

# INDIA

September 2021

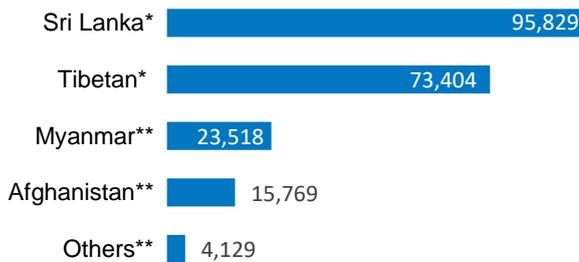
As of 30 September 2021, around **43,416** refugees and asylum-seekers are registered with UNHCR in India. **381 individuals** were registered in **September 2021**.

UNHCR India provided a 24x7 hotline for refugees and asylum seekers seeking protection assistance and information. Through the numbers (1800 103 5635, +919810173130, +917303154009), 3,626 people have reliable information about social assistance support, documentation, shelter, vaccination for COVID-19 among other topics in September 2021.

UNHCR is grateful to the Government of India for having included refugees and asylum seekers in the COVID-19 vaccination drive. By September, 31,165 refugees and asylum-seekers are known to be vaccinated.

## PERSON OF CONCERN AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

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



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

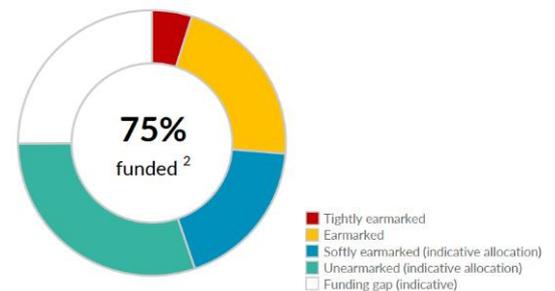
\*Refugees registered and assisted by the Government of India. Statistics with regard to Sri Lankan refugees and Tibetan are taken from MHA Annual Report 2019-2020 <https://www.mha.gov.in/document/annual-reports/annual-report-ministry-of-home-affairs-2019-2020>

\*\* Refugee and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR India (as of 30 September 2021)

## FUNDING AS OF 12 OCTOBER 2021

USD 14.2 M

Requested for India in 2021



## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

India has a long tradition of playing a host to a large number of refugees. India is a reliable partner, guaranteeing that people who need help will find a place and safety.

UNHCR has worked since 1981 for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in India. In support of the efforts by the Government of India, UNHCR works with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, NITI Aayog, United Nations Country Team, and its NGO partners based across 15 states of India.

Recently, due to violence and instability in neighbouring countries, there has been a rise in asylum seekers approaching UNHCR India for registration and assistance.

Further, the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect refugees and asylum seekers. The number of refugees and asylum-seekers requesting basic assistance has increased, including for food, rent and medicines.



Refugees and asylum-seekers received blankets in Jaipur, Rajasthan. UNHCR India's winterisation programme focuses on the provision of core relief items specific to winters such as thermal blankets, plastic sheets, and winter clothes. (©UNHCR/Aparna Dewal).

## Working with Partners

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

- **The Government of India:** Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, NITI Aayog.
- **United Nations (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 and UN India-SERF.
- **Formal partnership agreements with 11 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), Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), and Sphere Network.

## Main Activities



### Protection responses

In India, UNHCR supports local institutions and NGO partners with setting up protection referral mechanisms and case management for vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in India. UNHCR works with authorities, local NGOs, and refugee communities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) and promote child protection (CP).

- UNHCR conducted four training sessions on GBV risks as well as confront stigma and create within communities' support for survivors to increase their protection. 97 refugee community members in four districts (Delhi, Jaipur, Hyderabad, and Nuh) were trained on GBV to support identification and referral, and sensitise the community and individuals on available support, confidentiality, and access.
- Timely intervention by Child Welfare Committee, CHILDLINE Foundation India, and J&K Police managed to rescue three children from child marriage and followed by regular monitoring with support of NGO partner to ensure a child is not forced into such a marriage again.
- The language barrier and curriculum in the classroom is one of the major challenges to effective education for refugee children in India. 779 children refugee children in Nuh and Delhi, received support under the 'bridging programme' to help integration into local schools.
- UNHCR and its partners with the support of the 24/7 helpline provided supportive counselling and timely referrals on issues related to protection (health, mental health, food, livelihood) to 17 refugees and asylum-seekers. 2,461 emails from persons of concern were received and responded to.



### Health, Water, and Sanitation

UNHCR's WASH programming aims to create a healthier environment for refugees and host communities. UNHCR works with the local health authorities and NGO partners to ensure the provision of essential health services, improve local health services and include refugees, and asylum seekers in the national health system.

- UNHCR partners assisted 806 refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing basic health services at local hospitals. 213 refugees and asylum-seekers were provided with medicines by UNHCR partner BOSCO.
- Access to sufficient and adequate sanitary materials is central to women and girls' dignity and well-being, and lack of sanitary pads often leads to serious health implications. To respond to that, UNHCR provided 1,694 dignity kits to women and girls through NGO partners.
- UNHCR together with local NGOs conducted an awareness session in three districts (Jammu, Nuh, and Hyderabad) on COVID-19 prevention messages reaching 838 individuals.
- Four awareness sessions were held in Delhi, on family planning, monsoon preparedness, and vector-borne diseases reaching 955 individuals.



### Providing life-saving assistance and supporting communities

Beyond the immediate health impacts of COVID-19, the socio-economic impact of the pandemic was particularly grievous on refugees and asylum seekers. In this context, UNHCR and its NGO partners in support of the efforts by the Government of India continued delivering lifesaving assistance and supporting refugees and host communities.

- UNHCR partners have distributed food assistance to 2,735 families in Delhi, 419 households in Nuh, 117 in Dera Bassi, 30 families in Pune, 2,125 families in Hyderabad, and 261 host families in Nuh and Hyderabad.
- UNHCR supported programme provided 3,489 refugee and asylum-seeker households in Hyderabad and Delhi with mosquito nets to prevent them from the threat of malaria and mosquito-borne diseases.
- UNHCR was able to provide winterisation (blankets) support to 91 individuals in Jaipur.
- 187 refugees and asylum-seekers provided with cash-based assistance to meet their basic needs including food, shelter, and health.



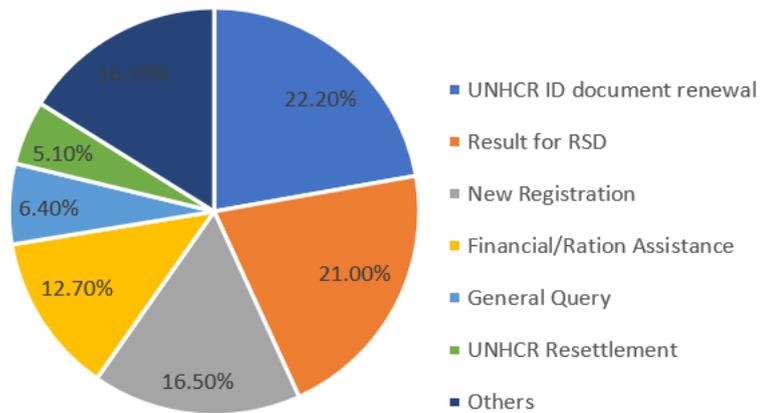
### Community-based interventions

UNHCR through community-based interventions works on mitigating protection risks and builds the resilience of the displaced populations, strengthens integration, expands alliances and protection networks.

- 15 meetings with participants from Afghan and Rohingya communities were held in Delhi, Jammu, Nuh, and Hyderabad. The community groups continue to raise issues of increasing financial difficulties, inability to meet basic needs, and concerns about increasing situational stress during the pandemic.

- Through the refugee helpline and toll-free number 1800 103 5635, +919810173130, +917303154009, 3,626 people received reliable information about registration and refugee status determination process, documentation, assistance support, among other topics in September 2021.

Summary of remote assistance provided by UNHCR by telephone  
(1-30 September 2021)



### Durable solutions and promoting self-reliance

UNHCR India remains available to assist refugees in India with durable solutions including voluntarily return home, local integration, and resettlement to a third country. Persons determined to be in need of international protection and who meet the resettlement criteria can be resettled. A small number of refugees are resettled each year.

- RICE Co. Hong Kong placed additional orders on the Holiday Collection to Archisha and Silaiwali, a group of Afghan persons of concern artisans for a total order of approximately USD 13,500.
- Under the UNHCR self-reliance programme, 90 individuals in Delhi and Hyderabad were supported with small microgrants to set up their small businesses. Some 180 individuals in five districts (Delhi, Nuh, Aligarh, Mathura, and Hyderabad) benefited from work opportunities, and 150 received guidance on labour market opportunities.
- Five individuals departed on complementary pathways in the month of September. One individual departed to Canada and four individuals departed to Finland. From January until August, 84 individuals departed on complementary pathways.



### Campaigns and working with partners

Demonstrating equity and inclusiveness, India has included refugees and asylum-seekers in its national vaccination programme. With over 82 crore #COVID19 vaccine doses administered until September, India is curtailing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic by ensuring vaccines for all. This campaign for inclusive vaccination drive was amplified by UNHCR HQ, United Nations India, and regional offices as well.

- Six refugee children living in Hyderabad were nominated for sessions on Climate Change summit with MASH Project Foundation leading up to COP26.
- UNHCR partnered with Uber India to provide refugees, asylum-seekers, and UNHCR India partner staff in Delhi and Hyderabad free rides for medical emergencies, distribution of food and non-food items, and community outreach. 627 free rides were provided in the month of September.
- UNHCR is grateful to the diplomatic missions in India of Australia, Canada, EU, France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, and US who participated in a briefing on the impact of COVID-19 and the situation of Afghan refugees in India and extended their support and solidarity to forcibly displaced populations.
- UNHCR extends gratitude to Virgin Atlantic for partnering with UNHCR India to support the educational needs of refugees in Delhi
- UNHCR India has conversations ongoing with 3 MNCs on extending support to refugees and asylum-seekers in India
- To ensure that “No one is left behind” and “Inclusive access to education”, Afghan school in Delhi was supported with 503 stationery items.



*Afghan student receiving stationery items as a part of the Afghan situation response and ensuring "No One Is Left Behind" ©UNHCR/Sediqa Rezaie*

UNHCR India would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Government of India for their support and cooperation.



UNHCR India is thankful to the donors:



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