



Photo: DRC Bangladesh

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 March 2023 newsletter from the ADSP, our first newsletter of the year. These newsletters are intended to spotlight some of the issues being tackled by the ADSP, and the programmatic work done by members to improve outcomes for persons affected by displacement. In addition, the newsletter provides updates on global or regional processes of which we are engaged.

Each newsletter contains articles related to ADSP focus countries, exploring interesting programme developments and regional migration trends. As we continue into 2023, we encourage members and external stakeholders alike to share ideas or

information that you would like to see addressed.

These newsletters are intended to improve information-sharing between ADSP member organisations, and to highlight the work of the platform more publicly. We hope you find the content useful and that it supports your work, or spurs future ideas and collaborations.

For any questions related to the ADSP, please don't hesitate to contact the ADSP Manager, Evan Jones at Evan.Jones@adsp.ngo.

A message from the ADSP Manager

Revitalised collective action towards protracted regional displacement

Evan Jones, Asia Displacement Solutions Platform Manager



ADSP is excited to be kicking off 2023 with a new [strategy](#), and a sharper vision for how we intend to work towards the realization of durable solutions for displaced persons from Myanmar and Afghanistan. This Strategy is a result of the coming together of our members, bringing their collective expertise and on-the-ground realities to shape our direction and areas of engagement. We see this as a unique opportunity to recalibrate and to ensure the work of ADSP remains focused to address the incredibly complex displacement contexts within which we work.

In late December 2022, in Afghanistan the de facto Taliban authorities announced a ban prohibiting women for working for international and local NGOs. This announcement comes at a time when the country is facing extreme humanitarian crisis, and women are more essential than ever in delivering services and humanitarian assistance to those in need. As such, despite the overwhelming needs across the country, many NGOs have been forced to fully or partially suspend activities. This challenging environment only further highlights the need for ADSP to continue working in a principled manner and to push for innovative solutions to ensure that all Afghans can receive the necessary support and access to solutions. By working closely with UN agencies, researchers, donors, civil society, and the broader humanitarian community, ADSP will continue striving for positive change.

On displacement from Myanmar, the situation for Rohingya and non-Rohingya alike remains extremely challenging. In 2022, more than 3,500 Rohingya attempted to cross the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. Of this number, nearly 350 are estimated to have gone missing at sea, feared dead. With the situation in the camps in Bangladesh only continuing to deteriorate, regional solutions are becoming more and more urgent to ensure that protection responses are predictable, equitable, and sustainable.

Whilst challenges persist across the region, opportunities also exist on the horizon. In December 2023, the second Global Refugee Forum will take place in Geneva, Switzerland. Whilst there are still several questions around how the event will look and the associated engagement modalities, it will be a marker for donors, NGOs and host states alike to take stock and consider how better to tackle displacement challenges. With Japan playing the role of Co-Convener – and as a nation with a long history of support and engagement with Afghanistan and Myanmar – we are very much looking forward to fruitful engagement and regional leadership.

In other news, in the coming months we will be saying farewell to ADSP's Regional Specialist, Adam Severson. Having been the backbone of ADSP since 2021, Adam will undoubtedly be sorely missed. His insights, deep understanding of the region, intellectual rigour and critical analysis will be hard to replace, but we wish him well as he moves onto the next chapter of his career. Thank you, Adam.

As always, I wish to thank members and stakeholders for your ongoing engagement and support. As ADSP continues to work towards the goals set forth in our strategy, we look forward to doing so in the spirit of partnership and collaboration.

Warmly,

Evan Jones
ADSP Manager



PRRiA project updates (January-March 2023)

'Protecting Rohingya Refugees in Asia' (PRRiA) is a two-year, ECHO-funded project that began in July 2021. Project partners include the Danish Refugee Council, Geutanyoe Foundation, HOST International, Jesuit Refugee Service – Indonesia, Mixed Migration Centre – Asia, and ADSP. ADSP leads the project's advocacy and coordination result, which fosters coordinated regional advocacy, promotes regional responses to Rohingya displacement, and supports national-level advocacy in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

On 5 January 2023, ADSP organized and hosted an [ad hoc meeting of the Regional Rohingya Advocacy Forum](#) about increasing irregular movement of Rohingya refugees overland and by sea from Bangladesh and Myanmar, and distressed boats in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. The meeting included representatives from UNHCR, IOM, donors, and national NGOs. Participants shared updates on boat movements and related advocacy efforts, and suggested joint messaging to encourage regional coordination and rescue and disembarkation of boats.

Following a soft launch in December 2022, ADSP and PRRiA project partners held a [virtual launch of *Refugee protection, human smuggling, and trafficking in South and Southeast Asia*](#) on 17 January 2023. The research report examines intersections between human trafficking and smuggling of refugees and gaps in national and regional protection law and policy in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The launch, moderated by the Mixed Migration Centre, began with keynote remarks from former Foreign Minister of Malaysia, H.E. Tan Sri Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar, followed by a presentation of the report's key findings and recommendations by Lilianne Fan, Co-founder and International Director of Geutanyoe Foundation.

The remainder of the launch consisted of a panel discussion with Dr. Sriprapha Petchamesree, former Representative of Thailand to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR); Mr Mohammadul Hassan, a refugee and Programme Coordinator at Geutanyoe Foundation – Malaysia; Mr Edmund Bon, former Representative of Malaysia to AICHR; and H.E. Yuyun Wahyuningrum, current Representative of Indonesia to AICHR.

Drawing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from *Refugee protection, human smuggling, and trafficking in South and Southeast Asia*, ADSP drafted a [submission](#) on behalf of PRRiA partners to the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The submission was sent on 23 February 2023 and will contribute to a report to the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council in June 2023.

On 7 February 2023, ADSP facilitated the second quarterly, hybrid meeting of the [Regional Rohingya Advocacy Forum](#) co-organized with IOM and UNHCR, and kindly hosted by at IOM-Thailand's offices in Bangkok. The meeting addressed irregular movement of refugees overland and by sea, advocacy around the upcoming 8th Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process, and planning for regional protection initiatives at the December 2023 Global Refugee Forum. The next meeting of the Forum is planned for May 2023.

On 2 March 2023, IOM, UNHCR, and ADSP co-hosted a [webinar on countering misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech](#) (MDH) directed at Rohingya communities in South and Southeast Asia. Moderated by ADSP, the webinar opened with a presentation of key findings from a 2021 IOM study on negative narratives toward Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and Malaysia, and recent trends. Three panels followed. The first panel included presentations from Article-19 and the UN Office on Genocide Prevention about international legal and policy frameworks for addressing MDH, not least the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. The second panel explored local initiatives to counter MDH, with presentations from Build Up and the Rohingya Project, a community-based organization in Malaysia. And the third panel surveyed the collection and analysis of data on MDH, the development of strategies and activities to counter MDH, and examples from the region. UNHCR and the Association for Progressive Communications were presenters.

The webinar is intended to be the first of a series of events to build the capacity of national NGOs working with Rohingya communities in the region, and to better coordinate national and regional-level advocacy to counter MDH toward migrants and refugees. If you are interested in participating in future events, please email adam.severson@adsp.ngo.

Mentorship support for Rohingya refugee community-based organisations in Malaysia for building research and advocacy capacity

PRRiA project partners have continued to provide mentorship support to Rohingya refugee-led community-based organisation in Malaysia. As part of this activity Rohingya Society in Malaysia (RSM), and Rohingya Women Development Network (RWDN), are being supported with research and advocacy capacity building.

Following a training on research and advocacy in July 2022, the CBOs have gone on to develop their own research and advocacy project entitled *Potential Contribution of Rohingya Communities in Malaysian Economy*. The CBOs collected data throughout December 2022 and conducted data analysis and report writing in January 2023, with support from ADSP and MMC. Based on the findings of the research, an "Advocacy Planning Workshop" was organised on 14-15 January 2023 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The workshop was held in a hybrid manner where facilitators joined both in-person and online. Representatives of relevant PRRiA partners joined the workshop along with the members of the CBOs. The CBOs drafted an advocacy plan in the workshop for their advocacy activities for January-June 2023.

The CBO research report will be finalised in early April 2023 and will be disseminated in the second quarter of the year. A closed-door briefing will also be organised for the members of All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia and Malaysian Advisory Group on Myanmar, as well as relevant government stakeholders.

PRRiA PARTNERS:



PROJECT DONOR:



European Union

Supporting Humanitarian and Refugee Protection (SHARP) project updates (January-March 2023)

ADSP, in partnership with the International Rescue Committee and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), also remains engaged in supporting national and regional level advocacy initiatives through a one-year grant from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). With a focus on research, advocacy, and capacity-strengthening initiatives for non-Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, the project is centered around India, Malaysia, and Thailand. Some of the notable achievements and engagements over the past three months include:

Capacity building for refugee-led organisations to strengthen national and regional advocacy

India:

A series of capacity building sessions were planned in India focusing on providing information on UNHCR procedure and on legal representation by NGOs. The needs of the community and further sessions on Indian laws were also discussed. Thus far three sessions have been completed in Mizoram and Manipur. The last session is planned for June 2023 which will build upon the foundational sessions and will provide space to support participants with the development of more refined messaging and advocacy approaches.

Malaysia:

A four-day training from 13–16 February was held in Kuala Lumpur attended by 18 participants (5 female; 13 male) from nine RLOs representing Myanmarese refugees (non-Rohingya). The training topics were curated in accordance with the request and skills required to carry out advocacy activities by RLOs. It covered introduction to advocacy, various types of advocacies, situational analysis, designing of advocacy plan and learning from other advocacy stakeholders. The training aspired to strengthen the capacity of RLOs on advocacy planning and implementation; empower RLOs to execute impactful advocacy activities; and support the designing of an advocacy plan for RLOs.

A participant-centered learning approach was used to encourage RLOs to better understand their capacity through identification of existing strengths, limitations and need for change. Participants were given opportunities to implement their learning through group activities. Pre and post-tests were conducted to assess the knowledge gained from this training. It was a successful training where participants demonstrated a 100% knowledge-gain. At the end of the training, participants committed to developing an advocacy action plan to champion the 'One-voice' approach considering the advocacy asks of the community are similar regardless of the different ethnic group. The agreed change was coined in an advocacy plan; formation of an advocacy working group and; proposal to develop advocacy tools.



ADSP Publications & Media

ADSP Advocacy Toolkit



The ADSP, in partnership with the Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies (CAPRS) and the Danish Refugee Council Diaspora Programme developed an Advocacy Toolkit for Diaspora Organisations in January 2023.

Diaspora communities, organisations, and individuals are increasingly vocal and influential, advocating for social, economic, and political change in their country of origin, the country of residence and in the international sphere. This toolkit provides practical guidance for diaspora organisations in their advocacy work.

Section 1 begins with a brief introduction by providing the definition of advocacy and highlighting its relevance to the diaspora. The section also presents an overview of the different approaches to advocacy and key concepts to consider before engaging in advocacy work.

Section 2 outlines the main steps in developing an advocacy strategy, consisting of prioritising advocacy issues, analysing the external context, setting the theory of change, goal, objectives and indicators, defining the target audience, developing the core message, selecting the right approach and planning monitoring, evaluation and learning. The section also provides examples of tools with step-by-step descriptions and templates to guide diaspora actors in the multi-stage process of developing an advocacy strategy.

Section 3 provides examples of methods that can be used at different levels of advocacy, including local, national, and transnational levels. The section presents a detailed description of selected methods that can be used to conduct advocacy with specific focus on their relevance for diaspora communities. The selected methods elaborated in the section are: making use of inside track, making use of international mechanisms, using (social) media and promoting/protesting countries of origin.

Section 4 discusses the potential risks that may occur throughout the project cycle of an advocacy campaign with a specific focus on the risks of diaspora advocacy in fragile contexts. The section also offers tools and strategies to navigate these challenges and minimise risks.

Section 5 addresses the often-overlooked aspect of emotions in advocacy work and presents some tools and guidance focussing on the role of self- and collective care.

Section 6 offers conclusions and recommendations to diaspora actors and organisations in their advocacy.

The toolkit can be found [here](#).

Op-Ed: The Asia-Pacific's Next Refugee Crisis Is Coming – Ready or Not

The Bali Process still holds promise for principled regional responses to the movement of refugees and migrants.



Last year marked 20 years since the creation of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime. Commendable for its longevity, serious-minded policy dialogue, and capacity building, the Bali Process' potential as a platform for regional cooperation on irregular movement remains unrealized. Distressed boats of Rohingya refugees left to drift in the Andaman Sea and Indian Ocean in the final two months of 2022 were another tragic reminder of this.

The Bali Process Ministerial Conference on February 9-10 in Adelaide, Australia – the first Ministerial Conference since 2018 – is a critical opportunity to recommit to regional cooperation and reenergize response mechanisms developed after the 2015 Andaman Sea Crisis, in which an estimated 8,000 people were abandoned at sea by smugglers.

Persistent conflict and instability in Myanmar, coupled with dire conditions in refugee camps in Bangladesh, mean more people are certain to undertake dangerous journeys in search of safety and opportunity elsewhere. The region must be ready. The Bali Process can and should become a platform for coordinating humane and legal responses to the irregular movement of refugees and migrants.

The groundwork has been laid. The 2016 Bali Declaration, agreed upon by Bali Process members at the Sixth Ministerial Conference, is a call for wide-ranging collective action to respond to irregular movement. Set against the backdrop of deadly failures during the Andaman Sea Crisis, and recognizing “the growing scale and complexity of irregular migration challenges,” the Bali Declaration “underline[s] that the transnational nature of irregular migration requires a comprehensive regional approach, based on principles of burden sharing and collective responsibility” – and underpinned by international legal obligations.

An internal review of the Bali Process' response to the Andaman Sea Crisis followed in late 2016, echoing the Bali Declaration's appeal for regional cooperation. The review noted coordination shortcomings, but struck an optimistic tone about the potential of a new Consultation Mechanism, another outcome of the Sixth Ministerial Conference, and a to-be-formed Task Force on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP). The review observed that there was “a window of opportunity...to ensure that similar situations do not happen again.”

Unfortunately, that window was largely missed. As irregular maritime movement dropped off after 2015 and international scrutiny faded, momentum behind the Bali Declaration and internal review eased. Bali Process co-chairs Indonesia and Australia deployed the Consultation Mechanism in 2017 following the movement of hundreds of thousands of displaced Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine State into Bangladesh, but it fell far short of yielding a meaningful regional response.

The TFPP has been more active, providing a forum for information sharing and capacity building, including table-top exercises to prepare regional officials to respond to large-scale irregular movements of refugees and migrants. Yet, it too has not generated more coordinated regional responses to predictable movements and foreseeable emergencies.

This was on display in November and December 2022. Notwithstanding fanfare around its 20-year anniversary and contemporaneous meetings of its members – including the 16th Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting on December 6 – the Bali Process was seemingly absent in the response to distressed boats in the Indian Ocean

and Andaman Sea. The reactions of regional governments were instead slow and disjointed. Communication between relevant officials was poor and coordination minimal. One boat carrying around 180 people is believed to have sunk, killing everyone onboard.

The region's next maritime emergency is not a question of if, but when. In 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) documented more than 3,500 Rohingya refugees attempting to cross the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea by boat. Although far below the number of attempted crossings of a decade ago, last year's figure is the highest on record since 2015. In the absence of regularized migration pathways, many will continue to seek out smugglers to take them on dangerous journeys by sea and overland, opening them to risks of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

Without a more comprehensive regional response, regional governments are unlikely to move away from reflexive approaches to irregular movement dominated by border management and national security. No country wants to unilaterally assume responsibility for migrants and refugees arriving by irregular means, lest they risk disproportionately shouldering that responsibility long term.

The Bali Process holds the potential for changing the status quo. With new direction, it could be well-suited for exploring regional coordination that addresses intersecting issues of migration, security, smuggling, human trafficking, humanitarianism, and human rights.

To this end, civil society actors and U.N. agencies have developed concrete recommendations for Bali Process reform. In July 2022, the secretariat of the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM), a Track 1.5 dialogue created in the midst of the Andaman Sea Crisis, published Future Ready, a report detailing eight opportunities for making the Bali Process more effective, not least as a platform for regional cooperation in response to irregular movement. In November 2022, UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – all organizational members of the Bali Process – released a joint paper with six recommendations, including ways of more effectively using the Consultation Mechanism and TFPP to respond to boat movements. More recently, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), issued a statement calling on Bali Process members to reinvigorate these mechanisms and assume collective responsibility to rescue and protect refugees and migrants stranded at sea.

Beyond preventing further loss of life – a sufficient end in itself – there are other incentives for Bali Process co-chairs to heed calls for reform now and encourage Bali Process members to recommit to regional cooperation. For an Australian administration seeking to strengthen relationships with regional governments, re-energizing the Bali Process to support countries affected by irregular movement could build goodwill and dispel perceptions that Australia's interest in the Bali Process is dominated by self-interest, rather than solidarity and responsibility sharing.

And as Indonesia leads ASEAN in 2023 and confronts an enduring political crisis in Myanmar and stagnation of the bloc's Five-Point Consensus, the Bali Process presents opportunities for regional action that may continue to elude a divided ASEAN. Short of addressing root causes within Myanmar, the Bali Process could lead the development of coordinated responses to forced displacement from Myanmar that marshal resources from Bali Process members and more fairly distribute responsibility for rescuing or receiving refugees and ensuring their access to protection. In its dual roles as Bali Process co-chair and ASEAN chair, Indonesia is better-positioned to link up Bali Process mechanisms and relevant ASEAN structures – a possibility Indonesia outlined at the December 6 Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting.

The Ministerial Conference this week is an opportunity to work toward a better Bali Process able to meet the challenges of irregular movement. It should not be missed.

This article was originally published in The Diplomat on 7 February 2023.

Displaced from Myanmar: Can't Go Back and Can't Go Forward



Displacement from Myanmar is not a new phenomenon, and in fact, the country maintains the unenviable title of being one of the world's largest producers of refugees. In the years since independence from British colonial rule, hundreds of thousands of people have fled to neighboring countries in search of safety from state persecution, inter-ethnic conflicts, religious oppression, and widespread violence. As of September 2022, there is an estimated 1,055,000 refugees from Myanmar scattered across the region – 200,000 of them non-Rohingya from Myanmar.

Despite the sizeable numbers of refugees from Myanmar within Asia, the overall protection environment remains flimsy. Across India, Malaysia, and Thailand, international treaty ratification related to refugees is absent, domestic legal protection frameworks are weak, and access to healthcare, education, livelihoods, and other basic services is unavailable or ad hoc at best. Refugees are stuck in positions where they cannot return home, most cannot access resettlement countries, and cannot thrive where they are. In Malaysia, the threat of arrest, detention and deportation for Myanmar nationals looms large.

Full article as originally published in the Diplomat: [Click Here](#)

Are We Forgetting the Myanmar Crisis?



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Full article as originally published in the Bangkok Post: [Click Here](#)

ADSP Member Publications

NRC's Emergency Response to the Fire in Cox's Bazar



After a massive fire broke out in a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh on 5 March 2023, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) responded with emergency support providing water, sanitation, shelter, education and legal aid. The fire affected 15,926 persons, displacing 5,274 Rohingya and damaging 2,805 shelters. In response to the fire incident, NRC scaled up its humanitarian operation and provided support to nearly 15,000 individuals in the area. The situation report published by NRC documenting NRC's emergency response and coordination work in response to the fire can be found [here](#).

ADSP 2023-2025 Strategy



The ADSP 2023-2025 Strategy was finalized and endorsed by the ADSP Steering Committee in January 2023, and aims to strengthen and elevate ADSP's ability to deliver impact in the region. The development of a Theory of Change and three-year strategy for ADSP commenced in April 2022, and was further clarified through a Strategy Development workshop held in Dubai, UAE in November 2022. The strategy was developed to ensure clearer articulation of ADSP's value-add, and ADSP's ability to support its member agencies and, most importantly, displaced communities in the region.

ADSP is a small, focused platform, working where the collective input of member organisations can add specific value. ADSP's strategy for 2023-2025 is deliberately contained, reflected in its overall logic the impact the Platform intends to make through coherent, evidence-based actions. For this reason, ADSP work streams for the Afghanistan and Myanmar displacement crises differ in terms of their direction, scope and stakeholder approach. This reflects notable differences between these situations, the operating environment, political considerations and engagement of decision makers in finding solutions. ADSP's work on both streams endeavours to be relevant, accessible, and to build on – rather than duplicate – processes and systems already in place.