Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network

ADVANCING THE RIGHTS OF REFUGEES
IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

November 2026



APRRN members gather at the 9th Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights (APCRR9), strategising on strengthening regional collaboration and collective advocacy for the rights of refugees and displaced persons.

WHO WE ARE

The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), founded in 2008, is a regional network of 350 organisational and individual members in 28 countries across Asia and the Pacific. Our mission is to protect and promote the human rights and meaningful inclusion of refugees, internally displaced people, stateless persons and other people on the move in situations of vulnerability.

Governance and Secretariat: APRRN is a member network registered in Switzerland and in Thailand, where we operate as the Foundation for the Rights of Disadvantaged Populations (FRDP). We are overseen by two Boards (APRRN and FRDP) and an elected Steering Committee made up of a Network Chair and the chairs and deputy chairs of geographical and thematic working groups, currently consisting of 22 persons, more than half of whom bring lived experience. Our Secretariat, based in Bangkok, has nine staff and consultants.

Meaningful Refugee Participation and Co-Leadership: Since 2023, APRRN has been led by two Co-Secretaries General, one of whom has lived experience of displacement. This shared leadership model puts people with lived experience at the forefront of our work. Meaningful refugee participation (MRP), which is diverse and intentional, is built into our strategic and operational plans, and an MRP Advisory Board guides this work.

WHY WE EXIST

Asia and the Pacific is home to some of the world's most protracted displacement crises. Conflict and instability have uprooted millions of people in Myanmar and Afghanistan; the region hosts more than half of the world's stateless people, and climate-related displacement is expected to rise.

At the end of 2025, UNHCR was protecting or assisting a record 17.6 million people in the region, up two per cent from the previous year.

17.6M	7.5M	5.2M	2.6M
people protected or assisted by UNHCR	internally displaced people	refugees, asylum seekers and others in need of international protection	stateless people, most of them Rohingya

Source: UNHCR, Asia and the Pacific Regional Trends: Forced Displacement and Statelessness 2025 (August 2026). Figures as at end-2025.

Protection remains weak. Three in five refugees in the region live in countries that are not parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and most national protection systems are ad hoc and inadequate. Safe routes out are also shrinking: the number of refugees resettled from the region fell by more than half in 2025, to 7,900. Refugees and other people on the move face forced returns, arbitrary detention, violence and exploitation, and denial of the rights to health, housing and education. Without legal status or the right to work, many are unable to contribute meaningfully to the societies and economies in which they live.

Our current advocacy priorities respond to these challenges:

- Alternatives to detention
- Meaningful refugee participation
- Legal pathways to protection
- The conflict in Myanmar and its regional effects
- The displacement crisis in Afghanistan, including mass returns from Iran and Pakistan
- The right to work
- Access to education
- Excluded populations, including LGBTQI+ refugees

WHAT WE DO

Networking

We build, expand and diversify connections and connect our members across the region and coordinate their collective work. Ten member-led working groups, four geographical and six thematic, are at the heart of the network: they set advocacy priorities, share information on protection developments and plan joint action. Our Secretariat works with the working groups, keeps members informed through weekly updates and a monthly newsletter, and links members when individuals face urgent risks such as detention or deportation. Before major global and regional processes, such as the Global Refugee Forum, we consult members and agree joint recommendations, so their views reach forums many could not access on their own. Every two years, the Asia Pacific Consultations on Refugee Rights (APCRR) bring members together to review our strategy, agree advocacy priorities and elect new leadership.

Advocacy and Research

Collaborative, evidence-based advocacy is at the core of APRRN's work. With members, academia, think tanks, and international partners, we produce research, briefing papers and joint submissions to UN human rights mechanisms. Recent work includes studies of refugee-led initiatives in Thailand, Indonesia

and Bangladesh, and analysis of the mental health impact of prolonged uncertainty on young Afghan refugees in Indonesia. We use this evidence in private engagement with policy - and decision-makers and donors, public statements and media work, and advocacy events and campaigns. We take a leading role in human rights and humanitarian forums and processes, including the UNHCR Regional Consultations with NGOs in Asia and the Pacific, which we co-convene. In these spaces, we shape agendas, organise and moderate sessions, and ensure people with lived experience have a central voice in the discussions.

Capacity Development

We strengthen our members through training on research, advocacy, international human rights law and refugee law, and by sharing tools and resources to improve their programmes. We also fund refugee-led initiatives, often in camps and other hard-to-reach areas, that strengthen their communities and provide frontline support such as education.



Women and girls in Afghanistan continue learning through community-based, home-based education despite restrictions on formal schooling.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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