

Beyond Asylum:

**Refugee Policy in Practice and
How Refugees Experience It**



- *Debate key issues and practices*
- *Expose the true refugee experience*
- *Identify policy and legislation challenges*
- *Examine implications for service provision*
- *Determine ways of improving services and integration*
- *Demonstrate practical models*
- *Explore how service providers can work together*

*Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network
East Asia Symposium*

Date: 12 November 2011

***Venue: University of Hong Kong, Council
Chambers***

2011 marks the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, a treaty that has saved hundreds of thousands of lives in its relatively short existence since World War II. Over half of the world's refugees are found in the Asia Pacific Region, yet few countries in the region have developed any law or policy to address refugee issues.

East Asia has the potential to lead positive developments in the field of refugee protection in the Asia Pacific region: Japan and Korea are amongst the few countries in Asia to sign on to the Refugee Convention, and although it is not yet a state-party of the Convention, Hong Kong has a strong civil society and rule of law that has led to several alternative systems of protection. The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network ("APRRN") believes that East Asia has both the capacity and the responsibility to establish a better refugee protection system and to support other countries in Asia to adopt protection mechanisms.

APRRN, together with key refugee advocates and practitioners are coming together to hold this symposium, with the aim of addressing a fundamental question: How do you save lives, protect human rights, and provide for the



diverse needs of vulnerable refugee populations with limited resources?

This Symposium brings key actors from Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau and Taiwan together to identify gaps and solutions, debate key issues, and challenge misconceptions about the most vulnerable population in Asia: refugees.

This Symposium is being coordinated by the East-Asia Working Group of the APRRN Network, and is jointly organized by: Vision First, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Society for Community Organization (SoCO), NANCEN, Japan Association for Refugees (JAR), International Social Services (ISS), Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre (HKRAC), Christian Action Chungking Mansions Service Centre, Centre for Comparative and Public Law at HKU, and Barnes and Daly Solicitors.

East Asia Symposium: Beyond Asylum

Agenda

In each of the following Panels, practitioners and academics will address some of the most difficult questions facing refugee practitioners and policy-makers. Each Panel will be moderated by a discussant who will facilitate dialogue between panelists and with the audience. Please note your questions and address the Panel during the Q&A period. Key conclusions will be developed based on presentations and subsequent discussion following the Symposium.

9:00-10:30

Keynote Address: Refugee Policy and Protection in Practice and How Refugees Experience It

Welcoming Remarks: Brian Barbour, APRRN

Durable solutions: Giuseppe de Vincentiis, UNHCR

Canadian Approach: Ruby Puni, Consulate General of Canada

Alternative forms of protection: W.H. Chow, Security Bureau (Not

Yet Confirmed)

10:30-10:45

Coffee/Tea Break

10:45-12:15

Panel: Comparative Practices: Sharing Innovative Approaches and Solutions to Shared Challenges

Hong Kong: Annie Lin, Society for Community Organization

Japan: Hiroaki Ishii, Japan Association for Refugees

Korea: Hotaeg Lee (Abraham), The Refuge P Nan

Macau: Paul Pun Chi Meng, Association for Refugees' Welfare

Taiwan: E-Ling Chiu, Taiwan Association for Human Rights

Moderator: Anoop Sukumaran, APRRN

In the face of shared challenges, innovative approaches and solutions have been developed by diverse actors to meet the needs of vulnerable refugee populations. In this panel, representatives from around the region will share and discuss innovative ideas and solutions to common challenges. Japan, Korea, and Macau have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention and have domestic refugee status determination procedures. Taiwan has some legislation on refugee issues. The Convention has not been extended to Hong Kong, but many alternative forms of protection have developed.

12:15-1:30

Lunch Break

1:30-3:00

Panel: From Policy to Practice: How Law and Policy Affect the Refugee Experience

Mark Daly, Solicitor, Barnes & Daly

Peter Barnes, Solicitor, Barnes & Daly

Stephanie Jones, Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre

JC Kim, Advocates for Public Interest Law (Korea)

Moderator: Kelley Loper, HKRAC, HKU Faculty of Law

This panel will highlight key legislative and policy changes relating to refugees and provide an opportunity to discuss policy or lack of policy and its impact on refugee livelihoods in practice. The panel will explore the changes in law and policy over the past decade and the impact of these changes on the experience of refugees in East Asia. It will provide an opportunity to consider the challenges and possible changes in the near future, and to discuss specific policies for which the sector should be campaigning. Panelists and audience members will update their knowledge about recent developments, develop their understanding of the challenges ahead, and examine how these challenges can be met.

3:00-3:15

Coffee/Tea Break

3:15-4:30

Panel: Social Exclusion and Refugee Integration

Adrielle Panares, International Social Services

Paul Bottrill, Christian Action

Akiko Ogawa, Japan Association for Refugees

Won Geun Choi, NANCEN

Moderator: Brian Barbour, EAWG, APRRN

This Panel will consider the practical needs of the refugee population in East Asia, and the consequence of social exclusion and a life lived in limbo often for several years. This along with the difficulty of day-to-day survival leads to social isolation and exacerbates the psycho-social well being of

the already vulnerable refugee population. It is also damaging to their long-term chances for successful integration after resettlement. However, Governments have a legitimate concern about ensuring economic stability and national security for the local population. East Asian countries are small in geographic size with a dense population. In this context, should refugees have the right to remain, work, and naturalize or would these rights open the floodgates and invite abuse?

4:30-5:30

Panel: “Nothing About Us Without Us”: Ensuring refugees are not treated as passive recipients, but active participants in the discussion of their needs and rights
(Please note that photographs and film will not be allowed during this session to protect the identity of the speakers)

Refugee from Japan

Refugee from Korea

Refugee from Hong Kong

Moderator: UNHCR

There are millions of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide, and even more Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Most of the world’s refugees worldwide are living in a state of ‘limbo’, meaning they are not wanted or integrated in the country they have fled to, they have not been resettled to a third country, and return to the country of origin is not an option. In this Panel you will hear the perspectives of 3 refugees as they discuss their experiences with regard to the risks and obstacles upon arriving in a ‘new’ country; how they survived the asylum-seeking process; and how they have been able to integrate or not in the host country.

5:30-5:45

Closing Remarks

Anoop Sukumaran, Coordinator, APRRN