



DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE, 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

# PROMOTING NETWORKING AND VOICE FOR ROHINGYA COMMUNITY RIGHTS ACROSS ASIA PACIFIC

Draft Concept Note For A Session During The Regional  
Humanitarian Partnership Week (RHPW) 2023

## **Abstract of the Session: What we want.**

*Regional Humanitarian Partnership Week (RHPW) stands as a significant annual gathering in Bangkok, bringing together hundreds of human rights activists, policymakers, and development advocates from around the globe and the Asia Pacific region. RHPW is jointly organized by four prominent networks and organizations: ADRRN, CWSA, ICVA, and OCHA. COAST Foundation ([www.coastbd.net](http://www.coastbd.net)) and the Cox's Bazar Civil Society and NGO Forum - CCNF ([www.cxb-cso-ngo.org](http://www.cxb-cso-ngo.org)) aspire to host this session, with potential co-organizational support from the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network – APRRN ([www.aprrn.org](http://www.aprrn.org)), Geutanyoe Foundation Malaysia, ALTSEN Burma - Canada and NGO Platform Coxsbazar.. The central aim of this proposed session is to reinvigorate discussions and networking surrounding the Rohingya community's issues, accountability for the Myanmar junta, and enduring solutions for Rohingya refugees in various countries.*

## **Rationales: Why the Rohingya Community Demands Special Attention-this is a Global Obligation**

Among all the refugee populations worldwide, the Rohingya refugees hold a unique status as stateless individuals who were compelled to flee their homeland due to a "textbook example of genocide" perpetrated by the Myanmar junta.

Bangladesh currently hosts over 1 million Rohingya refugees in the southeastern district of Cox's Bazar. This district lags behind the national average on several human development indices, while the region and the country grapple with a high population density and recurrent slow and rapid-onset disasters driven by the climate crisis. Bangladesh's government is actively pursuing facilities that could lead to durable solutions for the refugees until a dignified and voluntary repatriation becomes possible. Despite some experimental processes, the Rohingya community has found very limited dignified and sustainable solutions. A significant portion of the Rohingya population also resides in camps as Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Myanmar under deplorable conditions. Even after a recent cyclone, Myanmar's junta has provided minimal aid to these IDP camps.

It has come to our attention that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has diverted attention away from the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. As a result, local, national, and international actors are receiving

less aid, exemplified by the joint response plan led by UN agencies in Cox's Bazar receiving less than 40% of the expected aid for 2023. Consequently, food aid for each Rohingya family per month has been reduced from \$12 to \$8, with the World Food Programme (WFP) warning of further reductions if the dwindling aid situation persists. CCNF and civil society in Bangladesh have called for aid transparency, reduced management costs for relief agencies, and increased involvement of local actors in the refugee response.

A glimmer of hope for a sustainable solution lies in holding the Myanmar junta accountable. Gambia has lodged a case against the Myanmar junta at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). However, progress on the case has been exceptionally slow, hindered by a lack of funding and attention. In contrast, some countries have successfully lodged cases against Russian President Putin for actions related to the Ukraine crisis, demonstrating potential contradictions in the approach of powerful nations in this regard. Another source of optimism is the ongoing civil war in Myanmar between the military junta and forces loyal to the National Unity Government (NUG), which primarily operates in exile. The NUG has expressed its commitment to restoring democracy in Myanmar, offering citizenship to the Rohingya community, and facilitating their dignified repatriation if they come to power.

A significant number of Rohingya refugees also reside in ASEAN countries, an alliance of East Asian nations akin to the European Union. Most of these refugees embarked on perilous boat journeys, primarily from Myanmar and Bangladesh. Myanmar is a member of ASEAN, and this regional bloc can exert effective pressure on the Myanmar junta, as they have attempted in the past. Civil societies in East Asia and ASEAN countries can play a pivotal role in holding the Myanmar junta accountable and working toward durable solutions for Rohingya refugees within their borders.

Several Rohingya communities reside in developed countries, where they actively advocate for Rohingya refugee rights and Myanmar junta accountability. It is crucial to support and mobilize these communities to contribute to sustainable solutions for the Rohingya community in their home country, Myanmar.

### **Session Implementation Strategies: Inclusiveness and Participatory for Long-term Impact**

We are committed to ensuring inclusivity throughout our session implementation process, with a focus on long-term impact. Over time, we plan to extend invitations to APRRN, Geuntanyoe Foundation Malaysia, ALTSEN Burma, NGO Platform Cox's Bazar and other networks, organizations, and particularly Rohingya organizations working across the globe to become co-organizers of this event. This approach aims to re-energize and revitalize their involvement. We will maintain open communication and hold regular meetings with them leading up to RHPW. A tentative one-year plan might be prepared to ensure collective engagement in advocating for our agenda, including active participation in various international forums, notably the UN Human Rights Council.

We will strive to feature prominent speakers from leading civil society and Rohingya organizations actively engaged at the international level. Additionally, we will extend invitations to representatives from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, organizations that have been strong advocates in this area.

Before the session, we will create and disseminate informative content on the history, rights, and challenges facing the Rohingya community and refugees through various social media platforms, with a particular emphasis on Twitter (X). This effort aims to raise awareness on these critical issues on a global scale and promote the RHPW session.

During and after the session, we plan to engage with international media outlets based in Bangkok. Subsequently, we will distribute press releases to both international and Bangladeshi media channels. This approach aims to foster a sense of unity among Bangladeshi communities, reassuring them that they are not alone in their efforts to support the Rohingya cause. For Rohingya communities residing in refugee camps, this outreach will provide a glimmer of hope.

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*Cox's Bazar, September 30, 2023*