



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Protection at sea

Regional roundtable: disembarkation and temporary protection in the Asia and Pacific region

Thursday, 11 December 2014, 13:15-15:00
Palais des Nations, Room XXIII

Moderator:

Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Former Secretary General of ASEAN

Panellists:

Mr. Hasan Kleib, Director General for Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia

Mr. Anoop Sukumaran, Executive Director, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network

Ms. Daisy Dell, Director, Regional Bureau for Asia, UNHCR



UNHCR / Saiful Huq Omi

A new UNHCR report has found that more people are risking their lives on smugglers' boats in South-East Asia, despite the prospect of a dangerous route. UNHCR estimates that 54,000 people have undertaken such maritime journeys in the region so far this year, based on reports by local sources, media and people who survived the journey. This includes more than 53,000 people leaving from the Bay of Bengal towards Thailand and Malaysia, and others moving further south in the Indian Ocean. The outflow from the Bay of Bengal tends to peak in October, when calmer waters follow the end of the rainy season; departures this October surged more than in previous years. More than 21,000 estimated departures have taken place from the Bangladesh-Myanmar maritime border since October 2014, a 37 per cent increase over the same period last year. Across the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, approximately 10 per cent of those travelling irregularly by sea in 2014 were women. Roughly one-third of arrivals interviewed by UNHCR in Thailand and Malaysia were minors under 18 years of age. Children as young as eight years old are known to have made the journey alone. In total, some 120,000 people are believed to have embarked on these voyages in the Bay of Bengal since the start of 2012.

Sandwiches will be provided outside of the room.

Interpretation will be offered in English and French.