

BARNES & DALY



CCPL

CENTRE FOR COMPARATIVE AND PUBLIC LAW
AT THE FACULTY OF LAW, THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG



Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network

Primary Business Address
Times Square Building, 12th Floor
246, Sukhumvit Road
Bangkok, Thailand

Ph: +66 2653 2940 ext 101
Fax: +66 2653 2942
Web: <http://refugeerightsasiapacific.org/>

Life in Limbo:

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

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East Asia Symposium: Refugee Livelihoods

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 to provide partial protection to refugees. The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (“APRRN”) believes that as the most affluent and democratized region in this part of this world, 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 the 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 Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), and is jointly organized by (list of organizations).

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of the already vulnerable refugee population. It is also damaging to their long-term chances for successful integration after resettlement. However, Hong Kong has a legitimate concern about ensuring economic stability and jobs for the local population. Hong Kong is small in geographic size with a dense population. In this context, should refugees have the right to work or would that right open the floodgates and invite abuse?

4:00-5:00

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

Refugee 1

Refugee 2

Refugee 3

Discussant: JAR

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 testimony of (1,2,3) refugees as they discuss their views and experiences with regard to the risks and obstacles upon arriving in a ‘new’ country. How are they treated by their host country? And what are the key security issues?

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12:00-1:00

Lunch

1:00-2:30

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

Mark Daly, Solicitor, Barnes & Daly
Peter Barnes, Solicitor, Barnes & Daly
Kelley Loper, HKRAC, HKU Faculty of Law
??, Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre
Discussant: Pill-Kyu

This panel will highlight key legislative and policy changes relating to refugees and provide an opportunity to discuss policy and practice in Hong Kong. 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. 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.

2:30-4:00

Panel: Social Exclusion, Refugee Integration, and the Right to Work for Refugees

Adrielle Panares, Director, ISS
Paul Bottrill, Manager, Christian Action CKMSC
Comso Beatson, Director, Vision First
Annie Lin/Richard Tsui, SoCO
Discussant: Brian Barbour, Chair, East Asia Working Group, APRRN

This Panel will consider the practical needs of the refugee population in Hong Kong, and the consequence of social exclusion and a life lived in limbo often for several years. At present, refugees are prevented from working. This along with the difficulty of day-to-day survival leads to social isolation and exacerbates the psycho-social well being

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

Regional refugee protection – APRRN representative
Durable solutions – UNHCR representative
Resettlement – Canadian representative
Alternative forms of protection – HK Gov. Representative

10:30-12:00

Panel 1: Comparative Practices: Sharing Innovative Approaches and Solutions to Shared Challenges

Hong Kong
Japan
Korea
Macau
Taiwan
Discussant: 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. Given Taiwan's status, it cannot sign the Refugee Convention, but it has legislated on refugee issues. The Convention has not been extended to Hong Kong which is not a party to the Convention and does not have legislation concerning refugees, and so many alternative forms of protection have developed.