What is UNHCR?
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a mandate to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees, including by ensuring that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.

UNHCR has a Branch Office in Kathmandu, Nepal, and works closely with partner organizations to address the needs of persons of concern in Kathmandu. UNHCR has partners, such as Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) responsible for group and individual psychosocial counseling, and Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital responsible to provide basic health care.

Who is a Refugee?
The 1951 Refugee Convention establishing UNHCR defines a refugee as someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

What is the Situation for Refugees in Nepal?
UNHCR Nepal considers refugee claims of urban asylum seekers in Nepal under its mandate. If recognized, UNHCR provides protection for refugees in coordination with the Government of Nepal. However, as refugees in Kathmandu are currently considered illegal migrants by the Government of Nepal, visa overstay fines for stay in Nepal are accrued, and refugees do not enjoy the right to work in the country.

Rights and Assistance
- Protection from UNHCR and partners: ensuring physical protection (in case of detention, deportation, or harm to physical safety) in coordination with relevant authorities, provision of legal protection, and ensuring that basic human rights of refugees are protected while in Nepal.
- Health: Free access to basic health care at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, UNHCR’s partner for health care.

For any other health care in another hospital or with a specialist doctor, refugees will need to be referred by Teaching Hospital.
- Education: Children aged 5 through class 10 receive education support, currently in the form of a cash grant provided upon presentation of receipts. All other school-related expenses, such as books, uniforms and school bus fares are the responsibility of parents.
- Counseling: Access to counseling is available with UNHCR (i.e. former KCC staff). Individual and group psycho-social counseling sessions can also be arranged with UNHCR’s partner TPO by arranging appointment.
- Subsistence Allowance (SA): Upon assessment, a monthly SA may be provided to identify vulnerable refugees on 15th day of each month. SA is not provided automatically and may be reviewed or reduced at any time.
- Training: Life skills training and language classes in English and Nepali is offered, depending on availability of budget and other relevant criteria.

Responsibilities
- All refugees are required to follow and obey Nepali laws as well as to respect customs and cultures of Nepalis as well as that of other refugees and asylum seekers.
- The use of abusive language, threats or violence against UNHCR or partner staff or acts against UNHCR will not be tolerated. UNHCR and partner staff should be treated with respect and refugees should behave in a manner that does not prevent staff to carry out their duties (reference is made to the Code of Conduct posted at UNHCR office).
- Refugees should be truthful at all times. Presenting fake documents or misrepresenting information in order to gain benefits linked to refugee services is considered fraud. Misconduct and/or fraud are highly condemned by UNHCR and partners and could result in penalties and other consequences.

Please note:
- The confidentiality of all information provided by refugees will be ensured by UNHCR and partner staff.
- UNHCR and partner staff will treat all asylum seekers and refugees with respect.
Applications and queries submitted to UNHCR by refugees via email or letter boxes situated at the gate of the UNHCR office will be followed up on or responded to as deemed necessary.

UNHCR will work to identify solutions for all recognized refugees, which may include repatriation, integration or resettlement. It is important to note that UNHCR is unable to consider all refugees for resettlement. Please note that unlike large-scale resettlement operations such as for the refugees from Bhutan in Nepal, resettlement countries have very limited resettlement quotas for refugees worldwide. Such limitations also affect urban refugees in Nepal. Further, it is important to note that the few refugees considered for resettlement are identified on the basis of several criteria and on confidential elements of refugees’ cases. If accepted by a resettlement country for permanent resettlement, exit permits need to be secured from the Government of Nepal which can be a lengthy process.

According to the Immigration Rules of the Government of Nepal, all foreigners who have entered illegally or over stayed their visa in Nepal are liable to a fine (5 USD per day). UNHCR strongly believes that refugees should not be penalized and has been continuously advocating with the Government of Nepal to waive visa fines. Such waiver is at the discretion of the Government.

Important contact information:

Police: 100, 110, 120
Traffic: 103
Fire Brigade: 101

In case of emergency: UNHCR number: +977-1-4414724

ALL UNHCR AND PARTNER SERVICES ARE FREE OF COST

Any payment for any services is not acceptable. Any misconduct or attempt to solicit money or favors from refugees should be reported to UNHCR immediately

UNHCR Branch Office
Office Location:
Maharajgunj, Kathmandu
Phone calls hours:
Tuesday: 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM
Friday: 3:00 PM -5:00 PM
Contact Information:
Tel: +977-1-4414724
e-mail: nepka@unhcr.org
*Appointments Necessary*

Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital:
Location: Maharajgunj, Kathmandu
Tel: +977-1-4412303, 4412404

Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO):
Location: Baluwatar, Kathmandu
Tel: +977-1-4431717