

GL4102: TASK FORCE

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES RESIDING IN CAMPS IN THAILAND

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Executive Summary

This Task Force report addresses the issue of the lack of employment rights and opportunities for refugees in Thailand. Specifically, this report focuses on Thai refugees residing in camps along the Thailand-Myanmar border. Acknowledging that attaining these legal employment rights is a crucial pathway towards finding a durable solution for the refugee crisis in Thailand, our Task Force proposes policy recommendations to address this issue. Firstly, our Task Force conducted in-depth contextual research on Thailand, understanding the background of the refugee situation, past policy efforts, and current domestic barriers which hinder the employment rights and freedom of movement of refugees. A deeper analysis of the pre-existing situation in Thailand reveals that there has been a lack of political will on the part of the Royal Thai Government to secure better employment rights for refugees. This is despite the concrete

evidence that refugees bring about tangible economic benefits by filling labour gaps. The main barrier to be overcome is the Thai government's confinement policy approach in handling the refugee situation. Secondly, this paper conducted research on the wider geo-political context, through case study comparisons with Uganda and Jordan, as well as situating the Thai refugee situation in the wider global refugee situation. The case comparisons with Jordan and Uganda better informed our policy recommendations by allowing us to draw out best practices across different contexts whilst also determining why certain policy practices would not work within the Thai context.

By examining literature from a wide variety of sources and viewpoints, our group was able to make informed policy recommendations, which aim for better outcomes for all parties involved, chiefly the refugees in Thailand and Thailand itself. Our policy recommendations target three main areas for steps to be taken, namely through political, economic and social policies. The specific policies under these broad categories include freedom of movement for refugees, work rights for refugees to work in certain sectors, as well as social policies to aid in integration and public perceptions towards them. This report then examines some of the limitations hindering an effective implementation of these policies before closing with some final thoughts. Whilst each policy is not without limitations, our task force recommends that if taken in tandem, it is possible for these policies to collectively mitigate some of these limitations, eventually working towards achieving proper employment rights for refugees in Thailand in the long run.