



Photo: Maisam Shafiey / NRC 2023 (Afghans Returning - Torkham border)

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 January-March 2024 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 to improve outcomes for persons affected by displacement. In addition, the newsletter provides updates on global or regional processes in which we are engaged.

Each newsletter contains articles related to ADSP focus countries, exploring programme developments and regional migration trends. 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 generates 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 Secretariat

Closing chapters to build the basis for ADSP's future

For ADSP, the first quarter of the year was the opportunity to reflect on current trends, worldwide and in the region, as well as on results of global initiatives such as the Global Refugee Forum and regional implications. In addition to exchanges with our members, those reflections will constitute the basis for our continued efforts to articulate ADSP's value-added, our ability to support member agencies as well as other partners. In turn, this will help us drive the [ADSP 2023-2025 Strategy](#) towards its overall objective of supporting the development of conditions that enable people displaced from Myanmar and Afghanistan to enjoy fundamental human rights and access long-term displacement solutions in Asia.

From January to March, ADSP has also engaged in intense activities, supporting collective initiatives and coordination among various stakeholders at global and regional level, collaborating with NGOs and Refugee-Led Organizations in selected countries, releasing a number of public-facing publications, while also engaging in more private exchanges and advocacy. ADSP maintained its focus on the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and regional multilateral institutions relevant to the protection of and durable solutions for refugees from Myanmar, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Bali Process. At the national level, ADSP has continued to engage with NGOs and Refugee-Led Organizations in Malaysia, building partnerships meant to endure. This period was also the final throes of the Supporting Humanitarian and Refugee Protection (SHARP) project, which resulted in various publications initiated in late 2023, shedding light on displacement challenges and collective action at regional as well as national level, in the context of the Myanmar displacement axis.

Further details on the above elements are covered throughout this newsletter. As always, we wish to thank all members and stakeholders for your ongoing engagement and support.

Warm regards,
Dr. Jerome Elie ADSP Manager

Myanmar Displacement Workstream



Photo: Sadia Rahman / NRC 2023 (Overview of Rohingya refugee camps)

PRiA project updates (January - March 2024)

[Protecting Refugees in Asia \(PRiA\)](#) is an ECHO-funded project that began in July 2021. It entered its second phase in July 2023 and 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. With its focus on solutions to displacement, ADSP leads the project's advocacy and coordination result, which fosters concerted regional advocacy, promotes regional responses to Rohingya displacement, and supports national-level advocacy in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

The below presents highlights of key engagements from ADSP on the PRiA project and more broadly in connected initiatives in South-East Asia.

On 1 February, ADSP co-organised with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Asia Pacific Network of Refugees (APNOR) and Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) a debrief meeting on the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) among civil society organisations in the region. This was an opportunity to share key takeaways, reflect on opportunities for collective follow-up, and lessons learned from civil society's engagement with the GRF.

On 27 February, ADSP co-organised with the Myanmar INGO Forum a hybrid panel discussion on the Regional Dimensions of Recent Conflict Developments in Myanmar.” The panel discussion was moderated by ADSP’s Regional Specialist, Paul Vernon and addressed the role of Thailand in shaping the humanitarian agenda in Myanmar, humanitarian and protection needs for Myanmar refugees in India, and China’s evolving approach to Myanmar since the 2021 coup. A discussion among the various stakeholders in attendance ensued.

On 28 March 2024, ADSP facilitated the sixth quarterly hybrid meeting of the Regional Rohingya Advocacy Forum (RRAF) co-organised with IOM and UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. The meeting discussed key objectives for the RRAF in 2024, outcomes and advocacy implications from the GRF and the Rohingya multistakeholder pledge, the regional response to irregular Rohingya movements, and regional advocacy activities and opportunities related to advancing Alternatives to Detention (ATD), and in responding to misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech. The next meeting of the Forum is planned for June 2024.

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 February, IDC co-convened in Jakarta the Regional Peer-Learning Platform and Program of Learning and Action on Alternative Care Arrangements for Children in the Context of Migration in the Pacific, which brought together representatives from policy and implementing agencies in the governments of Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand and explore whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to implementing community-based alternatives to detention. In Malaysia, IDC has been leading the coordination of advocacy initiatives in response to the ‘Baitul Mahabbah’ detention centres for migrant children. In Thailand, IDC has been working with the Parliamentary House Sub-Committee on Irregular Migration and the Parliamentary House Sub-Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons to develop reports on how to sustainably address irregular migration in Thailand and how to respond to the situation of Myanmar refugees in Thailand.

Over the first three months of 2024, ADSP worked with the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) Asia to finalise a research report on the Impact of Climate Change on the Migration and Displacement Dynamics of Rohingya Refugees, to be published and disseminated in the second quarter of the year.



Funded by
the European Union

Supporting Humanitarian and Refugee Protection (SHARP) project updates (January-March 2024)

ADSP, in partnership with the International Rescue Committee remained engaged – for its final three months phase – in supporting national and regional level advocacy initiatives through a 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 was initially centered around India, Malaysia, and Thailand, the final phase taking a more regional perspective while maintaining support activities in Malaysia. Some of the notable achievements and engagements over the past three months included the following elements:

Malaysia

Phase 3 Capacity Strengthening Training for Refugee-Led Organisations

From February 6th to 8th, 2024, 23 leaders from Refugee-Led Organisations (RLOs) joined the Phase 3 Refugee-Led Capacity Building Training in Kuala Lumpur. The training was carefully planned, combining lessons from earlier sessions and discussions with refugee leaders. It aimed to help RLOs acquire tools that may help them in becoming self-sufficient, giving them the skills to handle challenges more confidently. The training focused on recognising



RLOs as strong and resilient, even when they have limited resources. Leaders learned about effective leadership, coaching, and adapting to the digital world and ways to transfer this knowledge and skills to their pairs. An important aspect highlighted in the training was the need for ongoing mentorship among refugee leaders. As the training wrapped up, RLO leaders left with renewed energy and skills, ready to keep making a positive impact in their communities. Based on the interest of participants, discussions and presentations also tackled displacement themes, for example with a presentation and

discussion on Complementary Pathways, guided by ADSP Manager, Jerome Elie.

Following-up on this opportunity, on 7 March 2024 ADSP joined a Stakeholder Engagement meeting organized by a group of refugees from Myanmar engaged with advocacy activities in Malaysia, with which ADSP has collaborated. This event was an opportunity to explore options for continued cooperation on common advocacy objectives.

Briefing Note on Mental Health of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Malaysia: A Detention Focus

On 30 March 2024, ADSP issued a Briefing note aiming to explore the mental health needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia following their release from detention. It seeks to identify the gaps and challenges hindering their access to essential mental health support. By shedding light on these issues, this note aims to formulate practical recommendations to address these gaps and improve the accessibility of mental health services for refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia post-detention. Such insights are crucial to guide policies and practices that aim to enhance the well-being and resilience of these vulnerable populations as they navigate the intricacies of forced migration and detention experiences.

The full Briefing Note is [available Here](#).

Project's Finalisation

At the end of March 2024, the Supporting Humanitarian and Refugee Protection in Asia (SHARP-Asia) project completed its activities. Having engaged with various stakeholders, from RLOs, to national and international NGOs, national human rights institutions, academics, UN agencies and national authorities, the SHARP project achieved its original objectives of supporting national and regional level advocacy initiatives for improved rights and protections for non-Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. This entailed the dissemination of several publications

touching in particular on refugee and stateless Children access to education, mental health needs of refugees, and proposals to realise refugee protection in the region (see details in the publication section below). In collaboration with its member, the International Rescue Committee, ADSP is now engaged in considering lessons learned from this project and options to ensure sustainable continuation of some of the elements and focuses of the SHARP project through ADSP's future activities.

Afghan Displacement Workstream



Photo: Maisam Shafiey / NRC 2023 (Afghans Returning - Torkham border)

Engagement on the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

Over the first three months of 2024, ADSP built on its collaboration with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and previous engagement with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholder to continue advocating for the overall benefits that can be derived from better and more regular interactions between NGOs and the Support Platform. Preliminary discussions and preparations were held to plan for concrete engagement in 2024. As a reminder, the Support Platform's website now constitutes one of the avenues for NGOs engagement, particularly as it may reflect NGO activities and messaging related to the SSAR through its tabs on '[NGO Resources](#)' and '[NGO News and Stories](#)'.

Building the evidence base to inform solutions

Building on their collaboration, ADSP and Samuel Hall worked to finalize a range of publications, which will particularly bring a value-added through presenting evidence and analysis of the solutions perspectives in Afghanistan, including in the complex current context. The series of publications, including Briefing and Research Notes, are to be disseminated in a concerted effort in the second quarter of 2024.

Introduction to Advocacy for stakeholders in Afghanistan

In March, answering assessed needs and interests, the ADSP Manager, Jerome Elie, prepared an online training on 'the fundamentals of advocacy' delivered to a variety of humanitarian actors in the West region of Afghanistan. The training was provided twice (24 and 25 March) and gathered about 50 participants, mainly from non-governmental organizations. It covered the fundamentals of advocacy and aimed to provide participants with advice and basic tools to engage in advocacy work relevant to the operational context, identify priorities and manage potential risks.

Engaging with Members covering the Afghanistan Situation

The initial months of the year also presented opportunities to exchange with ADSP members with operations in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Such exchanges were geared towards ensuring constructive alignment on objectives and collaboration for the remainder of the [ADSP Strategy](#). Targeted support was also provided to advocacy engagements.

Other Activities

Internal Displacement and Solutions Conference

In March, ADSP staff participated as panellists at the online [Internal Displacement and Solutions Conference](#) organized by the Refugee Law Initiative, University of London and the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement. On 14 March 2024, ADSP Regional Specialist, Paul Vernon delivered a presentation on "Evaluating 'Transitional Solutions' through its Use in the Myanmar Context". On 15 March, ADSP Manager, Jerome Elie delivered a presentation on "Restoring the Social Contract to Realize Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons." A recording of the conference panels is now [available online](#).

UNHCR Standing Committee

On 14 March 2024, ADSP Manager Jerome Elie delivered the NGO Statement for Asia and the Pacific at the UNHCR 89th Standing Committee Meeting on behalf of a wide range of NGOs. This statement stressed key civil society messages on the protection challenges refugees face in the Afghanistan and Myanmar situations, highlighting solutions-oriented priorities. The full statement is [available on the ICVA website](#), which coordinates NGO engagement with the UNHCR governing body meetings.

ADSP Publications

Empowering Mental Health in the Asia-Pacific: Innovative Strategies and Advocacy for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

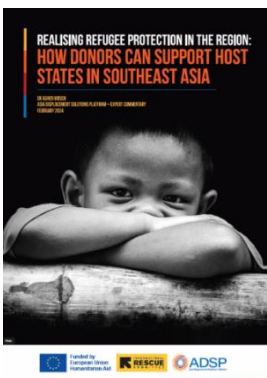


In November 2023, the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform (ADSP) and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), with financial assistance from EU Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), co-hosted a dialogue session on the mental health of refugees – a pressing issue in Southeast Asia. This session emerged against a backdrop of ongoing human rights and humanitarian crises in the region, which have compelled numerous individuals and families to seek refuge away from their homes. The trauma associated with displacement is not just physical but deeply emotional and psychological, underscoring the need for accessible mental health support for refugees. The objectives of this session were multifaceted and aimed at unpacking the complexities of mental health challenges in the refugee context, especially as it relates to refugee communities within Southeast Asia.

The report from this Regional Dialogue can be found [here](#).

Realising refugee protection in the region: How donors can support host states in Southeast Asia

Expert Commentary by Dr Asher Hirsch

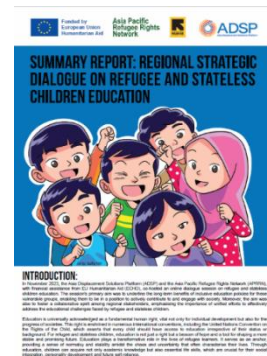


Southeast Asia hosts a significant number of refugees, yet struggles with providing adequate protection and rights due to various challenges, including a lack of legal frameworks, funding, and regional cooperation. This Expert Commentary focuses on the role donor states, especially those in the Global North, can play in supporting Southeast Asian host states to enhance access to protection and durable solutions for refugees.

Recognising the complexities of the regional context, this publication advocates for an incremental approach to refugee rights enhancement. It suggests that donor states should support host states through a series of practical, context-sensitive steps, in addition to pushing for the longer-term goal of wholesale adoption of international refugee law standards. This approach is grounded in the understanding that small, steady improvements can lead to significant long-term changes in refugee protection and solutions.

The full Expert Commentary is available here and the Executive Summary is available [here](#).

Summary Report: Regional Strategic Dialogue on Refugee and Stateless Children Education



In November 2023, ADSP and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), with financial assistance from EU Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), co-hosted an online dialogue session on refugee and stateless children education. The session’s primary aim was to underline the long-term benefits of inclusive education policies for these vulnerable groups, enabling them to be in a position to actively contribute to and engage with society. Moreover, the aim was also to foster a collaborative spirit among regional stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of unified efforts to effectively address the educational challenges faced by refugee and stateless children. For them, education is not just a right but a beacon of hope and a tool for shaping a more stable and promising future. Education plays a transformative role in the lives of refugee learners.

The full Summary Report is available [here](#).

Displacement from Myanmar: How We Got Here and What More Can Be Done

Expert Commentary by Dr Nyi Nyi Kyaw and Caitlin McCaffrie



Myanmar has long been the primary source of displacement in Southeast Asia, resulting in refugees and people seeking asylum from Myanmar living across Southeast and South Asia, often in precarious circumstances.

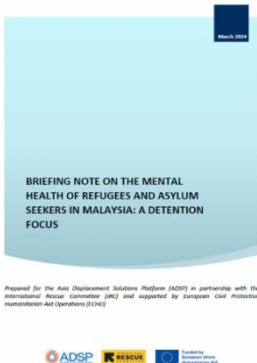
This paper aims to unpack the current situation facing those displaced from Myanmar and offer policy proposals to improve their lives in displacement, while working towards supporting conditions in Myanmar becoming safe for repatriation in the future.

In this perspective, this paper outlines recommendations along three key themes:

1. Addressing the enabling environment and ensuring repatriation is not rushed
2. Developing greater refugee protection and response capacity at the regional level
3. Better coordinating resettlement programs and expansion of resettlement countries

The Expert Commentary is available [here](#).

Briefing Note on the Mental Health of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Malaysia: A Detention Focus



The lived experience of forced displacement often implies trauma and can lead to an increased prevalence of mental health conditions and challenges to psychosocial well-being. Long ignored, this fact has recently been acknowledged by the international community. In this context, the mental health repercussions of immigration detention on these individuals have raised particular humanitarian concerns worldwide, including in Asia. The rise in depression, anxiety, and stress among refugees with detention experience is a troubling trend, reflecting a broader regional crisis, notably in Malaysia. This briefing note explores the mental health needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia following their release from detention. It seeks to identify gaps and challenges hindering their access to essential mental health support. By shedding light on these issues, this note aims to formulate practical recommendations to address these gaps and

improve the accessibility of mental health services for refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia post-detention.

The Briefing Note is available [here](#).