



Christian Conference of Asia

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CCA Statement on World Refugee Day–2023

'Hope Away from Home: A World Where Refugees are Always Included'

The theme of World Refugee Day–2023, 'Hope Away from Home: A World Where Refugees are Always Included', reminds us of the transformative power of inclusion and the importance of equitable access to spaces where refugees can be safe and thrive. As we commemorate World Refugee Day, let us reflect on the urgent need to protect and support refugees, especially those in Asia. We must strive to reach those most in need and promote human rights, equality, dignity, meaningful participation, peace, and security. Together, with the dedication of citizens and organisations, we can make a difference in the lives of refugees and work towards a more just and compassionate world.

A neglected humanitarian crisis due to the increase of refugees has been unfolding in Asia for several years. By the end of 2022, Asia and the Pacific hosted 6.8 million refugees, five million internally displaced refugees (IDPs), and 1.2 million stateless persons. The plight of refugees in Asia does not receive sufficient international attention and support. The refugee crisis caused by conflicts in Asia presents a complex set of situations needing greater responsibility-sharing and sustained commitment of resources. It demands our immediate action and attention.

Refugee protection is a shared, transnational challenge that requires shared solutions. It is crucial that we champion the right of refugees to seek safety, build support for their economic and social inclusion, and advocate for sustainable solutions. Inclusion is key to empowering refugees and enabling them to restart their lives, contributing to their host countries, and preparing for the possibility of their returning home when conditions allow. Matthew 25:35-40 reminds us, as communities of faith, of our responsibility to provide refuge and care for those in need. Including refugees in our communities means ensuring they have access to essential services such as education, healthcare, housing, and employment. It requires creating an environment of solidarity and welcoming that nurtures a sense of belonging. Refugees are resilient and make valuable contributions to the fabric of communities. They bring with them unique skills and talents that can benefit and enrich societies. By promoting their physical, economic, social, and psychological health and well-being, they can be enabled to thrive and become active contributors to their communities, and thus it would be possible for us to create for them 'Hope Away from Home: A World Where Refugees are Always Included'.

The full inclusion of refugees is impeded due to racism, xenophobia, and competition for resources. The cost of exclusion is far higher than the cost of inclusion. Refugees do not seek handouts but want opportunities to become self-reliant and contribute to society. By empowering refugees and providing them with opportunities, we can give them hope and enable them to take greater command of their lives despite the immense distress they have faced.

On World Refugee Day–2023, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) stands in solidarity with refugees, especially those in Asia, acknowledging the immense hardship they experience and courage amidst adversity. We denounce the policies of 'containment and confinement' that have plagued the region and renew our commitment to supporting and advocating for the rights, well-being, and inclusion of refugees in Asia.

The CCA urges the international community and neighbouring Asian countries to take immediate action to protect these civilians and provide them with the necessary support. At the same time, we urge the international community to work towards peace and find long-term solutions for refugees so they can safely return home or find opportunities for resettlement. The CCA especially appeals to its member constituencies and partners to extend all support to the mission of ameliorating the conditions of refugees in Asia.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA