



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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MEDIA RELEASE

High level UNHCR visit looks to regional cooperation on refugees

UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms Erika Feller, today completed a mission to the region to discuss cooperative approaches to the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.

The visit, which included high level discussions with the government and non-government sectors, highlighted the common issues faced by states in coping with the irregular movement of people to and through the region.

In particular, Ms Feller was able to give UNHCR's global view on the movement of people around the world and the protection needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.

"UNHCR acknowledges the difficulties faced by states all around the world in balancing their national security needs with their desire to provide protection for refugees who have fled violence and persecution in their homelands," Feller said.

"The instability in places such as Afghanistan and Sri Lanka does impact greatly on the numbers of people moving to and through this region, including Australia."

"It is our strong conviction that the opportunity exists for states, along with UNHCR and other partners, to work together to improve the quality of protection available to asylum-seekers and refugees in the region and to address the root causes of conflict and instability."

"This cooperation ideally crosses the whole spectrum of issues from security and counter-criminality to humanitarian aid, human rights protection and sustainable development."

"UNHCR looks forward to continuing these positive discussions on the regional approaches that are vital to help stabilize populations in countries and regions of origin, reduce onward movement, and find durable solutions for refugees."

Ms Feller concludes her mission today with an address hosted by the Human Rights Law Resource Centre in Melbourne on "*Refugee Protection in the Australasian Region & Beyond: Challenges & Opportunities*".

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