Mixed Migration Flows in the Asia-Pacific Region

Presentation by Raymond Hall,
UNHCR Regional Representative in Thailand and
Regional Coordinator for South East Asia

Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons
and Related Transnational Crime

Ad Hoc Group Meeting,
Bali, Indonesia, 27-29 July 2009
Overview

- Mixed Movements and triggers
- Key Refugee/Asylum-Seeker Statistics in the Region by Country of Origin
- Key Country Overviews
- Trends and Routes Taken
- Asylum Environment
Web of Reasons Why People Move

- Economic based, including labour migration (sending and receiving countries in the region)
- Protection driven movements triggered by human rights violations, armed conflict, serious disturbances of public order
- Social Factors (family reunification and education)
People on the Move subjected to Smugglers and Traffickers

Economic Migrants, Refugees and Asylum-Seekers:

– Travel in same directions
– Use same routes and means of transport
– Face same risks on route
Major Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Populations in the Asia – Pacific Region*

- Afghans – 1.7 million (plus 1 million unregistered in Pakistan)
- Myanmar – 203,600 (plus estimated 200,000 outside camps in Bangladesh)
- Sri Lankans – 78,400
- Iraqis – 52,100
- Somalis – 2,500
- Pakistanis – 1,700

*(2008 Annual Statistical Reports for UNHCR’s geographical Asia-Pacific Region)
Afghan Refugees – Main Host Countries in the Asia-Pacific *

- Pakistan – **767,500** *(plus 1 million unregistered)*
- Islamic Republic of Iran – **937,170**
- India – **9,900**
- Australia – **5,000**
- Malaysia – **500**
- New Zealand – **170**
- Indonesia – **170**

*(2008 Annual Statistical Reports for UNHCR’s geographical Asia-Pacific Region)*
Myanmar Refugees – Main Host Countries in the Asia-Pacific *

• Thailand - 123,600
• Malaysia - 45,500
• Bangladesh – 28,300 (plus estimated 200,000 outside camps)
• India – 3,600
• Japan – 1,800
• Australia - 500

*(2008 Annual Statistical Reports for UNHCR’s geographical Asia-Pacific Region)
Iraqi Refugees –
Main Host Countries in the Asia-Pacific *

- Iran – 44,500
- Australia - 6,000
- Malaysia - 530
- Indonesia - 270
- New Zealand - 240
- India – 200

*(2008 Annual Statistical Reports for UNHCR’s geographical Asia-Pacific Region. In addition, there are some 2 million Iraqi refugees, mainly in Jordan and Syria.)*
Sri Lankan Refugees – Main Host Countries and Territories in the Asia-Pacific *

- India – 73,300
- Malaysia – 2,200
- Australia – 1,900
- China:
  - Hong Kong SAR – 250
- Thailand – 160

*(2008 Annual Statistical Reports for UNHCR’s geographical Asia-Pacific Region)
Afghanistan Overview

- Deteriorating security situation in many parts of the country
- Increasing numbers of Afghans on the move from Afghanistan, and neighbouring asylum countries (Pakistan and Iran) to other countries in the region
- Voluntary returns continue weekly. For 2009, to date some 50,000 persons have returned. In 2008, 278,000 returned
Afghanistan (cont.): New eligibility guidelines for Afghan asylum-seekers

- Not all Afghans are in need of international protection
- Nevertheless, complexity of situation requires case by case analysis under 1951 Convention criteria
- Where relevant, complementary forms of protection need to be considered in relation to protection claims arising from the armed conflict
- Temporary protection urged by UNHCR in non-Convention signatory States
- Advise against return to areas other than places of origin or previous residence
- Advise against return to countries of transit/first asylum from which there is a risk of *refoulement*
### Afghanistan: Arrival Trends
(persons registered by Governments or UNHCR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries of Asylum</th>
<th>January to June 2008</th>
<th>January to June 2009</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,426</td>
<td>5604%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>190</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,680</strong></td>
<td><strong>784%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Movement in the Asia-Pacific

LEGEND

- Onward Mover Stop
- Destination: INS
- Destination: MLS
- Destination: AUL

COO: Afghanistan

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Myanmar Overview

Key protracted refugee caseloads include:

- Karen/Karenni (92,100 mostly in Thailand)
- Muslim Residents from northern Rakhine State (44,400, mostly in Malaysia and Bangladesh)*
- Chin (20,200 mostly in Malaysia and India)

* plus 200,000 estimated outside camps in Bangladesh
Myanmar Overview (cont.)

• High Commissioner for Refugees visited Myanmar in March 2009
• Government identified 5 key areas of intervention in NRS: health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture and infrastructure
• Agreement to reinforce UNHCR programme in northern Rakhine State
• Discussion underway on strengthening UNHCR activities in South East
## Myanmar: Arrival Trends
(persons registered by Governments or UNHCR)

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<th>Countries of Asylum</th>
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<th>January to June 2009</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>123%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>- 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>2710%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>5,294</td>
<td>7,893</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,399</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,279</strong></td>
<td><strong>53%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures not yet available; new arrivals in camps currently being registered and pre-screened.
Myanmar (cont.): Muslim residents of northern Rakhine State illustrate onward movement

- Departure from Myanmar and Bangladesh as part of mixed groups in boats operated by smugglers
- Mostly heading towards Malaysia, including via Thailand, but also affecting other countries
- Situation, with inter-related protection and economic dimensions, presents case study of broader onward movement affecting the region
Sri Lanka Overview

- Cessation of armed conflict and defeat of the LTTE in May 2009
- Internally displaced persons total 536,600
- Over 283,000 newly displaced as a result of last phase of conflict
- UNHCR eligibility guidelines issued in April 2009 continue to be in effect, with UNHCR advising careful consideration of individual protection claims
- UNHCR advises against involuntary return of Tamils during this post-conflict period
Sri Lanka Overview (cont.)

- Persons from former LTTE territory in North confined in IDP camps (283,000 Tamils)
- No freedom of movement
- Government has pledged to start the progressive return from camps
- Some 5,400 (mostly elderly) have been released from camps so far
- Humanitarian access improved since May but still limited
## Sri Lanka: Arrival Trends*
(persons registered by Governments or UNHCR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries of Asylum</th>
<th>January to June 2008</th>
<th>January to June 2009</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>137%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>104%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>-34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,054</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,271</strong></td>
<td><strong>21%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Asylum Environment

Lack of legal and social framework to protect refugees and asylum-seekers:

- Accession rate to refugee convention low
- Few national asylum systems in place
- Low standard of treatment and poor access to basic services and employment
- Few local integration structures available
Signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention

Australia
Afghanistan
Cambodia
China
Iran
Republic of Korea
Japan
Philippines
Papua New Guinea
Timor-Leste
Australia
New Zealand
Non-Signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention

- Bangladesh
- Brunei
- China: Hong Kong SAR
- India
- Indonesia
- Mongolia
- Pakistan
- Nepal
- Myanmar
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Brunei
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Nam
- Singapore
- Vietnam
- Malaysia
- Thailand
- Singapore
- Indonesia