



Photo: Azad Enayatullah / NRC

About ADSP

Introduction

The Asia Displacement Solutions Platform is a joint initiative of the Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, and Norwegian Refugee Council, which aims to contribute to the development of comprehensive solutions for displaced persons across the Afghan and Myanmar displacement axes.

Welcome to the June 2021 newsletter from the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform. These newsletters are intended to shine a spotlight on some of the issues being tackled by our members, and the programmatic work done to improve outcomes for persons affected by displacement. In addition, the newsletter provides updates on global or regional processes which may otherwise go unexplored.

Each newsletter contains articles from members in ADSP focus countries, exploring interesting programme developments and regional migration trends. As we move into the second half of 2021, we encourage you to share ideas or information that you would like to see addressed.

The newsletter relies upon content created by member organisations, and everyone is welcome to contribute. If you have an idea for an article, on any subject, please feel free to contact me to discuss. We would love to publish overviews of your activities, interviews with staff, and photos which give an idea of the work being carried out in the field.

These newsletters are intended to improve information-sharing between ADSP member organisations, and to highlight the work of the platform more publicly.

A message from the ADSP Manager: Ongoing humanitarian challenges requires a 'doubling-down' of effort

By Evan Jones, Asia Displacement Solutions Platform Manager



As we enter the second half of the year, it's time to take stock of our successes, our achievements, and where we need to continue our focus our efforts. Whilst Covid-19 has continued to deliver challenges in the form of travel restrictions, lockdowns and barriers to access, we must also acknowledge the tremendous amount of work that has been achieved by teams on the ground. Working in extremely challenging environments, ADSP members have continued to deliver lifesaving support and services. Often, without these services, refugees and other forcibly displaced persons would have nowhere else to turn.

Over the past three months, Afghanistan has seen a huge number of challenges thrown its way. From the official declaration of drought to ongoing large numbers of returns, to a deteriorating security situation – Afghanistan is facing one of its toughest moments in decades. Now more than ever, it is necessary that the international community and the donor community adequately and strategically support the country and its people. With skyrocketing humanitarian needs, and equally pressing development challenges, engagement is needed to save lives and to protect the social progress made over the past twenty years.

In Bangladesh, we have also seen tremendous hardships and challenging operating environments. In March, we witnessed devastating fires make their way through three refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Destroying more than 10,000 shelters and displacing more than 45,000 refugees, the effects of the fire are still felt to this day. On top of this, monsoon rains and the ongoing threat of Covid-19 remains a serious concern for ADSP members and Rohingya communities alike. ADSP members continue to address these humanitarian imperatives, and advocate for an improved protection environment for Rohingya within the country.

In Myanmar, the situation has been equally as challenging, with ongoing challenges following the military coup in February 2021. Since then, ADSP members have been responding to new and emerging situations across the country, as well as trying to navigate a range of operational roadblocks that has made aid delivery even more complex. In response to this situation, in June ADSP members published a [Briefing Note](#) outlining the current humanitarian priorities and suggested recommendations for government actors in both Europe and ASEAN in response to the worsening situation inside the country.

As we do not expect any abatement in these issues in the short or medium term, collective action and partnerships is as important as ever. By coming together to identify common messaging, strategizing around improved programmatic responses, and embarking on joint research, we can continue to play our part in delivering improved responses in efforts towards durable solutions.

Finally, I wish to thank all members, partners and colleagues for your continued engagement over the past few months. Whilst these challenges across the entire region are daunting, we are committed to tackling them together.

We look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

Evan Jones
ADSP Manager



Photo: Farid Gardon / ADSP

CAPACITY BUILDING

In May and July 2021, ADSP continued the rollout of its durable solutions trainings for civil society stakeholders and humanitarian professionals. Designed to improve programming through improved understanding of the humanitarian – development nexus, the trainings provided a useful platform for learning and mutual exchange. Throughout these two trainings, 44 participants engaged in presentations, groupwork and scenario discussions.

As part of the two-day trainings, participants engaged in seven different sessions – each providing acting as a steppingstone for attendees to better understand the concept of durable solutions. Sessions included: definitions of key terms of terminology, the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs, national and regional policy / legislative frameworks related to durable solutions, analysis of duty-bearers, preconditions for refugee self-reliance, housing + land and property rights, and durable solutions planning.

In a context such as Afghanistan, where civil society and humanitarian agencies are ‘wrapped up’ in emergency after emergency, it is essential that long-term durable solutions do not simply fall by the wayside. Instead, it is crucial that humanitarian actors remain cognizant of the need for development solutions, and to keep the dual approach at the fore in both planning and implementation.

ADSP looks forward to continuing these trainings in Afghanistan and across the region in the months ahead. For any questions on ADSP’s durable solutions trainings, please contact Farid.Gardon@adsp.ngo

Forced return of Afghans hampers the pursuit of durable solutions

Evan Jones, Manager at the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform; and

Jared Rowell, Country Director of the Danish Refugee Council, Afghanistan



The principles of safety and dignity must not only guide the pursuit of durable solutions, but also the return of rejected asylum seekers to Afghanistan. Successful return involves much more than putting people on a plane. Jared Rowell, Afghanistan Country Director for the Danish Refugee Council, and Evan Jones at the Kabul-based Asia Displacement Solutions Platform write.

On a blustery winter morning in mid-December 2020 after a long hiatus, a plane carrying 40 Afghans whose asylum applications had been denied by Germany arrived at Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport. This was the first such plane to touch down in months since deportations were suspended due to the pandemic. Their arrival has renewed the debate about the return of people to Afghanistan from Europe. Photo: Danish Refugee Council

Returning rejected asylum seekers to Afghanistan is not as simple as having them board a plane. For returns to be successful, individuals must have the ability to access long-term safety, livelihoods, security of land tenure, and access to basic services. Without this, there is a very real chance that they will be forced to leave again – seeing no other choice but to find those services in a foreign land. Recent survey data from the Mixed Migration Centre shows that among 1,255 returnees interviewed between July 2020 and January 2021, 41 per cent intended to re-migrate when the covid situation allows. A further 38 per cent were uncertain, and only 18 per cent intended to remain in Afghanistan.

There are currently around 2.6 million registered Afghan refugees globally, with the vast majority (almost 2.1 million) hosted by Pakistan and Iran. In 2020, Afghan refugees were the second largest group of asylum seekers in continental Europe, having fled their homeland for a variety of reasons including direct persecution, conflict, economic hardship, and climate induced displacement. Each person has a different reason, in many cases multiple reasons, for leaving in search of a semblance of safety and security.

Afghanistan reportedly has the second highest level of food insecurity in the world, with one in two children under-five expected to face acute malnutrition in 2021. In addition, almost 70 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, attempting to eke out an existence any way they can. Women and girls continue to be deprived of access to health services and education, while tenure insecurity, lack of civil documentation, and gender-based violence remain pervasive. Overlay these challenges with COVID-19, a deteriorating security situation, and a harsh winter, and conditions for many Afghans are precarious.

For recognised refugees, voluntary return is considered a viable long-term solution. However, it must be carefully planned for and supported in both host countries and countries of origin to ensure that the return is sustainable and voluntary.

Notably, any return must be done with caution, and with full respect for all customary and international human rights obligations. This also means that even if, for example, a European country has determined that an asylum seeker does not fulfill the relevant criteria for refugee status as interpreted by that country's authorities, there may still be strong reasons – such as drought, food shortages, ethnic persecution, civil unrest, rampant unemployment, or land grabs - not to return that person to Afghanistan.

Gul*, a member of the refugee-led Asia Pacific Network of Refugees, was returned involuntarily to Afghanistan without proper support or information after living in Sweden for five years. He has described his return as “coming back to a country that I had no connection with, and one that I feel was worse-off than when I first left.” In addition, he described witnessing extreme violence and insecurity, and being unable to find adequate food and shelter. He was subsequently compelled to leave Afghanistan again, this time making his way to Iran.

It is paramount that governments acknowledge that even though an individual may not meet a strict interpretation of the refugee definition, there may be legitimate reasons not to return him or her to Afghanistan. Return cannot be considered “voluntary,” if one’s only option is prolonged detention or destitution. The concepts of safety, voluntary return and dignity should be central to anyone’s decision to return to Afghanistan. This is especially true for women, who are often exposed to additional challenges in securing their safety and livelihoods.

Data from sources such as the Mixed Migration Centre show that many returnees, including those from Europe and Turkey, struggle upon their return to Afghanistan. For example, among 925 returnees interviewed between January and March 2020, 56% struggled with finding decent work, only 13% were able to access housing, and 19% faced debt. Such impediments are exacerbated by the huge existing number of internally displaced people – some 4.5 million - inside Afghanistan. Engagement with ongoing data collection initiatives should be prioritized by governments to better understand the experiences of arrivals and to adapt policies and procedures accordingly. Of course, not all returnees will face imminent danger. Some have reunited with family, utilized their skills to create work opportunities, and been able to establish a degree of stability. However, everyone’s circumstance is unique, and this cannot be considered possible for everyone.

The NGO community acknowledges that European and regional policymakers are struggling to grapple with the number of persons that have arrived irregularly. It is also appreciated that European governments have spent, and continue to invest, millions of euros in Afghanistan to improve conditions inside the country. Such support is invaluable and will undoubtedly contribute to the alleviation of the nation’s humanitarian and development needs. However, such support must not be undermined by forcing returns, as this can further destabilise a population that is already facing significant challenges.

The recent prospects of a peace deal currently being negotiated in Doha also raise the risk that European countries might prematurely determine that Afghan refugees and asylum seekers should be returned home. In the event that a peace process is secured, returns need to be handled with utmost caution and in phases so as not to overwhelm the limited resources available. It should also be acknowledged numerous socio-economic, environmental, and conflict issues will not disappear immediately after a peace agreement, and there remain real risks to Afghans upon their return.

The full article can also be viewed on the Development Today website [here](#).

Troop withdrawals won't end Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis



By Evan Jones, Manager at the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform

The withdrawal of troops marks the end of one of America's longest military engagements but the social, economic and security situation in the country remains dire.

Whilst the international community is focusing upon what a post-US and NATO Afghanistan may look like, Afghans are grappling with the ongoing and acute humanitarian needs within the country. Having borne the brunt of the decades-long conflict, Afghans all over the country are extremely nervous about what will happen if any political settlement between the government and the Taliban is reached. The situation on the ground remains dire for tens of millions of people, with continued risk of conflict, the devastating effects of climate change and residual impacts from decades of war.

As the world marks the seventieth anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention on June 20, it's incumbent upon the international community to reflect upon the plight of Afghans everywhere – whether it be the 19 million Afghans that live below the poverty line, Afghan refugees who remain in exile or those who are stuck in limbo.

Irrespective of the troop withdrawal timetable, the fundamental humanitarian needs of Afghans will not change, and as such, donors must remain steadfast both in terms of support inside the country as well as countries hosting large numbers of refugees such as Iran and Pakistan.

Impending drought

Afghanistan's unique geography and climate mean that it routinely faces severe climatic events such as extreme temperatures, flooding and drought. In 2018, the drought in the country's western region was so severe that it displaced more than 170,000 people. Primarily from provinces bordering Herat in the west, this group of people was forced to seek refuge in other parts of the country simply to meet their basic needs.

A significant number remain housed in informal settlements to this day, unable to return home and unable to integrate into local communities. Fast forward to 2021, and Afghanistan is once again on the precipice of yet another drought. Anticipated to diminish the quality and quantity of crop yields, and the livelihoods of tens of thousands of subsistence farmers, the potential results from this drought could again be disastrous.

According to the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), 17 provinces are facing the bleak prospect of a one-in-twenty-year drought. A further 24 districts are facing a one-in-ten-year scenario.

Should these forecasts come true, more than nine million persons are likely to be affected by hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity. According to the 2021 UN Humanitarian Needs Overview, Afghanistan has the second-highest number of people in the world suffering from emergency levels of food insecurity.

Risk of explosive remnants of war

Beset by fighting, conflict and war since 1979, Afghanistan is also battling with a silent and indiscriminate killer that does not receive the same news coverage as roadside attacks or other heinous events: unexploded ordnances and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

With 40,373 civilians killed by landmines or ERWs since 1989, and an estimated one million Afghans living within 500 metres of a mine-contaminated area, it will take demining and clearance teams several years to make the country safe from this threat. In the meantime, casualties will continue to increase, as men, women and children fall victim to these objects that are solely designed to kill and maim.

In 2020 alone, there were 1,473 reported civilian casualties from unexploded ordnance, a figure that has jumped since the previous year. Of this number, approximately half were children. A large number are also internally displaced persons, who may often return to their places of origin to farm, but without the understanding and knowledge of the hazards that may exist.

Violence, insecurity and conflict

Afghanistan is no stranger to conflict, having held the unfortunate title of 'World's Least Peaceful Country' since 2019. If that's not enough, the country also reverted to being designated as a country in 'active conflict' in 2018.

Afghanistan has witnessed a deteriorating security situation in recent years, with targeted killings, kidnappings and explosions placing fear into the lives of everyday Afghans. Many are nervous about what the future may hold.

Devastating attacks on innocent civilians are far from rare. Most recently, on May 8, there were a series of explosions outside a school for girls in the Dasht-e-Barchi neighbourhood of Kabul. Killing and injuring more than 150 young schoolgirls, the attack drew worldwide condemnation.

Despite the global outrage, however, such attacks will likely continue, with government forces, political opponents and civilians all in the firing line.

Ongoing conflict across the country over many decades has resulted in more than six million Afghans seeking refugee outside of the country. A further five million are displaced within Afghanistan, without access to basic services and facing barriers to attaining fundamental human rights. With seemingly no end in sight to the violence and conflict that has plagued the country, conflict-induced displacement is likely to remain for the foreseeable future.

Where to from here?

Although the rapid timetable for troop withdrawals will bring foreign military presence to an end in just a few months, Afghanistan's social and economic recovery will take much longer. There is no doubt that the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan will remain dire in the months and years ahead, with no prospects for a dramatic change in the lives and livelihoods of millions of Afghans.

It is therefore critical that the international community make clear their intentions to support Afghanistan and its neighbours for the long haul. Only then will we have the opportunity to witness what all Afghans desire – a safe and prosperous Afghanistan.

This article originally appeared in TRT World [here](#).

Household debt holds back durable solutions in Rakhine

By Rachel Sider, Myanmar Advocacy Manager, Norwegian Refugee Council



Myanmar is facing a new humanitarian crisis as conflict and displacement exacerbate vulnerabilities caused by Covid-19, previous armed conflict, inter-communal tensions, ethno-religious discrimination and environmental shocks. Around one million people in Myanmar were in need of humanitarian assistance prior to the 1 February military takeover, including an estimated 208,000 displaced people in Rakhine State (UN OCHA).¹ For displaced Rohingya families in Rakhine, prospects for durable solutions are now more elusive than ever. This is particularly true of their material safety – the ability to achieve adequate standards of living & access to livelihoods, markets & financial services – which has faced new setbacks since the coup.

In November and December 2020, one ADSP partner conducted research on the consequences of debt among conflict-affected and displaced populations in Rakhine State. The organization observed that the inability to meet basic needs fuels debt among communities, which in turn contributes to negative outcomes. Most borrowers surveyed reported that they most often take on debt to meet their basic needs. This includes paying for food and various types of medical expense, including those associated with childbirth. Borrowing is also used as a mechanism of last resort to meet exceptional expenses, such as when a family faces pressure as a result of trafficking. As one lender in Sittwe explained: “[People] borrow money when they face big challenges like their children are being threatened by the brokers on their way abroad.”

The research further found that 75 per cent of survey participants had at least one outstanding loan. Families often borrow money from other members of their community, with two out of three borrowers taking loans from members of their own ethnic group. On average, a household’s cumulative outstanding loans totalled USD 414. The majority of debt is informal (undocumented) and relatively flexible (without a specific due date), and a minority of participants reported that they had written documentation for their loans (13.1 per cent). In order to access loans, participants indicated that “mortgaging” ration cards that entitle conflict-affected and displaced communities to food is not uncommon, nor is facing a loss of housing or identity documents if the loan is not repaid.

Households with debt reported that borrowing leads to negative coping mechanisms, including skipping meals and selling household possessions. The research findings reinforce the contextual risk factors that contribute to other protection risks in conflict-affected & displaced communities including corruption, extortion, trafficking & violence.

The resurgence of Covid-19 and ongoing political instability in Myanmar makes advocating for and working with these communities to identify solutions to meet their basic needs critical. The humanitarian community must do all it can to help them avoid taking on insurmountable levels of debt. WFP’s food price monitoring in recent months indicates that across the country, the cost of rice jumped an average of three per cent in monitored markets since mid-February. Steep spikes in the price of cooking oil have been observed in central Rakhine where the average retail price increased 69 per cent from May 2020; in northern Rakhine, the price of pulses jumped 23 per cent since January 2021.² WFP has also documented a 30 per cent rise in petrol and diesel, raising concerns about further food price hikes.³ These rising prices are compounded by near paralysis of the banking sector, reductions in remittances and widespread limits on cash availability. All of this comes atop the high levels of debt in conflict-affected communities in Rakhine State as documented by recent research.

Working towards durable solutions requires a number of significant changes in the conditions across Rakhine, from regaining freedom of movement to facilitating access to legal identity to restoring destroyed shelters. It starts with meeting basic needs and alleviating the debt burdens facing those with reduced livelihoods options and a rising

¹ OCHA, “Humanitarian Update No. 7,” 27 May 2021.

www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Sitrep_Humanitarian_Update_No.7_OCHA_27May2021.pdf

² WFP, “Myanmar Market Price Update,” May 2021. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000129512.pdf>

³ WFP, “Myanmar Market Price Update,” February 2021. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000124962.pdf>

cost of living. The findings from this ADSP partner's 2020 research ring truer today as employment prospects and access to markets for communities continue to decline. Humanitarian organizations should therefore monitor market trends and adapt ongoing programming to factor in emerging and deepening socio-economic vulnerability. This includes enhancing healthcare service provision to reduce costs incurred by vulnerable populations and consolidating distribution lists in displacement camps to prevent gaps and duplication in coverage.

REGIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

A perilous journey: protection risks facing Rohingya en route to Malaysia

Jennifer Vallentine, Manager, Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) Asia



Despite tightening border controls and an ever hardening immigration stance, the movement of migrants and refugees bound for Malaysia, continues.⁴ In particular, Rohingya, fleeing ongoing persecution in Myanmar and worsening conditions in the overcrowded camps of Cox's Bazar, continue to brave perilous journeys across seas and over land in order to reach the relative safety and access to essential services that Malaysia affords.

Since January 2019, MMC Asia has been interviewing Rohingya in Malaysia via the 4Mi survey to better understand their migration experiences, journeys and aspirations. During this time, MMC has heard from hundreds of Rohingya refugees about the protection risks they face both during their journeys and upon arrival to Malaysia. With the majority (78% of 142) of Rohingya interviewed in 2021 reporting that they had personally experienced some form of protection violation during their journey, the risks are extensive, widespread and cannot be ignored. Further, the global pandemic has continued to make migration journeys more difficult, and, compounded existing risks.⁵

4Mi findings in this article come from 142 interviews conducted with Rohingya men (55%) and women (45%) between March and May 2021. More findings are shared in the MMC Asia 4Mi Snapshot – June 2021 Protection risks facing Rohingya refugees en route to Malaysia.

What are the risks and where do they occur?

4Mi findings from 2021 show detention and physical violence as the two most common risks reported by Rohingya men and women en route to Malaysia. Besides these two risks, other risks reported include physical violence, kidnapping, sexual violence, death & robbery. When disaggregated by gender, women reported slightly more risks of physical violence (49%), and significantly greater risks of sexual violence (36%), and kidnapping (28%), than men.⁶

No safe haven - where are protection risks occurring?

The risks facing Rohingya are prevalent throughout the region, starting with the ongoing persecution they face in their homeland, Myanmar. Risks continue to be prevalent for Rohingya throughout their journeys across the Asia region, including in the dangerous and overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar, along irregular journeys by sea and through countries such as Thailand, India, Bangladesh and Indonesia, as well as upon arrival in destination countries such as Malaysia.⁷ At the heart of the issue lies a systematic lack of legal protections for the stateless Rohingya throughout the region, as well as fundamental absence of durable solutions to the crisis.

⁴ See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-malaysia-idUSKBN23P1F7>

⁵ Since the pandemic 64% of people interviewed between March and May 2021 reported that migration has become more difficult during the pandemic. 27% also reported that COVID-19 has exacerbated already existing risks en route.

⁶ See <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/4mi-snapshot-protection-risks-facing-rohingya-refugees-en-route-to-malaysia/>

⁷ See <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/4mi-snapshot-protection-risks-faced-by-rohingya-and-bangladeshis-in-malaysia-amid-the-covid-19-crisis/> and <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/25/asia/rohingya-refugees-lost-at-sea-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>

Rohingya interviewed through 4Mi in Malaysia report that Thailand and Myanmar are the locations where protection violations were most likely to occur en route, with other less frequently cited locations reported in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Malaysia. In Thailand, Ranong, Mae Hong Son and Pattani were cited as risk hotspots, along with Yangon in Myanmar, see the Map below.



Who are perpetrating these violations?

Without legal migration channels available, Rohingya rely on the assistance of smugglers to cross borders and provide travel documents, to get to countries such as Malaysia.⁸ Consequently there is a sustained demand for smuggling activities with smugglers often adapting their routes, prices and business models in response to evolving border policies and law enforcement efforts that exist in the region.⁹

In absence of other options, the need for, and reliance on smugglers, has dire consequences for the protection of people on the move, including Rohingya, who are at heightened risk of falling prey to unscrupulous smugglers. Situations of aggravated smuggling and trafficking have been commonly reported along the routes to Malaysia, and have been tragically illuminated by discoveries of mass graves found in the jungle camps along the border of Myanmar and Thailand and the horrific stories which have emerged about the abuses occurring along maritime routes in the Andaman sea.¹⁰

Supporting this, the majority of Rohingya interviewed through 4Mi (66%) consider smugglers to be the main perpetrators of protection violations en route, with around half (56%) reporting that at some stage of their journey they had been intentionally misled by smugglers.

⁸ 94% of people interviewed through 4Mi reported using smugglers, 44% used more than one smuggler for different parts of their journey. Among those who used smugglers (n=134), half cited they were engaged to assist with transit across borders (51%) and a third to provide documents (36%), see <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/4mi-snapshot-protection-risks-facing-rohingya-refugees-en-route-to-malaysia/>

⁹ For more see MMC's key messages on and definition of human smuggling <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/smuggling-and-mixed-migration/>

¹⁰ See <https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/andaman-sea-crisis-5-years> and <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/01/thailand-mass-graves-rohingya-found-trafficking-camp>

"When they [smugglers] saw that they could demand more money, they changed and asked us for double amount of payment. You had to fulfil their demand, or they would kill you. It was very difficult for me, but I was so scared of being killed by smugglers".

26-year-old Rohingya man, interviewed in Johor, Malaysia

However, smugglers are not the only culprits with the abuse of refugees and migrants occurring in an environment of impunity, with the close involvement and collusion of state officials. With counter smuggling efforts focusing on prosecuting smugglers in isolation, the important role of state officials often remains insufficiently addressed.¹¹ Among Rohingya interviewed in Malaysia, military/police (30%) and border guards/immigration officers (29%) were the second and third most commonly cited perpetrators of protection risks en route to Malaysia.

More information is needed prior to migration

Despite the risks present along the routes to Malaysia, many do not know the extent of these risks prior to embarking on their journeys. 4Mi findings show that a significant number of Rohingya (61%) report they would not have started their journey knowing what they know now. When Rohingya in Malaysia were asked what information would have been most useful to know before departure, most noted more information about the conditions of the journey (57%), safety & security along the journey (56%), conditions in Malaysia (50%) and journey duration (49%).

"The journey was not like what the smuggler told me. You risked your lives the whole time and you can be dead anytime as well. I saw people dying of starvation."

19-year-old Rohingya woman, interviewed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Recommendations:

- Provide assistance to Rohingya refugees, especially women and children, during their journeys, with access to information, basic items such as food, water, & shelter, legal assistance, and psycho-social support.
- Engage authorities in major transit countries, including Thailand, Bangladesh and Indonesia, to uphold legal and institutional frameworks which make accountable the perpetrators of protection violations, particularly smugglers and state officials.
- Facilitate access to healthcare and psychological support for Rohingya women, men and children, especially those who are victims of sexual and physical violence.
- Advocate for the regional prioritization of legal pathways for Rohingya refugees, including labor migration and family reunification, as well as refugee resettlement.

About MMC:

The Mixed Migration Centre is leading source of independent and high-quality data, research and analysis on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understandings of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

In Asia MMC's 4Mi survey is currently conducted in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Afghanistan, with plans to expand to Turkey and Thailand in the coming year. For more information and access to our data please see 4Mi interactive or reach out to jennifer.vallentine@mixedmigration.org

¹¹ MMC's key messages on and definition of human smuggling <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/smuggling-and-mixed-migration/>

ADSP Publications

In June 2021, ADSP published a [briefing note](#) entitled 'Humanitarian priorities in post-coup Myanmar'.

On 1 February 2021, Myanmar's military, the Tatmadaw, deposed Myanmar's elected government. Alleging widespread fraud in the November 2020 elections, which the Tatmadaw's proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party lost to the incumbent National League for Democracy (NLD), Tatmadaw leaders announced a one-year state of emergency. Anti-coup protests and an organised Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) began the following day, spreading across the country in general strikes, public marches, online campaigns and nightly 'pot-banging'.

As dissent has grown, the Tatmadaw, police and affiliated armed groups have escalated attacks on protestors, strikers, NLD officials, civil society leaders, journalists and other civilians. As of 19 June, 870 people are estimated to have been killed, and 5,000 are estimated to be in detention. Myanmar's de facto authorities have restricted freedom of movement; blocked popular social media platforms; and limited mobile data, satellite and broadband internet connections. Condemnation of the coup and violence against civilians has been widespread. A growing number of countries have suspended aid to the de facto authorities or imposed targeted sanctions on Tatmadaw leaders, their family members and companies connected to the military.

Myanmar's economy is failing, and public services are in collapse. Tens of thousands have been displaced as ethnic armed organisations (EAOs)—many of which had been party to a ceasefire agreement prior to the coup—resume fighting the Tatmadaw. Humanitarian actors expect conditions to further deteriorate, threatening additional displacement, deepening economic and food insecurity, and causing widespread shortages of health care and other essential services.

This Briefing Note highlights three key priorities for responding to Myanmar's worsening humanitarian situation: (1) scaling up support to meet to the needs of internally displaced and refugee populations; (2) removing or circumventing barriers to humanitarian access and services and (3) redirecting development assistance to support humanitarian activities while monitoring the humanitarian impacts of international sanctions.



ADSP Briefings & Advocacy

Throughout Q2, ADSP has continued to advance its advocacy agenda related to Myanmar & Afghan displacement, with a series of private virtual briefings in both Geneva and Brussels. With the support and engagement of members IRC, NRC and DRC, the ADSP held two briefings on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan on 26 May (Brussels) and 29 June (Geneva), as well as participated in an additional Geneva-level briefing on the situation of the Rohingya on 2 July.

Each briefing explored a range of issues related to the two geographic contexts, and, provided a series of recommendations for how donor states and the international community could address pressing humanitarian concerns. Operating in a closed-door Chatham House format, member states were provided with ample time to ask questions of ADSP panellists, as well as discuss possible 'ways forward'.

On Afghan displacement, given the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in the country, there was significant interest from states to understand 'what's next', and to explore the impact that these changes will have on the Afghan community, as well as NGOs providing lifesaving assistance. Displacement from drought, the effects of the third wave of Covid-19, ongoing returns (Iran, Pakistan and Europe), as well as an uptick in violence and insecurity were the hot topics of discussion. It was noted that to address these complicated issues, the triple-nexus approach needs to be upheld, as well as a continued focus and support towards localization.

ADSP is committed to initiating and engaging in dialogue with member states and other stakeholders to continue our push towards improving the lives of affected persons. With durable solutions at the heart of what we do, we will continue to advance discussions at the local, national, regional, and international levels to ensure stronger and more sustainable outcomes for refugees and displaced persons.