
Min Ma

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/arv

Part of the Asian Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

This Review Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Chulalongkorn Journal Online (CUJO) at Chula Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Asian Review by an authorized editor of Chula Digital Collections. For more information, please contact ChulaDC@car.chula.ac.th.
Book Review


With more than 100,000 displaced persons from Myanmar living in temporary shelters in Thailand, the Royal Thai Government has for several decades faced critical policy decisions balancing its national security and economic interests against its obligation as a host to ensure access to humanitarian aid and protection for displaced populations. Myanmar has undergone a series of political reform in recent years, most drastically with its transition to a nominally civilian government in 2011, yet many of the factors contributing to the original flow of displaced persons across the border still persist. Within this context, Humanitarian Assistance for Displaced Persons from Myanmar (2014) offers a look at the current situation of displacement and the implications of various Royal Thai Government policies over time. The book draws the reader into current discussions around possible durable solutions to end the 30-year crisis of displacement of people from Myanmar.

This book is a part of a series of 4 volumes in the Springer Briefs in Environment, Security, Development, and Peace (Volumes 15-18) that present the results of six studies on sustainable solutions for displaced persons on the Thai-Myanmar border, conducted in partnership with UNDP with funding from the European Union. The editors of this volume are internationally recognized researchers from the Asian Research Center for Migration at Chulalongkorn University, a center of excellence for research on migration, labor, and refugee issues in the Southeast Asia region. Having provided critical research and analysis since the Indochinese refugee crisis in the 1980s, the authors are well-grounded in the issues at hand and offer authoritative analysis of current migration challenges in the region.

divided into two sections. The first section offers a unique, historical perspective of displacement along the Thai-Myanmar border that highlights the various factors influencing the Royal Thai Government’s policies toward displaced persons in Thailand. The authors introduce policy responses along several dimensions, including protection, administration of temporary shelters, education, health, individual registration, and livelihoods. The second section of the book presents quantitative and qualitative results of research conducted from 2010 to 2011 to analyze the rationale of current policies and strategies. This section establishes an evidence base for the development of alternative policy options, providing unique insight into coordination mechanisms that have developed among key players.

In a complex situation with myriad actors and interests, the book provides a useful mapping of the key actors responsible for policy-making and implementation, particularly from the Royal Thai Government. An accurate understanding of their roles, as they are juxtaposed with the efforts of international aid organizations and donors, is critical for any scholar or practitioner working on issues related to displaced populations in Thailand. Further, the book offers useful analysis of how current policies have been influenced by Thailand’s long history of hosting other displaced populations through the 1980s.

The book succeeds in presenting original research to serve as a starting point for future discourse on Thai policy and roles of international actors given recent changes in Myanmar and Thailand’s interests. Although its research methodology could be more clearly presented and writing style more concise, it offers the reader access to analysis that integrates the perspectives of displaced persons on their prospective solutions, including resettlement, local integration, and repatriation.

*Humanitarian Assistance for Displaced Persons from Myanmar* offers a comprehensive overview and complements existing literature on the international response to displaced persons from Myanmar in Thailand. The book serves as a useful entry point for students and researchers wanting an introduction to the case of displacement in Thailand and access to original evidence and analysis of potential durable solutions.

Min Ma