There has been a delay in biometric enrolment as well due to COVID-19 and related safety concerns.



*An Afghan refugee receives his renewed UNHCR refugee card in Delhi. The UNHCR card facilitates refugees access services and programmes and help local authorities and partners provide protection, humanitarian support, and life-saving assistance.  
(©UNHCR/Daniel Ginsianmung)*

### Cash-Based Interventions

- UNHCR's cash programme allows families to prioritize their needs such as food, clothes for winter, medicine, or paying back debt. Through cash assistance, displaced families have the independence to make choices and thus regain their dignity.
- 841 refugees' families were provided with cash-based assistance. Cash interventions prioritize most vulnerable people, including persons living with disabilities, unaccompanied elderly, children-at-risk, and individuals with severe or chronic medical conditions.

### Child Protection

- 127 at-risk children, including those unaccompanied and separated from parents, were supported and counselled by UNHCR NGO partner BOSCO in Delhi. 17 children are supported and counselled by Save The Children.

- As schools remain closed and children are confined to their homes, UNHCR and our partners have scaled up interventions on child protection, including psychosocial support. A total of 6 awareness sessions on child labour and prevention of child marriage were conducted in April with 111 children and child protection committee members.
- UNHCR outreach team provided more than 138 refugees and asylum seekers with relevant information and referred those with specific needs for help and support. The community services team engaged with 107 refugees and asylum seekers to promote community protection and capacity-building mechanisms.
- UNHCR has strengthened its hotline response to improve its outreach and provide information to refugees and asylum-seekers. Approximately 885 refugees and asylum seekers were counselled and provided information on our toll-free helpline number. UNHCR responded to queries from 570 refugees and asylum seekers received on [indne@unhcr.org](mailto:indne@unhcr.org).

#### Assistance and advocacy to end the detention of refugees and asylum seekers

- UNHCR continued its advocacy and worked with partners to end detention and release 269 refugees and asylum-seekers from detention, especially women, children, and other vulnerable individuals. In April, 6 refugees were detained due to immigration-related issues, and 13 individuals (3 refugees, 5 asylum seekers, and 5 unregistered children) were released following the judicial intervention.

#### Durable solutions

- UNHCR India remains available to assist refugees and asylum seekers in India with durable solutions, including resettlement to a third country, voluntary repatriation, and local integration. The cases of persons determined to be in need of international protection and meeting the resettlement criteria specified by countries are submitted /assisted for resettlement.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a temporary delay in departure for resettlement to a third country in April. Six individuals have departed on voluntary repatriation. Four individuals benefited from complementary pathways admission to a third country. One Sikh Afghan refugee was supported to fill the online application form for Indian citizenship.

#### Education

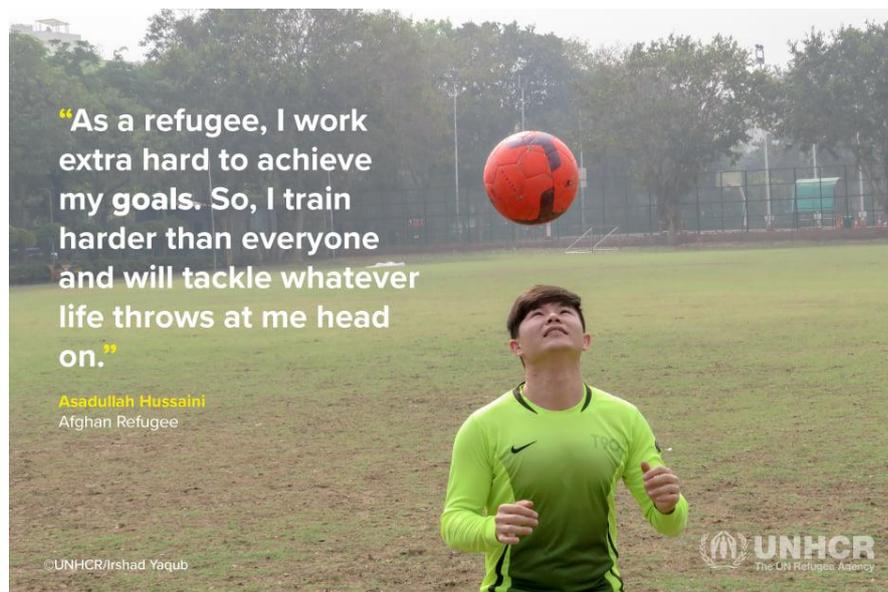
- UNHCR supports around 990 refugee and asylum seeker children (aged 5-17) with bridge, remedial, and language courses. UNHCR also supports 210 refugees (aged 12-17) to attend secondary school through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).
- UNHCR, together with a local partner NGO, launched four enrolment awareness drive in Jammu targeting 43 children. UNHCR supported 120 children with educational material and resources to enable them to learn from home.



*Sadf Paimani, an Afghan refugee volunteer in Delhi, holds up a handmade poster for the #StopTheSpread the campaign aimed to raise awareness on COVID-19 (©UNHCR/ Nasrat Paimani)*

## External Relations

- UNHCR continues to advocate with a full range of stakeholders (national authorities, civil society, humanitarian and development actors, and donors) for urgent and unreserved inclusion and support of refugees and asylum seekers in the full range of national COVID-19 prevention mechanisms, including vaccination.
- Ten youth clubs in Delhi carried out two campaigns, namely **#StopTheSpread**, to spread awareness on COVID-19, which reached 683 individuals and **'Save The Planet'** campaign on World Earth Day 117 participants.



*Sport is a powerful tool to strengthen social ties, promote sustainable development, solidarity and respect. Let's level the playing field and ensure everyone can thrive, including refugees. (©UNHCR/Irshad Yaqub)*

## Non-Food Items

- UNHCR provided 1013 dignity kits, 227 mosquito nets, and 79 tarpaulins to support and improve the living conditions of refugees in India. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the distribution of non-food items is temporarily impacted.
- Refugees and asylum seekers are deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in India, including loss of livelihood, spiralling poverty, and insufficient savings to meet basic needs. UNHCR, together with generous support from donors is planning to scale up its COVID-19 response in subsequent months.

## Self-reliance

- 41 refugee women are fulfilling orders for their products, such as key chains and recycled fabric pouch. 25 refugees benefited from the UNHCR and local NGO partner initiative to encourage employers to support refugees.
- Refugee women groups in India produce crochet earrings, crochet neckpieces, crochet laces, masks with round crochet lace, and candles that can be purchased by contacting UNHCR India. UNHCR is thankful to Hunar Export, CosPlus World Market and buyers from MADE51 for their orders of refugees made product from India.

## Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) prevention and response

- 10 new SGBV incidents were reported in April. The survivors were provided with appropriate support, including basic counselling and other health, legal, police, and livelihood assistance through NGO/local authorities.
- Authorities conducted various sessions, and UNHCR partners Save the Children, BOSCO and Action Aid, including awareness sessions and refresher training on SGBV and basic psychosocial support. Women reported facing increased socio-economic challenges and tensions at home owing to COVID-19 pandemic induced poverty and hardships.



SGBV session conducted with refugees and asylum seekers in Nuh. (@UNHCR/Shababul Hasan)

### Water, Health and Sanitation

- UNHCR and its local partners supported 361 refugees and asylum seekers in accessing government health services. UNHCR supported 149 refugees and asylum seekers with essential medicine and medical supplies, which were not available in the government hospitals. Government local health centre administered 150 refugee and asylum seeker children with routine immunization (130 children and 20 pregnant women). 47 refugee women benefited from two sessions on pre and antenatal care organized by UNHCR local partner in Hyderabad.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has stepped up its prevention and response mechanism. Over 54 COVID-19 prevention and response awareness sessions were organized for refugees and host communities in Delhi, Hyderabad, and Nuh. 148 refugees and asylum seekers living in Hyderabad benefited from a health camp organized with the support of a local public health centre.



UNHCR NGO partner BOSCO volunteers distribute protective face mask to host communities in Delhi. (@UNHCR/Kap Sian Sang)

## Funding

UNHCR is grateful for all contributions received in 2021 with special appreciation to the following donors who have directly contributed to the operation: the USA | Private Donors | UN COVID-19 MPTF. We are also grateful to donors who provide unearmarked or softly earmarked contributions to UNHCR, which help support India operation and enable us to respond in a timely and flexible manner. These donors include Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Private donors Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

88% of UNHCR needs are still unmet. We rely on the generous support of countries, organizations, and private donors to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the country. The COVID-19 pandemic in India has negatively impacted the socio-economic conditions for both refugees and host communities, and funding is urgently needed to provide life-sustaining assistance, including shelter, food, access to safe drinking water, remote education, and health services.

### CONTACT

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## HIGH PROFILE SUPPORTERS

**Ms Anita Nair**

**Mr John Abraham**

## LINKS

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaUNHCR>

UNHCR India website: <https://www.unhcr.org/india.html>

## GLOSSARY

- **Asylum-seeker:** An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which the claim is submitted. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee was initially an asylum-seeker.
- **Complementary pathways for admission to protection and solutions for refugees:** Safe and regulated avenues by which refugees may be admitted and stay in a country, and have their international protection needs met while they are also able to support themselves to potentially reach a sustainable and lasting solution. Complementary pathways are not meant to substitute the protection afforded to refugees under the international protection regime – they complement it and serve as an important expression of global solidarity, international cooperation, and more equitable responsibility sharing. These pathways may include family reunification, scholarship, and education programmes, as well as labour regional mobility schemes.
- **Durable solutions:** The means by which the situation of persons of concern to UNHCR can be satisfactorily and permanently resolved to enable them to live normal lives. In the refugee context, this generally involves voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, local integration (including through naturalization) in the country of asylum, or resettlement to another country.
- **Refugees:** A person who meets the eligibility criteria under the applicable refugee definition, as provided for in international or regional refugee instruments, under UNHCR's mandate, and/or in national legislation.
- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** Legal and administrative procedures undertaken by States and/or UNHCR to determine whether an individual should be recognized as a refugee in accordance with national and international law.
- **Resettlement:** The transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought asylum to another State that has agreed to admit them. The refugees will usually be granted asylum or some other form of long-term resident rights and, in many cases, will have the opportunity to become naturalized citizens. For this reason, resettlement is a durable solution as well as a tool for the protection of refugees. It is also a practical example of international burden-and responsibility-sharing.
- **Voluntary repatriation:** Return to the country of origin based on the refugees' free and informed decision. Voluntary repatriation may be organized (when it takes place under the auspices of the concerned governments and/or UNHCR) or spontaneous (the refugees return by their own means with no involvement of UNHCR and governments).