



**1** family torn apart by war  
**is too many**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## UNHCR marks World Refugee Day 2014

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The Global Trends report 2014 shows that the number of refugees and IDPs under UNHCR care has more than doubled in a decade – from 15 million in 2004 to 35.6 million today. For the first time in the post-World War II era, forced displacement has exceeded 50 million people worldwide. UNHCR has given much needed hope by protecting tens of millions of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons by providing them with the support needed to rebuild their lives. In Asia, millions of forcibly displaced wait for durable solutions, long-running and new conflicts continue to force more people to search for safe havens. At present, Asia remains one of the largest refugee producing regions in the world.

In this global and regional context, Sri Lanka has made progress in reintegrating the returning Sri Lankan refugees and by being a host country to many of those that flee violence in the region. Since the conflict in Sri Lanka ended in May 2009, UNHCR has helped over 11,400 Sri Lankan refugees who have returned voluntarily to restart their lives. Similarly, though numbers remain low in comparison to other host countries in the region, Sri Lanka currently hosts 291 refugees and 1547 asylum seekers, all of whom are registered with UNHCR.

Sri Lankan government has made great strides in reintegrating 573,651 returning internally displaced persons since the end of civil conflict in 2009. UNHCR continues to assist the government in finding durable solutions for the remaining IDPs. Likewise, Sri Lanka has very effectively dealt with the issue of statelessness on its territory by passing legislation enabling Tamils of Indian Origin, who had been previously disenfranchised, and a population of ethnic Chinese, who had been in the country since the 1940s, to access citizenship. Sri Lanka is often cited as the best practice in the region in resolving issues of statelessness.

This year, in commemorating the World Refugee Day, UNHCR globally focuses on the devastating impact of war on families. “World Refugee Day is a time for us to reflect on the lives of the refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people worldwide who go through immense suffering due to violence and persecution”: says UNHCR’s Representative, M. Golam Abbas. UNHCR appreciates the generosity of the Sri Lankan government in accommodating asylum seekers and refugees until durable solutions are found for them. Thus the World Refugee Day, 2014 also presents an opportunity for the government to reiterate its greater effort to protect refugees and asylum seekers.

*For further information on the World Refugee Day please check the UNHCR website [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org); for global refugee stories please visit <http://stories.unhcr.org> or contact Dushanthi Fernando, Executive Assistant at UNHCR Sri Lanka on 011 268 3968 or via [fernandd@unhcr.org](mailto:fernandd@unhcr.org).*