



Photo: Oriane Zerah for Samuel Hall 2023

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 December 2023 newsletter from the ADSP, our fourth and final 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 programme developments and regional migration trends. As we move into 2024, 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, Jerome Elie at jerome.Elie@adsp.ngo.

A message from the ADSP Manager

Closing the year through embracing and working through change

The last quarter of the year has been a hub of activity for ADSP on the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. ADSP has released a series of reports and briefing notes, supported local civil initiatives and advocated for strengthened refugee protection responses as it relates to Afghan and Myanmar displacement. Our work has continued to place affected communities at the heart of what we do, and pushed for more nuanced and protection-centred responses in the countries within which our members work.

At the national level, ADSP has continued to accelerate dialogue around education and refugee mental health in Malaysia, as well as propelling forward the discourse around Alternatives to Detention in Malaysia and Thailand. We continued to work in partnership and through local partners – ensuring that the most relevant stakeholders are at the table.

Regionally, ADSP has sustained our work with stakeholders and interlocutors in South, Central and Southeast Asia. This includes the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), national civil society, policy think tanks, regional platforms and Member States. This has supported collective engagement in the lead up to the High-Level Rohingya Event, Global Refugee Forum, regional processes and other domestic opportunities.

On the Afghanistan axis, ADSP has continued working closely with UNHCR, ICVA, ADSP members and national civil society across the sub-region to strengthen NGO engagement in the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. A [joint ADSP-ICVA statement](#) was delivered during the GRF High-Level Event on the SSAR Support Platform: The Afghanistan Situation, emphasising principled approaches to durable solutions and the role NGOs can play in engaging with the Support Platform. Further details on this are covered later in our newsletter.

ADSP's knowledge and learning partnership with Samuel Hall has continued to progress, with a number of foundational policy papers and briefing notes delivered in recent months in the lead up to the GRF. These have been shared with member states privately, and are intended to act as a catalyst for additional dialogue and discussion regarding durable solutions for displaced Afghans.

As 2023 is coming to a close, ADSP is also transitioning to myself as the new Manager. I bring to ADSP a wide range of experience in academia, UN Agencies and with civil society organisations. Most of my work has focused on policies, practices and advocacy that promote protection and durable solutions for displaced populations, and is therefore very relevant to the work of ADSP. I would like to convey my sincere thanks to Evan Jones who has led the ADSP so strategically and enthusiastically over the past 3.5 years. It has been a pleasure to watch ADSP mature, and I feel very fortunate to inherit such a strong organisation.

On behalf of the ADSP Team, I wish to convey our best wishes for 2024. In times of increasing challenges and depressing trends, our motivation to continue working towards durable solutions will remain strong. Our wish for the new year is to build on constructive initiatives and goodwill in the region to strengthen the resilience of displaced communities and support their aspirations for solutions.

As always, we wish to thank all members and stakeholders for your ongoing engagement and support.

Warm regards,

Dr. Jerome Elie
ADSP Manager



Photo: DRC Bangladesh // 2022

PRiA project updates (October - December 2023)

'Protecting Refugees in Asia' (PRiA) is an ECHO-funded project that began in July 2021 that entered its second phase in July 2023. Current project partners include the Danish Refugee Council, HOST International Malaysia, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) – Indonesia, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) – India, Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) – Asia, and the 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.

In the lead-up to the Global Refugee Forum, ADSP continued to lead and support collective engagement by civil society around the Rohingya response, including the coordination of interventions from civil society at the 17 October 2023 [High-Level Meeting on Rohingya Refugees](#). At the High-Level Meeting Gerry Garvey, DRC Executive Director Asia & Europe and Adam Combs, NRC Head of the Asia region, attended as representatives of ADSP and delivered interventions from the floor calling for more comprehensive and coordinated regional approaches to Rohingya irregular maritime movement and for a re-commitment to increased protection and solutions for Rohingya refugees.

On October 11, ADSP co-organised and delivered with NRC a virtual briefing for Brussels stakeholders on '*Rethinking Solutions to Rohingya Displacement*'. In the virtual briefing, ADSP and NRC discussed the potential implementation of a Rohingya support platform to advance regional approaches towards solutions, opportunities to expand access to third country solutions for Rohingya, and an update on the Bangladesh-Myanmar proposed repatriation pilot.

On October 29, ADSP published [Regional Solutions for Rohingya Refugees](#), a briefing note on the regional implications of the Rohingya humanitarian crisis. In the briefing note, ADSP spotlights the regional implications of the Rohingya humanitarian crisis and analyses how meaningful regional action in response to protracted Rohingya displacement can be mobilised to increase access to durable solutions.

On 30 November, ADSP published an op-ed in The Jakarta Post titled '[Bali Process must be fulfilled to protect Rohingya refugees.](#)' The op-ed calls for a reinvigoration of the Bali Process to strengthen regional coordination on irregular migration to better protect Rohingya refugees. The op-ed provides specific recommendations for how the Consultation Mechanism and the Bali Process Task Force for Planning and Preparedness can be mobilised to implement a proactive and principled regional response and also calls for Bali Process members to make commitments towards multi-stakeholder Global Refugee Forum pledges on the Rohingya, combatting trafficking, and protection at sea.

As part of its advocacy partnership with ADSP, the International Detention Coalition (IDC) continued to advance advocacy efforts towards implementing Alternatives to Detention (ATD) in Thailand and Malaysia. In Malaysia, IDC continues to lead and coordinate the End Detention Networks. In November, IDC developed briefing notes for the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM) on Malaysia's international commitments to end immigration detention of children as well as on the 'Baitul Mahabbah' detention centre for migrant children. In Thailand, IDC has been leading initiatives to increase protection for refugees under the National Screening Mechanism (NSM) and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Determination of Measures and Approaches Alternatives to Detention of Children in Immigration Detention Centres (MOU-ATD).

On 6 December 2023, ADSP facilitated the fourth quarterly hybrid meeting of the Regional Rohingya Advocacy Forum co-organised with IOM and UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. The meeting primarily addressed the recent escalation of irregular Rohingya maritime movement into Indonesia, and included discussions of regional advocacy targets and messaging, the role of the Bali Process, as well a discussion of the various relevant multistakeholder pledges developed for the Global Refugee Forum. The next meeting of the forum is planned for March 2024.



On 11 December 2023, ADSP participated as a panellist on a panel discussion titled '*Strengthening Regional Responses to the Rohingya Situation*' that was organised by Coast Foundation, CCNF, and NGO Platform Cox's Bazar as part of the Regional Humanitarian Partnerships Week. In the panel event, ADSP discussed how to expand protection for the Rohingya and strengthen regional coordination, with a focus on the role of the Bali Process in responding to irregular maritime Rohingya movement.

On 15 December 2023, ADSP and PRiA project partners published a [statement](#) calling for a comprehensive and coordinated regional response to address the recent escalation of irregular maritime movement by Rohingya to Indonesia.



Supporting Humanitarian and Refugee Protection (SHARP) project updates (October-December 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 grant from 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:

Malaysia

Excellence and Leadership Workshop for Refugee Leaders

From 21-23 October 2023, SHARP Asia conducted the second phase of our advocacy capacity-building training for refugee leaders in Kuala Lumpur. Following a 'one-refugee' approach, leaders from a range of refugee communities were invited to participate, in addition to the Burmese refugee community. The inclusion of other refugee leaders was to cultivate learning exchange and networking beyond the same refugee group. 18 refugee leaders, including 5 females and 13 males, participated in this training. The training focused on empowerment and excellence, emphasising leadership, fundraising, and digital skills training. The training aimed to provide knowledge, skills, and tools needed to excel in the critical fundraising field within the context of refugee support and community development. The leaders also had an opportunity to explore leadership qualities, effective communication techniques, and the fundamentals of successful fundraising. Additionally, there were practical sessions on AI tools and digital platforms, enabling attendees to harness technology for refugee-led organisations' fundraising efforts. The training also included analysis of case studies, learning from inspirational speakers, and refining presentation and elevator pitch skills.

Policy Brief Launch: Education for Refugee and Stateless Children in Malaysia



ADSP jointly hosted the launch of the [*"Policy Brief on the Right to Education of Refugee and Stateless Children"*](#) with the Children's Commissioner Office of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), supported by the European Union Civil Protection Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). The policy brief emerged from a 10 May 2023 Roundtable Discussion, which brought together a spectrum of perspectives and recommendations from various government stakeholders. At the launch, SUHAKAM presented the recommendations and innovative resolutions, urging the Malaysian government to take steps towards ensuring a more secure and qualitatively enriched education for children representing diverse backgrounds. The launch was officiated by the Minister of Education, YB Puan Fadhlina Sidek, through her congratulatory message, and the MADANI Government's effort and commitment to realising the right to receive education for all children in Malaysia with a multi-pronged approach. The launch was attended by 80 participants from government, civil society organisations and refugee-led organisations. The event served as a pivotal moment in fostering collaboration and dialogue to advance the cause of

education for stateless and refugee children in Malaysia.

Regional Dissemination:

1. *Regional Webinar on Refugee Mental Health in Malaysia - Round Table Discussion: Findings & Policy Brief on Education for Refugee and Stateless Children in Malaysia*

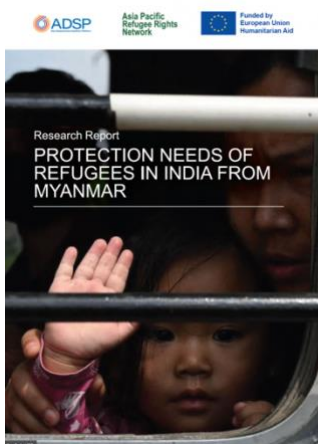
In November 2023, the ADSP and APRRN – under the auspices of the SHARP Asia project – co-hosted a dialogue session on the mental health of refugees and access to education for refugee children in Southeast Asia. Attended by more than 50 regional stakeholders, the session underscored the critical importance of addressing mental health among refugees and asylum seekers, and access to education through collaborative, culturally sensitive, and holistic approaches. It called for action from all stakeholders, emphasising the need for community involvement, innovative strategies, and systemic advocacy to create a supportive and inclusive environment for mental health care and access to education. The recommendations resulting from the consultation and dialogue are intended for regional stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and other organisations involved in refugee assistance, specifically to ensure that refugees and other people on the move have unhindered access to quality mental health services and education. Additionally, the recommendations aim to create a more equitable and inclusive society for refugees and asylum seekers in Southeast Asia.

2. *Regional Humanitarian Partnership Week - Asia Pacific 2023: Panel Session on Enhancing Humanitarian Advocacy Through Strategic Partnerships with CSOs and RLOs*

In December 2023, ADSP presented the SHARP Project's initiatives in fostering partnerships with refugee-led organisations in advocating for refugee needs and protection during the Regional Humanitarian Partnership Week - Asia Pacific 2023. The emphasis was placed on fostering an environment with additional resources where refugees can take the lead in championing their rights and shaping the discourse around their needs and protection. The panel session underscored the diverse roles and valuable contributions of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Refugee-Led Organisations (RLOs) in humanitarian action. The primary objective of the panel session was to highlight actionable approaches that guarantee cohesive and culturally sensitive humanitarian advocacy strategies. This presentation accentuated the crucial need for inclusivity and the creation of pathways that empower refugee leaders to assume leadership roles in advocating for their rights and needs.

India

Research Report Dissemination: "Protection Needs of Refugees in India from Myanmar India"



In November 2023, a closed-door dissemination event was held in New Delhi to present the research findings titled "[Protection Needs of Refugees in India from Myanmar](#)." Various CSOs, RLOs, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), representatives from UNHCR India, and embassy officials attended the session.

A key highlight from the discussion was the recognition that the support provided by Mizoram's state government presented a unique opportunity. Participants agreed that it could serve as a model for fervent advocacy by CSOs to extend similar support to refugees in other states, such as Manipur. Given the ongoing violence in Manipur, there was consensus that the study's recommendations might require nuanced adjustments, yet their overarching relevance remained steadfast. The consensus was that a pragmatic shift in advocacy strategies, particularly in advocating for policy changes, is essential.

Afghan Displacement Workstream

ADSP-ICVA Engagement at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF)



Present at the GRF, on 13 December, ADSP's Project Coordinator, Huzan Waqar, delivered an ADSP-ICVA statement at the session on the Support Platform for the Afghanistan Situation. Given the ongoing conditions, the joint statement reminded the audience that the UNHCR non-return advisory is still in effect and *non-refoulement* remains central to the refugee regime and to supporting welcoming traditions through responsibility-sharing. It also stressed that solutions must engage with refugees' own agency and aspirations.

ADSP and ICVA also highlighted the value-add that NGOs & civil society can bring to a Support Platform anchored in the Global Compact on Refugees' multi-stakeholder and partnership approach and repeated both organisations' readiness to continue supporting the process.

ADSP continues to engage closely through knowledge and learning partnership with Samuel Hall



Over the past three months, ADSP has worked closely with colleagues from Samuel Hall, as well as ADSP members in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan for the delivery of our first suite of deliverables (see publications below). Over the next three months, Samuel Hall will continue to work closely with ADSP members and

staff to deliver upon a range of sub-regional briefing notes and commentaries to supplement and strengthen our engagement with the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees.

The Global Refugee Forum



ADSP was present at the second Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva, Switzerland (12-15 December 2023). Organised every four years, the GRF is the world's largest gathering dedicated to refugee issues and the main responsibility-sharing arrangement created by the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees. As such, it represents a critical mechanism to regularly galvanise commitments and support accountability. This year's Forum was attended by over 4,200 participants from government delegations, NGOs, the private sector, academia and other multistakeholder groups, including 300 refugees. Preliminary assessments indicate that the GRF resulted in over 1,600 financial, material, technical, policy pledges, hopefully bringing additional commitments to refugee responses.

At the GRF, ADSP was represented by its Manager, Jerome Elie and ADSP's Project Coordinator, Huzan Waqar. Their engagement aimed to follow, analyse and influence solutions-oriented debates related to refugee situations in Asia and globally. Specific attention was given to the High-Level Events dedicated to the Rohingya Situation and the SSAR Support Platform, contributing directly through a joint ADSP-ICVA statement on the Afghanistan Situation. ADSP also followed the Plenary interventions and thematic sessions on *inter alia* whole-of-society approaches, refugee leadership and locally led actions, leveraging the HDP Nexus for protection and solutions, efforts to end Statelessness, third country solutions including labor mobility schemes, as well as sessions on climate change and displacement in Asia, health, MHPSS and education for refugees. Huzan made a specific contribution during the advanced day Education Campus' side-event on 'Promoting learning through Safety, wellbeing, and Play', showcasing recommendations from a consultation recently held in Malaysia, highlighting the need for refugee-led initiatives in this context.

Overall, while few sessions included interventions and examples from the region, ADSP staff came back with stimulating ideas and perspectives that will inform work on solutions in Asia for the coming years. ADSP also benefited from interactions and exchanges with a variety of actors at the Forum, strengthening ties and exchanging perspectives with fellow NGOs (including ADSP members), UNHCR, other international organisations and Member States. ADSP will remain engaged in the accountability and follow-up process at regional and global level, leveraging the GRF results to promote inclusive solutions for displacement related to the Afghan and Myanmar situations.

ADSP Publications

NGO Statement on Protection at UNHCR 74th Executive Committee Meeting



In October 2023, ADSP Project Manager for the SHARP-Asia project Malini Sivapragasam delivered the NGO Statement for Protection at the UNHCR 74th Executive Committee Meeting on behalf of the global NGO community. The oral statement was the result of wide consultation and engagement with the NGO community through the support of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

The Full Oral Statement can be found [here](#) and the Full Written Statement can be found [here](#).

ADSP Briefing Note: Deported to what? Afghans in Pakistan



On 26 September 2023, the Ministry of the Interior of the Government of Pakistan issued the *Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan*. According to the proposed plan, it is intended to “regulate the foreigners in Pakistan and to ensure that the foreigners staying illegally or overstaying their visa validity are deported back to their parent countries.”

This Plan outlines the proposed return / deportation procedures for non-citizens who reside in Pakistan and do not hold a valid visa. It is estimated that nearly 1.7 million Afghans are likely to be affected by the decision which will come into effect on 1 November 2023. The full Briefing Note can be found [here](#).

ADSP Briefing Note: Regional Solutions for Rohingya Refugees

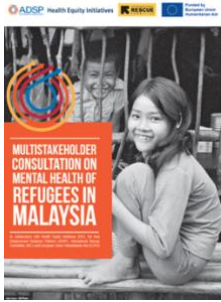


The Rohingya, the world’s largest stateless population, have experienced decades of persecution, systematic discrimination, and targeted violence by successive Myanmar authorities. This humanitarian crisis has resulted in the mass displacement of over 1.6 million Rohingya throughout the wider Asia region, including 952,300 in Bangladesh, 106,100 in Malaysia, 21,600 in India, and smaller groups in Indonesia and Thailand. There are 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Rakhine state in Myanmar, of which an estimated 140,000 live in camps. The protracted displacement of the Rohingya has a significant transnational dimension, as policy responses by host governments directly affect one another, and differing policy approaches have unintended consequences for other states.

International refugee policies and institutions, however, have not been effectively utilised to respond to the Rohingya crisis in the Asia region, as the combination of conflicting and diverging priorities among regional host governments, domestic political constraints, and insufficient political will have rendered sustained coordination and collective action elusive. As a result, responses to the Rohingya have been ad hoc and inconsistent, with negative consequences for regional stability and poor protection outcomes for Rohingya refugee populations.

This briefing note spotlights the regional implications of the Rohingya humanitarian crisis and analyses how meaningful regional action in response to protracted Rohingya displacement can be mobilised to increase access to durable solutions. The full briefing note can be found [here](#).

ADSP Workshop Report: Multistakeholder Consultation on Mental Health of Refugees in Malaysia

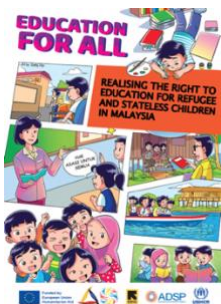


According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of May 2023, Malaysia hosted an urban refugee population of approximately 181,300, encompassing both registered refugees and asylum seekers. Often, due to the harsh conditions they face, refugees' mental health comes under stress. Numerous studies have highlighted the psychosocial challenges refugees and asylum seekers face during their migration, leading to an elevated risk of mental health issues, such as psychosis, suicidal tendencies, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. Particularly, refugee children are at a heightened risk, necessitating early intervention for their mental well-being.

It is within this context that a multistakeholder consultation was held in Kuala Lumpur in May 2023. Organised by Health Equity Initiatives (HEI), in collaboration with ADSP and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and supported by ECHO, the event brought together refugee communities, NGOs, academics, and other stakeholders. This meeting aimed to deepen understanding, foster discussions, identify challenges, and explore solutions related to refugee mental health in Malaysia. Additionally, it sought to fortify networks and share best practices.

The consultation featured two panel discussions on healthcare access barriers and refugee child mental health. The second part of the consultation focused on breakout groups, discussing these topics alongside solutions for refugees with mental health challenges. These dialogues emphasised active refugee community participation, resource and capacity exploration, and potential outcomes of successful strategy implementation. The full consultation report can be found [here](#).

ADSP Policy Brief: Realising the Right to Education for Refugee and Stateless Children in Malaysia



Education transforms lives, paving the way to better futures and livelihood opportunities. In times of crisis, including long-term displacement, education can play a life-saving and life-sustaining role. Unfortunately, in Malaysia, refugee and stateless children remain excluded from formal education in public schools.

This policy brief is the result of a roundtable discussion organised by the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR Malaysia), IRC and the ADSP, funded by the European Union Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) on Realising the Right to Education for Refugee and Stateless Children in Kuala Lumpur, on 10 May 2023. Recognising education as a fundamental right, the policy brief explores the gaps and challenges to educational access among refugee and stateless children in Malaysia. Some of these challenges include financial barriers, lack of documentation, insufficient infrastructure, legal barriers and parental involvement. This brief incorporates the main points that were discussed during the roundtable discussion, as well as secondary research.

This brief ultimately recommends a multi-dimensional approach encompassing policy reforms, resource mobilisation, capacity building, and stakeholder collaboration. The full brief (ENGLISH) and the Executive Summary can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

ADSP Study: Protection Needs of Refugees in India from Myanmar



In the aftermath of the military takeover on 1 February 2021, Myanmar has experienced dramatic upheaval. Escalating violence and an ongoing crackdown by military forces on actual or perceived opponents have motivated tens of thousands of people from Myanmar to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. India has become a primary destination. As of 31 July 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) reported that more than 55,000 refugees from Myanmar had entered India since 1 February 2021. The majority are sheltering in the Northeast, with more than 40,000 refugees estimated in Mizoram state and nearly 8,500 in Manipur state. Between 1 February 2021 and 1 July 2023, more than 5,200 individuals from Myanmar approached UNHCR in Delhi for registration.

This report presents the findings of a study examining the profiles, experiences, needs, and resilience of refugees from Myanmar in Manipur, Mizoram, and Delhi. Grounded in desk research and field interviews with refugees, advocates, and services providers, the study investigated factors driving the movement of people from Myanmar into India—particularly through the states of Manipur and Mizoram—and the challenges they face there. The findings confirm that threats to life due to actual or perceived political affiliation and widespread violence, coupled with accessibility and cross border kinship ties, have been key motivations for movement to India. The full report can be found [here](#).

ADSP Briefing Note – Forced to migrate: Afghan women waiting for protection in Iran and Pakistan



Over the past 40 years, Afghanistan has gone through multiple phases of migration, with Pakistan and Iran being the primary destination for millions of Afghan refugees and other migrants. Initially, Iran and Pakistan both opened their borders to their neighbours and Muslim brothers and sisters. Afghans have crossed and continue to cross these two borders, despite tightening mobility rights (with parts of the territory in Iran and Pakistan forbidden to Afghans), loss of the right to work (Afghans can only work in certain sectors), large-scale returns (from the region and abroad following the 2001 American intervention), or the decline of asylum opportunities and erosion of refugee rights.

August 2021 marked a new phase for Afghans seeking international protection. Ex-government workers, security and law enforcement agents, women, girls and their families had to migrate to seek protection. Yet, legal, financial and social barriers as well as tightening borders and continuous deportations from Iran and Pakistan jeopardised their search for protection. Most recently, both Iran and especially Pakistan have increased their efforts to deport undocumented Afghan nationals from their territory. Despite the official line being that only undocumented Afghans will be returned, many documented Afghans with Proof of Registration Card (PoR) or Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders have also been forcibly returned.

The Afghan displacement crisis has continued given the deteriorating economic conditions, protection risks, loss of social support system, and the loss of rights for women in Afghanistan: whether mobility, employment or educational rights that have been banned for women. Within already acute displacement patterns, Afghan women whose only option may be to migrate through irregular pathways, are exposed to risks of sexual assault, kidnapping and torture. Regular migration routes, as well as returns and deportations, also come with their own gendered protection risks.

This briefing paper sheds light on the issues faced by Afghan women in displacement in neighbouring countries, and offers a series of recommendations to host states, donors and the humanitarian community.

The full briefing note can be found [here](#).

ADSP Briefing Note – Afghan Children’s Access to Education in Iran & Pakistan



The De facto Authorities (DfA) imposed restrictions on women and girls’ education in 2022, banning secondary schooling for girls throughout Afghanistan and suspending tertiary education for women. The decreased access of girls to secondary and tertiary education will not only impact girls and women but the Afghan economy as a whole. Restrictions on female education, alongside over 20 other bans on women’s rights, are an added reason why Afghan women, often along with their families, have to migrate. According to a private report, written in March 2023, although access to education for girls and women is often not the sole reason for migration, it is and was “a key consideration for many” that have recently migrated to neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. This was particularly the case for families with daughters and sisters in secondary and tertiary years. Afghans have historically migrated to Iran and Pakistan in the hope of accessing safety. Yet Afghan girls and women migrants, including refugees, face obstacles accessing services in their host country.

This brief concludes with recommendations to expand inclusion within national education systems to undocumented Afghan nationals, and to enhance awareness raising among communities on the value of education as key out of poverty and towards resilience and self-reliance. The full briefing note can be found [here](#).

ADSP Op Ed: Bali Process must be fulfilled to protect Rohingya refugees



In the past two years, there has been a precipitous rise in the number of Rohingya refugees making the decision to undertake dangerous land and sea journeys in search of safety and protection. Recent arrivals to Aceh throughout November, who are in urgent need of shelter, nutrition and medical assistance, were initially pushed back to sea and are facing an increasingly unwelcome reception from local government and communities.

An estimated 5,852 people embarked on irregular maritime journeys from January 2022 to October 2023, of which almost 45 percent are women and children. The Bali Process, co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia, and with a mandate to address irregular migration in the region, has so far failed to play an effective role.

The continued deterioration of conditions in Bangladesh and Myanmar has driven this rise in irregular movement. Declining security conditions on both sides of the border, limited livelihood opportunities, and reduced food rations in Bangladesh due to funding shortages have all but exhausted existing coping strategies and are compelling the Rohingyas to resort to the decision to take unsafe sea voyages in search of a better life elsewhere in the region. This is well-known to place them at risk of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

The response from regional countries to these movements, however, has been ad hoc, inconsistent, and dominated by national security concerns. Receiving countries in the region have repeatedly refused to allow disembarkation and abide by their maritime obligations under international law, providing distressed vessels with only a minimal provision of safety and protection measures and frequently engaging in a policy of pushbacks at sea that denies refugees access to life-saving assistance.

This was especially evident in the deadly 2022-2023 maritime season, in which slow and disjointed responses by regional governments exacerbated by poor communication and minimal coordination between relevant officials led to an alarming rise in the death toll to 573 people since January 2022. Unless new policy measures are put in place this will continue to lead to the tragic loss of life and reputational harm for countries in the region.

To effectively respond to this anticipated increase in maritime arrivals over the next three months, coordinated regional action is urgently needed. Failing to do so will continue to have fatal consequences. This was affirmed in the 2016 Bali Declaration, which states, “the transnational nature of irregular migration requires a comprehensive regional approach, based on the principles of burden sharing and collective responsibility.”

However, appeals for regional cooperation on irregular migration have not been sufficiently translated into substantive action. The Bali Process, established in 2002 to facilitate regional and multilateral dialogue and engagement on irregular migration in the Asia Pacific region, has not been able to generate coordinated regional responses to emergency maritime issues and situations despite being poised to do so due to its broad membership including source, transit and destination countries, and key international organizations.

The activation of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism in February 2023 at the Eighth Bali Process Ministerial Conference was a welcome development and seemed to be an indication of greater commitment to actualising necessary regional coordination. Disappointingly, however, nine months have passed since its activation and no clear pathway forward has yet emerged.

Under the auspices of Bali Process co-chairs Australia and Indonesia, it is imperative that the Bali Process Mechanisms established following the failed response to the 2015 Andaman Sea crisis are reinvigorated and mobilised to better protect refugees from the smuggling and human trafficking risks they face. The Consultation Mechanism should be used to facilitate and support the development of policies and standing operating procedures that will harmonise search and rescue efforts and ensure equitable disembarkation arrangements for refugees stranded at sea and in need of protection. This should be complemented by efforts to support regional states to adopt alternatives to detention policies and establish family reunification options for rescued refugees and migrants.

A comprehensive approach such as this would enable the region to work together on solutions and allow for more predictable and humane responses in future. The mandate of the Bali Process Task Force for Planning and Preparedness (TFPP), established in 2016 to support the consultation mechanism by developing early warning capabilities and to coordinate collective action in response to large influxes, should also be revisited to ensure that it is adequately resourced and fit-for-purpose.

To remain relevant, the TFPP should take steps to establish clear and efficient inter-government communication channels, improve information sharing and mapping of movements and displacement hotspots, and ensure landing procedures and reception centres are safe and humane. In addition, the TFPP should support coordinated information campaigns to provide Rohingya with a more informed understanding of the risks, conditions and uncertainties of irregular maritime journeys.

The 2023 Global Refugee Forum, which includes a multi-stakeholder pledge on expanding solutions and resilience for Rohingya refugees and multi-stakeholder pledges on combatting trafficking and developing comprehensive responses to ensure protection at sea, is an opportune moment for members of the Bali Process to indicate their desire for and commitment to the protection of Rohingya refugees in South and Southeast Asia.

Bali Process commitments for improved regional coordination would be amplified by the longer-term prevention measures included in the multi-stakeholder pledge to expand access to durable solutions. These should encompass efforts to address the factors in host countries that are sustaining the ongoing smuggling and trafficking of Rohingya, including violence, insecurity, a lack of legal status and a lack of access to basic rights including education, health care and livelihoods.

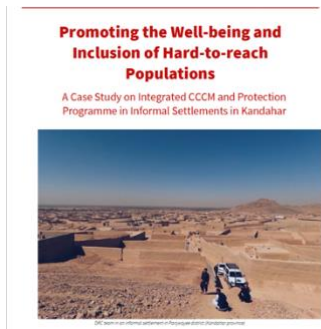
To avoid a repeat of the tragic loss of life of thousands of Rohingya refugees at sea, it is critical that the Bali Process fulfills its promise to prevent, or at least coordinate effective responses to, maritime emergencies. Implementing a proactive and principled regional response to irregular maritime movement will not only save lives and preserve human dignity, but also contribute to regional stability and prosperity.

The Bali Process – a unique mechanism both for its geographic remit, membership composition and thematic areas of focus – has the potential to deliver significant protection improvements in the region for one of the world's most vulnerable populations.

The original article published in the Jakarta Post can be found [here](#).

ADSP Member Publications

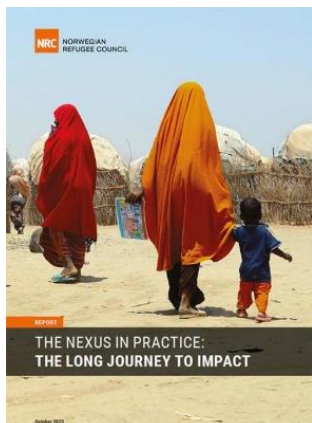
Promoting the Well-being and Inclusion of Hard-to-reach Populations A Case Study on Integrated CCCM and Protection Programme in Informal Settlements in Kandahar



In November 2023, DRC Afghanistan published a briefing note which summarises their work in Kandahar with hard to reach and marginalised communities.

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

The Nexus in practice: The long journey to impact



With funding from the Swiss FDFA, NRC has been conducting research examining the operationalisation of Nexus approaches and its impact on Principled Humanitarian Action in five case study contexts, namely: Libya, Iraq, Cameroon, Somalia, and Afghanistan.

The aim was to understand to what extent and how nexus approaches are being implemented in these fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

From the research of these five diverse contexts, several different modalities for the operationalisation of Nexus approaches emerge, including a localised and area-specific nexus approach in Cameroon; transitions away from humanitarian to Nexus or Durable Solutions response and coordination structures in Libya and Iraq; and an overreliance on repeated short-term humanitarian assistance in Somalia and Afghanistan, without sufficient complementary investments that address the underlying root causes creating needs and vulnerabilities. These diverse approaches underline that while the Nexus is a clear concept in theory, in practice, its practical implementation at country level remains unclear.

The full report can be found [here](#).