

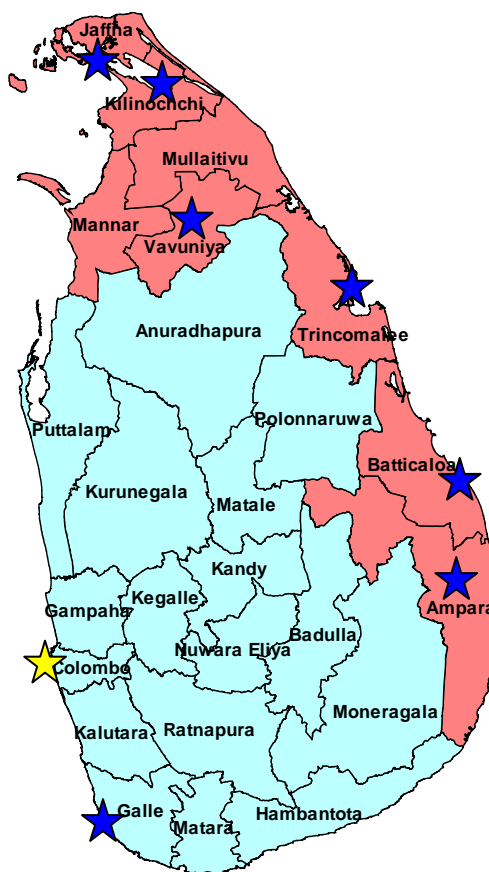
UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION




SRI LANKA

DONOR UPDATE

7 MARCH 2007

- Escalating conflict and open warfare in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka resulting in grave humanitarian consequences for over 200,000 internally displaced.
- Humanitarian access greatly impeded to assist the civilian population in conflict-affected areas due to the prevailing security situation.
- Recruitment of children by the LTTE and Karuna Faction continues to be a major violation to children's rights in Sri Lanka.



	Areas affected by the recent
	UNICEF Field Offices
	UNICEF Country Office

The boundaries and names shown do not imply official UN

1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

The unresolved conflict and the dangerously fragile ceasefire agreement between the Government and Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continue to gravely impact the lives of children and women in Sri Lanka and are the most important factors hampering rapid and sustainable development of the economy. With violence between the government and the LTTE at its highest level since 2002, the security situation is deteriorating especially in the North and East. Political functionaries have been killed and multiple attacks on military and police outposts have taken place. Religious/ethnic strife is common, and public life is often closed down as a means of popular protest.

While the entire country has suffered from the consequences of the conflict, the eight North East districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Ampara have borne the brunt of it. Since August 2006, over 200,000 persons have been displaced (including multiple displacements from Trincomalee to Vaharai and in January 2007, to Batticaloa government-controlled areas). Some 600,000 people remain cut-off in Jaffna district. Rehabilitation activities have slowed down significantly because of the worsening security situation. Access to Jaffna by the A9 road has not been possible since August 2006, severely hampering relief efforts. Humanitarian assistance is only possible by UN chartered aircraft. Food and other items are in extreme shortage.

Outside conflict-affected areas, two separate bus bombs – one on the road to Kandy, the other on the main road to Galle – resulted in the death of over 20 people and injured many others. These incidents may be a major turning point of the conflict with targeting of civilians by LTTE in areas that have not been affected by the conflict for many years. The UN has condemned the incidents and called for the protection of innocent civilians throughout the island.

The security situation in the North and East has also deteriorated for humanitarian workers due to harassment, abduction and forced recruitment by the LTTE and Karuna Faction. Intensified security measures by Sri Lanka Armed Forces has also resulted in reduced access for NGO and UN humanitarian staff and supplies to LTTE-operating areas and allegations of human rights violations.

Currently the immediate issues for the conflict affected IDPs are services for water supplies, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management. Ensuring that needs of public and personal hygiene is in place is critical. Accommodating high numbers of IDPs arriving into “cleared” (government controlled) areas from “uncleared” (non-government controlled) areas remains a priority.

The health situation in general is satisfactory with no reported significant increase in incidences of diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection, vector borne and communicable diseases, TB, typhoid or rabies in the affected areas in January 2007. However, mosquito-borne Chikungunya fever is prevalent in five districts in North and East provinces compounding the IDP crisis situation. The supply of drugs, including vaccines, is satisfactory for hospital and health clinic needs, but private pharmacies have run out of most items putting a strain on public hospitals in Jaffna and the Vanni¹.

There are more than 26,000 displaced students and approximately 1,000 displaced teachers across the North and East. However, given the pervasive violence and stress in the North it is assumed that all children in Jaffna, the Vanni, Vavuniya, Mannar and Vaharai and Muthur zones are acutely affected by the conflict and are directly impacted by both physical threats, access issues and deterioration in the quality of education. This represents more than 250,000 students. Displacement of teachers and students has led to teachers having decreased access to their students; insecurity in key areas has also compounded access issues in some of the most vulnerable communities leading to partial or complete disruption of education. Students in the Vaharai and Muthur zones were unable to attend schools for six months in 2006 because teachers were displaced or unable to access communities.

Conflict and displacement present particular threats for children, such as separation from their families, recruitment by fighting forces and exposure to targeted and indiscriminate violence like claymore attacks and landmines/UXOs. In IDP locations, abduction and recruitment of children have been reported by families and humanitarian agencies. In 2006, the situation became complex with the involvement of the Karuna Faction. As of end January 2007, UNICEF has recorded 6,241 children abducted (6,006 by LTTE and 235 by Karuna) with 1,879 children still being held (1,710 by LTTE and

¹ The Vanni is the region below the Jaffna peninsula and includes parts of Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya districts (mainly non-government controlled areas).

169 by Karuna). Released children and other male youth continue to seek UNICEF's assistance for special protection in fear of assassination, arrests and abduction.

The Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (comprising Government, UN agencies and civil society) under UN Security Council Resolution 1612 has compiled its first report on grave violations against children. Resolution 1612, adopted in July 2005, established a monitoring and reporting mechanism on six grave rights violations committed against children, including the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. The report provided inputs to the 20 December Report of the Secretary General on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in Sri Lanka and to Ambassador Allan Rock's 10-day mission to Sri Lanka and his subsequent report to the Security Council Working Group on 9 February 2007.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

UNICEF humanitarian action is focussed currently on IDPs and host communities in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, where over 200,000 persons remain displaced from their homes. According to UNHCR, the following table outlines the number of IDPs as of 22 February 2007. These statistics do not include the many people displaced before 7 April 2006².

District of Displacement	Families	Persons
Jaffna	13,027	43,147
Kilinochchi	11,663	45,665
Mullaitivu	7,020	24,805
Mannar	2,702	9,545
Vavuniya	1,458	5,586
Trincomalee	912	2,840
Batticaloa	20,833	76,498
Ampara	674	2,471
Anuradhapura	198	653
Puttulam	439	1,868
Kurunegala	15	88
Total	58,941	213,166

Sources: Government Agents, UNHCR Field Offices. Note: Figures are not final and are subject to change.

UNICEF, in collaboration with UN agencies, the ICRC, international and national NGOs and government partners, supports coordination of the water and sanitation and education sector. UNHCR leads the protection and shelter sectors; WHO, the health sector; and WFP, the food security/nutrition sector.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

UNICEF plays a lead role in the emergency coordination for water and sanitation. In response to the upsurge in conflict since August 2006, the WASH Emergency Task Force has been formed at the national level with members from ACF, EU, ICRC, IOM, OCHA, OXFAM, UNHCR, and UNICEF. Similar emergency coordination mechanisms are established at district level in the districts of Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Ampara, Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya. These fora have streamlined information sharing among national agencies and decentralized structures of implementation in line with the National Policy of Water and Sanitation. Existing capacity in terms of equipment, human resources, water sources, water testing and purification, and financial coverage is assessed weekly. Gaps are identified, and, whenever possible, solutions are found at the division level.

UNICEF's response has contributed to improved access to safe water and adequate sanitation services at IDP camps, ensuring adequate WASH staffing and the delivery of WASH emergency supplies to the affected population in accessible locations. Since the re-escalation of the conflict last year, some 3,974 IDP and host families totaling an estimated 19,870 persons (about 9,000 women and 5,900 children) have gained access to safe water and sanitation facilities.

In Batticaloa, an estimated 250,000 litres of drinking water is required on a daily basis and drinking water (5 L/person/day) is being provided through bowsering. Mapping water sources and identifying

² The overall figure of IDPs since the onset of the conflict is estimated at 450,000. An additional 16,000 people have sought refuge in India.

“stand-by” bowzers is now being conducted. More than 1200 emergency or semi permanent toilets, including facilities for disable persons, are completed out of a requirement of about 3000. Hundreds more are currently under construction. In Jaffna, UNICEF together with UNOPS, assist in constructing and rehabilitating dug wells and bathing places in temporary accommodation centres (TAC). There is a requirement for 100 emergency toilets and 250 semi-permanent toilets in Jaffna. Of these, currently 30 emergency and 60 semi-permanent constructions are completed. Construction is delayed due to lack of construction materials. In Kilinochchi, 274 emergency toilets have been constructed with beneficiary numbers estimated at 1,220 families or 3,900 people. UNICEF has supplied 17 water tanks to sites throughout the Vanni. In Anuradhapura district, 39 new family emergency toilets with disability inclusion and upgrades to 48 emergency toilets serve 446 families. 36 water tanks and hygiene kits were provided for 1800 persons. In Mannar district (in non-government controlled/ “uncleared” areas), 2500 hygiene kits and 50 water tanks have been pre-positioned for distribution pending a needs assessment.

Health Animators are working to ensure hygiene behaviours in IDP and host communities do not compromise the health of these communities. Hygiene promotion materials have been developed and widely distributed. 6,840 Families in war-affected areas have improved their hygiene practices. 276 Hygiene animators and 345 teachers/facilitators have been trained in participatory promotion of best hygiene practices. 4,000 Hygiene kits have been provided under emergency activities in Batticaloa and Jaffna. In Kilinochchi, on average 4,000 households are visited monthly. Hygiene promotion is conducted in schools through school health clubs, including in relocated schools.

In all locations, coordinated efforts are being made to ensure waste removal, provision of water for washing and other care and maintenance issues (i.e. providing bucket and toilet cleaning materials). UNICEF’s support to IDP locations and host communities facilitated improved hygiene practices, the use and maintenance of toilets, hand washing at critical times and safe water handling and storage.

Education

The primary school completion rate is at almost 98% nationally, but these statistics do not reflect the realities of conflict affected communities where attendance is influenced by displacement, actual threats and acute fear in the North and East provinces. Detailed information on the impact on completion rates is unknown, but it can be assumed that it is well below the national average. UNICEF is committed to ensuring all children-with a special focus on girls- return to school. In emergencies, schooling is a means of restoring a sense of normalcy to the lives of children and can help them overcome psychological and other forms of distress. Education offers a regular routine, opportunities for self-expression and the chance to engage with peers – all vital elements of normalcy for children whose lives have been disrupted by conflict and displacement.

UNICEF is the lead agency for education and is actively supporting the Ministry of Education and partners at national, zonal and district levels. UNICEF works with local partners and counterparts to ensure that assessments and ongoing monitoring in the emergency situation are conducted in a timely manner to allow for more rapid and targeted response. Government counterparts are supported to provide temporary learning sites, relocate displaced schools and reopen schools in conflict affected and host communities when possible. To date, 60 Temporary Learning Spaces serving up to 9,000 children have been constructed in the North and East to supplement the existing or damaged infrastructure. As more students enroll during displacement, the continued need to provide immediate shelter increases daily and plans have been made to serve communities as needed. Simultaneously, UNICEF provides tarpaulin and mats to support the initial emergency needs. Furniture and blackboards are ordered to ensure spaces are appropriately supplied.

Emergency learning and teaching materials have been provided in Ampara, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Vavuniya districts. These materials are distributed immediately as well as pre-positioned in key areas to allow for immediate response to future needs. To date over 6,500 school-in-a-box kits, over 26,000 textbooks, 14,000 uniforms in addition to schoolbags and supplementary stationery have been provided to accelerate the integration and provide continued support to conflict-affected children in their learning environments.

Because of the gross disruption to regular learning environments and systems, it is necessary to advocate for and provide alternative and innovative approaches. UNICEF has been instrumental in standardizing and supporting Catch-Up Education (CUE) in 113 schools between Batticaloa, Mannar and Vavuniya Districts. While this programme was meant to serve children who had either dropped out of the education system or were in real danger of dropping out, it is now increasingly addressing the needs of children affected by conflict. Attendance rates of students in conflict areas fluctuate dramatically following direct threats to communities and there are indications that attendance of

students who had missed six months of school in 2006 are decreasing daily as children find they are unable to easily readapt to the school environment or perform to grade level within the very formal and exam-oriented system. An assessment conducted with recently displaced families indicates that attendance of IDP children enrolled after the six-month disruption is as low as 50%. It is imperative that additional support be provided to ensure that these children do not lose access to quality education; UNICEF is currently working with the Zones to better understand the situation and respond with relevant programmes. This is accompanied by working closely with counterparts to strengthen systems and initiate activities to ensure that the planning and response to emergency education needs is based on school-level reality and has the flexibility to change with the needs.

Health and Nutrition

To prevent deterioration from existing nutritional status, UNICEF in partnership with WFP and the Ministry of Nation Building provided high energy biscuits (HEB) to children under five, lactating mothers and pregnant women. 63 MT of HEB to cover two months requirements of over 10,000 children under five, lactating mothers and pregnant women have been dispatched to Batticaloa. An additional 39 MT of HEB have been pre-positioned to accommodate movement of IDPs from Batticaloa to Trincomalee, and for Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu affected populations. WFP is also providing corn soya blend for two months covering 446 at risk pregnant and lactating mothers and 3,720 children under five who are below the 3rd centile.

Follow-up actions from the Food Security/ Nutrition Rapid Assessment survey in November 2006, conducted by the government with technical assistance from UNICEF and WFP, have been initiated. A protocol for rehabilitation of children with severe acute under nutrition has been developed by national experts from MRI, FHB and University of Colombo and shared with district health workers, and NGOs including ACP, ICRC, and Merlin. A nutrition rehabilitation programme has been implemented for severely undernourished children under five. The initial target group is 100 children who will receive hospital or community-based treatment.

UNICEF is supporting health promotion through community-level health promoters in all IDP locations. Key messages focus on ORS preparation, breastfeeding and complementary feeding, hygiene promotion, immunization, vitamin A supplementation and de-worming. UNICEF is also supplying de-worming tablets for pregnant women and vitamin A supplementation in all IDP areas. Mother and child corners for breastfeeding in IDP camps have been established in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. UNICEF supported mobile health services to IDP sites in Vaharai and Kilinochchi serving more than 28,000 IDPs who did not have sufficient access to regular health services.

Sri Lanka's achievements in high immunization coverage could suffer severe setbacks as the conflict continues. In Batticaloa, vaccination against measles of all children (6 months to 14 years) in IDP camps was supported. The government has conducted a Vitamin A programme nationwide, reporting 98% coverage in conflict and tsunami-affected districts in 2006.

In the last quarter, UNICEF airlifted vaccines and essential drugs to Jaffna to re-establish routine immunization services and assist in covering basic medical needs of the population. Essential supplies provided to serve IDP and host communities in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi and Batticaloa include 26 Emergency Health Kits, 5,980 mosquito nets, 2,900 baby-hygiene kits and transport, such as mopeds, ambulances and pickups, has strengthened field health staff mobility and referrals, promoting home visits and reducing pregnancy risk related problems.

To date, there have been no major disease outbreaks amongst the IDPs. Precautionary measures to control diseases have been undertaken, including mosquito spraying in 98 IDP camps. Challenges include the shortage of medical doctors, midwives and nurses, and supplies, as well as the access to the conflict affected population. In Jaffna, UNICEF continues to facilitate the approval of curfew passes for the primary health inspectors and midwives to ensure health services to the displaced people in the temporary accommodation centres.

Child Protection

UNICEF complements UNHCR's overall protection lead by providing coordination in child protection through district-led coordination of child protection agencies linked to national coordination. Key areas of response include prevention and responding to all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation committed against conflict-affected children include underage recruitment, registration of separated

children, support for child friendly spaces (CFS) and psychosocial support services, and mine risk education (MRE) and safety awareness.

UNICEF continues to monitor and report on underage recruitment and is currently working with the government and other agencies to set up a mechanism for monitoring and reporting other child rights violations particularly in conflict areas. UNICEF has maintained a comprehensive database of underage recruitment since 2001, which is updated when the child's status changes. The database provides a record of known cases of recruitment and has proven to be an effective advocacy tool for the release of underage recruits.

During the last quarter (October - December 2006), the number of children reportedly recruited by the LTTE further decreased from 187 to 145. Recruitment by the Karuna faction has also decreased from 72 to 68 during the same period. In summary, there has been a steady decrease in child recruitment from 259 during the last quarter to 213, a decrease of 18%. The total number of releases reduced from 53 during the last quarter to 49, though the number released from the Karuna Faction slightly increased during this period. UNICEF continues to dialogue with armed groups on the release of children and the cessation of recruitment.

Registration of separated, unaccompanied children and children with single parents in all IDP sites is conducted in collaboration with the government with the aim to reunify children with family members or to find a safe temporary caretaker. A coordination mechanism has been established with ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF NRC and ZOA to trace children. A referral form has been developed and shared with agencies working in child protection to record basic details of separated children for referrals. In addition, UNICEF worked in partnership with local and international agencies to assess and monitor the vulnerability of children in institutions in the conflict-affected areas, and supported the reunification of children in institutions with their parents through follow-up social work.

Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), including provision of psychosocial support services, are ongoing for all IDP camps. Children and women in IDP locations have access to psychosocial support services such as recreational activities through music, dance, folk game play, handicraft working, drama and theater activities. In Jaffna, five local NGOs have conducted CFS both in IDP camps and children's homes, providing a space to play and raise awareness on MRE, hygiene and child rights to promote the psychosocial well being of children. UNICEF and Save the Children continue to conduct joint reviews of the CFS to ensure that standards are being maintained. A monitoring form has been developed to monitor the progress and quality of CFS activities, based on minimum standards agreed upon with partners. Over 1500 government staff and displaced teachers have been trained in psychosocial support services and coordination networks have been established.

UNICEF works with over 20 partner organizations in Mine Risk Education and safety awareness. Activities are carried out using MRE posters, presentations, radio campaigns and television programmes. In 2006, 2,800 teachers and 903 principals were trained in MRE in the North and East provinces. 570,000 persons (45% women/ girls) were reached by MRE community-based programmes and an island-wide mass media campaign; and 20,000 persons benefited from a disability awareness campaign in Vavuniya. Casualties dropped between 2002 (154) and 2005 (38) but have increased again in 2006 (63) because of the conflict.

Main constraints relate to the deteriorating security situation and escalation of conflict in the North and East. Parents fear to report cases of child recruitment, and the ability of UNICEF staff to travel is limited. Many trained staff and volunteers have been displaced. Service delivery and capacity-building activities have been curtailed due to restriction of access and shortage of fuel.

Non Food Relief Items (NFRI)

The provision of emergency NFRI to displaced families is crucial as many IDPs have lost or left behind their possessions. Since the re-escalation of the conflict in August 2006, UNICEF provided the following items to conflict affected IDPs mainly in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Kilinochchi districts: 3,630 hygiene kits containing soap, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste. Over 2,000 families have benefited from kits containing clothes, towels, jerry can, mats, hygienic items, cooking pots, plastic sheeting and eating utensils. In addition, 22,158 bed sheets, 3,496 hurricane lanterns, over 10,000 cooking sets and 26,000 sleeping mats have been provided.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The total UNICEF Humanitarian Action Response (HAR) for 2007 is estimated at US\$9.65 million. The UNICEF component of the UN Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) reflecting unfunded requirements for the first six months, January to June 2007, covering emergency health, nutrition, education, WASH, child protection and non-food related items totals US\$2,561,200. To date, the CHAP remains unfunded. UNICEF has allocated over US\$3.7 million from its existing funds to jumpstart the emergency response. These funds need to be supplemented to ensure a comprehensive and timely response to future displacements.

Table 1: Total UNICEF needs by sector for the first six months of 2007

Sector	Target (in USD)
Health	222,200
Nutrition	277,800
Education	355,600
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	555,600
Child Protection	750,000
Non-Food Relief Items	400,000
Total	2,561,200

Additional Requirements in case of a full-scale conflict

In the case of increasing violence and warfare, additional resources will be required in order to adequately respond to a situation with an estimated population of displaced of up to 400,000 with periods of displacement likely to range up to several years.

Details of the Sri Lanka emergency programme can be obtained from:

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