

Indian Ocean earthquake - Tsunami emergency

During the days following the earthquake and tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004, UNHCR mobilized its emergency resources to provide immediate assistance in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Somalia. UNHCR's response to this catastrophe was an exceptional measure. The Office is not traditionally involved in natural disasters, but given the sheer magnitude of the devastation, the fact that UNHCR was present on the ground and had emergency capacities to respond swiftly, the organization responded to the UN Secretary-General's call for all agencies to assist, and to the request of the UN Country Teams.

The UN Flash Appeal of 6 January 2005 called for USD 977 million to assist some five million affected people over a six-month period. UNHCR's requirements were USD 75.8 million for its activities in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Somalia. They focused on the delivery of non-food household items, the provision of temporary family shelter and the reconstruction of houses. As the Flash Appeal was issued only 11 days after the devastating earthquake and tsunami, a revised appeal became necessary as the situation evolved and further assessments were made. A Mid-Term Review was thus issued in April, with revised total requirements of USD 1.1 billion and an extended timeframe for implementation to 31 December 2005. UNHCR's budget increased slightly, to USD 76.9 million.

The Flash Appeal was later extended to June 2006, and some of UNHCR's activities, especially those related to rehabilitation, are continuing in 2006.

In the emergency phase, as requested by the UN Country Team and in agreement with the Government of **Indonesia**, UNHCR quickly mobilized staff and resources, with the first assessment mission in Indonesia arriving in Banda Aceh on 31 December, followed by UNHCR's advance team on 2 January. The first team of emergency staff and technical experts was deployed on 5 January. UNHCR established four temporary field locations and a logistics hub. Some 400 metric tons of relief items and telecommunications equipment were airlifted within five days.

UNHCR assisted 100,000 people in the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) through the provision of emergency shelter (plastic sheets and tents) and other relief items (such as jerry cans, kitchen sets, blankets,

and sleeping mats). The Office immediately started working with the Government on the design of an integrated shelter programme. During the emergency phase, a total of 65 international staff were deployed, in addition to the regular staff of UNHCR Indonesia. UNHCR left NAD at the end of March upon completion of the emergency phase. Three days after the withdrawal, however, another earthquake hit the area and UNHCR assisted a further 45,000 coastal villagers on Nias Island (Province of North Sumatra) with non-food and emergency shelter items.

UNHCR re-established its presence in NAD at the end of June, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Indonesia which set the framework for the Office's involvement in the rehabilitation phase. UNHCR concentrated on the provision of more permanent shelter as part of an inter-agency, community-based programme for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of affected areas, particularly in the west coast of NAD and Nias Island. UNHCR's shelter programme was premised on the concept of permanent housing as the basis for the recovery process. It also took into consideration the interlinked issues of livelihoods and community building, involving inter-agency partnership on such structures as schools, places of worship, health clinics and other infrastructure. By the end of 2005, shelters were being built for some 1,200 families in NAD, while tents and plastic sheeting were provided for another 1,000 families in the province. In Nias, UNHCR supplied 1,000 replacement tents and over 5,000 blankets to affected residents and was in the process of procuring timber to reconstruct houses for some 2,000 families.

In **Somalia**, at the request of the Transitional Federal Government based in Nairobi, as well as the government authorities in *Puntland*, the UN Country Team was quickly mobilized along a clear division of responsibilities. UNHCR, together with UN-HABITAT, was responsible for coordinating the emergency shelter and household items sectors. Focusing on the villages along a 650-kilometre strip of north-eastern coastline, it provided non-food household packages to some 40,000 people, including villagers from the coast who had settled further inland. In addition, UNHCR activities, conducted with the UN Country Team, focused on the rehabilitation of public infrastructure (e.g. a school, a communal market and training facilities) and improved sanitation in affected areas. During the process, UNHCR



Indonesia: UNHCR staff and a community leader assess the damage in a coastal village that was hit by the tsunami.
UNHCR / J. Perugia

contributed to the drafting of a UN Country Team recovery and development programme, which shifted activities away from humanitarian emergency response towards recovery and rehabilitation.

In **Sri Lanka**, in close coordination with the Government and the UN Country Teams, UNHCR concentrated not only on emergency relief assistance and emergency shelter (providing plastic sheets, tents and household and hygienic items for some 32,000 families) but also on the protection of those affected by the disaster, many of whom had been previously displaced because of the conflict. Thus, from the early days of the emergency, the Office assisted the Government to draw up a comprehensive list of those displaced, missing, injured or presumed dead, and assisted some 120,000 people to replace or recover lost documentation such as ID cards and birth, marriage and death certificates. Together with the Government and other agencies, UNHCR ran more than 50 legal clinics in all affected districts. During the initial stages of the emergency, replacing lost documentation was vital to enable people to gain access to assistance, compensation and services. UNHCR also concentrated on housing, land and property rights, as a result of which a task force composed of government and civil society representatives was set up. The Office also concentrated

on access to rights and equitable treatment of all internally displaced people, irrespective of the cause of their displacement. In addition, UNHCR assumed the lead role for the transitional shelter sector, which provided shelter for about a quarter of a million people (55,000 families) in 2005. UNHCR constructed 4,440 housing units and assisted in the upgrading of some 1,000 shelters built by other agencies. The Office assisted the Government in national policy-making for the shelter sector and provided technical support to shelter agencies.

UNHCR also made three small cash grants in support of the emergency response to the Government of the **Maldives**, the Government of **Thailand** and the local government of the Union Territory of Pondicherry in **India**.

By the end of December 2005, USD 29.8 million had been spent on assistance to the affected populations in Indonesia, Somalia and Sri Lanka, with contributions totalling USD 58.8 million. UNHCR therefore adjusted its 2005 and 2006 activities to make use of the additional available funds.

Several factors contributed to the low rate of expenditure in Indonesia: the time needed for needs assessments; certification of land titles for beneficiaries of the housing

project; assessment of land conditions and subsidence risks prior to construction due to soil erosion; absence of several months in NAD; and a break for observing Ramadan in October. But by year's end work was in full swing and continues in 2006. UNHCR is grateful for the agreement of some donors to use part of their contributions for 2006 activities.

UNHCR also received generous in-kind contributions, such as technical experts, warehouse space, non-food items, transport and handling charges, helicopters and tents.

For more information, please see *Indian Ocean earthquake-Tsunami emergency – One-year Progress Report, January-December 2005*, available at www.unhcr.org/tsunami.

Budget, income and expenditure (USD) Supplementary programme budget					
	Appeal budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available ¹	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Supplementary programme	72,158,188	58,753,940	(4,112,773)	54,641,167	29,772,591

¹ Other funds available refer to the transfer of 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Note: The budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost of USD 4,693,312. Activities will continue in 2006 with the unspent balance of USD 24,868,576.

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure breakdown	Supplementary programme budget			
	Indonesia	Sri Lanka	Somalia	Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,966,221	1,633,048	206,976	4,806,245
Community services	22,719	0	0	22,719
Domestic needs and household support	835,722	1,034,320	592,913	2,462,955
Health and nutrition	0	10,200	0	10,200
Legal assistance	0	466,046	0	466,046
Operational support (to agencies)	410,127	45,612	1,100	456,839
Shelter and infrastructure	11,082,583	4,065,436	301,393	15,449,412
Transport and logistics	3,658,908	1,596,613	199,452	5,454,973
Instalments with implementing partners	237,544	405,658	0	643,202
Sub-total operational activities	19,213,824	9,256,933	1,301,834	29,772,591
Programme support	0	0	0	0
Total expenditure	19,213,824	9,256,933	1,301,834	29,772,591
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	237,544	1,423,464	0	1,661,008
Reporting received	0	(1,017,806)	0	(1,017,806)
Balance	237,544	405,658	0	643,202