

# Nepal - January 2022

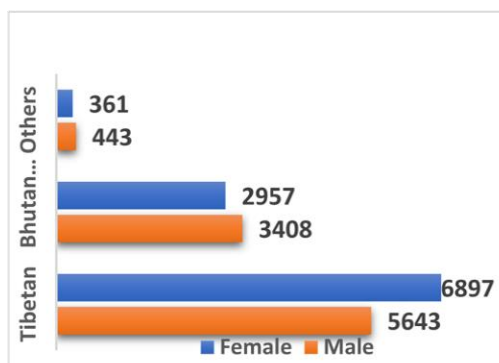
Nepal has a long tradition of providing asylum. Main larger arrivals took place in 1959 with the Tibetans and in 1990/91 with the Bhutanese.

113,500 Bhutanese refugees were resettled to eight third countries due to a lack of voluntary repatriation prospects. Group resettlement took place from 2007 to 2016.

UNHCR supports Nepal in the inclusion of all remaining refugees residing in Nepal into public services and in strengthening their self-reliance.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

19,709



Others include refugees and asylum seekers of various nationalities (mostly from Myanmar and Pakistan). Those are registered and documented under UNHCR's mandate given that Nepal has not ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees/ 1967 Protocol and has no national refugee legislation.

The Tibetan population is estimated as per the data of the Government of Nepal.

## FUNDING (AS OF DECEMBER 2021)

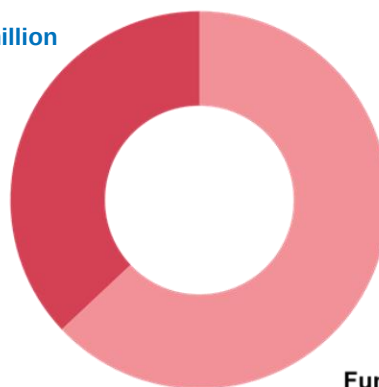
USD 5.8million

requested for Nepal

Unfunded

35%

2.03 million



Funded

65%

3.77 million

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### UNHCR Staff:

16 National Staff

03 International Staff

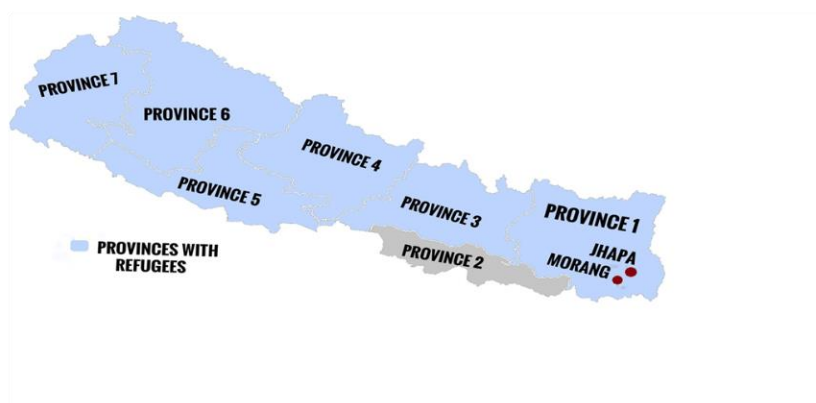
### Office:

UNHCR Representation

Kathmandu

Sub-Office Damak

(closed on 31.12.2020)



## Working with partners

In close partnership with the Government of Nepal's National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs (NUCRA) within the Ministry of Home Affairs and other key line ministries, provincial and local authorities, the refugees and their Community Based Organizations (CBOs), development partners, donors, private sector, NGOs, and civil society at large, UNHCR supports Nepal in protecting and assisting refugees. UNHCR works closely with the United Nations Country Team in Nepal (UNCT) in reaching Sustainable Development Goal targets by 2030 and to ensure inclusion of refugees under the "leave no one behind" principle. Key civil society partners are among others the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia, CARITAS Nepal, Forum for Women, Law and Development, Lutheran World Federation, Snow Lion Foundation, TPO Nepal, WOREC Nepal and the Nepal Bar Association etc.

## Nepal COVID-19 Update

**As of 1 January 2022**, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Nepal has reached **924,633 individuals** of whom **11,594** have sadly died, according to the Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal (SitRep#691). The COVID-19 emergency has placed enormous additional challenges on health and other public services and on the economy in Nepal. The most vulnerable, including daily wage earners in the informal labour market, suffer disproportionately, with refugees and those without citizenship certificates among those most vulnerable people.

## Main Activities

### Health and COVID-19 response

- Refugees have access to public health services, including COVID-19 vaccines, testing and treatment equal to nationals. Nepal became the first country in Asia and the Pacific to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to refugees, following the Government of Nepal policy of inclusion of refugees in the national vaccination campaign in March 2021.
- UNHCR has supported Nepal's COVID-19 response in multiple sectors, such as Cash Based Interventions (CBI), Water/Sanitation/Health (WASH), SGBV prevention & response, Education, Livelihoods, Counselling through UNHCR 24/7 Hotline services for refugees. Tele-counselling services replace the former face to face counselling for less urgent protection issues three times per week. Since the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, UNHCR and its partners carried out over **15,802 protection interventions**.
- In coordination with the National Health Insurance Board (NHIB) and the Government of Nepal at the central, provincial and local level, UNHCR supported in 2021 the renewal of health insurance for Bhutanese refugees in Beldangi settlement in Jhapa district and Pathai-Sanischara Settlement in Morang district, Province 1.
- In Kathmandu and Damak, UNHCR has funded ambulance services to support access to hospitals for COVID-19 patients and other medical emergencies of refugees and the host community. UNHCR provided medical equipment to Damak and Pathari-Sanischara Municipal Hospital in Province 1 and to the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu and coordinates with the Government and local authorities to ensure refugees have access to PCR testing and to public health care. UNHCR donated to municipal authorities in Province 1 and in Kathmandu, ambulances, hospital beds, mattresses, sanitizers, surgical masks, PPE, dignity kits, Rapid Diagnostic Test kits, thermal guns, oxygen concentrators etc. UNHCR supported the construction of one Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit equipped with an intensive care facility for newly born babies at AMDA Hospital, Damak.

- On 12 July 2021, Nepal received 1.5 million doses of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine from the United States. On the same day, the Government of Nepal Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) issued a circular specifying refugees aged 18 and above, as one of several target population groups who are eligible to receive the J&J vaccine. UNHCR has been coordinating closely with MoHP, local government health officers at the ward level, local NGO health partners and refugees at the household and leadership level to ensure timely information dissemination of the circular and continued monitoring of the vaccine roll out to refugees at the local level. UNHCR Nepal, as part of its ongoing COVID-19 response efforts has also provided Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) for use as an emergency buffer for purchasing food and household items.

## **WASH, SGBV**

- UNHCR invested in improvements to municipal drinking water systems, latrines, handwashing facilities in refugee settlements and public schools and donated soaps for refugees and host communities.
- UNHCR handed over two tipper trucks to the Mayors of Damak Municipality and Pathari-Sanischare Municipality in Jhapa and Morang districts in Province 1 to ensure better access to waste management services for Bhutanese refugees and the host community.
- UNHCR supported the GBV One Stop Crisis Management Centre (OCMC) in Kathmandu and funded the construction of the OCMC in Damak to comprehensively respond to the needs of survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV), the construction of an immunization centre, mental health units in Damak and Pathari-Sanischare public hospitals for refugees and host communities, handed over a Women Safe House to Damak municipality and strengthened the capacity of refugee community based organizations (CBOs) and local partners to prevent and respond to GBV.

## **Education**

- In Nepal, one third of the total refugee population are children. Refugee children have access to public schools in practice. UNHCR funded the construction and handed over two additional public-school buildings in Province 1 to strengthen access to public schooling for both, Bhutanese refugee children and local host community children. Due to significant school closures since March 2020 because of COVID-19 and to support remote learning opportunities which were developed by the Ministry of Education in the summer 2020, UNHCR procured and distributed 581 TVs and computer tablets for refugee children.

## **Livelihoods**

- The Government of Nepal does not provide work permits to refugees. UNHCR funded vocational and entrepreneurial skills-training and small-scale businesses (i.e. pickle making, bee keeping, mushroom farming) and handicraft (i.e. tailoring, masks and bamboo stool making) and vegetable and life stock farming projects in Morang and Jhapa district, Province 1 for refugee and host communities to support self-reliance through livelihoods.
- Additionally, UNHCR provides CBI to refugees with specific needs and socio-economic vulnerabilities and facilitated the opening of bank accounts for adult women and men refugees.
- Refugees and persons without citizenship certificates have been included in the 2020 UN COVID-19 Nepal Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP) and the UN Socio-Economic Response Framework (SERF), which focuses on health, social protection, livelihoods and social cohesion and community resilience for vulnerable groups.

## Protection and solutions advocacy

In close collaboration with the Government of Nepal, UNHCR aims at achieving protection, local solutions, and self-reliance of refugees through:

- **Inclusion of refugees in public services, policies, plans** (education, health, social protection) and self-reliance through livelihoods with enhanced refugee and host community mobilization while focusing on refugees with specific needs.
- **Inclusion of refugees in UN and Government of Nepal Emergency, Development and SDG planning** through multi-stakeholder approaches in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN as ONE.
- **Registration and issuance of Legal Identity Documentation for all (SDG 16.9)**, including all refugees, which provide the right to work, own businesses, form cooperatives and equal access to public education, health, social protection, and livelihoods, including for all descendants of long-staying Tibetans (estimated 75% are currently undocumented) and issuance of birth certificates for all refugee children.
- Putting in place **mechanisms to ensure respect for the principle of non-refoulement** and non-penalization of refugees for irregular entry or stay.

Following the group resettlement and departure of over 113,500 Bhutanese refugees to third countries, UNHCR transformed Bhutanese refugee camps into two settlements, re-enforced shelters, roads, provided solar energy, electricity, strengthened the capacity of community-based refugee organizations and referral mechanisms for refugees with specific needs, GBV survivors and vulnerable children into public services. In 2020, UNHCR redoubled its investments into public health, education, social protection facilities and handed over registration data of Bhutanese refugees to the Government of Nepal in December 2020 and closed UNHCR Sub-Office Damak on 31 December 2020. Close collaboration and coordination with all stakeholders and protection monitoring for all refugees in Nepal continues to be carried out through UNHCR Representation in Kathmandu. At all levels, UNHCR will continue to advocate for the right of refugees to **Voluntary Repatriation** and continues offering to facilitate dialogue between the Government of Nepal and the Kingdom of Bhutan in this regard.

## External / Donors Relations

UNHCR appreciates the partnership and financial contributions of both unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds from donors, as well as for those who have contributed regionally and directly to the Nepal operation: **Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America**. UNHCR also appreciates

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