

Regional Update for Asia and the Pacific

NGO Collective Statement – Oral Version

Dear Chair, distinguished delegates,

This statement was drafted in consultation with a wide range of NGOs.

In Asia, displacement linked to conflict, persecution and disasters continues to increase, while statelessness remains a concern. Within the current global environment, fraught with instability NGOs would like to highlight the following:

In Afghanistan:

Over 22 million people remain in need of humanitarian aid. Increased restrictions on women and girls, including the reiteration of a ban on female aid workers, continue to hamper aid reaching the most vulnerable. Notwithstanding the shrinking operating space, humanitarian organisations continue their vital work including through negotiations at local level.

- NGOs reiterate the importance of States to engage with Afghan authorities, including through the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) Platform. News of additional restrictions imposed by authorities should not be reason to withdraw support for humanitarian efforts.
- Durable solutions for Afghan refugees remain critical, including through sustained investments and third country solutions. Reintegration of returnees to Afghanistan requires long-term planning and cannot be left to humanitarians alone. NGOs call for effective nexus approaches, lifting restrictions on programming for resilience, urban planning, and capacity building.

In the sub-region:

NGOs commend Iran and Pakistan for hosting millions of Afghans and call to maintain this longstanding support. However, an increasing emphasis on returns is also noted and of concern given the lack of reintegration prospects for most Afghans.

As highlighted in [UNHCR's non-return advisory](#), Afghanistan is still unfit for returns and refugees have the right to protection against forced return. Therefore, NGOs:

- Remind states of their obligations of non-refoulement, and to halt compulsory returns and encourage access to legal status for Afghans.
- We urge donors to step up their support for displaced Afghans as funding is not proportionate with the needs seen across the region.

In Myanmar:

The escalating conflict has led to significant increases in casualties and displacement in-country and across borders, exacerbated by a conscription law particularly affecting the youth. The situation remains dire, with over 3.5 million IDPs, severe restrictions on humanitarian operations, and a worsening food insecurity and health crisis.

In Bangladesh, the interim government appointed after the Summer's upheavals has committed continued support for refugees and called for increased responsibility sharing. However, Rohingya still face insecurity in camps, compounded by mobility restrictions, limited access to education and livelihoods. Therefore, many Rohingya continue to embark on perilous migration pathways in their search for safety and solutions.

Continued pushback policies and regional coordination deficiencies, have resulted in the Andaman Sea route becoming one of the deadliest worldwide, while trafficking, abuse and extortion risks are escalating.

Therefore, NGOs hope the upcoming 'High-level conference on Myanmar' will result in concrete commitments for coordinated regional action that expands protection and solutions, particularly by:

- Securing commitments from regional governments to respect non-refoulement, in line with [UNHCR's Guidance Note on International Protection](#).
- Adopting regional SOPs on search and rescue, disembarkation and civil society engagement in coordination structures.
- Ensuring ASEAN includes forced displacement in its 2045 Vision, while recognizing the limits of the Five-Point consensus approach.
- Improving longer-term hosting arrangements through increased access to legal status and essential services, including MHPSS.

On durable solutions:

Investing in solutions is a global responsibility. Recent U.S. policy changes on humanitarian funding and third country solutions raise concerns. As the impact is already felt by those whose resettlement processes were halted, NGOs ask the U.S. Administration to reverse this course. We call on other donors to cover existing gaps, in terms of funding and solutions, as they courageously did in the past, to avoid a drop in hosting resources and in third country solutions.

The global situation is clearly a major test for the Global Refugee Compact's effectiveness. To achieve its four objectives, it is imperative that GRF pledges be fulfilled and we remind all stakeholders that pledges can be made on an ongoing basis.

NGOs look forward to engaging with UNHCR on the 2025 NGO Regional Consultations, on access to asylum and international protection, and hope more information will be shared at the regional level.

Further details are available at icvanetwork.org.

Thank you.