



FOURTEENTH MEETING

Sukosol Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

21-22 August 2025

Participant Pack



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Welcome to Bangkok for the 14th meeting of the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM). This meeting takes place on 21-22 August 2025 at the Sukosol Hotel, including the ADFM Dinner from 6:30-9pm on 21 August.

We are delighted to return to Bangkok for our 14th ADFM Meeting. This year has been a dramatic one for forced migration issues; with abrupt cuts to foreign aid and resettlement intakes from major donors, ongoing civil war in Myanmar exacerbated by a devastating earthquake in March, and deaths at sea reaching their highest levels since the 2015 Andaman Sea Crisis. The 14th ADFM Meeting will take place during Malaysia's year chairing ASEAN and as the world prepares for the High-level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar in September in New York.

With this context firmly in mind, in Bangkok we look forward to focusing on strengthening regional cooperation in response to shifting global policies on migration. Within this central theme we will explore:

- Strengthening regional cooperation and national policy development in response to cuts to foreign aid and resettlement programs,
- Mapping key concerns and potential silver linings in scenarios that the region is facing, including impact on trafficking and smuggling movements,
- Agreeing concrete opportunities to improve conditions in response to these concerns, including through temporary stay arrangements and access to documentation, health, livelihoods and education, and strategic use of resettlement and complementary pathways.

Since we last met in 2024, the ADFM Secretariat commissioned an external review of our work over the past ten years. The evaluation was intended to assess its impact, identify areas for improvement and future opportunities. Feedback was received from approximately 30 people in the ADFM's network which has been very helpful in developing our forward strategy, including recommendations to:

- Hone the ADFM's strategic focus and identify key objectives to pursue over the next 1-3 years;
- Refresh participation in ADFM meetings to ensure they bring together the most influential and knowledgeable policy-makers and experts;
- Increase and deepen engagement at the national level to feed ideas into regional conversations;
- Engage more actively with those with lived experience of displacement, the private sector, and members of parliament in different countries.

The ADFM Secretariat is excited to embark on a new three-year strategy based on the evaluation's findings, while recognising the need to remain flexible and responsive to the changing global and regional context.

The ADFM was established in 2015 as an independent Track 1.5 forum for genuine dialogue on critical forced migration issues facing the region. The ADFM is led by a regional secretariat of think tanks from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and has contributed to changes in governance, policy and practice benefiting refugees, stateless, and trafficked persons, in partnership with the region's institutions and national governments.

Please find enclosed the full participant pack, which includes meeting agenda, participant list, discussion paper, and profiles of participants and partner organisations. Thank you to all who contributed in writing or reviewing the discussion paper.

Should you have any questions about the meeting please contact:

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ADFM Meetings are not about admiring the problem, but rather are opportunities to develop practical, workable policy options to the forced migration challenges facing our region. As always we encourage participants to bring their curiosity, creativity and collegiality to the meeting, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Agenda

Day 1: 21 August 2025,
Rattanakosin Room, 1st Floor

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Additional information</u>
8:30-9:00	Arrival	Registration, tea and coffee provided
9:00-9:30	Welcome, recap of last meeting & activities since	Plenary discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening remarks and welcome • Introduction to the 'renewed' ADFM • Overview of agenda and objectives of the meeting
9:30-10:30	<u>Session 1:</u> Setting the scene	Kick off speaker sets the scene followed by updates from roundtable participants on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National priorities - examples of on the ground impact of reduction in foreign aid in the region • Regional priorities - ASEAN and Bali Process • Plans for the High-level Conference on Rohingya next month
10:30-11:00	Morning tea	Refreshments provided
11:00-12:30	<u>Session 2: Regional trends</u> Background reading: ADFM discussion paper	Plenary: Discuss trends covered in the paper, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern A: Even without further displacement, there will be increasing pressure on the humanitarian system including refugee camps, urban refugees and internally displaced people. • Concern B: Displaced people are increasingly vulnerable to trafficking, smuggling and related exploitation, and likely increase in dangerous maritime movements and deaths at sea. • Silver Lining: Cuts to funding result in innovative responses from governments and local and international agencies, leading to a better, more cohesive system in the long term.
12:30-1:30	Lunch break	Lunch provided
1:30-3:00	<u>Session 3:</u> National opportunities to address concerns	Small group discussions on national level opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise civil registration/documentation for all, • Enable access to the labour market for refugees, • Expand and harmonise complementary pathways.
3:00-3:30	Afternoon tea	Refreshments provided
3:30-5:00	<u>Session 3 (cont):</u>	Plenary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back on recommendations from small group discussions • Agree priorities to further develop tomorrow.
5:00-6:30	Break	
6:30-8:30	ADFM Dinner Venue: The Bangkok Heritage Restaurant	Dinner remarks: informal discussion on the role of parliamentarians in advancing cooperative refugee policy in national and regional contexts. Guest speakers: Kannavee Suebsang MP, Phil Twyford MP, Mercy Barends MP.

Day 2: 22 August 2025
Rattanakosin Room, 1st Floor

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Additional Information</u>
9:00-10:30	<u>Session 4:</u> Regional opportunities to address concerns	Plenary update and recap on previous day, followed by small group discussions on regional level opportunities, including but not limited to through ASEAN and the Bali Process, to advance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop early warning system capability, • Strengthen search and rescue capacity for coordinated responses to forced migration, • State cooperation to address root causes.
10:30-11:00	Morning tea	Refreshments provided
11:00-12:30	<u>Session 5:</u> Opportunities for innovation	Plenary discussion of opportunities for innovation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to prioritise funding to locally led groups, • Ways to move away from held immigration detention to community based care, • How to involve the private sector in medium-term solutions through employment pathways.
12:30-1:30	Lunch	Lunch provided
1:30-3:30	<u>Session 6:</u> Discussion and confirmation of proposals and next steps	Talk through recommendations and agree what to take forward, including possible mechanisms or avenues to advance proposals such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The upcoming High-level Dialogue on the Rohingya in September, • The next ASEAN Summit and future Bali Process meetings, • National level mechanisms.
3:30-4:00	<u>Closing and agree next steps</u>	End by 4pm at the latest

Participant List (alphabetical)

Name	Organisation	Country
Abi Poole	Deputy Head of Mission, New Zealand Embassy in Bangkok	New Zealand
Amy Hanson	Regional Risk and Verification Manager, Immigration New Zealand	New Zealand
Andrew Hudson	Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Policy Development	Australia
Anita Lewan	Director Counter People Smuggling, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Australia
Atu Yudhistira Indarto	Counsellor, Directorate of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Indonesia
Chompunut Phasuphan	Counsellor, International Organisations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Thailand
Dave Fatalla	State Counsel, Department of Justice	Philippines
Evan Jones	Programme Coordinator, Bali Process Regional Support Office	Australia
Fahmina Karim	Lecturer, Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University	Thailand
Faiyaz Murshid Kazi	Ambassador of Bangladesh to Thailand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Bangladesh
Fuad Adriansyah	Indonesian Co-Manager, Bali Process Regional Support Office	Indonesia
Fuadi Pitsuwan	President, Surin Pitsuwan Foundation	Thailand
Guy Eddington	Councillor, Bangkok, Department of Home Affairs	Australia
Hafsar Tameesuddin	Co-Secretary General, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network	International
Jashim Uddin Khan	Joint Secretary, Public Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs	Bangladesh
Kamal Norfarid Kamarudin	Principle Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs	Malaysia
Karen Whiting	Head of Bureau Protection and Solutions Service, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific	International
Mercy Chriesty Barends	Member of Parliament, House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia Chair of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR)	Indonesia
Mic Chawaratt	Asia Pacific Regional Manager, International Detention Coalition	International
Mohd Hafiz	Superintendent of Immigration, MAPO - Ministry of Home Affairs	Malaysia
Mohd Tarmizi Dan	Director of Intelligence & Crisis Management Division, National Security Council	Malaysia
Mohd Zulhairi Mohd Nor	Immigration Authority, Irregular Immigration Policy Unit, Ministry of Home Affairs	Malaysia
Napatrat Kranrattanasuit	Assistant Professor, Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University	Thailand
Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq	Senior Regional Migrant Protection Specialist, International Organization for Migration (IOM)	International
Phil Twyford	Member of Parliament for Te Atatū, Opposition Spokesperson for Immigration, Disarmament and Arms Control, Associate Foreign Affairs	New Zealand
Pimchanok Juntaboon	Plan and Policy Analyst Professional Level, Internal Security Division, Office of the National Security Council	Thailand
Reynaldo C. Cusi	Division Chief, Department of the Interior and Local Government	Philippines
Sriprapha Petcharamesree	Lecturer, Faculty of Law Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
Steve Wong	Former Deputy CEO, ISIS Malaysia	Malaysia
Thomas Benjamin Daniel	Director, Foreign Policy and Security Studies, Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia	Malaysia
Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti	Research Professor, Research Center for Politics, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)	Indonesia

Zconglod Khawjang	Foreign Relations Officer, Operation Center for Displaced Persons, Ministry of Interior	Thailand
Secretariat and Observers		
Caitlin McCaffrie	Policy Director, Centre for Policy Development	Australia
Christy Kumsan	Senior Project Coordinator, Centre for Policy Development	Australia
Natdanai Kietigaroon	Second Secretary, International Organisations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Thailand
Varistha Borkird	Plan and Policy Analyst Professional Level, Internal Security Division, Office of the National Security Council	Thailand

Invitation to ADFM Dinner

The ADFM Secretariat
is delighted to invite you to:

ADFM Dinner

for the fourteenth meeting of the
Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration

Thursday 21 August 2025

6:30pm–9:00pm

(group depart Sukosol Hotel at 6:00pm)

Dinner served at approx. 6:45

Dinner remarks at 7:30

Venue

The Bangkok Heritage Restaurant
2 Aram Si Alley, Thung Phaya Thai, Bangkok

Esteemed Speakers:

MP Kannavee Suebsang (Thailand)

MP Phil Thyford (New Zealand)

MP Mercy Barends (Indonesia)

Dress code

Smart casual attire or national dress

RSVP

Christy Kumesan: adfm@cpd.org.au

Please advise of any dietary requirements

Discussion Paper

2025 has been a dramatic year for forced migration issues in the Asia Pacific. In March an earthquake in Myanmar exacerbated the pain of ongoing civil war and internal displacement; in May over 400 people died in the Andaman Sea after resorting to dangerous boat journeys; and in July tensions on the border between Thailand and Cambodia rapidly escalated resulting in casualties and internal displacement in both countries. Added to this, 2025 has also witnessed the abrupt removal or decrease of funding from the US, UK and elsewhere that previously supported humanitarian and refugee responses. As this year also marks the ten year anniversary of the Andaman Sea Crisis, it is timely to reflect on progress and what is still to be done.

While most states in the region are not parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention, many nevertheless host significant numbers of refugees, in line with the 1966 Bangkok Principles and the 2013 Jakarta Declaration.¹ Until recently much of this support relied on international funding and a global resettlement system that is now under major strain. Limited safe legal pathways or access to survival, livelihoods and education, means that more people are likely to fall vulnerable to human trafficking and related exploitation, which has already seen a worrying uptick in the region since COVID-19.

The timing of the 14th ADFM Meeting in August 2025 allows us to take stock of the current context, consider emerging trends, and what collective action is possible and most effective. Upcoming opportunities to further this action include the 'High-Level Conference on the Situation of the Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities from Myanmar' taking place on 30 September, the 47th ASEAN Summit chaired by Malaysia in October, and other meetings of ASEAN sectoral bodies and the Bali Process.

The purpose of this paper is to promote discussion at the 14th ADFM that can lead to tangible action. It was written collectively by the ADFM Secretariat and benefited from feedback from a range of experts. Section 1 summarises the latest developments in foreign aid and resettlement cuts globally, then for specific country contexts in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. Section 2 outlines two key concerns and one potential silver lining based on analysis, with concrete proposals to address them. Below is a high-level summary of the proposals, more detail of which can be found on page 28.

Concerns and silver lining	Suggested response
Concern A: Even without further displacement, there will be increasing pressure on the humanitarian system including refugee camps, urban refugees and internally displaced people.	A.1. Prioritise civil registration/documentation for all
	A.2. Enable access to the labour market for refugees
	A.3. Expand and harmonise complementary pathways
Concern B: Displaced people are increasingly vulnerable to trafficking, smuggling and related exploitation, and likely increase in dangerous maritime movements and deaths at sea.	B.1. Develop early warning system capability
	B.2 Strengthen search and rescue capacity for coordinated responses to forced migration
	B.3 State cooperation to address root causes
Potential Silver Lining: Cuts to funding result in innovative responses from governments and local and international agencies, leading to a better, more cohesive system in the long term.	C.1 Prioritise funding to locally led groups
	C.2 Move away from held immigration detention towards community-based care
	C.3 Scale the involvement of the private sector, especially in medium-term solutions through employment pathways

¹ Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), '[Final text of the AALCO's 1966 Bangkok Principles on Status and Treatment of Refugees](#)' adopted on 24 June 2001; and [Jakarta Declaration on Addressing Irregular Movements of Persons](#), 20 August 2013, Jakarta.

Section 1: Recent policy changes affecting forced migration in the Asia Pacific

Global humanitarian funding has dropped significantly this year primarily due to major reductions in contributions from key donors such as the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK). The US has historically served as the backbone of the humanitarian system, providing approximately 40% of the United Nations (UN)'s global humanitarian budget and about 30% of refugee response funding globally, including significant support to both UNHCR and IOM operations.² As a consequence, UNHCR is projecting a shortfall of US \$8.1 billion against a global budget of \$10.6 billion, and warns that 11.6 million people are at risk of losing direct assistance this year.³ The agency is reducing its workforce by about one third, cutting roles in headquarters and regional bureaus over field offices to maintain operations as much as possible. UNHCR has seen 26% cut to programs in the Asia Pacific, a region which currently hosts 17.3 million forcibly displaced persons, including 7.2 million refugees, 6.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 2.5 million stateless people.⁴

Refugee-led and local non-government organisations (NGOs) that have long been crucial to frontline service delivery are also feeling the impact of these cuts. These groups often rely on sub-contracts or joint programs with UN agencies or other large international NGOs to sustain their work. As international partners cut or delay funding, local organisations are left under-resourced and overburdened, undermining years of progress in localisation of aid, a key global commitment since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. This trend not only erodes the resilience of local systems but also increases the risk of protection gaps for vulnerable displaced communities.

This is unfolding against a backdrop of rising defence expenditure. Global military spending rose to \$2718 billion in 2024, a 9.4% increase from 2023 and the sharpest annual rise since the end of the Cold War. Military budgets grew in over 100 countries, pushing the global military burden to 2.5% of GDP.⁵ Meanwhile, humanitarian budgets have largely remained flat or declined, as many governments prioritise national security, defence, and border enforcement. This funding shift has forced many humanitarian agencies to face difficult decisions resulting in widespread staff layoffs, halted field operations, and a growing gap between needs and available resources.

There are some welcome exceptions to this trend. For example, Australia has maintained a stable humanitarian aid budget in 2024-25 and has stepped in to fill some of the gaps, particularly in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Most recently, Australia committed an additional AU \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to strengthen disaster response capacities and support displaced women and girls from Myanmar.⁶ Humanitarian resettlement commitments have also remained stable in Australia. While this commitment is positive, no one country can fully offset the significant funding shortfall left by the withdrawal of major donors like the US and others. Given the new reality, more sustainable long-term solutions are needed.

² Centre for Global Development, June 2025, [Accelerating Refugee Inclusion Amidst Devastating Aid Cuts](#)

³ In 2024 UNHCR supported 36.4 million people with direct assistance. UNHCR. 2025. [On the Brink: The devastating toll of aid cuts on people forced to flee](#).

⁴ Ibid and UNHCR, June 2025, [UNHCR steadfast in refugee protection as it completes review of operations, structures and staffing](#). More detailed breakdown of populations in the Asia Pacific are on page 47 of UNHCR. 2025. [Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2026](#).

⁵ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), April 2025, [Unprecedented rise in global military expenditure as European and Middle East spending surges](#).

⁶ Penny Wong. 2025. [‘Additional humanitarian funding for the Indo-Pacific’ Media release](#), 10 July.

This reallocation of funding also reflects a broader policy shift away from humanitarianism to securitised migration management. Many governments have moved toward deterrence-based strategies, including offshore processing of asylum claims, stricter asylum requirements, and increased pushbacks and deportations, reducing focus on resettlement and humanitarian protection. By restricting legal and safe pathways for asylum and migration, these policies push people toward irregular and dangerous routes. With few or no alternatives, many are forced to rely on smugglers to seek safety or reunite with family.

UNHCR projects resettlement needs for 2026 globally to be 2.5 million. However, despite these acute needs, global resettlement places are at their lowest since 2003. The Asia Pacific is classified as hosting 806,700 refugees in need of resettlement, including in the following countries:⁷

Iran	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Thailand	Malaysia	Indonesia
348,900	215,000	125,500	83,500	25,200	1,800

The next part of the paper goes into more detail about the impact of funding and resettlement cuts on the situations in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia as of early August 2025.

1A) Impact on situation in Myanmar

UNHCR identifies people displaced from Myanmar as the fifth largest group in need of resettlement globally, making up 233,360 of the total 2.5 million.⁸ Myanmar has been experiencing civil war since the military coup in 2021. Instability was exacerbated when a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck on 28 March 2025, devastating the central region from Sagaing and Mandalay to Naypyidaw and Southern Shan. In total, 17 million people were affected: 9 million experienced serious consequences including over 5,000 injured, 55,000 homes destroyed, and 3,800 deaths.⁹ 640 health facilities were destroyed, triggering a public health emergency.¹⁰ The military-led relief response was slow and inadequate. Indeed, the military used the timing of the earthquake to conduct over 240 military attacks across the country including 171 airstrikes,¹¹ in contravention of ceasefire announcements. Attacks on schools and hospitals have also become increasingly common. Significantly, fighting has expanded into previously unaffected areas like Ayeyarwady, Bago, and Magway. Myanmar also now holds the grim distinction of having one of the highest landmine casualty rates in the world. In addition to state violence, violence from non-state actors has also been reported, particularly in Chin, Rakhine, and Northern and Southern Shan States, fracturing resistance networks and hampering aid coordination.

Humanitarian needs continue to be urgent. Nearly one-third of the population (15.2 million) faces acute food insecurity, with 2.3 million - particularly in Rakhine State - on the brink of starvation.¹² The cost of basic staples such as rice, beans, and oil has risen by over 30 percent, rendering food unaffordable for many. National poverty rates have grown to an estimated 31%, especially in the earthquake-affected regions. Alarming, international aid remains critically underfunded, with only 12% of the 2025

⁷ UNHCR. 2025. [Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2026](#), pp. 55-58.

⁸ People from Afghanistan are highest, followed by Syria, South Sudan and Sudan. *Ibid*.

⁹ Vibhu Mishra. 2025. [‘Myanmar crisis deepens as military attacks persist and needs grow’](#) *UN News*, 2 May.

¹⁰ WHO. 2025. [‘Sagaing earthquake in Myanmar: External situation report’](#) 6th edition, 14 April.

¹¹ UNOHCHR. 2025. [‘Türk warns of unrelenting violence against civilians in Myanmar’](#) *Press Release*, 2 May.

¹² UNOHCHR. 2025. [‘A third of Myanmar’s population faces food insecurity: UN human rights expert’](#) *Press Releases*, 13 March.

Humanitarian Response Plan supported.¹³ The US was previously a major donor, providing US \$238 million in aid and humanitarian relief for Myanmar in 2024. Remaining relief efforts suffer from access constraints and security threats, painting a bleak future for civilians trapped in conflict zones or displaced by overlapping crises. A record 3.5 million people are internally displaced, and pressure to cross borders to escape violence remains. More aggressive enforcement of the 2024 People's Military Service Law has already seen a substantial exodus of 18-35 year olds to Thailand and Malaysia to escape conscription.

1B) Impact on situation in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is experiencing a period of significant political transition following a student-led ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government in August 2024. Among the many competing priorities of the interim government, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has expressed renewed commitment to addressing the Rohingya crisis on the regional and international stage.¹⁴ Dr Khairul Rahman has been appointed as High Representative overseeing Rohingya issues, and promised greater transparency in addressing durable shelter, education, and livelihoods for the Rohingya in the 33 camps in Cox's Bazar and the 36,000 who have relocated to Bhasan Char island.

However, the situation for Rohingya in Bangladesh remains serious. The Government of Bangladesh has hosted the Rohingya in Cox's Bazar since 2017, contributing its own resources and supported by substantial contributions from the international community, which are now decreasing. UNHCR's latest data forecasts 169,000 people may lose direct assistance in the camps this year due to funding cuts.¹⁵ The 2025-26 Joint Response Plan identifies food security as the highest priority in the camps, and a flash appeal has been launched to prevent "emergency levels of malnutrition across the camps and even starvation".¹⁶ Funding cuts mean hygiene items will be reduced by 50%, and 50% of water is now "delivered below quality and quantity standards".¹⁷ In early 2025, the World Food Programme halved monthly rations to US \$6 per person briefly, which prompted warnings of starvation and unrest.¹⁸ Fortunately a US \$73 million injection from the US temporarily restored food support, but there are major concerns going forward. Education services have also been heavily impacted by funding cuts. In mid-2025, UNICEF and partners suspended thousands of learning centres, affecting nearly 300,000 Rohingya children.¹⁹ While some centres were later reopened, they re-employed only refugee teachers, which led to negative reactions from the host community who had lost jobs. There is ongoing concern about the sustainability of these learning centres without additional funding.

In the camps, shelter conditions remain fragile, especially with the onset of the monsoon season, and protection risks - including trafficking and gender-based violence - rise in parallel with deepening deprivation.²⁰ Concerns about crime and exploitation have been present for as long as the camps have existed, in part spurred by the lack of legitimate alternative livelihoods and future prospects faced by the camp population, particularly young people. The Government of Bangladesh has taken steps to address

¹³ UNOCHA. 2025. '[Myanmar, Humanitarian Update No. 47](#)', *Situation Report*, 27 June.

¹⁴ Al Jazeera. 2024. '[Bangladesh's Yunus promises support to Rohingya in first policy speech](#)', 18 August.

¹⁵ UNHCR. 2025. *On the brink*.

¹⁶ UN. 2025. [Joint Response Plan 2025-26](#). UNHCR Flash Appeal. 2025. [Addressing the most pressing needs of the 2025 Joint Response Plan](#)

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ Pradipto Vaskar Rakshit. 2025. '[WFP cuts Rohingya food assistance: What does losing \\$6.50/month mean?](#)' *ODI Humanitarian Practice Network*, 21 March.

¹⁹ Save the Children. 2025. '[About 300,000 children risk losing education as learning centres in Rohingya camps shut due to funding cuts](#)' *News and Press Release*, 5 June.

²⁰ Shagufta Shathy. 2025. '[Funding cuts heighten monsoon risks for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh](#)' UNHCR, 18 July.

perceived security concerns by ‘countering disruptive elements’, cracking down on illegal weapons and strengthening law and order.²¹ However, policies that prevent refugees from seeking employment or other activities that promote self-reliance remain in place.

The key to a long-term solution to the Rohingya refugee crisis remains in Myanmar. However, for the moment the community is entirely reliant on humanitarian aid and the generosity of the Government of Bangladesh. While most refugees want to return home when it is safe to do so, as of writing much more needs to be done to create conditions in Rakhine State that are conducive to safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation before this can become a reality. Indeed violence and persecution in Myanmar remain such that 150,000 new Rohingya refugees have arrived in Cox’s Bazar in the last 18 months.²² Tensions with the host community have reportedly increased too, particularly over employment and service delivery, underlining the need for integrated humanitarian approaches that support both refugee and local populations. Without sustained international commitment and changes in host-state policy on self-reliance and rights-based protections, the camps will remain sites of mounting vulnerability, instability, and lost human potential.

The upcoming ‘High-Level Conference on the Situation of the Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities from Myanmar’ taking place on 30 September in New York, co-facilitated by Malaysia and Finland, is an important opportunity to demonstrate international support to the Rohingya and the response in Bangladesh. There will also be a preceding International Conference in Cox’s Bazar on 25 August. Commitments made at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum included a Rohingya Multistakeholder Pledge, for which 15 of the 26 pledging entities came from this region, including the Governments of Thailand, Australia and the Philippines. This demonstrates the continued international solidarity to the situation in Cox’s Bazar, and states have the ability to make additional pledges at any time.

1C) Impact on situation in Indonesia

In Indonesia foreign aid cuts have significantly impacted the operations of international and local organisations delivering services to refugees. These cuts have resulted in staff layoffs, office closures, and program suspensions. In the absence of a legal right to accessing livelihoods, and only partial rights to accessing education and public health, most refugees rely heavily on particularly UNHCR and IOM for assistance and thus are directly impacted by these cuts. The reductions in funding also lead to reductions in housing, health care, education, and other forms of assistance. The Indonesian government will likely face greater pressure to fill the gaps in support for refugees and asylum seekers. Indonesia has historically played an important role in avoiding deaths at sea through allowing safe disembarkation, mainly in Aceh Province. A noteworthy increase in online disinformation and hate speech toward newly arriving refugees has been a concerning trend and is one that the government and international organisations play an important role in actively combatting.²³

The October 2024 change in Indonesian administration has led to a reorganisation of ministerial responsibilities and departmental structures, some of which are still ongoing. For example, as of writing there is no new regulation for establishing the National Refugee Task Force, as the responsible ministry’s

²¹ UN. 2025. [Joint Response Plan 2025-26](#), p 8.

²² UNHCR. 2025. [‘UNHCR: Bangladesh has welcomed 150,000 Rohingya refugees in the last 18 months’](#) 11 July. A ‘flash appeal’ has been launched to raise US \$84 million to meet the critical needs of these new arrivals. UNHCR. 2025. [Flash appeal for 150,000 new arrivals](#). This appeal is in parallel to a second appeal for US \$455.6 million for [Addressing the most pressing needs of the 2025 Joint Response Plan](#).

²³ UN Sustainable Development Group. 2024. [Rising above hate: Indonesia tackles disinformation against Rohingya refugees](#), 29 February.

nomenclature has also changed. There has been uncertainty over who will be the lead agency for refugee response in Indonesia following a division of the Coordinating Ministry of Political, Security and Legal Affairs into two separate Coordinating Ministries (one of Political and Security Affairs, the other of Legal, Human Rights, Immigration and Corrections). However, following a coordination meeting of the Refugee Task Force at the end of May 2025 it was agreed that the Coordinating Ministry for Political and Security Affairs would remain the Lead Agency.

These changes come as Indonesia is also tightening its domestic budgets across the board, leading to repercussions on ministerial staffing, programmatic and service delivery budgets. At the same time global conditions are continuing to force more people to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, making preparing for future displacement crises an ongoing priority. From the Indonesian perspective, the aid cuts are a challenge to multilateralism and international cooperation in addressing global challenges, including refugee crises.

1D) Impact on situation in Thailand

In Thailand the suspension of US foreign aid and resettlement has had, and will continue to have, a huge impact on both registered and unregistered refugees living in the country. Thailand hosts approximately 81,000 registered refugees in camps along the Thai-Myanmar border,²⁴ and 6,300 registered urban refugees from 45 nationalities. In addition, approximately 1,700 refugees are detained in the country's 22 immigration detention centres.²⁵ Thailand also experiences relatively large mixed migration flows: IOM estimates that 1.3 million people entered Thailand from Myanmar irregularly and through porous land borders in 2023; the majority of whom intended to stay for a week or less.²⁶

The situation for those living in the nine camps along the Thai-Myanmar border are experiencing significant challenges.²⁷ Previously, approximately 50% of food and medical supplies (including vaccines) relied on US funding.²⁸ As a result of this funding being cut, children and adults in the camps now face a significant shortage of health care services, lower living standards and potential malnutrition.²⁹ Food services are also affected. The Border Consortium is the primary provider of food assistance to the camps, and announced on 31 March that 80% of households would "experience a substantial decrease in monthly food support" as a result of funding shortfalls.³⁰ 40% of UNHCR's budget in Thailand has been cut, affecting staffing and service delivery. The Thai Government is exploring solutions to cover some of the gap, however this is a major budgetary challenge and won't be without difficult trade-offs.

Over 145,000 refugees have been resettled from Thailand since 2004: 83% from the camps on the Thai-Myanmar border and 17% from urban areas.³¹ In the current context it is unlikely these high rates of

²⁴ UNHCR. 2025. [Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2024](#), page 21. The estimated number of registered and non-registered refugees in the camps is around 90,000- 100,000

²⁵ As of 6 June 2024 there were 17,100 adults and 131 children in detention across Thailand according to correspondence with the Immigration Bureau reported in FIDH. 2024. [Out of Sight](#). p. 6.

²⁶ Sally Barber & Rosalia Sciortino (eds). 2024. [Thailand Migration Report 2024](#), UN Network on Migration in Thailand, p. 53.

²⁷ Thai PBS. (2025, February 4). [Stop work order ศูนย์ผู้ลี้ภัย "มนุษยธรรม" ทางออกไทย "ม้าอารี"](#) [Stop work order Refugee Camp "Humanitarian" and Thailand's Solution "Ma-Aree"]

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Karen News. (2025, March 25). [US Aid Cuts Will Increase Hardships in Thai Refugee Camps](#); Thai PBS. (2025, February 4). [Stop work order ศูนย์ผู้ลี้ภัย "มนุษยธรรม" ทางออกไทย "ม้าอารี"](#) (Stop work order Refugee Camp "Humanitarian" and Thailand's Solution "Ma-Aree")

³⁰ The Border Consortium. 2025. [Statement: Reduction in Food Support to Refugees](#). 31 March.

³¹ IOM Thailand. [Resettlement and Movement Management](#).

resettlement will be reinstated anytime soon. Fortunately, Thailand has experienced significant economic development over the past two decades and increasingly participates in global fora on migration and refugee issues. Thailand is not classified as an upper-middle income country,³² currently sits on the UN Human Rights Council and made a series of very ambitious pledges at the two Global Refugee Forums and the International Migration Review Forum. Thailand is also one of the most rapidly ageing societies in the world, projected to have about 28% of its population over 60 years old by 2033³³

The Thai Government has taken some welcome and pragmatic steps to address the needs of the camp-based population, many of whom have lived in Thailand for decades. In October 2024 the Thai Parliament passed legislation to provide a pathway to permanent residency and nationality for 335,000 long-time residents of “officially recognised minority ethnic groups” and 142,000 of their children born in Thailand. This benefits about 80% of the almost 600,000 registered stateless people in Thailand, the majority of whom were registered between 1984-2011, making Thailand their home for decades.³⁴

Another positive recent step is the development of the National Screening Mechanism (NSM) and implementing alternatives to immigration detention of children. The NSM was initiated in 2019 and implemented from September 2023,³⁵ through partnership between the Immigration Bureau, UNHCR and civil society. The NSM aims to identify individuals who qualify for “protected person” status, which allows temporary stay and access to health and education services. While there is still work to be done to improve the new mechanism, including expanding its scope to include people from Myanmar, it is a welcome step towards more robust policies and practices to better support people in need of protection in the country. Thailand has also been leading on ‘education for all’ and community-based care arrangements for children in the context of migration, through which 1,340 children and caregivers have benefited between 2019-2023.³⁶ This not only benefits children and their families’ physical and mental health, but also saves the government money, as community-based care has been shown to be up to 80% cheaper than held-detention.³⁷ Another welcome step was taken in 2024 when Thailand removed its reservation to Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, confirming its commitment to protect the rights of refugee and asylum-seeking children, including their access to protection and assistance in line with international standards.³⁸

1E) Impact on situation in Malaysia

According to UNHCR data, Malaysia currently hosts around 196,300 refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people, the vast majority of whom are from Myanmar, most of whom are Rohingya.³⁹ Bureaucratic and political decision-making circles remain reluctant to ease any pathways which could lead to more permanent and legal local solutions, despite some refugees being in the country for almost three

³² World Bank. 2025. [Thailand at-a-Glance](#).

³³ World Health Organization (WHO). 2023. [‘Thailand’s leadership and innovations towards healthy ageing’](#), 9 February.

³⁴ UNHCR. 2024. [‘UNHCR commends Thai Cabinet’s landmark resolution to end statelessness’](#) Press Release, 31 October.

³⁵ Based on the Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on the Screening of Aliens who Enter into The Kingdom and are Unable to Return to the Country of Origin B.E. 2562 (2019).

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2025. [Country Statement by Ms Pinsuda Jayanama at the Second Asia Pacific Regional Review of the Implementation of the Global Compact on Migration](#), 4 February.

³⁷ International Detention Coalition (IDC). 2015. [There Are Alternatives](#).

³⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2024. [Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations, New York, deposited Thailand’s instrument of withdrawal of reservation to Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#). 4 September.

³⁹ UNHCR. 2025. [Where we work: Malaysia](#).

generations. This has been further compounded by sustained negative public sentiment toward refugees and asylum seekers. The IMM13 pathway from Malaysia's Ministry of Home Affairs and its Immigration Department allows IMM13 holders to access medical services and education. However this pathway is limited to use by certain groups, including Syrians, those from the state of Sabah in East Malaysia and refugees or migrants from the Philippines. The process continues to be controversial, mired in a toxic mix of federal-and-state-politics, corruption and bureaucratic inertia.

The primary guidelines on all matters concerning refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia is National Security Council Directive Number 23: Policy and Mechanism for the Management of Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The latest iteration of Directive 23 was revised in 2023 before being signed into effect by the Prime Minister on June 14, 2023. The directive is intended to encompass mechanisms, processes and responsibilities for the management of refugees and asylum seekers, including the government's own refugee status determination guidelines. It also covers the enforcement of relevant laws and social support systems. Implementation of this directive has been hampered as the government currently lacks a registration mechanism and the prerequisite data for identifying different groups of refugee and asylum seekers.⁴⁰ Despite being approved by the Prime Minister for just over two years, Directive 23 itself remains confidential, which has impacted the ability of local and international civil society, aid, advocacy and refugee management groups to plan mid-to-long term responses.⁴¹ Reports from early 2025 have indicated that a further revision of Directive 23 is in the works that may allow refugees access to work.⁴²

Resettlement from Malaysia has historically been a lengthy and arduous process, often taking years to process and approve for those who meet all requirements.⁴³ Between 2005 and 2024, UNHCR Malaysia submitted over 159,000 refugees from 62 countries for resettlement. Of this number around 126,000 refugees were resettled to 17 countries, primarily to the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Norway.⁴⁴ Canada and the US have historically been primary recipients of refugees resettled from Malaysia. A combination of both COVID and the current US administration have seen a major reduction in the resettlement intake,⁴⁵ With limited resettlement options from Malaysia in the near future, alternative policy solutions are urgently needed.

Section 2: Concerns, silver linings and concrete responses

Based on the above context, this section of the paper outlines two key concerns and one potential silver lining over the immediate-term identified by the ADFM Secretariat, namely:

- Concern A: Even without further displacement, there will be increasing pressure on the humanitarian system including refugee camps, urban refugees and internally displaced people.
- Concern B: Displaced people are increasingly vulnerable to trafficking, smuggling and related exploitation, and likely increase in dangerous maritime movements and deaths at sea.

⁴⁰ Malay Mail. 2024. '[Govt unveils new policy to manage Malaysia's 191,832 refugees and asylum seekers, says minister](#)' 18 December.

⁴¹ SUHAKAM. 2025. '[Media Statement No. 12-2025_SUHAKAM calls for urgent implementation of the National Security Council \(NSC\) Directive No. 23](#)', 17 February.

⁴² Malay Mail. 2025. '[Government proposes allowing UNHCR refugees to work in Malaysia legally](#)' 13 February.

⁴³ Liani MK. 2022. '[Safety and stability elude refugees seeking resettlement from Malaysia](#)' *Southeast Asia Globe*, 19 August.

⁴⁴ UNHCR. 2025. [Durable Solutions in Malaysia](#).

⁴⁵ Melissa Gosselin. 2024. '[Surge in refugee healthcare costs strains Canada's system](#)', *Immigration.ca*, 3 December; FCJ Refugee Centre. 2024. '[Canada to reduce new immigration by 21 percent](#)'; White House. 2025. [Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program](#), 20 January.

- Silver Lining: Cuts to funding result in innovative responses from governments and local and international agencies, leading to a better, more cohesive system in the long term.

In response to each point, 3-4 concrete policy proposals are put forward to mitigate risks. The responses recognise that governments and organisations across the region are under immense pressure and are being asked to do more with less. There will inevitably be trade-offs and difficult choices to make. The proposals in this paper endeavour to be practical, pragmatic and low-cost, building as much as possible on existing policy and programs. For clarity, a summary of the proposals can be found on pages 8 and 28.

Concern A: Even without further displacement, there will be increasing pressure on the humanitarian system including refugee camps, urban refugees and internally displaced people.

As outlined above, displaced groups in the region are facing greater hardship as a result of the cuts to humanitarian aid and the lack of resettlement options. Even if there are no new sudden displacement events, this population is large and experiencing distress, and the local and international organisations that used to provide services to them are struggling to stay open. National and local governments will not be able to entirely fill gaps in funding and no new donors are large enough or have the political willingness to step into the breach.

As displacement becomes more protracted, people living without legitimate access to education, livelihoods and ways to contribute to society are more vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. These are serious security risks that must be considered by host states. Displaced populations in the region include large groups of working-age people who bring skills and have the potential to fill gaps in labour markets. Both the economic and security cases for building temporary protection policies for refugees in the region are therefore strong. Two important elements of a temporary protection regime include registration and access to livelihoods. To mitigate negative perceptions towards refugees from host communities, and also address concerns about competition over resources, education campaigns will be important, to make it clear which rights do and do not come with this temporary protection status. Governments can develop these policies in close collaboration with refugees, UNHCR, civil society experts and the private sector who each bring a wealth of capability to the discussion.

In response to the current context UNHCR and IOM are developing what they refer to as a “panoramic”, or “route-based, approach” to mixed movements of refugees and migrants.⁴⁶ This approach involves interventions for refugees and migrants in countries of origin, asylum, transit and destination as a means of saving lives, averting dangerous journeys, rebuilding trust in asylum and migration systems, and fostering sustainable solutions. This approach intends to be implemented through programmes in key locations across common routes, including from Myanmar and Bangladesh onward to Southeast Asia and Oceania, to enhance protection and solutions as early as possible.

When inclusive and well-designed, programs like this not only assist governments in better understanding who is living within their borders, but also boost the national economy through employment, registration fees and tax revenue; mitigate security risks by providing displaced people with meaningful ways to spend their time; and better prepare refugees for their long-term future either in their home country (when conditions allow for safe and dignified return) or a resettlement country. Temporary protection and local

⁴⁶ UNHCR & IOM. 2025. *Looking ahead: A panoramic approach for irregular movements in the region*.

stay arrangements were highlighted in the Bali Process *2016 Bali Declaration* as a means of improving preparedness and responses to forced migration.⁴⁷ Temporary protection policies could be modelled on those that have worked successfully elsewhere, such as the temporary protection directive activated in Europe in February 2022 for Ukrainians, providing temporary access to things like residence permits, access to employment under certain conditions, access to medical care and education for those under 18 in state-run schools.⁴⁸ These types of policies can work well alongside more strategic use of complementary pathways, particularly pathways to higher education or labour mobility.

A.1. Provide civil registration/documentation for all

States benefit from having robust civil registration processes and accurate data on populations in their country for a number of reasons. It helps them manage their labour force, addresses security concerns, and prevents people falling prey to traffickers and other types of exploitation. Registration can also assist in reaching remote or isolated populations with essential services, including health services like vaccines which benefit whole societies. Improving registration will also help to more quickly identify trafficking victims who drown at sea (discussed further below). As noted by the Co-Managers of the Bali Process Regional Support Office of the Bali Process, “people without legal identity face layered risks from being denied basic services and livelihood opportunities, which in turn results in higher vulnerability to exploitation and statelessness. This can lead to individuals selecting to pursue clandestine passages as their only perceived option to a better life.”⁴⁹

In many ways progress on civil registration for all is long overdue, and it aligns with numerous commitments made across the region. For example, prioritising civil registration is in line with the Bali Process’ *Adelaide Strategy for Cooperation* Section 6 on victim protection and migration management, and Sustainable Development Goal 16.9.⁵⁰ This agenda is also supported by attendees at the Third Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific held in June 2025, where Ministers committed to a “Decade of Action” on the issue to 2030.⁵¹ At the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand all made pledges to end statelessness and support global progress on this front, and will need to report on progress towards these pledges in December 2025.

Progress will look different in each country, and will require concerted efforts to address access and language barriers and trust deficits in some communities. But promising steps already exist. For example, as noted above Thailand has made progress by regularising 480,000 stateless people in the country,⁵² and establishing the National Screening Mechanism. Unfortunately, the current model of the NSM is so far slow to screen people, and requires people to be in detention before accessing the mechanism, thereby maintaining the criminalisation of undocumented migrants and refugees. Elsewhere, the Government of Malaysia and UNHCR are reportedly in the early stages of exploring how a similar model could work in

⁴⁷ Bali Process. 2016. [Bali Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime](#), 23 March.

⁴⁸ European Commission. N.D. [Temporary Protection](#).

⁴⁹ Fuad Adriansyah and David Scott. 2025. [‘Providing a legal identity for all should be Southeast Asia’s next big migration priority’](#), *The Diplomat*, 30 May.

⁵⁰ Bali Process 2023 [Adelaide Strategy for Cooperation](#), Eighth Ministerial Conference, 10 February; and SDG16 Now, [‘SDG16.9 By 2030’](#): “By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration”.

⁵¹ UNESCAP. 2025. [Ministerial Declaration on a Decade of Action for Inclusive and Resilient Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific](#), Bangkok, 24-26 June 2025.

⁵² Hai Kyung Jun. 2024. [‘Thailand takes major step towards ending statelessness’](#) *UNHCR Press Release*, 1 November. Thai Government. 2023. [‘Announcement of the Screening Committee for Protected Persons on the criteria, methods and conditions for screening applications for protected persons’](#) Vol. 140, Special Episode 72, Royal Gazette, 27 March.

that country.⁵³ In Indonesia there could be an opportunity to allow refugees access to Indonesian Health Cards (*Kartu Indonesia Sehat*/KIS cards) or the newly established digital national ID system to provide access to bank accounts and healthcare.⁵⁴ To allay host community concerns about pull factors any such registration or documentation process should be accompanied by education campaigns targeting both the host community and refugees to clarify what rights do and do not accompany these documents.

Concrete options:

- As part of a temporary protection regime, states hosting displaced persons explore national policies to provide them with documentation that allows access to national health services, bank accounts, education and employment on a temporary basis, working closely with UNHCR, civil society and those with lived experience.
- Education campaigns need to accompany this policy roll-out to ensure relevant government agencies, host communities and those being registered are fully informed and to allay any potential concerns, misinformation or disinformation.
- At the regional level, ASEAN and the Bali Process Regional Support Office continue to convene discussions to share lessons learned and promising practice in the area of civil registration and vital statistics.

A.2. Enable access to the labour market for refugees

Building on a solid base of civil registration and documentation, services will be easier to target to those who need them. Lack of access to legitimate work opportunities can push people into the grey or irregular market, making them vulnerable to forced labour, wage theft, mistreatment, and human trafficking. Evidence shows that enabling access to livelihoods and work rights yields greater economic benefits both for the individual and the state than segregating refugees from local populations. These economic arguments are even stronger in countries with ageing local populations like Thailand, and with displaced populations who are not able to return home safely like those from Myanmar. It is also important to remember that refugees bring a range of skills with them including doctors, lawyers, nurses, engineers, farmers and hospitality workers.

In Malaysia, demand for cheaper migrant labour to fill positions in manufacturing and service industries persists. Local workers tend to avoid such jobs because of the tough conditions and low pay, while employers have baulked at raising salaries to attract local hires. This reliance on migrant labour in certain industries also has the effect of preventing prices in these industries from increasing. Traditionally migrant labour has come from Indonesia and Myanmar, however this has declined significantly recently, with possible cuts from Bangladesh also seemingly on the horizon.⁵⁵ This has led to calls from the country's largest employer federation and several restaurant associations for the government to amend laws allowing refugees and asylum seekers to work formally in an assortment of sectors.⁵⁶ In 2016 the

⁵³ Chia Wan Rou, 2025. '[Home ministry to start registering refugees, vendor to be selected](#)' *Free Malaysia Today*, 8 July.

⁵⁴ Abigail Opiah. 3034. '[Indonesia's President launches platform to drive digital ID and service integration](#)' *Biometric Update*, 29 May.

⁵⁵ Malay Mail. 2025 '[Malaysia no longer top choice for Indonesian workers as immigration crackdown drives them to other countries, says ambassador](#)' 19 March; Hanthar Hein. 2025. '[Malaysia work permit quota limited to 20 workers per agency monthly](#)' Myanmar Labour News, 26 March' Says Asif Nazrul. '[Malaysia may recruit up to 40k workers next year](#)' *The Daily Star*, 3 July.

⁵⁶ Arfa Yunus. 2025. '[Giving refugees the right to work a win-win for Malaysia, says MEF](#)' *The Star*, 22 June. Hadi Azmi. 2025. '[Malaysian restaurants call for Rohingya refugees to fill 25,000 job vacancies](#)' *South China Morning Post*, 3 February.

Government of Malaysia worked with UNHCR on a pilot program allowing Rohingya access to work in the plantation and manufacturing sectors, however this did not lead to an ongoing program.

According to 2019 research by the Malaysian think tank IDEAS, granting refugees the right to work in Malaysia would contribute over RM3 billion (approximately US \$725 million) to annual GDP, create 4,000 new jobs for Malaysians, and contribute over RM250 million (approximately US \$59 million) in taxes within five years.⁵⁷ The Malaysian Government has stated its intention to provide formal employment rights to refugees registered with the UNHCR (pending a review of NSC Directive 23), however no timeline or roll-out agenda has yet been put forward.⁵⁸ It will be incumbent on stakeholders both in and out of government to ensure the formulation of clear, transparent, and enforceable guidelines which can address the needs of the market, lead to a more inclusive workforce and help registered refugees improve their living conditions and contribute to the local economy.

As noted above, in Bangladesh the situation for Rohingya living in Cox's Bazar remains challenging and in need of new short and medium term solutions. Past efforts to develop livelihood opportunities in the camp include programs run by IOM, ILO and the World Bank.⁵⁹ However these were never run at scale. World Bank survey data found that in 2019 about 33% of the working age Rohingya population described themselves as working, predominantly in paid volunteer work for humanitarian organisations, or in non-agricultural wage labour for men and self-run home-based activities for women.⁶⁰ According to the same survey the host community had a high employment rate of 95.4% and worked predominately in agriculture, which the Rohingya are precluded from by formal policies preventing them from leaving the camps. Limited informal livelihood opportunities run by UN agencies in the camps are now drastically cut back to the point where they soon may not exist at all.

Concrete options:

- States hosting refugees develop policy options to allow temporary access to livelihoods for refugees in the country, linked to registration documents. These opportunities should be designed with business communities, refugees and relevant UN agencies to ensure they are meeting the needs of refugees, local communities and the private sector.
- To address potential concerns, access to livelihoods should be limited to refugees, and as a temporary measure until repatriation or resettlement becomes viable. Education campaigns should also accompany these measures to address misperceptions and improve public understanding of the contribution of refugees to economies.
- Interested states could release a joint statement in the lead up to the High Level Conference in September committing to increasing access to livelihoods and inviting businesses to collaborate on opportunities that would jointly benefit refugees and host communities.
- Further research should be undertaken both to quantify the economic benefits to states in providing access to formal employment by the World Bank and other actors, and also to identify innovative ways to engage displaced people in the labour market including through technology.

⁵⁷ Laurence Todd, Adli Amirullah, Wan Ya Shin. 2019. [The Economic Impact of Granting Refugees in Malaysia the Right to Work](#), Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), April.

⁵⁸ Malay Mail. 2025. [‘Government proposes allowing UNHCR refugees to work in Malaysia legally’](#) 13 February.

⁵⁹ More information about these programs can be found here: [IOM](#), [ILO](#), [World Bank](#).

⁶⁰ World Bank Group. 2019. [Insights from the Labor Module on Work and Wages in Cox's Bazar](#), 19 November.

A.3. Expand and harmonise complementary pathways

Most years global resettlement programs only reach one per cent of at-risk populations, and in 2025 that number will be even smaller. In this context, making better use of remaining pathways, both traditional and newer complementary pathways, is essential. These are not a silver bullet, but are an important part of the picture, and help to share responsibility globally. These policies also build on the base of civil registration and documentation identified above, and link to access to labour markets in host countries.

A growing number of complementary pathways exist in the region. In 2025-26 the Australian Government has committed to settling 20,000 humanitarian entrants, and currently has a waiting list of over 300,000 people, mostly referred by UNHCR.⁶¹ Australia also resettles people through what it calls “complementary pathways” - although these are currently counted within the existing humanitarian intake of 20,000. The government has pledged to make this additional to the refugee intake and grow the total to 10,000, however is yet to provide a timeframe.⁶² As current co-chair of the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, Australia is actively consulting civil society groups who have put together practical roadmaps for how this scaling could be achieved.⁶³ This could include through expanding Australia’s Refugee Student Settlement Pathway, the emerging Train to Hire pilot and the Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot programmes, which are targeted at qualified refugees based in the Asia Pacific. New Zealand also has a small refugee quota programme which resettles 1,500 refugees per year, and ran a pilot of community sponsorship from 2021-June 2025 which settled 190 refugees, however there have been no announcements made about whether this pilot will continue.⁶⁴

Outside of long-time resettlement countries like Australia, newer champions are emerging like the Philippines, which has developed a small but thriving complementary pathways program. The program launched four years ago and has so far enabled 25 Rohingya refugees to move to the Philippines predominately from Malaysia to study at universities. The most recent group of 10 students also included a few Rohingya students from Bangladesh, marking an important first for that population.⁶⁵ The success of these students studying in the Philippines demonstrates the human capability that could be harnessed at scale if displaced people are given the right opportunities through higher education, in line with UNHCR’s goal to reach 15% of refugee youth accessing higher education by 2030.⁶⁶ Thailand has policies that benefit middle-class refugees from Myanmar and elsewhere, including digital nomad visas and the ability to extend student visas for students who have graduated for them to find employment in Thailand.

Thus complementary pathways should not be considered as limited to traditional resettlement countries. Indeed these policies need not solely benefit refugees either. There are creative ways that complementary pathways can be linked to labour mobility of host communities to ensure that benefits go to both groups, particularly for countries like Bangladesh which have large migrant worker populations outside the country, including in Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries.

⁶¹ Department of Home Affairs. 2025. [Discussion Paper: Australia’s Humanitarian Program 2025-26](#), P. 3.

⁶² UNHCR. 2023. [The Government of Australia pledges at The Global Refugee Forum: 13-15 December, Geneva](#).

⁶³ RCOA et al. 2025. [2025 Complementary Pathways Vision and Roadmap](#), May.

⁶⁴ New Zealand Immigration. [Refugee and protection unit](#). Host International. 2025. [‘Community Refugee Sponsorship’](#).

⁶⁵ UNHCR. 2025. [‘New batch of refugee scholars arrive in the Philippines through Complementary Pathways programme’](#) 8 July.

⁶⁶ Today the proportion of refugee youth enrolled in higher education globally is 7%. UNHCR. 2025/ [‘15% by 2030: global pledge on refugee higher education and self-reliance’](#) UNHCR,

Concrete opportunities:

- Countries with complementary pathways programs (including Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines) commit to practical, timebound roadmaps to strengthen and grow these pathways, co-designed with refugees, civil society and private sector actors to ensure sustainability, and share lessons learned amongst each other.
- All countries explore developing pathways for refugees in tandem with labour mobility pathways from host communities, including to OIC countries with existing labour agreements.
- States come forward at the Rohingya High Level Conference with commitments of support to expand third country solutions and complementary pathways.

Concern B: Displaced people are increasingly vulnerable to trafficking, smuggling and related exploitation, likely to increase in dangerous maritime movements and deaths at sea.

Displaced people facing protracted, desperate situations will naturally seek a better life through whatever means is available. People in desperate situations often make desperate decisions even in full awareness of the risks involved. 2024 was already the deadliest year on record since the 2015 Andaman Sea crisis, seeing the highest number of attempted movements in a decade.⁶⁷ And this was before the impacts of funding cuts were felt. In May 2025, 427 Rohingya died at sea.⁶⁸ An absence of effective early warning capabilities and reliable search and rescue procedures increase the risk of these tragic deaths at sea. Policies like pushbacks which most countries in the region employ (with the notable exception of Indonesia) worryingly set the stage for another Andaman Sea Crisis of 2015.

Since COVID-19, Southeast Asia has been experiencing a significant rise in human trafficking and forced criminality in cyber scam centres, which has received widespread media coverage and international attention.⁶⁹ Many criminal groups base their operations in Myanmar - as well as Laos and Cambodia - due to weak governance, porous borders and relatively under-resourced law enforcement, making the issue a true regional challenge. Significantly, a recent report on regional trends from East and Horn of Africa identified Southeast Asia as a destination region for human trafficking from Africa for the first time, primarily involving “migrants from Kenya and Uganda who were trafficked into online scamming operations” with victims mostly young, educated men.⁷⁰

Domestically in many parts of Southeast Asia exploitation and forced labour are common for undocumented and/or forced migrants. The 2023 Global Slavery Index found the Asia Pacific region has the largest number of people living in modern slavery in the world at 29.3 million (or 59% of the global total estimate).⁷¹ Due to the cross-border nature of trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling it is important to take a regional approach to addressing root causes and improving responses, including but not limited to through ASEAN and the Bali Process. It is timely to look at these approaches now, ahead of the annual increase in maritime movements that comes with the end of the monsoons towards the end of the calendar year.

⁶⁷ UNHCR. 2024. [Desperate irregular journeys: Rohingya refugees in search of protection](#). 31 December.

⁶⁸ UNHCR. 2025. [‘UNHCR fears extreme desperation led to deaths of 427 Rohingya at sea’](#) Press Releases, 23 May.

⁶⁹ The latest report is UNODC. 2025. [Inflection Point](#).

⁷⁰ Freedom Collaborative. 2025. [Regional trends in unsafe migration and trafficking in human beings: Collective CSO data from the East and Horn of Africa](#). June.

⁷¹ Walk Free. 2024. [Asia and the Pacific](#). This number comprises 52% in forced labour and 48% in forced marriage.

B.1. Develop early warning system capabilities

Consistent with the objective of improved regional cooperation and governance of forced migration, the need for better early warning capability has been recognised time and again in the region.⁷² The Andaman Sea experiences seasonal conditions which make the movement of people by sea relatively predictable, and yet every year these risky movements continue, if not increase, with deadly results. While much is known about common migration trends through the important work of groups like IOM and the Mixed Migration Centre, doing more to integrate forecasts with monitoring in real time would help to ensure that people are receiving the help they need when they need it. This is far from a new idea and has been recommended in documents including the Jakarta Declaration of 2013.⁷³

While this capability may take several years to develop, there are steps that can be taken now to build towards this goal. The Bali Process is well-placed to lead these efforts, given its broad membership beyond the ten ASEAN States to include other important actors, particularly Bangladesh, Australia and New Zealand, which all fall along common irregular migration routes. Indeed one of the main reasons that the Bali Process established the Taskforce on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) and Consultation Mechanism was to avoid another situation like the 2015 Andaman Sea Crisis.⁷⁴ The original vision for the TFPP was to bring officials together who can “standardise various national approaches, develop early warning capabilities and coordinate action in the events of a large influx of irregular migrants”.⁷⁵ The ADFM has previously suggested a review of these mechanisms to ensure they are achieving the goals they were originally established to achieve, and continues to see merit in this idea.⁷⁶

ASEAN also has an important role in improving regional early warning capabilities, given its ability to promote harmonised national systems and produce guidelines and protocols for emergency situations. ASEAN has a wealth of experience in early warning for natural disasters that could be built upon to consider implications for displacement. Internationally there are emerging examples that may prove illustrative. In Burkina Faso the Danish Refugee Council used a new programme to predict a significant influx of people displaced by conflict in 2024. As a result they were able to put in place preparatory measures including identifying housing, pre-positioning household items, drafting contingency plans for sanitation needs and sensitising host communities to the incoming arrivals.⁷⁷ International Crisis Group conducts regular conflict tracking to identify early warning of escalation, and lessons could be taken from this approach and usefully applied to movements of people.

Concrete opportunities:

- Bali Process Taskforce on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) scale up practical tabletop exercises and heat-mapping of likely displacement hot spots.

⁷² Such as in the [Bali Process Adelaide Strategy](#): “Continue activities to build preparedness to respond to irregular migration, including changing patterns and trends, such as multi-disciplinary table-top and planning exercises.” and ASEAN’s [Assessment of Current Capacity in multi-hazard end to end early warning systems](#)

⁷³ “Developing an early warning system and exchange of information and intelligence among diplomatic, immigration, border and law enforcement officers” [Jakarta Declaration on Addressing Irregular Movements of Persons](#), 20 August 2013, Jakarta, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Bali Process. 2016. [Review of Region’s Response to Andaman Sea Situation of May 2015](#).

⁷⁵ Ibid, para 13.

⁷⁶ ADFM. 2020. [Proposal for an assessment of future regional priorities for forced migration responses, including analysis of progress of Bali Process initiatives since 2016 Bali Declaration](#), Participant Pack, p. 16-18.

⁷⁷ Evan Easton-Calabria, Anna Lena Huhn, Stuart Campo. 2025. [Demystifying anticipatory action for displacement: a menu of operational options](#), 18 June.

- Bali Process Regional Support Office and ASEAN explore the potential for joint real-time monitoring of movements, linked to existing high-quality data on trends, to better enable life-saving interventions.
- AHA Centre pilot a project on developing an early warning system for conflict-induced displacement.

B.2 Strengthen coordinated and predictable search and rescue protocols and disembarkation

No matter how robust early warning systems are, it is also critical to have well-coordinated governance and well-supported capability to conduct search and rescue when required. This requires high levels of coordination both among national agencies and between different countries, which is inherently challenging. It is also important to design and carry out search and rescue activities in such a way that respects humanitarian obligations and saves lives, while also not encouraging criminal networks. Search and identification of people who have died or gone missing at sea is crucial not only to provide answers to families of loved ones, but also to better track trafficking and smuggling trends. These efforts have historically been led by Interpol in the region however would benefit from being embedded in national and regional practice.

Gaps that persist in the region around coordination and humanitarian obligations can be addressed through trust-building and cooperative agreements at the regional level, wherever possible bolstered by international expert organisations including AICHR, UNHCR, IOM and Interpol. Predictable funding for search and rescue is also crucial. In response to the crisis, ASEAN established a Trust Fund to Support Emergency Humanitarian and Relief Efforts in the Event of the Irregular Movement of Persons in Southeast Asia, however financial contributions are voluntary, and disbursement of funds to respond to emergency situations remains unclear.⁷⁸

The 2013 Jakarta Declaration - which all ADFM participating countries agreed to - included a recommendation for “Building capacity and conducting table-top exercises to promote timely search and rescue operations”.⁷⁹ The Bali Process’ review into the 2015 Andaman Sea Crisis identified lessons learned including: “the need for immediate search and rescue operations from neighbouring countries, financial support for humanitarian assistance, processing and resettlement from around the world (including OIC countries), verifying the status of arrivals and provision of shelter, water, food and health services, repatriation of those not in need of protection, and resettlement for those who are.”⁸⁰ These are worthy and widely agreed-upon recommendations, however more than ten years on there is still considerable way to go in meeting them in practice.

Concrete opportunities:

- A joint initiative from AICHR and the Bali Process RSO Joint on human rights-based maritime search and rescue in ASEAN, including:
 - Scenarios to improve coordination of safe disembarkation and screening for protection and safe disembarkation, and
 - Developing better procedures for activation of ‘disaster victim identification’ in case of boats in distress in the region.

⁷⁸ ASEAN. 2016. [‘Terms of reference of the trust fund to support emergency humanitarian and relief efforts in the event of the irregular movement of persons in Southeast Asia’](#) adopted ad referendum on 16 July 2016.

⁷⁹ [Jakarta Declaration on Addressing Irregular Movements of Persons](#), 20 August 2013, Jakarta, page 2

⁸⁰ Bali Process. 2016. [Review of Region’s Response to Andaman Sea Situation of May 2015](#).

- Ahead of the next sailing season, the ASEAN Secretariat clarify the status of the ASEAN Trust Fund and ensure that it is accessible in the case of emergencies at sea.

B.3 State cooperation to address root causes

In this region over 90% of refugees originally come from Myanmar.⁸¹ This makes ending the civil war and restoring peace in that country a regional priority. Recognising ASEAN norms of non-interference, there are nonetheless ways for regional actors to work to pressure the military to end violence and restore peace, including through financial sanctions, exclusion from political discussions, and engagement with diverse non-military actors from Myanmar. Some promising steps taken include The Gambia taking Myanmar to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2019 on the alleged grounds that Myanmar failed to fulfill its obligations to prevent and punish acts of genocide committed against the Rohingya in Rakhine State.⁸² Separately, the Australian Government has issued targeted financial sanctions and travel bans on individuals responsible for the 2021 coup, military-owned holding companies and five financial entities, designed to limit the military's access to funds.⁸³

Another significant recent development was that the International Labour Organization (ILO) invoked Article 33 of its Constitution against the military junta at its most recent ILO General Conference in June 2025.⁸⁴ This is only the third time this mechanism has been used in the ILO's history. This is the most serious measure in the ILO's toolkit and urges governments, companies and unions to "ensure that their actions do not enable the junta's continued repression" by taking steps such as reviewing supply of weapons, jet fuel or investments that may benefit the military. As all ADFM participating states are members of the ILO this is a significant measure, which will be regularly reported upon at ILO sessions going forward.

Malaysia has also taken important steps to address the Myanmar crisis through its role as 2024 ASEAN Chair, including indicating a willingness to transition the Special Envoy from a rotating to a more permanent role, to allow greater continuity.⁸⁵ In the lead up to 2024, efforts were made by local and international stakeholders including the ADFM Secretariat to encourage Malaysian officials to include forced migration in the new ASEAN's Community Vision 2045.⁸⁶ These were unsuccessful, however the opportunity is not completely closed. The two-decade period of ASEAN's current vision and plans ensures that there are provisions for periodic reviews and updates of Vision 2045. Further, paragraphs 8, 10 and 41 of the Vision call for ASEAN to "refresh processes", "strengthen ASEAN's institutional capacity and effectiveness" and make institutions "future-ready" and "more decisive, responsive and timely,"⁸⁷ all of which would require addressing forced migration in more effective and dignified ways.

⁸¹ Refugee Council of Australia. 2019. [‘The need for constructive Australian intervention on forced displacement in Myanmar’](#).

⁸² ICJ. 2025. [Application of the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide \(The Gambia v. Myanmar: 7 states intervening\)](#). Countries which have so far filed declarations of intervention include the Maldives, Belgium, Ireland, Democratic Republic of Congo, Slovenia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

⁸³ DFAT, [Myanmar sanctions framework](#).

⁸⁴ ILO 2025 [Resolution](#) concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Myanmar.

⁸⁵ Joanne Lin et al. 2025. [‘Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship: Laying the groundwork for Vision 2045’](#) *Fulcrum*, 29 May.

⁸⁶ ADFM. 2024. [From Crisis to Collaboration](#), March.

⁸⁷ ASEAN. 2025. [ASEAN Community Vision 2045](#), adopted by the 46th ASEAN Summit, 26 May, paras 8, 10, 41.

Concrete opportunities:

- ASEAN appoint an ongoing Special Envoy for Myanmar, and the troika of current, past and future ASEAN Chairs continue to engage with the diverse voices in Myanmar including the National Unity Government and continue to exclude the Myanmar military from high-level meetings.
- States publicly support the ongoing legal case against the Myanmar military junta at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
- States impose targeted financial sanctions on individuals responsible for the 2021 coup.
- States and other partners consider making new pledges for the GRF Rohingya Multistakeholder Pledge including to strengthen support to displaced Rohingya, and also support towards creating conditions conducive for return to Rakhine State. These pledges could also be part of statements made by States at the Rohingya High Level Conference.

Potential Silver Lining: Cuts to funding result in innovative responses from governments and local and international agencies, with opportunities to develop a better, more cohesive system in the long term.

A more positive trend is that this latest crisis will force innovation and new ways of working that ultimately result in a more cohesive and sustainable humanitarian and refugee system. Many of the old ways of working were very expensive. For example, localisation has been shown time and again to be an effective and lower cost way of providing humanitarian assistance; and community-based care of children a much better alternative to immigration detention. Given the reality that former levels of funding are simply not coming back, and resettlement systems may never look the same, innovative solutions are needed.

C.1 Prioritise funding to locally or refugee-led groups

Local and refugee-led responses are more cost-effective and better able to get to those who need it most. The localisation agenda is heavily at risk given the current funding landscape, and greater attention should be paid from donors to focus on how to get funds to those who need them most. It is also critical that those whose realities are most affected will have a seat at negotiation tables and be part of drafting solutions in a meaningful way. Localisation is increasingly urgent in camp settings, and in the context of humanitarian aid to Myanmar more generally. Many large donors work through intermediary groups in order to disburse funding locally. More can be done to remove risk for those working on the ground (through accepting digital rather than physical receipts for example) and to develop localisation or refugee-led pooled funds. More can also be done to tap the diverse talents of refugee communities who can play roles as teachers, doctors, engineers etc in supporting their local communities.

Concrete opportunities:

- Major donors review their policies around local provision of aid, incorporating feedback from those on the ground, ensuring aid does not end up in the hands of military groups, and coordinating with like-minded countries.
- ASEAN explore establishing an international aid monitoring mechanism, potentially supported by AIHR, to ensure provision of aid is reaching those who need it most.
- States make commitments at the upcoming High Level Conference on the Rohingya to fund diverse local and refugee led groups supporting displaced Rohingya communities.

C.2 Move away from held immigration detention towards community-based care

As noted above, some states are already moving away from the held detention of children in the context of migration. An evaluation of Thailand's Alternatives to Detention (ATD) work was carried out in 2023 and the policy is being revised this year in line with the findings. Countries like Malaysia are still exploring the best model for their country's context and having discussions with civil society and UN experts about how to progress their own ATD Pilot. The ADFM Secretariat and International Detention Coalition have convened the Regional Peer-Learning Platform on ATD since 2019 as a forum to exchange good practice and provide a community of practice for policymakers and practitioners. This forum brings together government and non government officials from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Thailand and met most recently in Sydney in February 2025.⁸⁸ An internal evaluation found participants greatly valued the peer-learning model as a way to improve policy and practice in a safe space.⁸⁹ This Platform was a recommendation from the 7th and 8th ADFM meetings and is supported in part by the Australian Department of Home Affairs, which in 2023 pledged to "share practice and policy lessons from Australia's journey away from held detention of children, especially within the Asia-Pacific" at the Global Refugee Forum.⁹⁰

Implementing alternatives to detention is aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which all states in the region have ratified, and the the Global Compact on Migration, which most states in this region adopted, particularly Objective 13 to "protect and respect the rights and best interests of the child at all times, regardless of their migration status, by ensuring availability and accessibility of a viable range of alternatives to detention in non-custodial contexts, favouring community-based care arrangements, that ensure access to education and healthcare, and respect their right to family life and family unity, and by working to end the practice of child detention in the context of international migration."⁹¹ ASEAN has also begun development of Guidelines on the Implementation of ATD for Children, expected to be finalised this year, which will be an important tool for accountability in the region.

Concrete opportunities:

- Continue to convene the ATD Peer-Learning Platform to promote positive practice and practical implementation of community-based alternatives to child detention and explore how these issues link to broader management of forced migration.
- Aligned with recommendations for documentation and civil registration above, states in the region explore moving away from held detention as a model, particularly of stateless people and those who cannot return to their home country for fear of persecution or violence.
- Money saved from held immigration detention programs can be invested in the development of national asylum systems and to strengthen national health and education systems to benefit all residents.

C.3 Scale the involvement of the private sector in medium-term solutions through employment pathways

Several high profile global businesses have been outspoken supporters of refugee employment, including Ikea, Uniqlo, Ben & Jerry's and Chobani. In Asia these voices also exist, including the examples of

⁸⁸ CPD. 2025. [Alternatives to Child Detention Peer Learning Platform](#).

⁸⁹ IDC and ADFM Secretariat. 2025. [Learning together: Advancing alternatives for children](#).

⁹⁰ UNHCR. 2023. [Government of Australia Pledges](#), 13-15 December.

⁹¹ [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#). 2018. Objective 13, paragraph 29(h). 13 July.

Malaysia's largest employer federation and several restaurant associations mentioned above.⁹² Harnessing the power of private sector voices in this discussion is hugely important. Employers often from diaspora communities or with refugee backgrounds themselves can also lead the way in promoting refugee employment.

Regional bodies have a role to play as well. In its 2016 *Bali Declaration* the Bali Process committed to engaging with "the private sector to expand legal and legitimate opportunities for labour migration and to combat human trafficking and related exploitation" and established a Government and Business Forum (GABF) in 2017.⁹³ This is still a work in progress, as to date the GABF has had a much stronger focus on combatting trafficking and exploitation than on expanding legal labour opportunities. As noted above, many ASEAN Member States rely on migrant workers to power their economies, including Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia and particularly Thailand, where over 10% of the labour force are migrants.⁹⁴ While ASEAN has a range of mechanisms in place to protect the rights of migrant workers, there would be benefits to the ASEAN economy and community from recognising refugees are either locked out of this labour force and therefore a missed opportunity, or are included in the grey areas of the informal economy, leading to exploitation.

Concrete opportunities:

- The Bali Process Government and Business Forum include access to work for refugees, and complementary pathways as part of their agenda and ongoing workplan to galvanise support from interested private sector companies.
- Establish a network of Asia Pacific refugee employer champions to galvanise momentum for refugee employment opportunities across the region, either through the GABF, World Bank Private Sector for Refugees (PS4R) initiative or another mechanism.
- Where previously resettlement countries have supported livelihood and training opportunities pre-departure for skilled refugees, prospective employers can step up and cover this funding themselves. Support pledged at the Global Refugee Forum can be leveraged to strengthen this engagement.

⁹² Arfa Yunus. 2025. '[Giving refugees the right to work a win-win for Malaysia, says MEF](#)' *The Star*, 22 June. Hadi Azmi. 2025. '[Malaysian restaurants call for Rohingya refugees to fill 25,000 job vacancies](#)' *South China Morning Post*, 3 February.

⁹³ Bali Process. 2016. [Bali Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime](#), 23 March.

⁹⁴ IOM. 2021. [Bridging the gap: Optimising the contribution of labour migration for Thailand's social and economic transformation](#), p. 20.

Table: Summary of proposals for discussion at the 14th ADFM Meeting

Concern A: Even without further displacement, there will be increasing pressure on the humanitarian system including refugee camps, urban refugees and internally displaced people.	
A.1. Prioritise civil registration/ documentation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of a temporary protection regime, states hosting displaced persons explore national policies to provide them with documentation that allows access to national health services, bank accounts, education and employment on a temporary basis, working closely with UNHCR, civil society and those with lived experience. • Education campaigns need to accompany this policy roll-out to ensure relevant government agencies, host communities and those being registered are fully informed and to allay any potential concerns, misinformation or disinformation. • At the regional level, ASEAN and the Bali Process Regional Support Office continue to convene discussions to share lessons learned and promising practice in the area of civil registration and vital statistics.
A.2. Enable access to the labour market for refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States hosting refugees develop policy options to allow temporary access to livelihoods for refugees in the country, linked to registration documents. These opportunities should be designed with business communities, refugees and relevant UN agencies to ensure they are meeting the needs of refugees, local communities and the private sector. • To address potential concerns, access to livelihoods should be limited to refugees, and as a temporary measure until repatriation or resettlement becomes viable. Education campaigns should also accompany these measures to address misperceptions and improve public understanding of the contribution of refugees to economies. • Interested states could release a joint statement in the lead up to the High Level Conference in September committing to increasing access to livelihoods and inviting businesses to collaborate on opportunities that would jointly benefit refugees and host communities. • Further research should be undertaken both to quantify the economic benefits to states in providing access to formal employment by the World Bank and other actors, and also to identify innovative ways to engage displaced people in the labour market including through technology.
A.3. Expand and harmonise complementary pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries with complementary pathways programs (including Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines) commit to practical, timebound roadmaps to strengthen and grow these pathways, co-designed with refugees, civil society and private sector actors to ensure sustainability, and share lessons learned amongst each other.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All countries explore developing pathways for refugees in tandem with labour mobility pathways from host communities, including to OIC countries with existing labour agreements. • States come forward at the Rohingya High Level Conference with commitments of support to expand third country solutions and complementary pathways.
Concern B: Displaced people are increasingly vulnerable to trafficking, smuggling and related exploitation, and likely increase in dangerous maritime movements and deaths at sea.	
B.1. Develop early warning system capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bali Process Taskforce on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) scale up practical tabletop exercises and heat-mapping of likely displacement hot spots. • Bali Process Regional Support Office and ASEAN explore the potential for joint real-time monitoring of movements, linked to existing high-quality data on trends, to better enable life-saving interventions. • AHA Centre pilot a project on developing an early warning system for conflict-induced displacement.
B.2 Strengthen search and rescue capacity for coordinated responses to forced migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint initiative from AICHR and the Bali Process RSO Joint on human rights-based maritime search and rescue in ASEAN, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Scenarios to improve coordination of safe disembarkation and screening for protection and safe disembarkation, and ◦ Developing better procedures for activation of 'disaster victim identification' in case of boats in distress in the region. • Ahead of the next sailing season, the ASEAN Secretariat clarify the status of the ASEAN Trust Fund and ensure that it is accessible in the case of emergencies at sea.
B.3 State cooperation to address root causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEAN appoint an ongoing Special Envoy for Myanmar, and the troika of current, past and future ASEAN Chairs continue to engage with the diverse voices in Myanmar including the National Unity Government and continue to exclude the Myanmar military from high-level meetings. • States publicly support the ongoing legal case against the Myanmar military junta at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). • States impose targeted financial sanctions on individuals responsible for the 2021 coup. • States and other partners consider making new pledges for the GRF Rohingya Multistakeholder Pledge including to strengthen support to displaced Rohingya, and also support towards creating conditions conducive for return to Rakhine State. These pledges could also be part of statements made by States at the Rohingya High Level Conference.
Potential Silver Lining: Cuts to funding result in innovative responses from governments and local and international agencies, with opportunities to develop a better, more cohesive system in the long term.	

C.1 Prioritise funding to locally led groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major donors review their policies around local provision of aid, incorporating feedback from those on the ground, ensuring aid does not end up in the hands of military groups, and coordinating with like-minded countries. • ASEAN explore establishing an international aid monitoring mechanism, potentially supported by AICHR, to ensure provision of aid is reaching those who need it most. • States make commitments at the upcoming High Level Conference on the Rohingya to fund diverse local and refugee led groups supporting displaced Rohingya communities.
C.2 Move away from held immigration detention towards community-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to convene the ATD Peer-Learning Platform to promote positive practice and practical implementation of community-based alternatives to child detention and explore how these issues link to broader management of forced migration. • Aligned with recommendations for documentation and civil registration above, states in the region explore moving away from held detention as a model, particularly of stateless people and those who cannot return to their home country for fear of persecution or violence. • Money saved from held immigration detention programs can be invested in the development of national asylum systems and to strengthen national health and education systems to benefit all residents.
C.3 Scale the involvement of the private sector, especially in medium-term solutions through employment pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bali Process Government and Business Forum include access to work for refugees, and complementary pathways as part of their agenda and ongoing workplan to galvanise support from interested private sector companies. • Establish a network of Asia Pacific refugee employer champions to galvanise momentum for refugee employment opportunities across the region, either through the GABF, World Bank Private Sector for Refugees (PS4R) initiative or another mechanism. • Where previously resettlement countries have supported livelihood and training opportunities pre-departure for skilled refugees, prospective employers can step up and cover this funding themselves. Support pledged at the Global Refugee Forum can be leveraged to strengthen this engagement.

Logistical Notes

Information for participants about logistics and travel are outlined in detail below. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at adfm@cpd.org.au.

Please note that the ADFM Secretariat **does not arrange travel insurance** for participants. We kindly **encourage all participants to make their own arrangements** and explore suitable insurance options.

Venue & accommodation

The Venue of the 14th ADFM Meeting is **The Sukosol Hotel in Bangkok**, Thailand.

The Sukosol Hotel

477 Si Ayutthaya Road, Phaya Thai, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Phone : +66 2 247 0123

The meeting venue will be in the **Rattanakosin Room on the 1st Floor**.

Accommodation for most participants during the event has been arranged at the meeting venue: The Sukosol Hotel. The ADFM Secretariat can cover accommodation for up to two nights (including breakfast) at the venue for those who were covered by the organisers. Participants will be responsible for their own additional expenses (i.e. minibar, phone charges, etc).

Check-in time is 2pm, however you are welcome to drop your luggage off at any time.

Airfares

Should you require assistance booking your flights please confirm this well in advance with organisers. The Centre for Policy Development (CPD) will be responsible for arranging flights for participants who need assistance.

Meals

Breakfast is included in your accommodation booking on 21-22 August 2025 for those staying at the venue at the Patummat Restaurant of the hotel, starting at 6.30am.

During the meeting on 21-22 August, lunch and coffee breaks/refreshments will be provided for all participants.

The ADFM Dinner on 21 August 2025 will be held at the **Bangkok Heritage Restaurant** at 2 Aram Si Alley, Thung Phaya Thai, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400. It's a 10 minute walk from the meeting venue and we will depart together from the lobby.

Visa

1. Visa-Exempt or Visa-on-Arrival countries:

Many passport holders including those from ASEAN and Australia can enter Thailand without a visa for up to 60 days, or obtain a Visa on Arrival for 15 days. Please check your specific country's status and any other requirements [here](#). If your country **does require a visa in advance** let us know and we can assist with any necessary invitation letters or documents.

2. Passport validity: Please ensure your passport is **valid for at least 6 months** from your date of arrival.

3. TDAC (Thailand Digital Arrival Card):

All foreign visitors must submit the TDAC online at least 3 days before arrival. Submit online [here](#).

Airport Transfer

Please note that participants are expected to **organise their own transport to and from the airport**. Below are the recommended options:

Airport Rail Link

The fastest way to get from Suvarnabhumi Airport to the hotel venue is by taking the Airport Rail Link. The Express Line departs every 30 minutes and takes only 18 minutes at a cost of THB 150. Alternatively, the City Line departs every 20 minutes and takes 30 minutes (stopping at eight stations) for a fee of THB 45.

To take this option, from the **Arrivals Hall**, take the **escalator or elevator down to B1 level** for the **Airport Rail Link (ARL) towards Phaya Thai Station**. The Sukosol Hotel is **just 4 minutes walk** from the station (*turn left after exit, cross the small street toward the hotel*). See a short video showing the walk from Phaya Thai Station to The Sukosol Hotel [here](#).

Official Airport Taxi (Metered)

Public taxi service information counters and automatic ticket vending machines are located in the Passenger Terminal, Suvarnabhumi Airport, Floor 1, between Gate 4 and Gate 7. Travel time is approximately **40–60 minutes**, depending on traffic. Estimated cost will be THB 420-500 (with additional charge of THB 50 for taxi drivers as per the announcement from the Ministry of Transport and THB 70 for toll).

Ride-Hailing Apps (Grab, Bolt, InDrive)

You can choose the ride-hailing app Grab, Bolt, and InDrive to get from the airport to the venue. This will cost around THB 200-500 (includes tolls; varies by app and car type). Follow in-app instructions to the **designated pick-up area on Level 1 (Ground Floor)**. You will have to download this app from the App Store/Google Play Store and register an account to book a ride.

When returning, it is advised to be at the airport about 2 hours before your departure time. Factoring in a 30-60 minute journey from the hotel to the airport, aim to leave the hotel 3 hours before your flight's departure.

Facilities at/around the venue

Hotel guests can access an outdoor pool, gym and wellness centre at the hotel. There are a range of restaurants in the hotel:

- **Patummat (international)**
The hotel's signature outlet features all-day dining, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets from the show kitchen and à la carte meals.
- **Lin-Fa (Chinese)**
Popular modern Cantonese dining in Bangkok. It is recommended to try the weekend all-you-can-eat dim sum and Peking duck.
- **Sapphire Bar**
A 'speakeasy' styled bar featuring alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks and tapas.
- **The Deli Shop**
Provides sandwiches, salads, pizza, coffee, smoothies, as well as an array of homemade cakes, pastries and chocolates.

- **Pool Terrace**

Provides light meals and cool drinks beside the pool, located on the 6th floor of the Siam Wing.

Local attractions near the venue:

The hotel is adjacent to many retail, commercial, dining, nightlife, cultural and government centres. Within easy reach are tourist sites including Jim Thompson's House, Suan Pakkard Palace, Dusit Park, Grand Palace and Chao Praya River. It is also near shopping meccas like Siam Paragon, MBK, Central World, Siam Square, Pratunam, Platinum and Chatuchak Weekend Market.

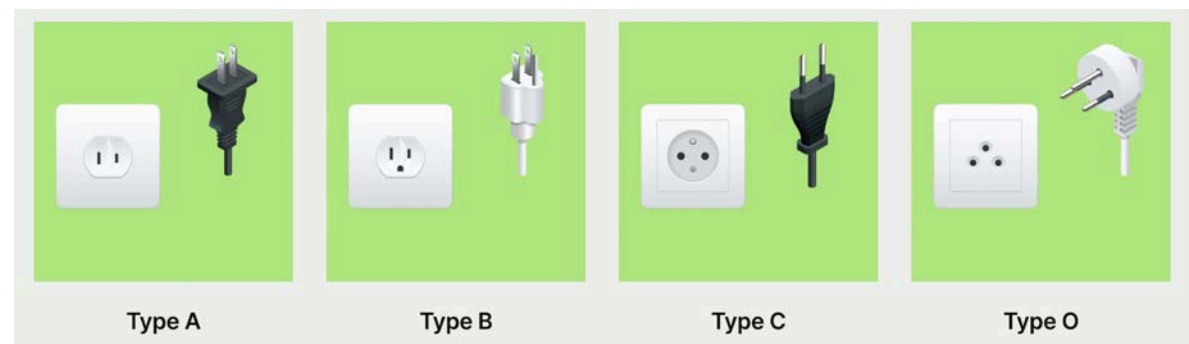
Other information

Obtaining a SIM Card (if desired)

You can easily purchase a Thai SIM card upon arrival at major airports such as Suvarnabhumi or Don Mueang. Counters for major providers like AIS, DTAC, and TrueMove are located in the arrival halls. They offer prepaid tourist SIM packages with data, calls, and texts. Please bring your passport for registration. Alternatively, SIM cards are also available at convenience stores like 7-Eleven across the city.

Electricity supply

Thailand operates on a 220V supply voltage and 50Hz. The most commonly used plug types are Type A, B, C, and O. Participants are advised to bring their own universal travel adaptors if required.



ADFM Dinner Speaker Profiles

21 August 2025, Bangkok

Kannavee Suebsang MP

Kannavee Suebsang is a Member of Parliament of Thailand and is a frequent presence in humanitarian and human rights forums. With a background at the National Security Council, Kannavee later joined the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), serving in eight countries, including Sudan, Uganda, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand.

Kannavee possesses valuable expertise in humanitarian response, specifically in the war-affected Thailand-Myanmar border area, where he has provided emergency support to internally displaced people and refugees. He actively monitors and advocates to end rights violations particularly in the three southernmost provinces. In addition to his work as a Member of Parliament, Khun Kannavee is also the founder and chairperson of the Peace Rights Foundation: an organisation dedicated to fostering peace and reconciliation efforts.



Mercy Chriesty Barends MP

Mercy Chriesty Barends is a Member of the House of Representatives in Indonesia for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI Perjuangan) representing Maluku since 2014. She is also currently the Co-Chair of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR).

Ibu Mercy has been very active on human rights issues including climate change issues through her work in Parliament, as well as internationally through her work in The Alliance of Parliamentarian Call for Fossil Free Future, the Global Alliance for Green New Deal, or Air Quality Asia. She is a Member of Parliamentary Committee Commission X, responsible for Education, Youth, Sport, Tourism, Arts and Culture.



Phil Twyford MP

Member of Parliament

Phil Twyford is the Labour Member of Parliament for Te Atatū, a suburb of Auckland New Zealand, where he lives. After studying politics at Auckland University, Phil worked as a journalist and union organiser before becoming the founding Executive Director of Oxfam New Zealand. Phil later became Oxfam's Global Advocacy Director, based in Washington DC. Upon returning to New Zealand, Phil was elected to Parliament for the Labour Party in 2008 and has served in a number of roles including Minister of Transport and Minister of Housing and Urban Development, and later Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control in Prime Minister Ardern's Government. Phil is currently the Opposition Spokesperson for Immigration, Disarmament and Arms Control, and Associate Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs.



Participant Profiles



Abi Poole

New Zealand

Abi Poole is currently the Deputy Head of Mission at the New Zealand Embassy in Bangkok, and New Zealand Permanent Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Abi has worked for the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade since 2013, and prior to being posted to Bangkok she was seconded as an adviser to the New Zealand Foreign Minister's Office. Her last posting was to Australia.



Amy Hanson

New Zealand

Amy Hanson is a Risk and Verification Manager with Immigration New Zealand, based at the New Zealand Embassy in Bangkok. In this role, she has a focus on immigration risk management and visa fraud in the Southeast Asia region. Amy has over a decade of experience working in the immigration system in a range of operational teams.



Andrew Hudson

Australia

Andrew Hudson is Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centre for Policy Development (CPD). He has 25 years of experience in public policy, advocacy and senior leadership, working with NGOs, the United Nations, the private sector and government. Andrew joined CPD in June 2021 as inaugural International Director, to build out a new international program for CPD, and became CEO in April 2022.



Before joining CPD, Andrew was CEO of Crisis Action in New York, leading a global team of over 50 people in 11 countries working to build coalitions to protect civilians in conflict. Prior to that, Andrew has also worked at Human Rights First in New York, as a lawyer in Australia, with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Ecuador and the UN Regional Commission in Thailand. He was also Australia's first Youth Representative to the UN. Andrew holds honours degrees in politics and law from the University of Melbourne and a Master of Laws from New York University School of Law.

Anita Lewan

Australia

Anita Lewan is Director Counter People Smuggling within the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). In this role she is responsible for the Australian Government's international engagement on irregular maritime migration and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime.



As a member of DFAT's crisis cadre Anita also provides surge support to global humanitarian and disaster relief responses. Anita has extensive experience across the Australian Public Service. Highlights include founding DFAT's counter foreign interference capability; senior defence, legal and operations roles in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; managing Australia's defence cooperation programs in Southeast Asia and the Pacific for the Department of Defence; and a posting to Wellington, New Zealand as Australia's inaugural secondee to the New Zealand Ministry of Defence. Anita has also worked in domestic policy roles within the Attorney-General's Department, and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Atu Yudhistira Indarto

Indonesia

Atu Indarto is a career diplomat and currently serves as the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs at the Directorate of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. In this role he manages Indonesia's diplomacy on humanitarian affairs at multilateral forums. His responsibilities include humanitarian assistance, International Humanitarian Law, disaster management, and refugee issues. Since joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2008, he has worked in the Directorate General of Information and Public Diplomacy, the Directorate General of American and European Affairs, and the Directorate General of Multilateral Affairs.



His overseas assignments include in London, United Kingdom (2014-2017), and in The Hague, Netherlands (2020-2024). During these postings, he addressed political and economic relations and consular and public diplomacy. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communication from the University of Indonesia, and a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, USA.

Caitlin McCaffrie

Australia

Caitlin McCaffrie is the Forced Migration Policy Director at the Centre for Policy Development, where she has worked since 2018. In this role Caitlin coordinates the Track 1.5 Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM) in collaboration with think tank partners in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, and provides policy analysis, advice and research on topics including migration governance, human trafficking, forced migration and refugee resettlement.



Prior to joining CPD Caitlin worked for non-government organisations in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, including the Cambodian Center for Human Rights and Stanford University's WSD Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice, managing programs on research, education, outreach and trial monitoring of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Caitlin holds a Masters of Public Policy and Management Degree from the University of Melbourne and a first class Honours degree in International Studies from the University of Adelaide.

Chompunut Phasuphan

Thailand

Chompunut Phasuphan has recently taken up the role of Chief of the Migration/Humanitarian Section at the Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She joined the Ministry in 2012 and her first posting was to Dhaka, which is where she began working on displacement issues. Upon returning to Bangkok, Chompunut served as migration desk officer, contributing to key milestones such as the repatriation of displaced persons, establishment of the National Screening Mechanism, and Thailand's role as a GCM Champion Country.



From 2021 to early 2025, Chompunut was posted at the Permanent Mission of Thailand in Geneva, focusing on migration and humanitarian affairs. Her interests include Alternatives to Detention (ATD), statelessness, and asylum systems. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from Chulalongkorn University and a Master's in European Studies from King's College London.

Christy Kumesan

Indonesia

Christy Kumesan is Senior Project Coordinator at CPD where she works across the forced migration and just transition portfolios. She is a humanitarian and international development professional with a demonstrated history working for non-profit organisations. Christy is skilled in humanitarian diplomacy, multilateral affairs and policy, project management, organisational development, international relations, partnership development, as well as community engagement. Her professional goals include promoting peace through multi-tracks diplomacy and strengthening multinational collaboration to reach world prosperity and equality.



Christy has more than a decade of experience working in this sector including with GIZ, ICRC, RedR Indonesia, Humanitarian Benchmark Consulting, and Kompas Gramedia Group. She has a Masters Degree in Global Humanitarian Diplomacy from Universitas Gadjah Mada and a Bachelor of Political Science from the same university.

Dave Fatalla

The Philippines

Dave Florenz M. Fatalla concurrently serves as State Counsel III of the Department of Justice's Legal Staff and Protection Officer of the Department's Refugees and Stateless Persons Protection Unit. As State Counsel, his responsibilities extend beyond courtroom litigation to diplomatic and policy development, taking part in negotiation of treaties and drafting of administrative rules.



As a Protection Officer, Dave performs roles relevant to the promotion and safeguarding of the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons. Most recently, he participated in the Southeast Asian Senior Officials' Roundtable on Civil Registration, Legal Identity Documentation and the Prevention of Statelessness in Viet Nam, in October 2023. He has also taken part in training from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and served as a delegate in a refugee study mission in South Korea.

Evan Jones

Australia

Evan Jones is Programme Coordinator at the Regional Support Office for the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (RSO). Evan joined the RSO team in June 2023, and supports the smooth functioning of the RSO for effective and strategic engagement with Bali Process Members. He is passionate about further enhancing the capability of the RSO to deliver impactful programmes and activities that align with the objectives and needs of members.



Evan has been based in Asia for more than a decade, having worked in the not-for-profit sector in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand. He also has prior experience working in academia, supporting NGO governance, and in the public sector in Australia. He brings diverse knowledge and familiarity with effective governance, media engagement, stakeholder engagement, partnerships, and research to the RSO.

Faiyaz Murshid Kazi

Bangladesh

Faiyaz Murshid Kazi is the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Thailand with concurrent accreditation to the Kingdom of Cambodia, and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP). He is a career diplomat belonging to the 20th batch of the Bangladesh Foreign Service. Prior to holding his current role he served as Director General in charge of UN and European affairs, and has also served in the Bangladesh Missions in Beijing, Geneva, New York and Brussels.



Over the years, Mr Kazi has participated in many multilateral negotiations as part of the Bangladesh delegation. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Mr. Kazi served as an Assistant Commissioner and Magistrate in Chattogram as a member of the Bangladesh Administration Service. Mr. Kazi did his Master's in English literature from Dhaka University, and holds a diploma in International Relations from the erstwhile Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris, France.

Fuad Adriansyah

Indonesia

Fuad Adriansyah is the Indonesian Co-Manager of the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (RSO). He is also currently serving as Deputy Chief of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UNESCAP of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bangkok.



Pak Fuad joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 1998, and was assigned to several foreign postings, including in Berlin, Germany (2001-2005), the in New York, USA (2008-2012), and in Seoul, Republic of Korea (2015-2019). Prior to his arrival in Bangkok, he served as the Director of Centre for Functional Positions Development (2020-2024). He completed his Bachelor of Informatics Engineering at Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia, and Master of International Relations at the University of Indonesia, Indonesia.

Fuadi Pitsuwan

Thailand

Fuadi Pitsuwan serves as president of the Surin Pitsuwan Foundation; a philanthropic group focused on education, conflict resolution, and human security in ASEAN. The Foundation aims "to inspire ASEAN citizens to rise above their differences, address regional challenges and bring prosperity to the region as a single community." It funds scholarships for international relations students, supports a Track 2 network of Myanmar scholars in the region, and organises art events, among other initiatives.



Dr. Pitsuwan is also a visiting fellow at Chiang Mai University's School of Public Policy, where he is primarily based. From 2022 to 2024, he advised the Move Forward Party and its leaders on foreign policy. Earlier, he joined the advisory board of Teach for Thailand from 2012 to 2019. He also helped launch Harvard's Thai Studies Program, serving as its founding coordinator from 2013 to 2014. Dr. Pitsuwan holds a PhD in International Relations from Oxford University. He also earned his Master's in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School and a bachelor's degree in foreign service from Georgetown University.

Hafsar Tameesuddin

International

Hafsar is the Co-Secretary General of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, a social worker, human rights defender and Rohingya activist. They advocate for the rights of refugees, LGBTQI+ communities, statelessness, gender equality, prevention and response to SGBV and ending child marriages. Hafsar has more than 15 years of experience working with refugee communities, INGOS and NGOS and has served as an interim advisory member of the UNHCR Advisory Group. They are currently an advisory member of the Global Movement of Statelessness, Board Member at Forces of Renewal Southeast Asia and member of the Board for Azadi Project.



Hafsar's expertise includes understanding the ground realities of challenges faced by refugees, statelessness and LGBTQ+ communities as someone with lived experience. They are a passionate advocate for power shifting, inclusion and diversity within existing systems. Their work and advocacy are centred on improved prevention and response measures to SGBV, to promote and protect the rights of refugees, stateless people, asylum seekers, and LGBTQ+ communities in the Asia Pacific Region and beyond.

Jashim Uddin Khan

Bangladesh

M. Jashim Uddin Khan is Joint Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh in the Ministry of Home Affairs, leading national efforts on human trafficking, migrant smuggling, extradition management, mutual legal assistance, and security cooperation with other countries. In this role he works closely with government agencies and local, regional, and international organizations to translate national policies into actionable results.



Holding an MBA in Training and Development and an MHRPD in Human Resource Development, Jashim Uddin Khan blends strong policy expertise with over six years' judicial experience as a cognizance and trial magistrate. He currently leads the review of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012, advancing major reforms, and has been pivotal in strengthening Bangladesh's institutional and infrastructure capacity to combat these transnational crimes.

Kamal Norfarid Kamarudin

Malaysia

Kamal Norfarid bin Kamarudin is currently serving as the Principal Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) in Malaysia, where he focuses on public and security policy, refugee management, and irregular migration. He began his service in 2005 after completing his Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence.



Over the years, he has held various positions in both domestic and international postings, including Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of Malaysia in Berlin (2019–2023), Consul at the Consulate General of Malaysia in Davao City (2009–2013), as well as senior roles in the Prime Minister's Department and the Department of Islamic Development.

For six years, he was also involved in the Mindanao peace process as a member of Malaysia's Secretariat for the GPH-MILF peace talks—an experience that deepened his commitment to diplomacy, regional stability and conflict resolution.

Karen Whiting

International

Karen Whiting is currently serving as the Head of the Protection Service in UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. In this role she supports UNHCR country operations in the region in the areas of protection and solutions.

Prior to her posting in the Regional Bureau in Bangkok, Karen worked with UNHCR's country operations in Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan, the Republic of Türkiye, Iraq, Italy and Ukraine. She also worked on judicial engagement in the Europe Bureau in Brussels and headed the Child Protection and Youth Unit in the Division of International Protection in UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. She holds a law degree from McGill University in Canada, and speaks English and French.



Mercy Barends

Indonesia

Mercy Chriesty Barends is a Member of the House of Representatives in Indonesia for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI Perjuangan) representing Maluku since 2014. She is also currently the Co-Chair of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR).

Ibu Mercy has been very active on human rights issues including climate change issues through her work in Parliament, as well as internationally through her work in The Alliance of Parliamentarian Call for Fossil Free Future, the Global Alliance for Green New Deal, or Air Quality Asia. She is a Member of Parliamentary Committee Commission X, responsible for Education, Youth, Sport, Tourism, Arts and Culture.



Mic Chawaratt

International

Chawaratt Chawarangkul (Mic) joined the International Detention Coalition as the Southeast Asia Programme Manager in 2020 and now serves as Asia Pacific Regional Manager. Prior to working with IDC, Mic worked in a wide range of roles within the humanitarian, human rights and development fields across Asia and Africa, advocating for and protecting the rights of marginalised groups, building resilient communities and promoting sustainable development environments for the poorest and most vulnerable. He also facilitated the development of the Thailand policy to end the immigration detention of children, and fostered the development of the national refugee screening mechanism in Thailand.



Mic earned a Master's in Human Resource Management Systems from Golden Gate University in the USA, a Master's in Human Rights from Mahidol University in Thailand, and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Kasetsart University in Thailand.

Mohd Hafiz bin Abdullah

Malaysia

Mohd Hafiz Lo bin Abdullah is a Superintendent of Immigration currently attached to the Council of National Strategic Office for Anti Trafficking in Persons and Anti Smuggling of Migrants (MAPO) since 2021. With more than five years as a secretariat member for the council and his experience in trafficking and smuggling issues, Mohd Hafiz has a wealth of experience in irregular migration and forced labour issues in Malaysia. He has contributed to the National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (NGHTI), National Action Plan on Forced Labour (NAPFL), yearly United States Trafficking in Persons Report (USTIP's Report), Case Management Committee and Victims Assessment and Case Coordination Committee and others.



Mohd Hafiz holds a Master's of Business Administration, a Diploma of Science in Investigation from Malaya University, a Diploma in Enforcement Law and a Certificate in Law from the International Islamic University in Malaysia.

Mohd Tarmizi Dan

Malaysia

Mohd Tarmizi bin Dan is the Director of the National Intelligence and Crisis Management Division of the National Security Council of Malaysia. One of his responsibilities in this role is to identify strategies in managing refugees and asylum seekers.

He leads his division in coordinating the national level committee on refugees and asylum seekers that formalises national strategy and approaches on managing refugees and asylum seekers. He has a Master's Degree in Strategic and Security Analysis from the National University of Malaysia.



Naiyana Thanawattho

Thailand

Naiyana joined Asylum Access Thailand in January 2019 and currently serves as Executive Director. In this role she oversees overall operations, programming, and policy advocacy at Asylum Access Thailand, working closely with refugee networks on issues like Alternatives to Detention (ATD) and access to livelihoods.

Naiyana has over 15 years experience working on child protection issues, both in development and humanitarian sectors including with international organisations UNICEF, UNHCR and Save the Children. At UNHCR, Naiyana led the 'Best Interest Determination' process for refugee children along the Thai-Myanmar border. She also provided child protection technical support to the program implementation team at Save the Children. Naiyana holds a Master's Degree in Women Studies from Thammasat University in Bangkok.



Napatat Kranrattanasuit

Thailand

Napatat Kranrattanasuit is Assistant Professor and Lecturer at the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies at Mahidol University, Thailand, and is part of the ADFM Secretariat. Her research interests are international human rights law, human rights of marginalised groups of people, and anti-trafficking law. She received her Doctor of Juridical Science degree (S.J.D.) from American University Washington College of Law.



Dr. Napatat Kranrattanasuit's recent publications include: ASEAN and Human Trafficking: Case Studies of Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam; Making Disability Rights Real in Southeast Asia: Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN; Restricted Right to Employment among Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Indonesia and Its Consequences; Emergency, Exclusion and Inequity in Education of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Children in Indonesia; and Failed Mimicry: the Thai Government's Attempts to Combat Labor Trafficking Using Perpetrators' Means.

Natdanai Kietigaroon

Thailand

Natdanai Kietigaroon currently serves as a diplomat (second secretary level) at the Human Migration section, Social Division, Department of International, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this role he is responsible for overseeing tasks concerning irregular migration in Thailand including displaced persons from Myanmar, stateless persons, irregular migrants in urban settings, as well as Thailand's role in providing humanitarian assistance. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand in 2022.



Before his current position, Natdanai served in the China Section of the Department of East Asian Affairs, overseeing Thailand-China bilateral relations. He holds a Master's Degree in International Development Studies from Chulalongkorn University and Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq

International

Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq is the Senior Regional Specialist for Migrant Protection at IOM's Asia Pacific regional office in Bangkok, Thailand. In this role she supports the IOM missions in the region in IOM's migrant protection portfolio, ranging from counter trafficking, assistance to migrants in vulnerable situations to return and reintegration assistance to vulnerable migrants. Prior to joining the regional office, Peppi worked with IOM in Bangladesh coordinating the mission's Rohingya humanitarian response in the country, as well as managing projects from safe migration awareness to sustainable reintegration of victims of trafficking.



Peppi has also worked as a journalist with the Dow Jones Newswires and the Wall Street Journal in London and Brussels. She holds a Master's Degree in Comparative Politics and a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Phil Twyford

New Zealand

Phil Twyford is the Labour Member of Parliament for Te Atatū, a suburb of Auckland New Zealand, where he lives. After studying politics at Auckland University, Phil worked as a journalist and union organiser before becoming the founding Executive Director of Oxfam New Zealand. Phil later became Oxfam's Global Advocacy Director, based in Washington DC.



Upon returning to New Zealand, Phil was elected to Parliament for the Labour Party in 2008 and has served in a number of roles including Minister of Transport and Minister of Housing and Urban Development, and later Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control in Prime Minister Ardern's Government. Phil is currently the Opposition Spokesperson for Immigration, Disarmament and Arms Control, and Associate Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs.

Reynaldo C. Cusi

The Philippines

Reynaldo C. Cusi is the Division Chief of the Community Capacity Development Division (CCDD) under the National Barangay Operations Office (NBOO) of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). He leads the implementation of programs and projects aimed at promoting and protecting the welfare of women and children, with a strong emphasis on addressing trafficking in persons and related concerns.



Under his leadership the Division has spearheaded key initiatives including Strengthening of Local Committees on Anti-Trafficking and Violence Against Women and their Children (LCAT-VAWC) and has supported international engagements, including the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC). Mr Cusi has also actively participated in various regional workshops and high-level meetings on trafficking in persons in the ASEAN region, including the 2025 launch of the ASEAN Guidelines on the Non-Punishment Principle in Malaysia.

Sriprapha Petcharamesree

Thailand

Sriprapha Petcharamesree is currently Senior Researcher in the Faculty of Law at Chulalongkorn University, and was previously Senior Lecturer in the International PhD Program at the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand. She is part of the Secretariat of the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM).



Dr Petcharamesree was appointed by the Thai Government as the Thai Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) where she served between October 2009 to December 2012. Her research and expertise focuses on human rights, ASEAN and Southeast Asian studies, migration, including statelessness and citizenship, business and human rights, and international relations. Dr Petcharamesree has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Thammasat University, Thailand and received her PhD from the University of Paris-X Nanterre in France.

Steven CM Wong

Malaysia

Steven Wong is the former Deputy Chief Executive and Member of the Board of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia. In that position, he headed the Institute's economics division. He has worked in the public policy arena for 25 years and has spent an additional eight years in the private sector, where he held senior positions in the capital markets, investment strategy and research, fund management and management consultancy.



Dato' Steve has extensive experience in regional affairs, having headed East Asia research with ISIS Malaysia, and having been on the secretariats of two ASEAN eminent persons groups. He received his graduate and post-graduate education from the University of Melbourne. Steve was a member of the Ministry of Human Resource's Technical Committee for the Minimum Wage and Tenaga Nasional Berhad's Economic Council. He has served as the Secretary-General of the Malaysian National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Malaysian Committee for Pacific Basin Economic Cooperation.

Thomas Daniel

Malaysia

Thomas Daniel is the Director for the foreign Policy and Security Studies Programme at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia and member of the ADFM Secretariat. His interests lie in security and strategic challenges and impacts of major power dynamics on ASEAN and its member states, the South China Sea dispute, and Malaysia's national security and foreign policies.



Thomas also looks at the policy implications of refugees, asylum seekers and other displaced people in Malaysia, and the government's refugee policy of "not having a policy". Thomas holds a Master's Degree in International Studies from the University of Nottingham (Malaysia), a Bachelors Degree in Communication and Media Management, and an Honours Degree in Communication, Media & Culture from the University of South Australia. He has also worked as a public relations practitioner focusing on social media management and media engagement strategies.

Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti

Indonesia

Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti is Research Professor at the Research Center for Politics, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and member of the ADFM Secretariat. For more than five years, she was a part of the ASEAN Research Team at BRIN. Dr Pudjiastuti's experience in trafficking and smuggling issues has also given her an insight into irregular migration. Although her research focuses on Indonesia, it also notes regional mobility, particularly at the level of ASEAN. She has also produced position and policy papers for the Indonesian government on a wide range of issues related to forced migration.



Dr Pudjiastuti graduated with a Master of Arts in Geography and Environmental Studies from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Adelaide, with a focus on international migration. She also holds a PhD from the Department of Criminology - Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia, with her dissertation focusing on people smuggling from Indonesia to Australia.

Varistha Borkird

Thailand

Varistha is a Plan and Policy Analyst at the Office of the National Security Council (NSC), Thailand. She is currently in the division in charge of statelessness and irregular migration issues. As a policy-making agency, the NSC has announced its two-year timeframe to draft a national action plan on the reduction of statelessness and the management of forcibly displaced persons in Thailand, which Varistha will be working closely on.

Varistha holds a Master's Degree in International Conflict Analysis from the University of Kent in the United Kingdom and a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand.



Zongklod Khawjang

Thailand

Zongklod Khawjang is a Foreign Relations Officer at the Operation Centre for Displaced Persons at the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok, Thailand. He has six years of experience in this space, focusing on forced displacement, statelessness, and labour migration issues since early 2018.

Zongklod recently attended the second Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, Switzerland as a part of the Royal Thai Government's delegation. He holds a Master's Degree in Migration Studies from the University of Sussex, United Kingdom.



Organisational Profiles

Centre for Policy Development



The Centre for Policy Development (CPD) is an independent, values-driven and evidence-based Australian policy institute, founded in 2007 by John Menadue AO, former Australian Ambassador to Japan and Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet under Prime Ministers Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser.

CPD exists to solve the biggest policy challenges facing Australia and the region, and to take people on a journey to solving them. CPD's policy development is geared towards an Australia that is equitable, aspirational and truly prosperous – and enlivened by the challenge of shaping a better future at home and abroad. CPD fuses domestic and international insights, combining fresh expertise to build a progressive Australian agenda.

CPD's model is collaborative and practical. CPD assembles coalitions of consensus from across business, government, politics, civil society and academia with a shared purpose to tackle long-term challenges and produce lasting systemic change. This is embodied in our Create-Connect-Convince working method. We:

- Create ideas from rigorous, evidence-based, cross-disciplinary research at home and abroad
- Connect experts and stakeholders to develop these ideas into practical policy proposals
- Convince governments, businesses and communities to implement these proposals

CPD's policy development is based on the following core values

- A government that is active and effective
- A country respected for leadership and cooperation
- An economy that is clean, innovative and productive
- A society that expands opportunity and social justice

National Research and Innovation Agency



The National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) was formed by the Indonesian government in 2019, and was established as a new government agency in April 2021.

The 2020-2024 vision for BRIN is: "A National Research and Innovation Agency that is reliable, professional, innovative and with integrity in service to the President and Vice President to realize the Vision and Mission of the President and Vice President: An Advanced Indonesia that is Sovereign, Independent, and Has Personality based on Mutual Cooperation"

The mission of the BRIN is to:

- Improve national science and technology capability, research and innovation through improving science and technology capability, strengthening economic transformation, and sustainable development based to increase competitiveness.
- Improve transparent, effective, and reliable government management

This mission includes efforts to respond to science and technology development challenges, and in the 2020-2024 period in the aspects of research and innovation policies, development cooperation and partnerships, increasing research, development, assessment and application of science and technology in several priority focuses of national research and innovation, as well as improving good governance in the context of bureaucratic reform.

In order to achieve BRIN's vision and mission, the strategic objectives that must be achieved are:

- Increasing invention productivity and innovation for competitiveness
- Improving good governance in the context of bureaucratic reform

Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies



The Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies (IHRP) was created following a merger between Mahidol University's Center for Human Rights Studies and Social Development and the Research Center for Peacebuilding. IHRP combines the experience and perspective both centers have to offer. IHRP is uniquely interdisciplinary and is redefining the fields of peace, conflict, justice and human rights studies in the Asia Pacific region and beyond.

The Center for Human Rights Studies and Social Development (CHRSD) was established in 1998. For more than ten years, it served as an academic institution specialising in human rights, with a track record in providing postgraduate education as well as training programs to students, human rights workers, human rights defenders, members of civil society organizations and government officials. The Masters in Human Rights started by the CHRSD is the longest running graduate degree program in human rights in Asia.

The Research Center for Peacebuilding was founded in November 2004 with the impetus to be part of the peaceful solution to conflicts in Thailand, especially the conflict in three southern-most provinces: Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. The Center has developed and implemented considerable action and participatory research projects. These projects focus on facilitating cooperative efforts to deal with the conflicts through opening space for dialogue at all levels, reducing violence, and identifying the needs of community and society. Also, the projects provide input for new public policies, in order to transform conflicts and build a just and peaceful society.

Mission: Our focus remains on social and political realities at the community, national and international levels. The IHRP is committed to the advancement of human rights and peace by educating human rights and peace practitioners, promoting outreach programs to community and international organizations, and conducting cutting edge research on important issues. Our mission is to promote learning excellence in human rights and peace, engaging communities in the transformation towards just peace.

Institute of Strategic and International Studies



The Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) was established in 1983 as an autonomous, not-for-profit research organization. ISIS Malaysia has a diverse research focus which includes economics, foreign policy, security studies, nation-building, social policy, technology, innovation and environmental studies. It also undertakes research collaboration with national and international organizations in important areas such as national development and international affairs.

ISIS Malaysia engages actively in Track Two diplomacy, and promotes the exchange of views and opinions at both the national and international levels. The Institute has also played a role in fostering closer regional integration and international cooperation through forums such as the Asia-Pacific Round-table, the ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and the Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT). ISIS is a founding member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and manages the Council's Secretariat.

ISIS Malaysia has four research programmes:

- **Economics:** to promote rapid and sustained economic growth and equitable development; to develop actionable policies and to spur institutional change
- **Macroeconomic policy:** trade and investment, banking and finance; industrial and infrastructure development and; human capital and labour market development
- **Foreign Policy and Security Studies:** To provide relevant policy analyses on Malaysia's strategic interests, and on regional and international issues, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific Region; including security studies, foreign policy, Southeast Asian politics and military affairs
- **Social Policy:** demographic and socio-cultural trends that are changing Malaysian society; effective nation-building and fostering greater national unity; Malaysian National Blueprint, youth, women and underprivileged communities
- **Technology, Innovation, Environment and Sustainability (TIES):** Strategic foresight, collaborative research and policy advice to the public sector, businesses and policy audiences; TIES development; and green growth, as well as energy, water and food security.