



2018

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**THE ASIA PACIFIC REFUGEE RIGHTS NETWORK**

# CONTENTS

Note from the APRRN Secretariat	01
Message from the Membership	02
APRRN - In a snapshot	03
Key Achievements and Outcomes	04
Programme Activities: Advocacy	06
National advocacy	06
Regional Advocacy	10
International Advocacy	11
Statements	14
Programme Activities: Capacity Strengthening	15
Programme Activities: Knowledge Resource Sharing and Outreach	16
Organisational Development	16
APPENDIX	18



# NOTE FROM THE APRRN SECRETARIAT

2018 was transformative. APRRN members helped the network accomplish considerable milestones in refugee protection across the region, and continued to develop and advance the ground-up, grass-roots, membership-led movement that the Asia-Pacific region is pioneering in the field of refugee rights advocacy. This report details many of these developments, and demonstrates just how diverse and compelling our membership is. It reflects upon our recent achievements, and provides a snapshot of the year in review.

Our membership defines our priorities, and one key development in 2018 was the reimagining of our Thematic Working groups. The addition of a Refugee Leadership and Participation Working Group, a Durable Solutions Working Group, and a Rohingya Working Group demonstrates an organisational adaptability and responsiveness to emerging opportunities and challenges in advancing advocacy for protection in the region, responding to the changing needs of our members, and the shifting political landscape.

Here in Thailand, APRRN worked with a number of local members to strengthen the network's efforts to progress and refine its strategy for supporting non-Rohingya Myanmar refugees and asylum seekers residing in Southeast Asia. APRRN continued to support the Coalition for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CRSP) as a means to strengthen national advocacy for refugee rights in Thailand.

Regionally, we streamlined our advocacy efforts by better focusing our engagement with ASEAN, the Philippines, and Australia. This included strengthening relationships with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission for Human Rights (AICHR), capacity-building and awareness raising with the Philippines Government, and supporting membership-led initiatives out of Australia. APRRN members have been key advocates and stakeholders in regional responses to the Rohingya crisis, and APRRN hosted regional events to increase the dialogue and refine advocacy approaches.

APRRN also coordinated a regional response to the cessation of refugee status for Chin refugees, and began progressing dialogues on regional frameworks for legal protection through strategic litigation and pro-bono assistance.

Internationally, APRRN played a crucial role in policy advocacy from a chronically under-represented region. APRRN maintained critical dialogue with UNHCR regional and national offices, and carried the priorities of members to headquarters in Geneva. This included contributing to advocacy for the adoption and implementation of the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration and supporting refugee leadership at every step.

APRRN's core strength is the dedication of our members. Their hard work is vital to our success. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a sincere thank you to all our hard-working member organisations, individuals, and the Secretariat staff.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Thamba Lewis'.

**Thamba Lewis**  
Secretary General



# MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP ARASH BORDBAR



I am honored to provide a message for the APRRN 2018 Annual Report, on behalf of all members and stakeholders with lived refugee experience. I am grateful to present a perspective too rarely seen in refugee rights advocacy: that of a refugee.

The refugee experience in the Asia-Pacific region was again characterised by instability and uncertainty in 2018. Many governments in the region continue to drift towards isolationist strategies, xenophobic rhetoric, and anti-refugee policies. This is an alarming and notable trend across the globe over the last few years, and one we must counter - with refugee representatives at the forefront of our efforts. The politics surrounding immigration continue to complexify, in national and regional dialogues, while simplistic sound-bite rhetoric undermines fundamental respect for the importance of humanistic approaches to protection.

Despite these worrying trends, APRRN members continued to lead the charge in refugee rights advocacy. We are excited to witness significant, if slow, positive steps in the region. These include the first Asia-Pacific Summit of Refugees, the widespread adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Thailand's Memorandum of Understanding to stop holding children in immigration detention, and Pakistan's pledge to provide citizenship to more than 1.5 million Afghan refugees.



The diversity and regional solidarity of our dedicated members continues to be APRRN's strength. Our collective efforts are strengthened by continued learning and information sharing through roundtables, conferences, short courses, and any number of other engagements at the local and international level. APRRN will continue to focus on bolstering our collective capacity in future years.

APRRN has been a valuable asset to me for my work with Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC) and UNHCR, with its vast connections in the Asia-Pacific region. I have been able to represent youth from all over the world, and am able to fight for their voices to be heard, thanks to the help of APRRN. In addition, APRRN has played a big part in my advocacy, having supported me since 2016, when I was chosen to represent youth at the global level at the UNHCR-NGO Consultations in Geneva. APRRN has provided me valuable training, and allowed me to make meaningful connections, internally and externally.

As we embark into another year of hard work, dialogue, and incremental steps, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all APRRN members, the Secretariat, and APRRN supporters. I look forward to all of the work we will do together in 2019.

**Arash Bordbar**  
Refugee Advocate



# APRRN – IN A SNAPSHOT

## Purpose

The Asia Pacific region is characterised by a diversity of national approaches to refugees and refugee rights, and an absence of regional frameworks and fundamental legal protection mechanisms. In order to ensure vital services are provided to refugees and to advocate for their protection, national civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have stepped in to fill protection gaps that are, fundamentally, state responsibilities. It is difficult for these local actors, with limited resources, to access critical training opportunities, essential technical resources, stakeholders, and other advocates. APRRN was created to bridge this gap, providing a platform for refugee rights advocates to better work together and engage with relevant stakeholders for a more prominent, unified, and effective regional advocacy presence. Advancing the rights of refugees at different levels is the heart of APRRN's mission, and this remains an integral focus of our mandate and work.

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## Membership

APRRN encompasses a diverse array of 199 organisational members and 203 individual members, for a total of 402 members both within and outside of the region. These members, which include legal aid providers, service providers, academics, human rights defenders, students, development practitioners and refugee communities themselves, are all key stakeholders in refugee rights in the Asia-Pacific.

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## Structure

Our members are the ultimate authority at APRRN, and our approach is ground-up. APRRN's volunteer Steering Committee and the APRRN Secretariat oversee efforts to support the capacity, collaboration, and information-sharing of refugee rights advocates. During 2018, the APRRN Secretariat was comprised of six full-time staff members. The APRRN Steering Committee was comprised of thirteen members elected by APRRN members every two years.

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## Programme Areas

In 2018, APRRN's members collaborated on a wide variety of programming and advocacy areas. These largely fell under specific working groups, which changed over the course of the year to ultimately include eight thematic (Immigration Detention, Regional Protection, Legal Aid and Advocacy, Women and Girls at Risk, Youth, Refugee Leadership and Participation, 'intern' Rohingya working group, and Durable Solutions) and four geographic Working Groups (South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific).

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## Member Support

APRRN Secretariat staff visited Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, and Singapore in 2018 and met with former, current, and potential APRRN members. These outreach trips not only assisted in increasing APRRN's visibility in each country, but also provided a space to discuss ways in which APRRN can further strengthen collaboration between members.

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**“APRRN has continued to support OUR's activities in 2018 by being present at 3C Forum in Jakarta, September, as well as by offering us a workshop slot during 7th APCR to discuss new strategies on access to higher education in the region. APRRN remains the first, and the most important stop for any NGO or initiative working in the region**



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

APRRN has pushed for meaningful change across national, regional, and international advocacy platforms. Through coordinated messaging, collaboration and well thought out interventions, APRRN was also able to engage and input constructively into key international processes such as the The Global Compact for Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. By presenting a coherent and trusted civil society voice, APRRN was also able to engage a wide range of stakeholders throughout all stages of the negotiation processes. APRRN's advocacy in both of these compacts will continue in 2019 as they begin to be implemented by governments across the region.

In 2018, APRRN co-organised a number of national and regional events. These meetings facilitated collaboration and joint-advocacy to push for critical policy changes. Some examples include a regional protection roundtable, high-level strategic discussions around the Rohingya Crisis, a parliamentary roundtable in the Philippines, the Asia Pacific Summit of Refugees, and capacity building / advocacy training for our South Asian members. These provided spaces to build and strengthen the capacity of people and organisations to advocate, and provided opportunities to explore new avenues for collaboration.

Furthermore, APRRN's members **influenced key stakeholders** to promote expanding available protection spaces. In Thailand for example, we were actively involved in discussions and input relating to the development of a Memorandum of Understanding to stop holding children in immigration detention and to explore alternatives to detention. APRRN also held a forum the Commission for Human Rights of the Philippines to highlight the successes of national refugee policies, and inspire key stakeholders in the region to emulate those successes.

APRRN's activities have also focused on **strengthening the organisational capacity** of members across the region. Through APRRN's annual short course, held in Bangkok in November 2018, and first-ever South-Asia course, in Bangalore in June 2018, attendees gained advocacy skills and context specific-refugee rights knowledge. This knowledge has been taken by members back to their local contexts, providing a bolstering of capacity and advocacy opportunities across the region.

Lastly, APRRN's communication channels provided network members with the ability to learn from one another and **share good practices**. Through our Facebook page, Twitter account and website, APRRN members and refugee rights advocates had space to share news stories and research. Many communications channels focused on the theme of refugee leadership and participation in 2018, and this theme was explored further in a number of meetings and summits throughout the year.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES



A further outcome of APRRN's **information and knowledge** sharing is the ability to **garner joint support** on a multitude of issues. In 2018 APRRN significantly increased the number of statements and press releases produced and shared, reflecting key issues of concern across countries and among the members. As a result, APRRN garnered a significant increase in media coverage in 2018

# PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES: ADVOCACY

## NATIONAL ADVOCACY

### New Zealand

Throughout 2018, APRRN retained our focus on New Zealand, and how the country can strengthen its leadership around refugee protection. APRRN continued to work with the International Detention Coalition (IDC) and New Zealand-based APRRN members to encourage New Zealand to resettle 20 unaccompanied refugee children from shelters in Malaysia. Through ongoing bilateral meetings, our members have continued to liaise with key government interlocutors on this issue. Meetings were held with the New Zealand Immigration Spokesperson, the Hon Michael Woodhouse, on this issue in May 2018 and was followed up with an APRRN-hosted Parliamentary Breakfast in Wellington in September 2018. These meetings were used as opportunities to continue political sensitization on the issue of refugees, alternatives to detention, and strategic use of resettlement. APRRN has been extremely pleased with the receptiveness of the New Zealand Government and will continue to progress these discussions into 2019 and beyond.

Furthermore, APRRN consistently engaged with the New Zealand Government to encourage finding a solution for the men, women, and children currently detained on Manus Island and Nauru. Positively, in 2018, the New Zealand Government announced that they had decided to double their refugee resettlement quota to 1,500 refugees per year. This announcement was the result of consistent efforts by APRRN members both within New Zealand and across the region.

“**had decided to double their refugee resettlement quota**”



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### Thailand

In 2018, APRRN initiated and undertook a series of activities in Thailand to strengthen the network's efforts to progress and refine its support strategy for the approximately 180,000 non-Rohingya Myanmar refugees and asylum seekers residing in Southeast Asia.

APRRN and the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) conducted a joint scoping mission to Malaysia and the Thai-Myanmar border from 23-31 March 2018. The primary objective of the scoping mission was to strengthen APRRN and RCOA's understanding of the perspectives of Myanmar refugees and asylum seekers on the Thailand-Myanmar border and in Malaysia.

A Briefing Paper on the findings of the mission was shared with representatives of diplomatic missions in Bangkok, Thailand, at an Embassy Briefing hosted by the German Embassy on 7 May 2018.





## Thailand

As follow up to the scoping mission and subsequent Diplomatic Briefing, APRRN and RCOA have continued the relationship building and information sharing with the diplomatic community regarding the current situation, as well as ongoing communication, information sharing and advocacy planning with organisations and refugee communities from both Malaysia and the Thailand-Myanmar border.

Since early 2016, APRRN has strategically focused on supporting CRSP as a means to strengthen national ownership of refugee issues in Thailand. Along with other APRRN activities, a number of CRSP events took place in 2018:

- CRSP organised an embassy briefing on 19 March 2018, which was hosted by the Canadian Embassy in Bangkok.
- Together with CRSP, APRRN actively participated in drafting and providing comments on a civil society document titled 'Regulations of the Office of the Prime Minister on the Management of Refugees'.
- APRRN has also been working alongside CRSP and other local child rights organisations to provide input to the Thai Government's draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Children in Immigration Detention.
- As part of the Global Campaign to End Child Detention, many partners around the world have developed country specific scorecards on immigration detention of children.
- Between 16-17 May 2018, the International Detention Coalition hosted a Theory of Change Workshop titled "Advocating for Alternatives to Immigration Detention for Children" in Bangkok, Thailand.
- From 21-23 May 2018, APRRN Secretariat staff participated in a workshop organised by CRSP titled "Safety, Stability and wellbeing: Accessing Thai Justice System and State Policy".
- On 16 July, APRRN and CRSP also participated and presented in a meeting with the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the EU Delegation.

Together with Asylum Access Thailand (AAT), Fortify Rights, and Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), APRRN assisted in producing a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) factsheet on the current situation of Thailand's Asylum Seekers and Refugees. This factsheet covers the period of June 2016 – December 2018



## Taiwan

In 2017, APRRN dedicated a significant amount of human and financial resources towards supporting Taiwan on the progression of their national legislation and other capacity building initiatives.

In 2018, the unique situation posed a challenge to particular advocacy programs in Taiwan. Throughout 2018, APRRN members in East Asia supported our Taiwan members in building internal capacity to address refugee protection concerns. This included interviewing techniques, country of origin information, and confidentiality concerns.

APRRN has also continued our engagement with the Taiwan Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva as well as the Immigration Attaché to Thailand, based in Bangkok.

## Afghanistan

From 20-27 April 2018, APRRN's Programme Coordinator Evan Jones conducted a scoping mission to Kabul, Afghanistan. As part of a combined mission with the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and APRRN's member TABISH Organisation, the trip focused upon developing a clearer understanding of APRRN's potential role for further support in the region. While in Kabul, APRRN also facilitated a workshop at the ACBAR, (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development), General Assembly titled "Advocacy Opportunities for IDP and Refugee Protection in Afghanistan".

**APRRN members in East Asia supported our Taiwan members in building internal capacity to address refugee protection concerns**

## Pakistan

APRRN maintained our advocacy for greater rights and protections for refugees in Pakistan, including for extensions of the PoR card, and the need for long-term safety and security. Following a change of government in Pakistan, APRRN welcomed the news from 16 September when Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan pledged to provide full citizenship to more than 1.5 million Afghan refugees currently living in Pakistan.

The APRRN Secretariat has continued to provide support to other national networks across the sub-regions by linking them to resources and other members as well as sharing information. As a matter of course, the APRRN Secretariat also provides technical support and advice to members as needed and provides linkages to other members across the region and internationally.



## Australia

In 2018, much of APRRN's Australia-related work was focussed on the dire situation for refugees detained in offshore facilities on Manus Island and Nauru. In April 2018, APRRN undertook a letter campaign to write to all 220 Australian MPs individually to raise our concerns regarding the treatment of these individuals. APRRN also wrote to all MPs in New Zealand.

As part of APRRN's mandate and commitment to facilitating refugee self-representation, in 2018 APRRN provided support for one refugee representative from Australia to travel to Geneva to attend the UNHCR-NGO Consultations and other side events. Since his support to attend Geneva, he has gone on to represent APRRN at a number of other forums including a Human Rights Council side-event, media, and other domestic advocacy.

APRRN continues to see the Australian Government as a key stakeholder that we must engage with despite the challenging environment. With the support of APRRN members, refugee representatives and other stakeholders we see the potential for positive changes to occur.

## The Philippines

In early September, a small APRRN delegation consisting of Interim Secretary General Evan Jones, Deputy Chair Lillian Fan, Programme Officer Sussi Prapakranant and a refugee representative, ASEAN parliamentarians, lawmakers and refugee experts convened in the Philippines for a series of refugee forums.

With the objective to foster an exchange of knowledge and regional perspectives on the refugee situation across Southeast Asia, APRRN partnered with the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), and respectively the Philippines House Committee on Human Rights and the Commission on Human Rights to hold these two forums on refugee awareness and protection mechanisms.

On 12 September a half-day Refugee Forum with civil society organisations was held at the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines. This event provided a platform for members of civil society, ASEAN parliamentarians, other non-governmental stakeholders and the Commission to learn about, and exchange knowledge about the refugee situation in the Philippines and across the region.

As a result of the forum, the House Committee as well as the Commission committed to make refugee rights a priority. APRRN will follow these developments closely, and offer any technical assistance as needed.

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**The International Association of Refugee & Migration Judges (IARMJ), Asia Pacific chapter has worked closely with APRRN over the past few years to promote and assist with training and better understanding of international refugee law and related issues in Asia. Because of the unique situation in Taiwan we hope our work there together has been instrumental and will continue to help claimants and our friends in Taiwan.**

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**Allan Mackey - Project Director and past President - International Association of Refugee & Migration Judges.**



# REGIONAL ADVOCACY

## Engagement with the ASEAN

APRRN continued to strengthen its engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2018, including by serving as the 'refugee focal point' within the Solidarity for Asian Peoples' Advocacy (SAPA) Taskforce, a network of human rights organisations and advocates.

APRRN focused its 2018 efforts on strengthening engagement and advocacy with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and other ASEAN human rights bodies through its cooperation with SAPA.

APRRN also participated in SAPA's Annual Strategy Meeting (ASM) aboard the Peaceboat in Singapore on 5 April 2018. APRRN's Programme Officer also held a side meeting during the ASM with the AICHR representatives during which the idea of conducting a joint mission to Bangladesh later in the year was discussed. This mission was rescheduled for mid-2019.

## Situation of Rohingya Refugees

Following attacks by militants on 25 August, 2017, against 30 police posts in Myanmar, the Myanmar military engaged a massive 'clearance' operation, burning villages and committing atrocities against the Rohingya population, forcing their expulsion from the country.

In November 2017 the APRRN Steering Committee decided to establish a Rohingya Task Force (RTF) in order to engage strategically with the situation and to address the key issues. The Task Force was headed by Lilianne Fan (APRRN's Deputy Chair and International Director of the Geutanyoe Foundation), and Chris Lewa (Director of the Arakan Project) and Brian Barbour.



Between 7-15 May, 2018, Chris and Lilianne, along with Brian Barbour from the Japan-America Refugee Network carried out a field mission to Bangladesh, including Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, and the refugee camps in Kutupalong and Jamtoli. As an outcome of the Bangladesh trip, the RTF compiled a mission report detailing the findings and outlining a number of recommendations for APRRN as well as other stakeholders.

On 22 October 2018, immediately prior to the 7th Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights, APRRN hosted a closed-door regional roundtable titled 'Protecting Rohingya Refugees in South and Southeast Asia - Challenges, Opportunities and Ways Forward' in Bangkok. APRRN's work to support the Rohingya over the next two years will continue, and primarily be led by its Rohingya Working Group (RWG). The RWG was formally established following the roundtable at APCRR7 in October 2018.

On 6 February 2018, APRRN and the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) co-organised the "APRRN-ICVA Dialogue on Rohingya Returns" in Bangkok, Thailand. Over 20 organisations were represented in the meeting, which included NGOs working on the ground in Bangladesh and Myanmar as well as UNHCR. The meeting was followed up on 5 September 2018, where APRRN and ICVA jointly convened a second multi-stakeholder briefing between UNHCR, NGOs and other partners in Bangkok, Thailand.

**“In 2018 APRRN hosted several roundtable interactions and training courses in Bangladesh. This has helped local organisations and individuals to understand refugee right issues, network on a regional level and devise related advocacy in the country. We expect APRRN will continue to strengthen front line activism and civil society organizations in the future.”**

**Rezaul Karim Chowdhury - Executive Director - Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust (COAST Trust)**

# INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

## UNHCR Engagement UNHCR Annual Consultation with NGOs

The theme of this year's Consultation was "Putting People First". The consultations provided space to discuss a number of core issues of concern and for refugee advocates to connect with each other for joint strategizing and information sharing. In addition to the usual sessions for the various regional bureaus, the agenda also featured thematic sessions on the following issues: statelessness, partnerships, measuring CRRF impact, working for and with local and refugee leadership, national systems strengthening, self-reliance, internal displacement, protracted internal displacement, climate change and faith-sensitivity in humanitarian responses.

This year approximately 70 APRRN members were present and actively involved as participants, moderators, note takers and panellists. APRRN provided funding and mentoring support to two refugee representatives, one representing the Youth Working Group and the other representing the Women and Girls at Risk Working Group (now known as the Women, Gender and Diversity Working Group). In addition to the UNHCR Consultations, several side meetings were organised including; UNHCR RSD Retreat, Strategic Litigation Roundtable, a Global Summit of Refugees, meetings with UNHCR Asia Bureau and other senior officials and meetings with relevant permanent missions (USA, Indonesia and Malaysia).

### Other UNHCR engagement

In addition to the above, APRRN continues to be in close dialogue with both the UNHCR Regional Office as well as some of the national offices (e.g. Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh) in the region. In March 2018, APRRN coordinated the NGO statement for the UNHCR Standing Committee summarises key concerns for the region. The statement can be found [here](#).



## Global Compact on Refugees Global Compact for Migration

Advocacy around the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) continued to be a key focus for APRRN in 2018. This engagement was led by APRRN's Regional Protection Working Group and the following activities took place in 2018:

- APRRN continued to be part of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Reference Group which consisted of UNHCR, IFRC and a few other NGOs.
- APRRN also continued to be involved in the Civil Society Action Committee.
- Regarding the thematic consultations of the GCR, APRRN participated in several and used these consultations as platforms to engage with government representatives. In total APRRN had physical presence at 4 out of 6 consultations on the Global Compact for Refugees and attended all consultations for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
- Together with Act Alliance APRRN drafted 6 briefing papers that looked at the complementarity of the two Compacts. The briefing papers have been shared with states at the various Global Compact for Refugees intergovernmental negotiations in Geneva, and at the Global Compact for Migrants intergovernmental negotiations in New York.
- Via its mailing list the Secretariat has circulated regular information and briefings to members in order to strengthen their understanding on the GCR and GCM.
- On a regional level, APRRN has been working closely with our member Migrant Forum in Asia in an effort to develop consolidated messaging and understanding of the Global Compact on Migration.
- The first of these meetings was held from 11-12 February in Manila, the Philippines and was attended by APRRN's Programme Coordinator Evan Jones, titled Asia Regional Civil Society Meeting on the Zero Draft of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM).
- A second meeting was also held from 21-24 March 2018 in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- A third and final meeting was held from 24-26 August in Bangkok, Thailand.
- In December 2018, APRRN's Programme Coordinator Evan Jones, former APRRN Chair Dr. Gopal Krishna Siwakoti and APRRN's GCM Focal Point Carolina Gottardo attended the adoption conference for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Marrakech, Morocco.

## Regional Protection Working Group Roundtable

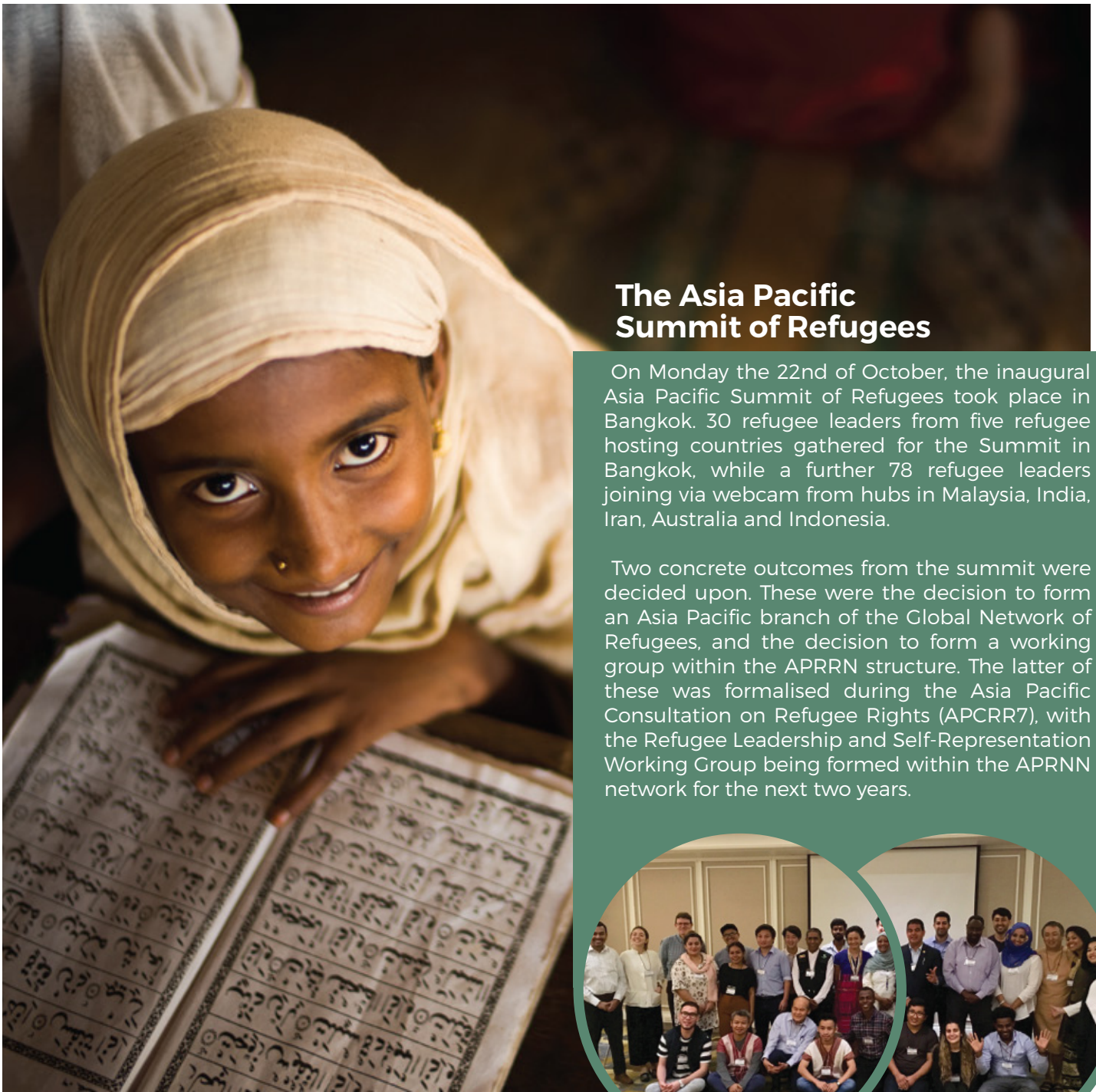
APRRN's 2nd Annual Regional Protection Working Group Roundtable was held from 1-2 May 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. The roundtable was preceded by a half-day workshop organised by ICVA which focused on the 'whole-of-society' approach, as articulated in the CRRF rollout and the discussions on the GCR. The workshop was targeted to NGO and other non-State participants and served as additional preparation for their engagement in the APRRN Regional Protection Working Group Roundtable.

## The 7th Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights (APCRR7)

APRRN members from within and outside the Asia Pacific region gathered in Bangkok for our biennial Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights in October 2018. This was the seventh time APRRN has organised the consultation, held on this occasion at the Narai Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. Over 170 participants from 25 countries in the region participated in the Consultation.

This year's theme, APRRN at Ten Years, recognised the impressive development of the network over the past decade, and the strategies and approaches needed to continue this progress. Some of the key outcomes of the consultation include:

- A new Steering Committee and APRRN Board were formalised.
- Three new Working Groups were established: Refugee Leadership and Participation, Rohingya, and Durable Solutions.
- Discussions resulted in working group action plans focused on advocacy around the situation of Rohingya, concerns of refugee communities on the Thailand-Myanmar border, ASEAN engagement, and strategic litigation.



## The Asia Pacific Summit of Refugees

On Monday the 22nd of October, the inaugural Asia Pacific Summit of Refugees took place in Bangkok. 30 refugee leaders from five refugee hosting countries gathered for the Summit in Bangkok, while a further 78 refugee leaders joining via webcam from hubs in Malaysia, India, Iran, Australia and Indonesia.

Two concrete outcomes from the summit were decided upon. These were the decision to form an Asia Pacific branch of the Global Network of Refugees, and the decision to form a working group within the APRRN structure. The latter of these was formalised during the Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights (APCRR7), with the Refugee Leadership and Self-Representation Working Group being formed within the APRRN network for the next two years.



## “Refugee Women : Keys to the Global Compact for Refugees,,

In 2018, APRRN entered into a partnership with the Forced Migration Research Network (FMRN) at the University of New South Wales to support the implementation of a research project titled “Refugee Women: Keys to the Global Compact for Refugees”.

From 25-28 October, APRRN and the FMRN kicked-off ‘stage 1’ of the three-year research project supporting the implementation and monitoring of commitments to gender equality, age, gender and diversity and ending sexual and gender-based violence and the new Global Compact on Refugees. The project is led by researchers from UNSW’s Forced Migration Research Network, who undertook the Gender Audit of the GCR Thematic meetings which informed the development of the GCR. Working in partnership with refugee women, service providers and UNHCR the project will develop and trial a suite of implementation tools and monitoring and evaluation strategies in five countries in the Asia Pacific.

# Statements

In 2018 APRRN published a number of statements, press releases and open letters raising key issues and concerns in the region. Please note that some of these were not publicly published. In chronological order these are :

Open Letter to Pakistan Prime Minister Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi	January 2018
Press Release : Proposed Repatriation to Myanmar for Rohingya Refugees is far too Premature	January 2018
Press Release: Lack of political courage once again threatens the safety of UNHCR Recognised Refugees in Thailand	January 2018
Press Release: Thailand Returns UNHCR Recognised Refugee to Cambodia Despite Overwhelming Safety Concerns	February 2018
Press Release: Despite Global Refugee Crisis, Japan Accepts Only 20 Refugees in 2017	February 2018
Open Letter to the Malaysian Prime Minister	February 2018
Letters to Australian and New Zealand MPs	April 2018
APRRN Statement: Afghanistan Remains Unsuitable and Unsafe for Returning Refugees	May 2018
Press Release: Legal Stay for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan Will Again Come Down to the Wire	June 2018
Press Release: International Solidarity for Stranded Yeminis and other Refugee Populations in South Korea	July 2018
Press Release: APRRN Pays Tribute to Refugee Rights Champion Barbara Harrell-Bond	July 2018
APRRN Statement: Suspend Policy to End Refugee Status of Chin Refugees from Myanmar	September 2018
Press Release: ASEAN Parliamentarians and Civil Society Call for Greater Regional Refugee Protection	September 2018
Urgent APRRN Statement: India Forcibly Returns Persecuted Rohingyas back to Myanmar	October 2018
Press Release: Refugee Activists from Across Asia Celebrate 10 years of Advancing Refugee Protection	October 2018
Urgent APRRN Statement: Bloody Violence Waged Against Hazara Highlights Insecurity in Afghanistan	November 2018
Press Release: Refugee Rights Activists from Across Asia Denounce Australia's Decision to Withdraw from the Global Compact for Migration	November 2018
Open Letter to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-Ocha: Release Refugee Hakeem Al-Araibi and Allow Him Safe Passage to Australia	December 2018



# PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES: CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

## Short Course

### South Asia

APRRN's first South Asia short course, titled Advocacy and Refugee Rights, was held from 4-8 June 2018 in Bangalore, India. The aim of the course was to strengthen participants' understanding of forced migration in the Asia Pacific and to strengthen participants' capacity and knowledge in advocating for the rights of refugees in the South Asia region. The course was delivered through a combination of lectures, case studies and small group work. Nineteen participants from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Singapore and Thailand joined the course.



### Southeast Asia

APRRN's seventh annual Short Course, focusing on Advocacy and Refugee Rights, was held from 26 to 29 November 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. The aim of the course was to strengthen participants' understanding of forced migration in Asia Pacific through a human rights perspective, to build capacity and knowledge in advocating for the rights of refugees in this region. Rachel Tan from the APRRN Secretariat and Dr Mike Hayes from Mahidol University's Institute for Human Rights and Peace Studies (IHRP) were the main course facilitators. 23 participants from 11 different countries in the Asia Pacific, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong and Iran joined the course. Five advocacy plans were developed by the end of the course, addressing pertinent refugee issues in the region.



**“APRRN has facilitated the development of my skills in terms of refugee rights and enabled me to share my experiences and ideas in international forums. Now in Bangladesh I am raising my voice in favour of Rohingya refugees professionally in different forums and programs.”**

**Abu Murshed Chowdhury - Executive Director - Programme for Helpless and Lagged Societies (PHALS) Bangladesh.**

# PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES: KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE SHARING AND OUTREACH

## Communications

APRRN continues to maintain its communication channels including a website, social media accounts, Google Groups and teleconferences. In 2018:

- Facebook Likes increased by 38%
- Twitter Followers increased by 23%
- 4 newsletters were published
- On average 4 posts were made per month to APRRN's website
- On average 7 Google Groups messages were sent per week
- 28 Working Group Teleconferences were held
- 5 Steering Committee meetings (3 in-person) were held

## Examples of Representation and Outreach

APRRN was invited to participate and speak in a number of meetings and workshops during 2018. Some key examples include:

- Expats Supporting those in Need Charity Luncheon, Bangkok, Thailand (February, 2018)
- Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration – Sixth Meeting, Sydney, Australia (March, 2018)
- OHCHR expert meeting on protecting the human rights of migrants in the context of return, Geneva, Switzerland (March, 2018)
- Innovation For Change World Forum, Almaty, Kazakhstan (June, 2018)
- Civic Space or No Space? Global Network Learning Event, Beirut, Lebanon (September, 2018)
- Metropolis Conference, Sydney, Australia (October, 2018)
- Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration – Seventh Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand (November, 2018)
- OHCHR and Swiss Embassy 70th Anniversary event of the UDHR, Bangkok, Thailand (November, 2018)
- Global Forum for Migration and Development, Marrakech, Morocco (December, 2018)
- Adoption Conference for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Marrakech, Morocco (December, 2018)
- High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection, Geneva, Switzerland (December, 2018)



# ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Staff changes

During 2018, the APRRN Secretariat has seen a number of staff changes:

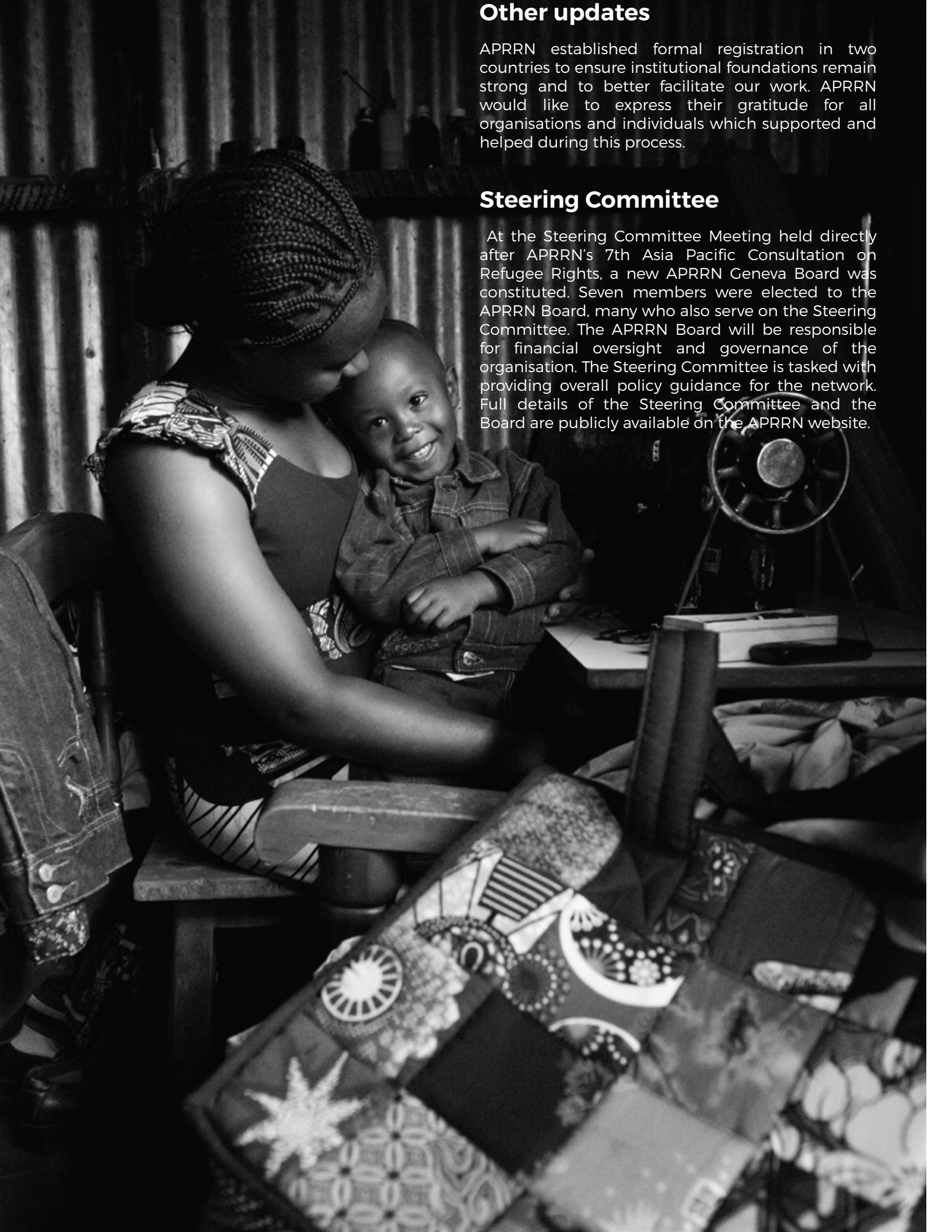
- Our Administration Officer, Ms. Mayuree Ruechakiattikul, left her role at APRRN in late June 2018.
- Rachel Tan joined the Secretariat as APRRN's Programme Associate in July 2018.
- APRRN's Secretary General Julia Mayerhofer left the Secretariat in mid-2018. Julia was replaced by Mr. Themba (Matthew) Lewis who commenced his duties in October 2018.
- Matthew Potts was an APRRN intern from February-November 2018.
- Won Guen Choi was an APRRN Volunteer from July to December 2018.
- Our Finance Manager Issaree Dinsamutra concluded her employment with APRRN in December 2018. She was replaced by Ms Sunisa Jaikleaw who commenced her role in December 2018.

## Other updates

APRRN established formal registration in two countries to ensure institutional foundations remain strong and to better facilitate our work. APRRN would like to express their gratitude for all organisations and individuals which supported and helped during this process.

## Steering Committee

At the Steering Committee Meeting held directly after APRRN's 7th Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights, a new APRRN Geneva Board was constituted. Seven members were elected to the APRRN Board, many who also serve on the Steering Committee. The APRRN Board will be responsible for financial oversight and governance of the organisation. The Steering Committee is tasked with providing overall policy guidance for the network. Full details of the Steering Committee and the Board are publicly available on the APRRN website.



# APPENDIX

## Appendix A : APRRN Steering Committee (September 2016 to October 2018)

### Working Group Chairs and Deputy Chairs

The Chair and Deputy Chair of each Geographic Working Group and the Chair of each Thematic Working Group serve on the APRRN Steering Committee.

Name	Organisation	Country	Position
Yiombi Thona	Refugee pNan	South Korea	Chair of APRRN
Lilianne Fan	Guetanyoe Foundation	Malaysia	Deputy Chair of APRRN

### Geographic Working Groups

Molly Kennedy	MCLaSS: Multicultural Learning and Support Services	New Zealand	Chair, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific
Paul Power	Refugee Council of Australia	Australia	Deputy Chair, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific
Il Lee	Advocates for Public Interest Law	South Korea	Chair, East Asia
Piya Muqit	Justice Centre	Hong Kong	Deputy Chair, East Asia
Deepa Nambiar	Asylum Access	Malaysia	Chair, Southeast Asia
Gina Yap	Community and Family Services International	Philippines	Deputy Chair, Southeast Asia
Ashok Gladston Xavier	OfERR	India	Chair, South Asia
Imran Khan Laghari	Human Rights Alliance	Pakistan	Deputy Chair, South Asia

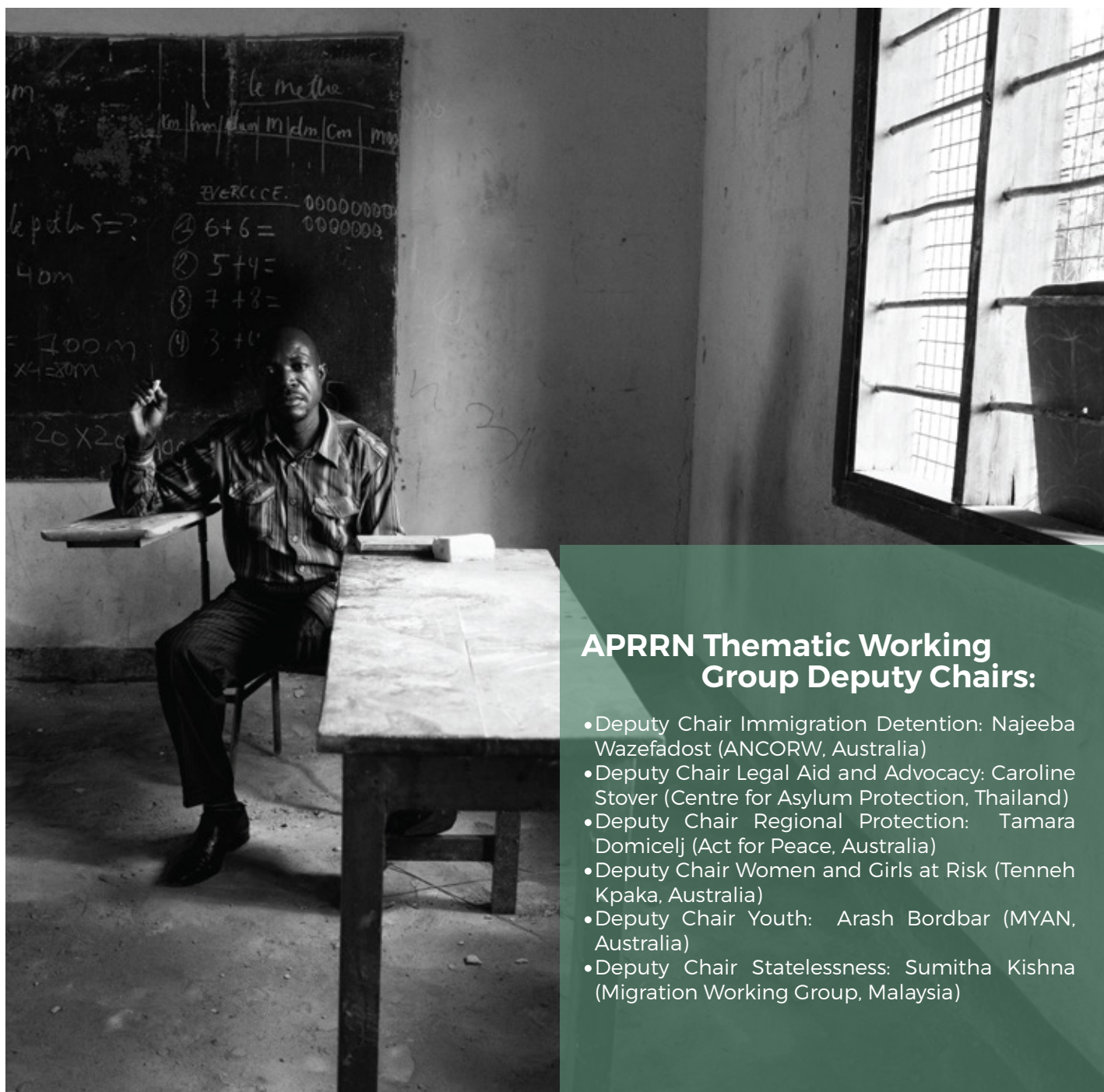
### Thematic Working Groups\*

Vivienne Chew	International Detention Coalition	Malaysia	Chair, Immigration Detention
Brian Barbour	Japan-America Refugee Network	Japan	Chair, Regional Protection
Carolina Gottardo	JRS Australia	Australia	Chair, Women and Girls at Risk

## Thematic Working Groups\*

Ali Palh	RightsNow Pakistan	Pakistan	Chair, Legal Aid and Advocacy
Chris Lewa	Arakan Project	Thailand	Chair, Statelessness
Dor Achiek	Settlement Services International	Australia	Chair, Youth

\*Thematic Working Group Deputy Chairs are not part of the Steering Committee. In addition, a Constitutional change in October 2018 mandated that Geographic Working Group Deputy Chairs would also no longer serve on the Steering Committee.



### APRRN Thematic Working Group Deputy Chairs:

- Deputy Chair Immigration Detention: Najeeba Wazefadost (ANCORW, Australia)
- Deputy Chair Legal Aid and Advocacy: Caroline Stover (Centre for Asylum Protection, Thailand)
- Deputy Chair Regional Protection: Tamara Domicelj (Act for Peace, Australia)
- Deputy Chair Women and Girls at Risk (Tenneh Kpaka, Australia)
- Deputy Chair Youth: Arash Bordbar (MYAN, Australia)
- Deputy Chair Statelessness: Sumitha Kishna (Migration Working Group, Malaysia)

## Appendix B: Current Organisational Members

### Afghanistan

- Afghanistan Democracy and Development Organization
- Afghan Planning Agency
- Tabish Organisation
- War Child Canada

### Australia

- Access Community Services Limited
- Act for Peace-National Council of Churches in Australia
- AMES Australia
- Amnesty International Australia
- Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS)
- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- Australian Chin Community (Eastern Melbourne)
- Australian National Committee on Refugee Women
- Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce
- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)
- Bhutanese Community in Australia
- Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University
- Cisarua Learning Limited
- Connect Settlement Services
- Forced Migration Research Network, University of New South Wales
- Help Himalayan Youth Foundation
- HOST International
- House of Welcome
- International Detention Coalition
- International Tamil Refugee Advocacy Network - ITRAN
- Migrant and Refugee Rights Project Asia Pacific
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
- Multicultural Youth Queensland
- MDA Ltd
- Naiker Associates
- NAMII, Consultants
- Occupational Opportunities for Refugees and Asylum Seekers Inc (OOFRAS)
- Overseas Services to Survivors of Torture and Trauma
- Oxfam Australia
- Quaker Service Australia
- Refugee Council of Australia
- Settlement Services International (SSI)
- Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (SA)
- The Kick Project
- UNICEF Australia

### Bangladesh

- Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights
- BRAC
- COAST Trust
- Centre for Social Integrity
- Nibedito Samaj Kalyan Songstha
- Odhikar
- OKUP (Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program)
- PHALS (Programme for Helpless and Lagged Societies)
- Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit

### Cambodia

- Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM Cambodia)
- Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW)
- Minority Rights Organization (MIRO)

### France

- Urban Refugees



## Germany

- Society for Threatened Peoples

## Hong Kong

- Branches of Hope
- Daly and Associates
- Christian Action
- Health in Action
- Justice Centre Hong Kong
- Resolve Foundation

## India

- ARA Legal Initiative
- Development and Justice Initiative
- LHA Charitable Trust
- OfERR
- Socio Legal Information Centre (Human Rights Law Network)
- The Other Media
- Tibetan Legal Association
- Tibetan Voluntary Health Association

## Indonesia

- Human Rights Working Group
- JAPPSI – Indonesian Refugees and Asylum Seekers Advocacy Network
- LBH Jakarta
- People's Crisis Centre
- Roshan Learning Centre
- SUAKA – Indonesian Civil Society Network for Refugee Rights Protection
- World Relief
- Yayasan KKSP, Kelompok Kerja Sosial Perkotaan
- Yayasan Geutanyoe (The Geutanyoe Foundation)

## Iran

- Association for Protection of Refugee Women and Children (HAMI)
- Zanjirehomid Charity Institute

## Japan

- Forum for Refugees Japan
- Japan Association for Refugees
- Refugees International Japan
- Stateless Network
- Tokyo Public Law Office

## Kyrgyzstan

- Publication Foundation – Legal Clinic 'Adilet'

## Macau

- Global and Community Mental Health Research Group

## Malaysia

- CARAM Asia
- Development of Human Resources For Rural Areas (DHRRA)
- Federation of Reproductive Health Associations, Malaysia
- Good Shepherd Services
- Health Equity Initiatives (HEI)
- Malaysian Social Research Institute
- Mercy Malaysia (Malaysian Medical Relief Society)
- Migration Working Group
- Penang Stop Human Trafficking Campaign
- Rohingya Project
- Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
- SUKA Society
- Tenaganita
- Voice of the Children
- PKPKM Sabah
- Yayasan Chow Kit





### **Mongolia**

- Human Security Policy Studies Centre

### **Myanmar**

- Rohingya Human Rights Monitoring Network
- Chin Human Rights Organization

### **Nepal**

- Human Rights Organization of Nepal
- INHURED International
- Population Watch
- PPR Nepal

### **New Zealand**

- Asylum Seeker Support Trust
- English Language Partners New Zealand
- Empower
- Canterbury Refugee Council
- Hope Worldwide - Pakistan
- Multicultural Learning and Support Services (MCLaSS)
- New Zealand Myanmar Ethnic Council
- New Zealand National Refugee Network
- New Zealand Refugee Youth Council
- New Zealand Sri Lanka Forced Migrants' Support Group
- POONGA
- Refugees as Survivors
- Refugee Council of New Zealand
- Pegasus Health (Charitable)

### **Pakistan**

- Children and Women Trust
- Community Help Community
- Direct Focus Community Aid
- ESCR - Asia Pakistan
- Forum for Human Rights Law and Policy (FHRLP) Pakistan
- Foundation for Rural Development (FRD)
- Human Rights Alliance (HRA) Pakistan
- Legal Researchers
- RightsNow Pakistan
- IDEA-Initiative for Development and Empowerment Axis
- Rural Empowerment and Institutional Development (REPID)
- Rural Development Project (RDP)
- Pakistan International Human Rights Organization (PIHRO)
- Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid (SHARP-Pakistan)
- Union Aid
- Youth Association for Development

### **Papua New Guinea**

- Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee

### **Philippines**

- Community and Family Services International
- Migrant Forum in Asia

### **Republic of Maldives**

- Maldives NGO Federation





## Republic of Korea

- APIL (Advocates for Public Interest Law)
- Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights
- Dongcheon Public Interest Foundation
- EcoFemme
- Human Asia
- Immigrants Advocacy Center Gamdong
- Korean Public Interest Lawyers Group GONGGAM
- Migration to Asia Peace (MAP)
- Medipeace
- NANCEN
- No Chain for North Korea
- Refuge pNan

## Singapore

- Advocates for Refugees - Singapore (AFR-SG)
- Reyna Movement
- Opening Universities for Refugees
- Save the Children

## Sri Lanka

- South Asian Network for Refugees, IDPs and Migrants (SANRIM)
- Centre for Migration Research and Development (CMRD)
- National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka

## Switzerland

- Same Skies

## Taiwan

- Taipei Overseas Peace Service
- Taiwan Association for Human Rights
- Union of Excluded Immigrants and Unwanted Citizens (UNIC)

## Thailand

- ALTSEAN-Burma
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- Asylum Access
- Burma Link
- Caritas Thailand

## Thailand

- Center for Asylum Protection
- Coalition for the Rights of Refugees and Stateless Persons
- Courageous Kitchen
- Fortify Rights
- Human Security Alliance (HSA)
- Karenni Social Development Center
- Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific
- People's Empowerment Foundation
- The Arakan Project
- The Branch Foundation

## UK

- Burma Campaign UK
- Centre for Applied Human Rights (University of York)
- Refugee Legal Aid Information
- Garden Court International
- Karenni Student Development Programme (KSDP)
- The Equal Rights Trust

## USA

- Bond Street Theatre Coalition
- BPSOS, Inc.
- Burma Border Projects
- Japan-America Refugee Network
- Organization for Refuge, Asylum, Migration (ORAM)
- Refugee Solidarity Network

## Vietnam

- Centre for Community Development and Social Work (CODES)

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**For regular updates and to learn more about what APRRN is working on, add us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and bookmark our Website.**



## Appendix C: Financial Statement

<b>Income 2018</b>	<b>THB</b>
Grants*	15,276,772.92
Interest received	9,300.71
Other Income	905,333.77
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,191,407.40</b>

<b>Expenditures 2017</b>	<b>THB</b>
Program Expenses	4,983,582.82
Administrative Expenses	8,823,960.01
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>13,807,542.83</b>

<b>Grants *</b>	<b>THB</b>
Planet Wheeler Foundation (PWF)	1,452,194.39
UNHCR	1,670,000.00
OAK Foundation	2,788,710.60
Open Society Foundations	3,555,171.80
Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southeast Asia (HBS)	1,102,094.52
Settlement Services International	1,189,718.75
Act for Peace	840,492.82
HOST International	118,090.43
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy	193,138.76
Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)	175,437.49
International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)	163,200.00
University of New South Wales (UNSW)	367,866.19
Private family foundation	1,660,657.17



# ANNUAL REPORT

THE ASIA PACIFIC REFUGEE RIGHTS NETWORK

## Photo Credits

Special thanks to Alexander Treves for providing photos for this report.

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