



# REPORT

ON THE SITUATION, CONDITION, AND  
ACTIVITIES OF SUAKA  
2021-2025



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ACTIVITIES OF SUAKA  
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**Title**

**Report on the Situation, Condition, and Activities of SUAKA, 2021-2025**

**Author**

**Perkumpulan Suaka Untuk Perlindungan Hak Pengungsi (SUAKA)**

Angga Reynady Hermawan Putra

Annabella Arawinda Arundhati

Atika Yuanita Paraswaty

Dewi Fatika Rahmasari

Diana Irna Yuliani

Fin Ultrami

Jayanti Aarnee Kusumadewi

Rizka Argadianti Rachmah

Shaila Tieken

Zico Efraindio Pestalozzi

**Translator**

Monica Susanti Rahadsih

Febrilliant Maulana Husein

Huspidiatul Anwar Gemadiyah

**Cover Design and Layout**

Anggraeni Puspitasari

**Published by**

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# FOREWORD

Over the past five years, we have borne witness to how efforts to achieve peace have encountered significant challenges and serious setbacks. Armed conflicts in various parts of the world, acts of genocide against specific communities and ethnic groups, discrimination based on identity, as well as climate change have had profound impacts on global dynamics. One phenomenon that has come under increasing global scrutiny is forced displacement, marked by the rising number of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide. As civilized states operating within the framework of international law, how should states respond to this phenomenon? How should a human rights-based approach be applied in addressing this humanitarian issue? And what role might social and community actors play? These questions are relevant for assessing the modalities, capacities, and best practices required in responding to forced migration.

Indonesia, although not a country affected by armed conflict, large-scale national crises, or active hostilities, nonetheless holds a role and legal obligations in responding to forced migration. Due to geographical, socio-cultural, and other contributing factors, Indonesia has become one of the countries hosting refugees and asylum seekers. At the time this report was written, Indonesia was home to more than 11,000 refugees and asylum seekers from various countries of origin. As a state governed by the rule of law, adherence to international standards and the protection of the human rights of refugees and asylum seekers are imperative.

This report presents an overview of the international context (which also affects Indonesia) and the national situation regarding the protection of refugees and asylum seekers; political and policy developments across different administrations; community-based data; and a comprehensive analysis of the roles played by SUAKA as part of civil society and as a key stakeholder. Through this presentation of data and analysis, SUAKA seeks to highlight that Indonesia, as the

primary duty bearer in the protection of human rights, has yet to fulfill its obligations in a comprehensive manner. As a form of advocacy for change, civil and community actors play an active role.

This report is intended not only to provide an up-to-date situational overview, but also to offer key recommendations aimed at mobilising support, strengthening collaboration, and promoting human rights-based policy reforms for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia. Furthermore, SUAKA hopes this report will contribute to increased awareness and broader support for human rights protection, which remains crucial to the conditions faced by refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia. Human rights belong to everyone, without exception, and are universal to all human beings.

**Angga Reynady Hermawan Putra**  
Executive Director



Figure 1. SUAKA activists during the 2024 Annual Work Meeting agenda

## **About *Perkumpulan SUAKA Untuk Perlindungan Hak Pengungsi* (SUAKA - Association for the Protection of Refugee Rights)**

**P**erkumpulan SUAKA Untuk Perlindungan Hak Pengungsi (**SUAKA**) is a civil society organization dedicated to advocating for the rights of international refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia.

In pursuing the fair and dignified fulfillment of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, SUAKA carries out policy research and advocacy, provides legal aid and empowerment, and conducts campaigns and public awareness activities. These efforts aim to produce analyses that reflect the factual conditions and realities experienced by refugees and asylum seekers.

The importance of fulfilling rights and providing protection for refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia was recognized by the three organizations that initiated the establishment of SUAKA: the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Jakarta), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Indonesia, and the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG). With support from individual volunteers, SUAKA has been operating since 2012, and in 2018 it was formally established as a legal entity in the form of an Association.

SUAKA works to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights for refugees and asylum seekers. This vision is articulated through four core missions:

1. To provide legal aid, advice, and information to asylum seekers and refugees;

2. To empower asylum seekers and refugees to assert and uphold their rights;
3. To increase public awareness of asylum seeker and refugee issues in Indonesia; and
4. To conduct advocacy for the implementation of policies that protect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

Currently, SUAKA is supported by 19 Individual Members, 3 Organizational Members, and approximately 20 Volunteers. The commitment, contributions, and dedication of its Members and Volunteers have enabled SUAKA to grow as an organization and to actively contribute to the fulfillment and protection of human rights for refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia.

In carrying out its work, SUAKA is guided by a three-year Strategic Plan and an Annual Work Plan. For the 2025–2027 period, SUAKA has developed the following Strategic Plan:

**Strategic Goal:** “The Establishment of Policies to Protect Refugees in Indonesia.”

1. **Program Objective I:** Policy Advocacy on the Protection and Fulfillment of Refugees’ Rights.

2. **Program Objective II:** Expansion of Access to Legal Aid Services.
3. **Program Objective III:** Strengthening Public Support to Promote Policies that Ensure the Fulfillment of Refugees’ Basic Rights.

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## Organigram Perkumpulan SUAKA Untuk Hak Pengungsi

SUAKA's organizational structure ensures a clear separation between decision-making, oversight, and program implementation functions, with cross-functional coordination to support work effectiveness.

### A. GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MEMBERS

The highest decision-making body that guides association policies and annual strategic programs.

### B. SUPERVISORY BOARD

Provide guidance and direction for implementing activities to management in accordance with the mandate of the general meeting of members.

### C. EXECUTIVE BOARD

Responsible for drafting the bylaws and other regulations related to the organization. Prepares reports on the work programs and actions carried out by the Management. The composition is adjusted according to the agreed program, including:

1. Chairperson

Represents the association in legal matters with third parties, including cooperation, fundraising, and other forms of support. Coordinates all organs within the association to ensure the implementation of programs.

2. Secretary

Responsible for strengthening the organization's capacity in terms of administration, systems, human resources, and infrastructure to support program implementation.

3. Treasurer

Responsible for financial management, including fundraising, storage, and expenditure, and supporting program funding.

### D. IMPLEMENTING BODY

Implementers of the association's strategic and operational programs with a composition tailored to the agreed programs, including:

1. **Policy Advocacy Program**

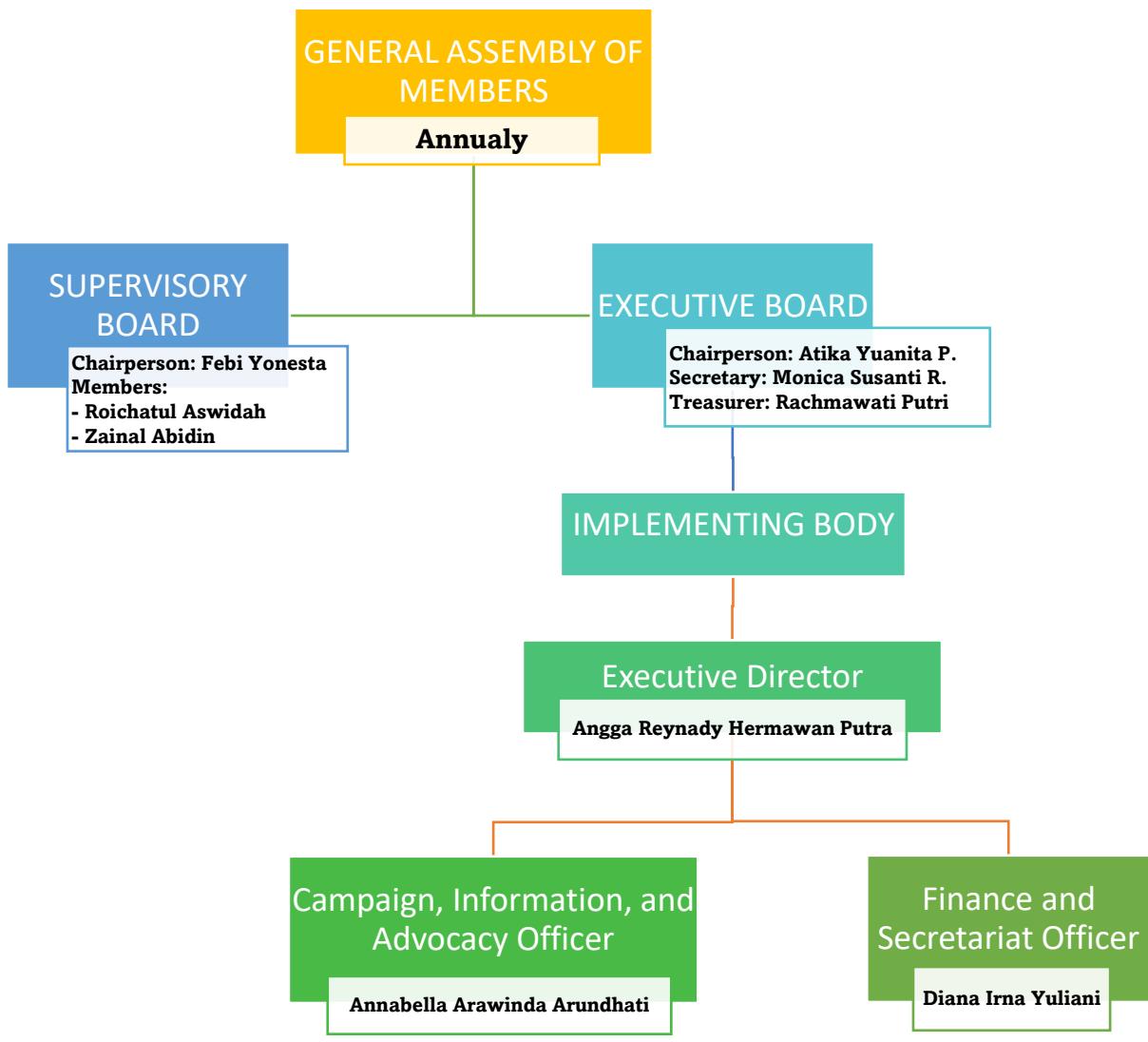
Responsible for implementing programs related to policy advocacy, including conducting policy research, drafting policy briefs and regulations, policy lobbying, and engaging with policymakers.

2. **Empowerment and Legal Aid Program**

Responsible for implementing programs related to empowerment and legal aid, including providing consultations, empowering legal assistance, strategic litigation, legal empowerment, community info sessions, and community paralegals.

3. **Campaign and Public Awareness Program**

Responsible for implementing campaign-related programs, including social media, websites, celebrations of important days, and stakeholder awareness-raising activities.



ORGANIGRAM 2025

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# List of Abbreviation

Abbreviation	Description
SUAKA	SUAKA – Association for Protection of Refugee Rights
HAM	Human Rights
LBH	Legal Aid Institute (particularly LBH Jakarta as the initiator)
JRS Indonesia	Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia
HRWG	Human Rights Working Group
LKBH	Legal Consultation and Legal Aid Institute (University-based)
OBH	Legal Aid Organization
APH	Law Enforcement Officials
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IDC	International Detention Coalition
RPJMN	National Medium-Term Development Plan (2020-2024)
RPJPN	National Long-Term Development Plan
RANHAM	National Action Plan on Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals 2030
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
RSD	Refugee Status Determination (Penentuan Status Pengungsi)
ISHR	International Service for Human Rights
GI-RF	Global Initiative - Resilience Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
5PC	Five-Point Consensus (ASEAN)
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual
PILnet	Public Interest Lawyer Network
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
OV	UNHCR Outreach Volunteer

Satgas PPLN	Task Force for the Handling of International Refugees
TPPO	Criminal Offense of Trafficking in Persons
CSO	Civil Society Organization
BKSAP	Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Body (House of Representatives of Indonesia)
APHR	ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights
APRRN	Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network
GSLC	Global Strategic Litigation Council for Refugee Rights
AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021–2025 period has been a critical phase for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, both globally and in Indonesia. Over the past five years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented rise in forced displacement. More than **122 million people** have been forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, systematic persecution, genocide, political regime changes, and protracted humanitarian crises. This surge has not been accompanied by a strengthening of the international protection system. Instead, the period has been marked by **shrinking access to durable solutions**—particularly resettlement—as well as the growing prevalence of restrictive policies and anti-refugee sentiment in many destination countries.

In 2025, UNHCR projected that **global resettlement quotas would reach their lowest level since 2003**, falling even below levels recorded during the COVID-19 pandemic. This decline coincided with a **global humanitarian funding crisis** driven by substantial cuts in foreign aid from major donor states. The consequences have been immediate and severe: healthcare, education, financial assistance, and protection services for refugee women and children have all been significantly reduced. In this context, transit countries such as Indonesia are facing increasing responsibilities despite limited capacity and policy frameworks.

In Asia and Southeast Asia, refugee protection challenges are structural in nature. While the region hosts large refugee populations, most countries lack comprehensive national legal frameworks and effective regional protection mechanisms. The Rohingya refugee crisis stands as the clearest example of the region's collective response failure. By 2025, more than **1.2 million Rohingya refugees** remain in overcrowded and precarious conditions in Bangladesh, while violence and genocide in Myanmar persist. High-risk maritime movements continue, leading to recurring loss of life at sea. ASEAN, despite its regional humanitarian mandate, remains constrained by the principle of non-intervention and the

absence of binding refugee protection instruments.

At the national level, Indonesia hosts approximately **11,900 refugees and asylum seekers as of September 2025**, with the largest

communities originating from Afghanistan, Myanmar (Rohingya), and Somalia. The country functions de facto as a transit state, where refugees are often stranded for prolonged periods with no certainty about their future. The absence of ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, combined with limited national policies, leaves refugees in a legally ambiguous and vulnerable position. Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016 provides a framework for managing emergency arrivals but does not guarantee sustained access to fundamental rights such as livelihood, social protection, and local integration.

Living conditions vary sharply among refugees. Those accommodated under the IOM housing scheme—whose capacity continues to shrink—receive minimal basic support. However, **Independent or Self-reliant refugees**, especially those arriving after 2018, face multiple layers of vulnerability: no legal access to work, limited financial aid, restricted healthcare services, and heightened risk of social tension and criminalization. The suspension of UNHCR cash assistance since 2024 has further worsened the situation. Over the long term, prolonged uncertainty has had severe consequences for mental health, with rising rates of depression, anxiety, and trauma among refugee populations.

This report is based on a combination of **community-based data**, legal aid case documentation, policy research, and SUAKA's advocacy and accompaniment experiences during the 2021–2025 period. Legal aid data reveal recurring pattern of challenges faced by refugees, ranging from criminalization,

arbitrary detention, gender-based violence, and barriers in accessing justice. On the other hand, the report highlights positive practices emerging from refugee and civil society initiatives, including the development of learning centers, refugee-led organizations (RLO), and limited collaborations with local communities.

Overall, this report shows that the refugee situation in Indonesia is not merely a humanitarian issue, but also **a matter of public policy, human rights, and governance**. Without stronger national legal frameworks, clearer inter-agency coordination, and a

sustained commitment to fulfilling refugees' basic rights, Indonesia risks maintaining prolonged structural uncertainty. At the same time, this report highlights the strategic role of civil society in addressing protection gaps and promoting human-rights-based policy change.

This summary aims to provide a factual and evidence-based overview of the refugee situation in Indonesia over the past five years, serving as a foundation for policy dialogue, cross-stakeholder collaboration, and the development of responses that are more just, humane, and sustainable.

# BACKGROUND

**A**s part of its commitment to advancing the fulfilment of human rights of refugees and asylum seekers, SUAKA undertook an analysis of refugee conditions in Indonesia to assess existing protection mechanisms and to identify practical steps that can support more dignified and sustainable livelihoods for refugees.

SUAKA recognizes the lack of comprehensive analysis on refugee handling in Indonesia have and has thus produced this report to provide the current data and overview.

**This report is presented as a five-year overview to provide a comprehensive picture of the situation, policies, and protection of refugees and asylum seekers across successive periods of global and national leadership.** The five-year timeframe was selected in line with SUAKA's internal strategic planning cycle, which guides its programmatic work. Accordingly, the report maps changes in refugee conditions alongside shifts in international and domestic political contexts, while also reflecting SUAKA's own strategic priorities.

**The section examined developments in refugee situations at the international, regional, and national levels between 2021 and 2025.** SUAKA particularly applied a qualitative approach, drawing on secondary data from reports and publications by other organizations, including annual reports, media monitoring, research studies, and analyses produced by international and national actors working on refugee issues in Indonesia. Over this period, refugee conditions evolved rapidly in response to escalating conflicts, political transitions, and the weakening of protection policies in many countries. Growing anti-refugee sentiment, the externalization of migration control, and the limited availability of durable solutions—particularly resettlement—have further aggravated the global refugee situation. **In Southeast Asia, the Rohingya crisis has underscored the lack of an effective collective regional response.** At the national level, the absence of a comprehensive legal framework continues to impede refugee protection, leaving many refugees in prolonged uncertainty with no clear pathway forward.

**The analysis presented in this report is based on data and information gathered through multiple sources.** As an organization engaged in service provisions (legal aid), advocacy, and network-building, SUAKA draws on a substantial body of case-based data. Many of the findings stem from SUAKA's internal database, which documents legal complaints submitted by refugees and asylum seekers. These cases provide first-hand insight into the everyday challenges and legal obstacles faced by refugee communities. This information is complemented by formal and informal exchanges with refugee and asylum seeker communities in various locations, as well as by information shared through collaboration with other civil society organizations, academic institutions, and international organizations. Given SUAKA's limited resources and operational reach, such exchanges are essential to developing a broader and more balanced understanding of refugee protection in Indonesia.

**It is important to note that this report reflects the realities and limitations of SUAKA's operational work.** While SUAKA operates at the national level, its base in the Greater Jakarta area (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi) means that service delivery and advocacy efforts are more frequent in these locations. Nonetheless, SUAKA continues to engage with refugee communities in other regions, such as Medan and Makassar, including through online legal assistance and remote follow-up. The limited number of organizations providing refugee support nationwide also affects the diversity of perspectives and the documentation of challenges, conditions, and progress in refugee protection. This situation is closely linked to

broader gaps in awareness and understanding of human rights protection among civil society actors, law enforcement authorities, and state institutions. These challenges are particularly pronounced given the absence of a comprehensive human rights-based policy framework governing the fulfillment of refugees' and asylum seekers' basic rights in Indonesia.

Despite these constraints, SUAKA hopes this report will contribute constructively to efforts to strengthen refugee protection in Indonesia

by offering informed analysis and practical recommendations, especially on key issues identified through available data. The challenges outlined in this report also highlight opportunities for deeper collaboration with a wide range of actors, including civil society organizations, academic communities, youth groups, and others. Such collaboration is increasingly reflected in the growing body of academic research on refugee and asylum seeker issues, spanning research projects, undergraduate theses, and postgraduate studies.



Figure 2. Legal information session for the refugee community. A speaker representing refugee paralegals is delivering legal information to the participants.

## REFUGEE CONDITION AND SITUATION

2021-2025

**I**ndonesia is one of the countries that responds to the presence of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing persecution or human rights violations in their countries of origin.<sup>1</sup> As a country that has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention,<sup>2</sup> Indonesia often serves as a transit country for refugees and asylum seekers seeking resettlement<sup>3</sup> in states that are parties to the Convention and able to offer long-term solutions. In practice, however, opportunities for resettlement are often limited by the willingness of destination countries to accept refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>4</sup> This limitation leaves many refugees and asylum seekers in prolonged—and sometimes years-long—periods of transit, with no certainty regarding their rights and living conditions in Indonesia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bryony Lau, Syahri Ramadhan, and Tasnim Yusuf, *A Transit Country No More: Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Indonesia*, Mixed Migration Centre Research Report (May 2021), [https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/170\\_Indonesia\\_Transit\\_Country\\_No\\_More\\_Research\\_Report.pdf](https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/170_Indonesia_Transit_Country_No_More_Research_Report.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (Geneva: United Nations, 1951), [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_CONF.2\\_108.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.2_108.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Robyn C. Sampson, Sandra M. Gifford, dan Savitri Taylor, "The Myth of Transit: The Making of a Life by Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Indonesia," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 7 (2016): 1135–1152, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1130611>; Asher Lazarus Hirsch dan Cameron Doig, "Outsourcing Control: The International Organization for Migration in Indonesia," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 22, no. 5 (2018): 681–708, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1417261>

<sup>4</sup> Lau, Ramadhan, and Yusuf, *A Transit Country No More*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**The challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia are compounded by past experiences of persecution and human rights violations, creating multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities.** One of the most immediate areas of vulnerability is the need for protection. Refugees often face dramatic life changes, including separation from family, adapting to a new environment, difficulty accessing basic services, and exposure to danger and insecurity. Those whose asylum claims are rejected risk prolonged detention, while refugees perceived as security risks may face indefinite detention. These circumstances make it even harder for them to access protection, integrate into society, and rebuild their lives, reinforcing their position as a highly vulnerable population.

**Addressing these layered vulnerabilities requires strong legal and policy frameworks.** International instruments, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as broader human rights treaties, recognize these vulnerabilities and provide special protection measures.<sup>6</sup> Refugee protection is also embedded in global development agendas, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact on Refugees.<sup>7</sup> In practical terms, organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Detention Coalition (IDC) have operationalized these concepts through tools like *Vulnerability Screening Tools*.<sup>8</sup>

Despite these international frameworks, Indonesia has yet to integrate the specific protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers into national policies. Key planning documents, including the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN), and the National Action Plan on Human Rights (RANHAM), do not prioritize refugees as a target group. Without formal recognition of their vulnerabilities, refugees remain in a policy “grey zone,” with limited legal or social protection. Indonesia’s non-ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol further complicates the provision of protection and long-term solutions for refugees in the country.

**Inadequate policy frameworks complicate the situation for refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia.** Refugees arriving in Indonesia face numerous challenges, including obstacles in seeking asylum, the refugee status determination (RSD) process, and national law enforcement that often does not prioritize the protection of their rights. Additionally, refugees are compelled to meet their basic needs with minimal support, such as access to housing, employment, healthcare, and education. The limited protection of refugee rights within Indonesia’s regulatory framework undermines the resilience of refugee communities, hindering their ability to pursue a decent and sustainable livelihood independently, and exacerbates the uncertainty in their lives.

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<sup>6</sup> The protection of refugees is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as various other human rights conventions, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

<sup>7</sup>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *The Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact on*

*Refugees*, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/sustainable-development-goals-and-global-compact-refugees>.

<sup>8</sup>UNHCR and International Detention Coalition (IDC), *Vulnerability Screening Tools: Identifying and Addressing Vulnerability – A Tool for Asylum and Migration Systems* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Detention Coalition, 2016), <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-idc-vulnerability-screening-tool-identifying-and-addressing-vulnerability-tool-asylum>

### **a) The Situation of Refugee in the International Context**

Globally, over 122 million people are forcibly displaced due to persecution, armed conflict, and protracted wars.<sup>9</sup>

**The complexity of forced migration is further compounded by setbacks in refugee protection policies in both transit and destination countries.** Between 2021 and 2025, several states adopted increasingly restrictive approaches, often aimed at avoiding responsibility for refugee protection. In 2022, the United Kingdom announced a plan to relocate asylum seekers to Rwanda,<sup>10</sup> although this policy was later revoked by the succeeding government.<sup>11</sup> This policy exemplifies the growing trend of outsourcing refugee protection, a trend also evident in several European countries. In 2023, Italy and Albania signed an agreement to transfer asylum seekers arriving by sea under Italian jurisdiction to Albania. **These practices of shifting protection responsibilities undermine international protection principles and create greater uncertainty over the status and living conditions of asylum seekers.** A similar approach is evident in Australia's policy of processing refugee claims in *offshore* locations.

**Setbacks in refugee protection policies are also apparent in Eastern Europe.** Belarus, subject to EU economic sanctions, was alleged to have used asylum seekers as a political

instrument by mobilizing them to the borders of EU countries such as Latvia, Poland, and Lithuania, apparently as a form of retaliation against the sanctions.<sup>12</sup> This has led to uncertain legal status and living conditions for the displaced, while neighboring countries struggle to accommodate the sudden influx, triggering humanitarian crises and prompting extreme measures such as the construction of border walls, as seen in Poland.<sup>13</sup>

**Australia, with refugee policies that intersect geopolitically with Indonesia, also shows a decline in refugee protection standards.** As of 2025, Australia continued to block resettlement for refugees registered in Indonesia after 1 June 2014 and maintained offshore processing in Nauru and Papua New Guinea with indefinite timelines. While temporary measures in 2022 allowed holders of Temporary Protection Visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas to access permanent visas, and the number of asylum seekers in Nauru temporarily decreased in 2023, these developments were not sustained. By 2024, placements in Nauru increased again, with 94 asylum seekers remaining in the processing centers.<sup>14</sup> Beyond national policies, **rising anti-refugee sentiment in the public sphere has further restricted protection space.** Refugees and asylum seekers are frequently targeted by negative narratives linking them to crime or public disorder. For instance, a stabbing incident in the UK in August 2024<sup>15</sup> was accompanied by misinformation suggesting

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends*, diakses 5 April 2025, <https://www.unhcr.org/mid-year-trends>.

<sup>10</sup> BBC, "What Is the UK's Plan to Send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda?", BBC News, 18 Juni 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-61782866>.

<sup>11</sup> Sam Francis, "Starmer Confirms Rwanda Deportation Plan 'Dead,'" BBC News, 7 July 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz9dn8erg3zo>.

<sup>12</sup> European Union, *Briefing: Instrumentalisation in the Field of Migration and Asylum* (November 2022)

<sup>13</sup> Alexandra von Nahmen, "Poland's Belarus Border Fence: A Controversial Deterrent," DW, 18 January 2025,

<https://www.dw.com/en/polands-belarus-border-fence-a-controversial-deterrent/a-71333184>.

<sup>14</sup> Refugee Council of Australia, "Offshore Processing Statistics," 3 November 2025, <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/operation-sovereign-borders-offshore-detention-statistics/2/>.

<sup>15</sup> Danica Kirka, "What's Behind the Anti-Immigrant Violence That Has Exploded Across Britain? Here's a Look," AP News, 6 August 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/britain-riots-unrest-social-media-misinformation-attack-5824d3136675e10d6a25c9e17287c994>.

the perpetrator was an asylum seeker, fueling broader negative perceptions of refugee communities.

**The refugee protection system has been further strained by the global humanitarian funding crisis.** In March 2025, the Commissioner of UNHCR, Filippo Grandi, warned that massive cuts in humanitarian funding have placed millions of lives at serious risk, including increasing the vulnerability of refugee women to sexual violence and pushing children into child labor, human trafficking, or early marriage.<sup>16</sup> This funding crisis is closely linked to policy changes in major donor countries. In early 2025, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump announced drastic cuts to foreign aid, including the elimination of over 90% of USAID contracts and a reduction of approximately USD 60 billion in U.S. aid globally.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, the Trump administration also suspended refugee resettlement programs, reinstated travel restrictions, and dismantled various support systems that had long formed the foundation of refugee reception in the United States.<sup>18</sup>

**These dynamics contributed to a sharp decline in global resettlement opportunities in 2025.** By June 2025, UNHCR projected that the resettlement quota would reach its lowest level since 2003, even lower than during the COVID-19 pandemic, reversing the gains of 2024.<sup>19</sup> This decline limits long-term solutions for refugees, especially for those who have been in transit countries for extended periods.

Overall, **the 2021–2025 period shows a global regression in refugee protection**, marked by restrictive policies, funding crises, rising anti-refugee sentiment, and reduced access to durable solutions. These trends directly affect transit countries like Indonesia, where **refugees face prolonged waiting periods and heightened uncertainty amid weakening international protection systems.**

#### **b) The Situation of Refugee in Asia and Southeast Asia**

**The worsening of refugee protection policies has become increasingly apparent across Asia.** Since 2023,<sup>20</sup> many countries in the region have carried out deportations of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers. These measures are commonly justified on the grounds of national security and rising crime, often reflecting growing anti-refugee sentiment that unfairly portrays refugees as a source of security threats. Amnesty International reports that Iran and Pakistan unlawfully deported more than 2.6 million Afghan nationals throughout 2025. Similar practices have also been documented in Turkey, Tajikistan, and several European countries, including Germany and Austria. These forced returns have occurred amid a severe deterioration of human rights conditions in Afghanistan under Taliban rule, with women, children, former government officials, journalists, and human rights defenders facing heightened risks.

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<sup>16</sup> Emma Farge, "Millions of Lives at Risk from 'brutal' Funding Cuts, UN Refugee Chief Says," *Reuters*, 20 December 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/millions-lives-risk-brutal-funding-cuts-un-refugee-chief-says-2025-03-20/>.

<sup>17</sup> Associated Press The Guardian, "Trump Administration to Cut More Than 90% of USAID Foreign Aid Contracts," *The Guardian*, 26 February 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/26/trump-usaid-cuts>.

<sup>18</sup> International Rescue Committee, "How Have Trump Policies Impacted Refugees?", *International Rescue Committee*, [Rescue.org](https://www.rescue.org/article/how-have-trump-policies-impacted-refugees), 18 September 2025.

<https://www.rescue.org/article/how-have-trump-policies-impacted-refugees>.

<sup>19</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2026, *UNHCR*, June 2025, <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/2026-projected-global-resettlement-needs-pgrn>.

<sup>20</sup> Haroon Janjua, "Why is Pakistan expelling Afghan refugees?", *DW*, 18 January 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/why-is-pakistan-expelling-afghan-refugees/a-71732536>

**A similar pattern can also be seen in plans to repatriate Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to their country of origin, Myanmar.<sup>21</sup>** Although the plan has yet to be implemented, it poses serious risks to the safety of Rohingya refugees, given the ongoing persecution and ethnic genocide against the Rohingya in Myanmar. In April 2025, Myanmar confirmed that 180,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh—who had fled Rakhine State—were deemed eligible for return, out of a list of 800,000 names submitted by Bangladesh in several phases since 2018. Verification is still underway for an additional 70,000 refugees, while a further 550,000 remain awaiting accelerated verification. These repatriation plans are unfolding amid severe overcrowding in Rohingya refugee camps, continued violence in Myanmar, and persistently high risks to the refugees' security and human rights.

**Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are enduring an increasingly dire humanitarian crisis**, with around 1.2 million people sheltering in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char.<sup>22</sup> Severe overcrowding in the camps has been accompanied by rising crime, shrinking access to basic rights and essential services, and substandard living conditions.<sup>23</sup> Recent aid cuts have deprived some 300,000 refugees of healthcare, while education has been gravely affected, leaving nearly 230,000 children without access to learning. These challenges are further intensified by climate change, as recurrent

floods, landslides, and cyclones continue to worsen an already fragile situation.

**The challenges confronting Rohingya refugees demand a concerted regional response from countries across South and Southeast Asia.** Yet meaningful collective action has been hampered by the absence of effective regional solutions, compounded by ASEAN's structural constraints rooted in its principles of non-interference and consensus-based decision-making. Although ASEAN adopted the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) in 2021, the ongoing escalation of conflict and violence in Myanmar points to serious shortcomings in its implementation.<sup>24</sup>

**The lack of effective regional solutions has fueled the continued exodus of the Rohingya, including their movement to countries across Southeast Asia.** Together with other refugee flows, Rohingya displacement has driven a steady increase in refugee populations throughout the region. By 2025, Malaysia hosted the largest number of refugees in Southeast Asia—around 189,476 people—followed by Thailand with 86,789.<sup>25</sup> While national approaches vary, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia have not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention, leaving their protection capacities constrained. In the absence of a robust regional framework, refugees' access to protection and durable solutions remains severely limited, despite ASEAN's mandate

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<sup>21</sup> Al Jazeera, "Myanmar Confirms 180,000 Rohingya Eligible to Return, Bangladesh Says," *Al Jazeera*, 4 April 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/4/myanmar-confirms-180000-rohingya-eligible-to-return-bangladesh-says>

<sup>22</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), "Eight Things You Should Know About the Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh," *Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)*, 15 September 2025, <https://www.nrc.no/feature/2025/eight-things-you-should-know-about-the-rohingya-crisis-in-bangladesh>.

<sup>23</sup> Ruma Paul, Sudipto Ganguly and Krishna N. Das, "Insight: Surging crime, bleak future push Rohingya in Bangladesh to risk

lives at sea," *Reuters*. 24 January 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/surging-crime-bleak-future-push-rohingya-bangladesh-risk-lives-sea-2023-01-24/>

<sup>24</sup> AJAR, "Civil Society Needs ASEAN Commitments More than Just 5 Points Consensus," *ASIA-AJAR*, 12 October 2024. <https://asia-ajar.org/press-release/summits-asean-commitments-beyond-five-point-consensus/>

<sup>25</sup> UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-data-finder/>

under the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 to uphold peace, stability, and humanitarian protection. **At the same time, dangerous sea journeys continue to cost lives.** Refugee boat sinkings in waters near Malaysia and Thailand in late 2025, which claimed at least 21 lives, starkly highlight the region's ongoing failure to provide safe and coordinated pathways for protection.<sup>26</sup>

**These realities highlight the urgent need for stronger multilateral mechanisms and more effective regional cooperation.** At the Asia-Pacific level, efforts to review the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) have taken place through the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation, which convened for its second session on 4–6 February 2025 in Thailand.<sup>27</sup> Alongside discussions on protecting migrant workers and international students, representatives at the forum stressed the importance of improving social services for refugees, including access to mental health care, legal documentation, and concrete measures to address the discrimination and xenophobia they continue to face. Indonesia, as one of the countries championing the Global Compact for Migration, also reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that all migrants are protected and safe at every stage of migration, with their rights upheld throughout the process.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the setbacks in refugee

protection outlined earlier indicate that regional protection mechanisms remain far from optimal, revealing persistent gaps between commitments and their effective implementation.

**Between 2021 and 2025, the forced displacement of Palestinians continued as a result of Israel's prolonged genocide.** According to data from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as of May 2025, more than 90% of homes in Palestine have been damaged or destroyed, leaving nearly 1.9 million Palestinians without permanent and safe housing.<sup>29</sup> Many have been pushed to live in tents or makeshift emergency shelters that fall far short of basic standards of safety and dignity, while large segments of the population endure a severe humanitarian crisis marked by food shortages, lack of access to essential services, and devastated infrastructure. By 2024, the Palestinian population that has migrated to the Middle East is estimated at seven million with varying legal statuses, while UNRWA reports providing support to 5.9 million refugees in the region.<sup>30</sup>

On 17 November 2025, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2803, endorsing the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict—also known as Trump's 20-point plan—which emphasized the need for a ceasefire in

<sup>26</sup> Lyndal Rowlands and News Agencies, "21 Dead, Search Continues After Refugee Boat Sinks Near Malaysia, Thailand," *Al Jazeera*, 11 November 11 2025,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/11/11/21-dead-search-continues-after-refugee-boat-sinks-near-malaysia-thailand>

<sup>27</sup> UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), *Report on the Second Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration ESCAP/GCM/2025/5*, UNESCAP, 26 February 2025, <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/2500079E.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Network on Migration, *Item 2: Indonesia* (2025),

[https://migrationnetwork.un.org/system/files/docs/Item2\\_Indonesia.pdf](https://migrationnetwork.un.org/system/files/docs/Item2_Indonesia.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), *Situation Report #173 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 28 Mei 2025,

<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-173-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>.

<sup>30</sup> Astrid Prange de Oliveira dan Jennifer Holleis, "The Plight of Displaced Palestinian Refugees," *DW*, 28 September 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-plight-of-displaced-palestinian-refugees/a-70353072>

**Palestine.**<sup>31</sup> Despite this, Israel violated the ceasefire nearly 600 times between 10 October and 2 December 2025, killing at least 356 Palestinians, injuring over 900, and continuing to obstruct humanitarian aid. As a result, security in Palestine remained fragile, forcing many Palestinians once again to flee their homes.

In response to the Palestinian refugee crisis, the Indonesian government initially expressed its readiness to receive and evacuate injured, traumatized, or orphaned Palestinians from Gaza, including plans to temporarily host around 1,000 refugees in Indonesia.<sup>32</sup> However, the initiative drew criticism for overlooking the historical context of the occupation in Palestine and raising questions about Indonesia's preparedness to accommodate refugees amid limited protection policies and the absence of adequate legal frameworks.

The ongoing genocide underscores the lack of comprehensive long-term solutions—both at the regional and international levels—for the protection of Palestinians, including asylum seekers and refugees forced to flee their homes. The protracted violence in Palestine serves as a stark reminder to Asia and Southeast Asia of the urgent need to strengthen refugee protection mechanisms and humanitarian responses across the region.

Amid the ongoing challenges of refugee protection in Asia and Southeast Asia, there have been some positive developments in advancing refugee rights. **In 2025, Thailand**

**and Malaysia took steps to allow refugees to work legally—an important breakthrough in promoting their economic inclusion.**<sup>33</sup> In August 2025, Thailand approved a policy granting work rights to thousands of Myanmar refugees living in border camps, most of whom are from the Karen and Karenni ethnic groups. Meanwhile, Malaysia plans to launch a national registration system on 1 January 2026, which would allow registered refugees to live and work legally in the country as part of its national refugee policy framework. If implemented effectively, these reforms could enhance refugees' economic self-reliance, serve as a regional model for inclusion, and help reduce the reliance on humanitarian aid amid global funding cuts.

### **c) The Situation of Refugee in Indonesia (National Context)**

A number of refugees from various countries, with diverse histories of persecution and migration routes, are residing in Indonesia. As of September 2025, there were 11,900 refugees and asylum seekers registered with the UNHCR in Indonesia.<sup>34</sup> These individuals come from diverse backgrounds, with the three largest groups coming from Afghanistan, Myanmar (Rohingya), and Somalia.

**SUAKA documents the impact of international and regional political developments on the refugee protection situation in Indonesia.**

<sup>31</sup> Laurie Nathan, "Achieving a Genuine Ceasefire in Gaza: Lessons from Other Ceasefires," *ReliefWeb*, 18 December 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/achieving-genuine-ceasefire-gaza-lessons-other-ceasefires>.

<sup>32</sup> Sebastian Strangio, "Indonesia Ready to Temporarily Shelter Palestinians From Gaza, President Says," *The Diplomat*, 10 April 2025, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/04/indonesia-ready-to-temporarily-shelter-palestinians-from-gaza-president-says/>

<sup>33</sup> Harrison Tang dan Thomas Ginn, "A Breakthrough for Refugees' Work Rights in Thailand and Malaysia?," *Center for Global Development*, 17 December 2025, <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/breakthrough-refugees-work-rights-thailand-and-malaysia>.

<sup>34</sup> UNHCR Indonesia Monthly Statistical Report, September 2025, <https://www.unhcr.org/id/en/media/monthly-statistical-report-september-2025>

First, international and regional dynamics influence refugee migration patterns toward Indonesia. The Afghan community, which has historically represented the largest refugee population in Indonesia, has experienced ongoing conflict and ethnic discrimination against the Hazara minority, driving large-scale refugee migration worldwide. In 2021, the return of the Taliban to power further exacerbated discrimination against women in Afghanistan. Similarly, for the Rohingya, the military coup by the ruling junta and legal identity-based discrimination have escalated acts of genocide, prompting refugees to seek safety in other countries. Beyond large-scale movements, Indonesia has also observed individual refugee migration, often motivated by personal experiences of discrimination or political reasons, typically related to opposition to the ruling government in their country of origin. Indonesia also pays close attention to the genocide, attacks, and occupation carried out by Israel against Palestine. The situation in Palestine has had multiple repercussions, including an increase in the forced migration of asylum seekers from Palestine worldwide.

Second, in addition to driving factors from their countries of origin, refugees are drawn to Indonesia through human smuggling networks, the presence of relatives or family members already residing in the country, and a standard of living that is relatively comparable to their home countries.<sup>35</sup>

Third, there are other factors that make Indonesia an attractive destination for asylum seekers. SUAKA has identified two key ones. The first is geographical:<sup>36</sup> as an archipelagic country, Indonesia shares strategic proximity with other asylum-seeking destinations, such as Malaysia and Australia. The second is religious: as one of the world's largest Muslim-majority countries, Indonesia is particularly appealing to refugees from other Muslim-majority nations.<sup>37</sup>

In response to these international situations, Indonesia has essentially developed its own responses and key findings. In the case of Myanmar, for instance, Indonesia has frequently presented a positive narrative at high-level international forums, advocating for peace in Myanmar and collaborative efforts to address the situation of the Rohingya.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, **there are allegations that three state-owned enterprises may have supplied weapons to the military junta, which is implicated in the genocide and forced displacement of the Rohingya in Myanmar.**<sup>39</sup>

In the context of Palestine, Indonesia has proposed several measures in response to the crisis. One such proposal involved evacuating Gaza residents to Indonesia for temporary medical treatment. However, this proposal sparked debate, as there were concerns that such an evacuation could unintentionally support Israel's agenda of territorial clearance.

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<sup>35</sup> Bryony Lau, Syahri Ramadhan, and Tasnim Yusuf, *A Transit Country No More: Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Indonesia*, Mixed Migration Centre Research Report (May 2021), [https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/170\\_Indonesia\\_Transit\\_Country\\_No\\_More\\_Research\\_Report.pdf](https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/170_Indonesia_Transit_Country_No_More_Research_Report.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Arief Hamdi, Hanifa Maulidia, dan Habbi Firlana, "Fenomena Pencari Suaka dan Pengungsi Etnis Rohingya di Indonesia: Studi Kasus Penanganan Rohingya di Aceh," *Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Keimigrasian* 6, no. 1 (2013): 64.

<sup>37</sup> BBC Indonesia, "Mengapa ratusan pengungsi Rohingya mendarat di Deli Serdang, Sumatra Utara? - 'Kami perlu

bantuan karena kami tidak aman di Bangladesh", *BBC Indonesia*, 2 January 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c802y7w6gd90>

<sup>38</sup> Statement from the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the *High Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar*, September 2025, <https://kemlu.go.id/berita/menlu-sugiono-desak-komunitas-internasional-bersatu-atas-krisis-rohingya?type=publication>

<sup>39</sup> BBC Indonesia, "Myanmar: Tiga BUMN dilaporkan ke Komnas HAM atas tuduhan jual senjata ke junta militer yang perangi warga sipil", *BBC Indonesia*, 4 October 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-66992361>

It also raised questions about potential inconsistencies in refugee management, particularly regarding the alignment of policies with the legal status of refugees.<sup>40</sup>

These responses highlight the Indonesian government's engagement with crises affecting refugees and asylum seekers. Ensuring that such responses result in concrete actions is essential, especially in developing human rights-based policies that effectively protect refugees and asylum seekers impacted by adverse international conditions.

**Several factors driving refugee migration to Indonesia have required the country to address the needs of displaced people.** Indonesia has been receiving Rohingya refugees since 2003. Between 2003 and January 2025, 26 boats carrying a total of 3,342 Rohingya refugees arrived in the country.<sup>41</sup> This pattern of arrivals, together with the influx of other refugee communities along various migration routes, prompted the Indonesian government to issue Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016. Although Indonesia has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and therefore lacks a formal legal framework for refugee protection, Presidential Regulation 125/2016 provides a mechanism to respond to emergency arrivals. However, it does not establish long-term protection or solutions for refugees.

**Indonesia finds itself caught in the complexities of international refugee regulations.** The principle of non-refoulement prohibits the country from returning refugees to places where they may face persecution or danger, while resettlement options through

third countries remain limited. Consequently, Indonesia is often compelled to host refugees indefinitely, without a clear path for their long-term protection or relocation.<sup>42</sup>

**The refugee community's reliance on international organizations and civil society reflects structural limitations in the fulfillment of their basic rights.** Observations from the field highlight several key dynamics. In Indonesia, refugees and asylum seekers can generally be divided into two groups based on their living arrangements. The first group comprises those residing in accommodation provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In earlier years, IOM had the resources to support refugees through structured housing schemes. However, since 2018, budget constraints and changes in funding priorities have led IOM to discontinue accommodation support for newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers. Consequently, individuals who arrived after 2018 have been required to secure housing independently. This population forms the second group, commonly referred to as independent or self-settled refugees.

Refugees living in IOM accommodation tend to receive better access to basic services, including limited financial assistance and medical care. By contrast, self-settled refugees face layered and persistent challenges. They receive little to no support from IOM or other organizations, whether in terms of financial assistance or housing. UNHCR previously offered cash assistance based on vulnerability criteria, but this program was terminated in 2024 following a global decline in UNHCR

<sup>40</sup> SUAKA statement on the refusal of the Gaza evacuation plan from the perspective of human rights and refugee protection

<https://suaka.or.id/rilis-media-suaka-menolak-rencana-pemindahan-warga-gaza-ke-indonesia-dalam-skema-evakuasi-oleh-pemerintah-indonesia/>

<sup>41</sup>Nino Viartasiwi dan Antje Missbach, "Will Pekanbaru become Indonesia's Cox's Bazar?", *New Mandala*, 12 February 2025,

<https://www.newmandala.org/will-pekanbaru-become-indonesias-coxs-bazar/>.

<sup>42</sup>Robyn C. Sampson, Sandra M. Gifford, dan Savitri Taylor, "The Myth of Transit: The Making of a Life by Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Indonesia," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 7 (2016): 1135–1152, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1130611>

funding. Despite these constraints, support in the areas of education and health remains relatively stronger. Through a partnership with *Yayasan Guru Belajar*, UNHCR provides educational capacity-building and facilitates access to formal schooling. In addition, collaboration with *Yayasan Cita Wadah Swadaya* (YCWS) enables the provision of medical services as well as protection programs for women and children.

For refugees and asylum seekers living independently—outside accommodation provided by IOM and the Indonesian government—interaction with civil society is relatively extensive. These social interactions carry several implications. On the positive side, SUAKA has documented a number of constructive forms of collaboration between refugee and local communities, particularly through community-based activities such as waste management initiatives and the joint celebration of Indonesia's Independence Day. However, negative interactions have also been recorded. Conflicts involving refugees and local communities not infrequently escalate into legal issues. Documented cases include physical violence, sexual violence, and other criminal offenses.

These social dynamics have significant implications for refugee governance, including policy approaches, the ongoing gaps in the fulfillment of basic rights, and the legal challenges faced by refugees. In light of this, the government should promote community-based approaches through inclusive policies and empowerment programs. Such efforts would support refugees' adaptation to local communities while fostering collaborative

networks that enable mutual empowerment and meaningful participation in social life.

**As a non-signatory state to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Indonesia classifies individuals as asylum seekers pending formal refugee status determination by UNHCR.** Under the President Jokowi administration, Presidential Regulation No. 125/2016 established a legal basis for the recognition of refugees, following Indonesia's experience during the Andaman Sea crisis. However, the regulation does not elaborate on the conditions governing refugees' lives during prolonged periods of stay in Indonesia. Indonesia's self-identification as a "transit" country has resulted in limited support and inadequate fulfillment of refugees' rights. Observations from comparable "transit-country" contexts, such as Thailand, suggest that the transit label can weaken expectations placed on states to protect all individuals within their territory.<sup>43</sup> As a transit country, Indonesia therefore faces the imperative of clearly defining the temporary nature of its role as a place of refuge.

**As a country that upholds the promotion and protection of human rights, Indonesia has the opportunity to initiate and advance good practices in refugee protection.** To actively support the rights and well-being of refugees, Indonesia should focus on four strategic areas:

1. Ensuring the fulfillment of refugees' civil and political rights;
2. Ensuring the fulfillment of refugees' social and economic rights;
3. Implementing and strengthening existing national legal frameworks; and
4. Promoting sustainable solutions for refugees.

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<sup>43</sup> Coddington, Kate (2020). Producing Thailand as a transit country: borders, advocacy, and destitution. *Mobilities*, 15:4, 588-603, DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2020.1759928.

**Indonesia plays a crucial role in ensuring the civil and political rights of refugees.** A human rights-based approach to refugee protection is rooted in the goal of upholding human dignity. Among the most fundamental rights of every individual is the right to life. Through policies and state actions, Indonesia must ensure that all refugees can live safely and are protected from any life-threatening situations. This right to life is realized through measures such as emergency interventions upon refugees' arrival, providing adequate living standards to meet basic human needs, and ensuring the comprehensive fulfillment of other human rights. In addition, the state must also protect refugees' rights in relation to their social roles, supporting their interactions and integration with local communities.

Refugees also have the right to express their views and participate in policymaking that affects them, as well as to access justice when interacting with the legal system. The right to freedom of expression has been exercised on several occasions. SUAKA has observed a number of demonstrations organized by refugee communities. These documented actions were carried out with the accompaniment of law enforcement authorities and were related to issues such as uncertainty about the future, protests over gaps in the protection of human rights in Indonesia, and calls for the expedited process of resettlement to third countries. However, on several occasions, **there have also been instances of restrictions and violations of this right through repressive measures.** One notable example is the violence experienced by some refugees during a demonstration in Makassar in 2024.<sup>44</sup>

Access to justice encompasses refugees' right to legal assistance, equality before the law, protection against arbitrary arrest and

detention, and the assurance of an independent and impartial judicial process.

**Indonesia can also play a role in ensuring the social and economic rights of refugees by providing access to an adequate standard of living, as well as to education and healthcare services.** Support for livelihoods, however, still has room for improvement. Under current Indonesian immigration and labor policies, refugees are not permitted to engage in income-generating activities or employment, as stated in the annex of the Statement Letter under the Directorate General of Immigration Regulation No. IMI-0352.GR.02.07 of 2016 concerning the Handling of Illegal Migrants Who Identify Themselves as Asylum Seekers or Refugees (**Perdirjenim 2016**). As a result of this regulation, refugees and asylum seekers face significant challenges in meeting their daily needs.

The Indonesian government has, in fact, taken an initial step toward fulfilling this right. In 2024, the Ministry of Manpower issued Circular No. 2/1730/LP.03.02/IX/2023 on Job Training for Refugees ("SE Kemenaker"), granting refugees and asylum seekers access to national-level training programs to develop specific work-related skills. While this circular represents a positive step, refugees still face restrictions on employment and other income-generating activities. Moreover, the training is primarily beneficial only if refugees are eventually resettled to a third country where they can legally work. In this sense, this form of empowerment has limited impact on refugees' ability to meet their daily needs while remaining in Indonesia.

<sup>44</sup> SUAKA statement on the law enforcement repression of refugee protests in Makassar, [https://suaka.or.id/rilis-pers\\_lindungi-kebebasan-berekspresi-bagi-pengungsi-luar-](https://suaka.or.id/rilis-pers_lindungi-kebebasan-berekspresi-bagi-pengungsi-luar-)

<https://negeri-kecaman-suaka-terhadap-kekerasan-dalam-aksi-massa-komunitas-pengungsi-di-makassar/>

In terms of the right to education, the Ministry of Education and Culture has encouraged education units to allow refugee children to participate in schools through Circular Letter No. 30546/A.A5/HK.01.00/2022 on Education for Refugee Children. However, administrative limitations remain, such as the absence of official diplomas and the requirement for a sponsor to cover formal education costs. These constraints result in only partial fulfillment of the right to education.

The circular was somewhat delayed in responding to the educational needs of refugee children, especially considering that many refugees and asylum seekers had already been residing in Indonesia long before the circular came into effect. Given the limited access to formal education from the start until now, the refugee community has actively demonstrated its capacity by organizing independent educational initiatives. Informal education through *learning centers* and capacity-building activities led by *Refugee-Led Organizations* (RLOs) has long been in place. Examples include the Cisarua Refugee Learning Center<sup>45</sup> and the Refugee Talent Program,<sup>46</sup> both active in Bogor or Cisarua, and the Roshan Learning Center<sup>47</sup> in Jakarta, among others. These informal education initiatives provide a more accessible and supportive learning environment, as refugees are grouped with peers from their own communities, reducing language barriers and facilitating adaptation. The growth of RLOs and their activities has been rapid. This is driven not only by the evolving educational curriculum but also by successful collaborations between learning centers, RLOs, and official educational institutions from various countries. Progress is also tied to their organizational capacity and

legal status. Some RLOs have even secured official legal recognition, supported by local communities that help strengthen their legal standing.

Indonesia also has a role to play in ensuring refugees' right to health. Currently, access to primary and secondary healthcare depends largely on funding from international organizations and partners. There is no policy or system that guarantees affordable medical services for refugees. Coupled with the lack of opportunities to work and earn an income, this makes it difficult for refugees to access the care they need. SUAKA appreciates the openness of healthcare facilities across all levels in Indonesia toward refugees. At the most basic level, community health centers (*Puskesmas*) proactively provide access for refugees and asylum seekers, particularly because their services are among the most affordable.

In the context of the right to health, SUAKA also emphasized the mental and psychological health situation. Prolonged uncertainty—especially as comprehensive solutions become increasingly difficult to obtain—places severe psychological stress on refugee and asylum-seeker communities. This is compounded by limited access to basic rights and daily necessities, further increasing the community's psychological burden. Research shows a strong link between living with an uncertain future and higher rates of post-traumatic stress and depression.<sup>48</sup>

**Given the complexity of refugee handling, it is necessary to strengthen policy frameworks and ensure the implementation of duly mandated obligations.** Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016 is under increasing strain. Refugee migration flows are expected to

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.cisarualearning.com/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.refugeetalentprogram.com/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.roshanlearning.org/>

<sup>48</sup> A. Nickerson et al., "Intolerance of uncertainty, post traumatic stress, depression, and fears for the future among displaced refugees," *J Anxiety Disord*, vol. 94, p. 102672, Mar. 2023.

continue in light of persistent unfavorable global conditions. Handling refugees in accordance with this regulation is essential for protecting human rights and ensuring the safety and legal certainty of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Indonesia. The implementation also depends on the coordination and capacity of specific government units. During President Joko Widodo's administration, the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs established the Refugee Handling Task Force (*Satgas PPLN*), which operated under annual ministerial decrees. According to SUAKA's records, the last decree governing *Satgas PPLN* was issued in 2024 under Coordinating Ministry Decree No. 25 of 2024. As of 2025, no new decree has been issued regarding the task force or its role in refugee handling. This uncertainty is linked to structural changes in the ministry following President Prabowo Subianto's inauguration in October 2024. The ministry, formerly responsible for political, legal, and security affairs, now covers only political and security matters. It is therefore unclear whether *Satgas PPLN* will remain under this ministry. These changes in ministerial structure and coordination responsibilities have created uncertainty regarding both the task force's mandate and its position within the government.

From a policy perspective, a human rights approach is essential. Indonesia needs to move beyond the procedural, technical measures outlined in Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016 and focus on strengthening human rights protections within its national policy framework. Human rights-based approaches can also be integrated with other approaches. One example of good practice is the locally grounded, faith-based policy in Aceh: the *Fatwa of the Aceh Ulama Consultative Assembly No. 3 of 2024 on Assisting Foreign Immigrants Who Are Victims of Persecution*

*from the Perspective of Islamic Sharia, Customary Law, Positive Law, and International Law ("Fatwa Aceh Ulama 2024")*.

**Although Indonesia has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention, it still plays a role in providing long-term solutions for refugees.** Resettlement is becoming increasingly difficult, as more countries reduce quotas for third-country placement for various, often political, reasons. At the same time, Indonesia does not have a local integration process for refugees. Repatriation—the only remaining comprehensive solution—can only occur if the country of origin is safe and the process is voluntary. Given these circumstances, implementing long-term, comprehensive solutions for refugees and asylum seekers remains extremely challenging.

The Indonesian government has a role in addressing these challenges. Diplomatic channels can be used to encourage other countries to expand resettlement quotas and to promote peace and security in refugees' countries of origin. Stable and safe conditions in these countries would make voluntary repatriation possible. Supporting sustainable solutions for refugees has two important benefits for Indonesia: enhancing the country's international reputation as a defender of refugee rights, and increasing local support in destination countries for resettlement programs, which in turn opens opportunities for more refugees to move safely from Indonesia.

**Beyond resettlement, the Indonesian government's support for refugee empowerment can help open alternative pathways for placement in third countries, with support from local communities in destination countries.** The prolonged waiting period for resettlement has prompted refugees to seek information on alternative solutions

SUAKA has identified several such alternatives, including *community-based sponsorship*, family reunification, education-based relocation, and work-based relocation (labour mobility). The latter two options, however, require refugees to have certain skills and educational qualifications. Unluckily, study shows that many refugees face integration challenges due to limited education and skill levels.<sup>49</sup> In this context, the government can play a key role by supporting access to capacity-building initiatives and empowerment programs that strengthen refugees' skills and resources, enabling them to take advantage of these alternative pathway.

#### ***d) Special Context: Myanmar Conflict and the Arrival of Rohingya Refugees in Indonesia***

The Rohingya are among the most persecuted minority groups in the world.<sup>50</sup> Since their exclusion from Myanmar's official list of 135 ethnic groups under the 1982 Citizenship Law, the Rohingya have been rendered *stateless* in their own homeland. Longstanding discriminatory policies and state-imposed structural violence have driven repeated waves of Rohingya displacement to other countries in the region. The period 2021–2025 has been marked by the continued perpetration of violence against the Rohingya, both in Myanmar and in countries where Rohingya refugees seek protection, including Indonesia.

The military coup in Myanmar in 2021 further exacerbated the vulnerability of the Rohingya population. Severe restrictions on freedom of movement, the obstruction of humanitarian assistance in Rakhine State, and the escalation of armed conflict—including clashes between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army—have significantly increased the risks of violence and forced displacement, which persist to this day.<sup>51</sup> What has occurred in Myanmar has been classified by the international community, including experts, as genocide.<sup>52</sup> A 2025 report by Human Rights Watch notes that approximately 630,000 Rohingya remain trapped in conditions of systematic violence, while attempts to flee by sea continue despite the extreme risks involved.<sup>53</sup> The deteriorating security situation in Myanmar, the stagnation of durable solutions, and the decline of humanitarian assistance in refugee camps in Bangladesh have compelled the Rohingya to once again seek protection in other countries, including Indonesia.

Indonesia has been a transit country for Rohingya refugees since the early 2000s. SUAKA has documented at least three major waves of arrivals, occurring in 2009, 2012, and 2015.<sup>54</sup> The 2015 arrivals were closely associated with the Andaman Sea or Bay of Bengal crisis, during which around 1,300 Rohingya refugees were left drifting at sea after being turned away by several countries, before

<sup>49</sup> Halpern, P. (2008). Refugee economic self-sufficiency: an exploratory study of approaches used in the office of refugee resettlement programs. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

<sup>50</sup> Amnesty International Australia, "Rohingya People: The Most Persecuted Refugees in the World," *Amnesty International Australia* , (n.d.), <https://www.amnesty.org.au/rohingya>.

<sup>51</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2023: Myanmar*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/myanmar>.

<sup>52</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "UN expert demands accountability for the

Rohingya and an end to 'paralysis of indifference,'" press release, 24 August 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/08/un-expert-demands-accountability-rohingya-and-end-paralysis-indifference>

<sup>53</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2025: Myanmar*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/myanmar>.

<sup>54</sup> Rizka Argadianti Rachmah dan Zico Efraindio Pestalozzi. *Hidup yang Terabaikan: Laporan Penelitian Nasib Pengungsi Rohingya di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH) Jakarta, 2016, <https://suaka.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/suaka-laporan-penelitian-pengungsi-rohingya-2016-ind-min.pdf>.

eventually being rescued by Acehnese fishermen. In response, Indonesia participated in a regional forum with Malaysia and Thailand on 20 May 2015,<sup>55</sup> where it agreed to provide temporary shelter and began developing a domestic policy framework to address similar situations in the future.<sup>56</sup> These efforts led to the enactment of Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016, the first legal instrument in Indonesia to formally recognize the definition of refugees as articulated in the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Despite the foundational framework provided by Presidential Regulation No. 125/2016, significant limitations remain in practice in responding to the dynamics of Rohingya arrivals and ensuring their protection. Incidents of boat pushbacks and failures to uphold refugees' basic rights continue to occur. A notable example took place in December 2021, when dozens of Rohingya refugees—mostly women and children—were forced out of Indonesian waters toward Malaysia, even though their vessel was leaking and posed serious risks to their safety.<sup>57</sup>

The arrival of Rohingya refugees continued in the years that followed. By the end of 2023, SUAKA observed a significant surge in Rohingya

arrivals in Aceh following the end of the monsoon season in Bangladesh. Overcrowded and unsafe conditions in the Cox's Bazar camps, which host around 931,000 refugees, drove a new wave of sea departures.<sup>58</sup> UNHCR recorded that 1,752 Rohingya refugees arrived in Aceh and North Sumatra during November–December 2023 alone, aboard 11 boats.<sup>59</sup> By mid-2025, at least 3,770 individuals had landed in Indonesia on no fewer than 27 boats, with more than 1,000 people still residing in temporary shelters in Aceh, North Sumatra, and Riau.<sup>60</sup>

This renewed influx was accompanied by growing resistance from local communities and responses that were not yet optimally coordinated across institutions, particularly toward the end of 2023. Disinformation and hate speech targeting Rohingya refugees intensified, spreading widely through social media platforms. Narratives framing the Rohingya as “illegal migrants” or security threats contributed to a weakening of public solidarity.<sup>61</sup> The situation was further compounded by fake accounts impersonating UNHCR that circulated provocative content, making it more difficult to counter negative narratives about Rohingya refugees.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>55</sup> ReliefWeb, “Joint Statement: Ministerial Meeting on Irregular Movement of People in Southeast Asia,” 20 May 2015, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/joint-statement-ministerial-meeting-irregular-movement-people-southeast-asia>.

<sup>56</sup> Dompet Dhuafa, SUAKA, and Yayasan Geutanyoe, *Laporan Pemantauan Implementasi Peraturan Presiden No. 125 Tahun 2016 Tentang Penanganan Pengungsi dari Luar Negeri*, January 2022, <https://suaka.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Monitoring-5-Tahun-Perpres-No.-125-Tahun-2016.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> Aljazeera, “Indonesia rejects Rohingya refugees, sends boat to Malaysia,” Aljazeera, 28 December 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/28/indonesia-rejects-rohingya-refugees-sends-boat-to-malaysia>

<sup>58</sup> ACAPS, *BANGLADESH: Rising violence, insecurity, and protection concerns in Cox's Bazar refugee camps*, Briefing Note, 2023, [https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data\\_Product/Main\\_media/20230512\\_acaps\\_briefing\\_note\\_bangladesh\\_rising\\_violence\\_in](https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20230512_acaps_briefing_note_bangladesh_rising_violence_in)

[security\\_and\\_protection\\_concerns\\_in\\_coxs\\_bazar\\_refugee\\_camps\\_0.pdf](#)

<sup>59</sup> UNHCR Indonesia, *Indonesia-Fact-Sheet-December-2023-final.pdf*, UNHCR Indonesia, December 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/id/media/indonesia-fact-sheet-december-2023-final-pdf>

<sup>60</sup> UNHCR Indonesia, *External Update – Rohingya Boat Arrivals August 2025*, UNHCR Indonesia, Agustus 2025, <https://www.unhcr.org/id/media/external-update-rohingya-arrivals-august-2025>.

<sup>61</sup> BBC News Indonesia, “Rohingya ditolak: ‘Rohingya di Sidoarjo’”, “Rohingya minta tanah”, ‘Menlu Retno usir Rohingya’ – Bagaimana narasi kebencian dan hoaks bekerja menyudutkan etnis Rohingya?”, BBC News Indonesia, 1 January, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c03y7n3k12lo>

<sup>62</sup> Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital, “[HOAKS] Akun Palsu Mengatasnamakan UNHCR,” 11 December 2023, <https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/pengumuman/detail/hoaks-akun-palsu-mengatasnamakan-unhcr>

Repeated pushbacks of refugee boats—including the refusal to allow a vessel carrying 249 people to land in Bireuen in November 2023,<sup>63</sup>—and the storming of a shelter in Banda Aceh in December 2023 by a group of students demanding deportation<sup>64</sup> reflect serious challenges to social acceptance of refugees in Indonesia.

In 2024 and 2025, similar incidents continued to unfold. In October 2024, a vessel carrying 150 Rohingya refugees reached South Aceh, where three people were found dead.<sup>65</sup> The absence of adequate shelter facilities meant that some refugees received only minimal assistance. At the same time, civil society networks reported ongoing practices of undisclosed refugee transfers, detention in inhumane conditions,<sup>66</sup> and persistent disputes over responsibility among government agencies.<sup>67</sup>

This situation has been further compounded by constraints on humanitarian funding following cuts to international aid.<sup>68</sup> Although efforts are underway to restore funding and explore various options to address financing challenges

in order to keep resources available,<sup>69</sup> the response to Rohingya refugees in Indonesia remains fragile. UNHCR estimates that approximately USD 2.2 million will be required in 2025 to respond to the current refugee population and potential new arrivals, while available funding remains far from sufficient.<sup>70</sup>

Overall, the reception of Rohingya refugees in Indonesia demonstrates that while a regulatory framework is in place, persistent gaps in implementation, weak inter-agency coordination, limited resources, and fluctuating levels of social acceptance continue to undermine the quality of protection. Recurrent rejections, the spread of disinformation, and responses that are not fully grounded in humanitarian principles point to a broader crisis of solidarity that demands serious attention. Indonesia's experience in responding to Rohingya arrivals therefore highlights the urgent need to strengthen advocacy for refugee protection policies and to consistently integrate humanitarian principles into future responses.

<sup>63</sup> Pernyataan Bersama Mempertanyakan Janji Kemanusiaan Indonesia Bagi Pengungsi Rohingya, *suaka.or.id*, 17 November 2023, <https://suaka.or.id/pernyataan-bersama-organisasi-masyarakat-sipil-pemerhati-isu-pengungsi-dan-pencari/>

<sup>64</sup> Reza Kurnia Darmawan, "Kronologi Mahasiswa Usir Pengungsi Rohingya di Banda Aceh Halaman," *KOMPAS.com*, 28 December 2023 <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2023/12/28/160157878/kronologi-mahasiswa-usir-pengungsi-rohingya-di-banda-aceh?page=all>

<sup>65</sup> Michelle Gabriela, "Bermula Ditemukan Mayat di Perairan Labuhan Haji Aceh Selatan, Terungkap TPPM Etnis Rohingya," *Tempo.com*, 25 October 2024, <https://www.tempo.co/arsip/bermula-ditemukan-mayat-di-perairan-labuhan-haji-aceh-selatan-terungkap-tppm-etnis-rohingya--1159583>

<sup>66</sup> Pernyataan Bersama Organisasi Masyarakat Sipil Terhadap Krisis 48 Jam Pengungsi Rohingya Ditahan Di Atas Truk Oleh Pemerintah Indonesia, 9 November 2024, <https://suaka.or.id/pernyataan-bersama-organisasi-masyarakat-sipil-terhadap-krisis-48-jam-pengungsi-rohingya-ditahan-di-atas-truk-oleh-pemerintah-indonesia/>

<sup>67</sup> Pernyataan Bersama Organisasi Masyarakat Sipil Terhadap Penanganan 93 Pengungsi Rohingya di Kota Langsa, 19 February 2025, <https://suaka.or.id/pernyataan-bersama-organisasi-masyarakat-sipil-terhadap-penanganan-93-pengungsi-rohingya-di-kota-langsa-pernyataan-bersama-organisasi-masyarakat-sipil/>

<sup>68</sup> Deutsche Welle (DW) Indonesia, "PBB Pangkas Bantuan Rohingya di Indonesia," *Deutsche Welle (DW) Indonesia*, 7 March 2025, <https://www.dw.com/id/pbb-pangkas-bantuan-rohingya-di-indonesia/a-71859697>

<sup>69</sup> Reuters, *Badan Migrasi PBB: Bantuan untuk Rohingya di Indonesia Dipulihkan*, VOA Indonesia, 11 March 2025 <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/badan-migrasi-pbb-bantuan-untuk-rohingya-di-indonesia-dipulihkan/8006360.html>

<sup>70</sup> UNHCR Indonesia, *External Update – Rohingya Boat Arrivals August 2025*, UNHCR Indonesia, August 2025, <https://www.unhcr.org/id/media/external-update-rohingya-arrivals-august-2025>.



**Legal information session for  
the refugee community.**

**A speaker representing  
refugee paralegals is  
delivering legal information  
to the participants.**



Figure 3. Legal Information Session to Share Legal Knowledge with Refugee Communities

## SUAKA's Work

### 2021–2025 Period

SUAKA's work is guided by a number of core reference documents, most notably its Strategic Plan (Renstra), which is developed on a three-year cycle. Through this plan, SUAKA identifies the key challenges in the protection of refugees and asylum seekers and translates them into concrete responses and programs to address these priorities. During the 2021–2025 period, SUAKA operated under two Strategic Plans, covering the 2019–2021 and 2025–2027 cycles. Based on these plans, SUAKA structured its mission around four core areas of work: (1) legal assistance, (2) empowerment of asylum seekers and refugees, (3) public awareness and community engagement, and (4) policy advocacy. This section outlines SUAKA's work from 2021 to 2025 in advancing these four areas, complemented by institutional reporting on the organization's secretariat and financial management.

#### A. Legal Empowerment

Between 2021 and 2025, SUAKA implemented a range of programs aimed at strengthening the legal empowerment of refugee communities in Indonesia. As a guiding framework, SUAKA adopted the legal empowerment framework developed by NAMATI, which defines three interrelated

pillars: *to know, to use, and to shape the law*. These pillars serve as indicators for measuring progress and impact at the community level.

The *to know* pillar emphasizes building community knowledge and awareness of the laws that affect them, both in terms of their

legal obligations and the protections afforded to their rights. Building on this foundation, the *to use* pillar focuses on enabling communities to apply the law in practice—to protect themselves, seek justice, and identify opportunities for legal development that may strengthen rights protection. Ultimately, the *to shape the law* pillar reflects the capacity of communities to participate in efforts to influence and reform legal frameworks so that they better safeguard their rights. Each of these pillars involves distinct processes in achieving meaningful legal empowerment, particularly for refugee communities.

Before analyzing changes and the implementation of legal empowerment initiatives under these three pillars, this report first outlines the programs that have been carried out as part of SUAKA's efforts to advance each of the pillars.

a) [Community-Based Paralegal Network for Refugees and Asylum Seekers](#)

As part of its community-based approach, SUAKA designed a paralegal training program for individuals from refugee communities in Indonesia. In this context, paralegals are not formally recognized under Indonesia's legal framework, as stipulated in Law No. 16 of 2011 on Legal Aid ("Legal Aid Law") and Minister of Law and Human Rights Regulation No. 3 of 2021 on Paralegals in the Provision of Legal Aid ("Paralegal Regulation"), both of which require paralegals to be Indonesian citizens.

Due to these administrative restrictions, SUAKA refers to this initiative as a "community-based" paralegal network. Through the establishment of this community-based paralegal network, SUAKA aims to broaden the range of actors involved in legal empowerment and legal assistance within refugee communities, thereby expanding access to justice and reaching areas and communities

that fall beyond SUAKA's direct reach. As community-based paralegals, members of the network play a role in disseminating legal information and provide limited assistance with legal matters faced by refugees, such as police reporting, case referrals, and legal correspondence.

The community-based paralegal network was developed through a two-tier paralegal training program, comprising basic and advanced levels. Between 2021 and 2025, SUAKA organized one basic-level training in 2023, which was attended by 15 refugees, followed by one advanced-level training in 2024 for 15 graduates of the basic program. Overall, across three cohorts held in 2019, 2020, and 2023, the community-based paralegal network comprises 53 refugee individuals. Some have left Indonesia for third country *resettlement*.



Figure 4. Scenes from the Basic-Level Paralegal Training organized by SUAKA

The basic-level training brought together participants from various refugee communities and focused on building a strong theoretical and conceptual foundation. The sessions covered topics such as the concept of community-based paralegals, basic principles of law and human rights, an introduction to advocacy and legal empowerment, and an overview of Indonesian law. Each session was facilitated by legal practitioners, human rights professionals, and community empowerment experts engaged by SUAKA.

In 2024, as a continuation of this capacity-building process, SUAKA conducted its first advanced-level training for community-based paralegals who had completed the basic-level program. Fifteen refugee paralegals took part in this training, which emphasized practical skills. The modules covered topics such as gender-sensitive approaches to case handling, core principles of legal aid, legal correspondence, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and advocacy and campaign strategies.

Following the training, several initiatives were carried out to strengthen the role of community-based paralegals within refugee communities around Jakarta. In 2021, paralegals from the Afghan community organized online legal information sessions for fellow refugees, covering topics such as Fair Trial Principles and Public Service Issues. A total of 44 participants attended these sessions. Capacity-building for the community-based paralegal network continued through *upgrading sessions* in 2021, which addressed legal topics not covered in the basic-level training. These included immigration Law, Case Documentation Practices, and Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016.



Figure 5. Scenes from the Advanced-Level Paralegal Training

In addition to these sessions, SUAKA also produced pocket guides for paralegals on community-based paralegal ethics and case documentation techniques.

It should be noted that, due to limited resources, SUAKA's community-based paralegal network has so far been limited to refugees in Jakarta and surrounding areas. In 2024, SUAKA documented the achievements of refugee paralegals as a way to share their experiences and training resources with other areas hosting refugee and asylum-seeker communities. This documentation collected the stories of five selected paralegals and presented them in a narrative format for readers. The material has been published on SUAKA's official website and is intended to inspire the creation of similar community-

based paralegal networks in other areas and by organizations beyond SUAKA.

b) Refugee Rights and Empowerment Discussion Series (RISE Discussion Series)

The *RISE Discussion Series* is SUAKA's ongoing program for information sharing and capacity building, launched in 2021. It began as the Refugee Legal Webinar Series (RLWS) and has since provided public discussion forums to share legal knowledge, human rights information, and empowerment resources with refugee communities in Indonesia. Topics covered in past sessions include COVID-19 vaccination for refugees, how to organize safe and peaceful demonstrations, contract law in Indonesia, and more.

Refugees are actively involved in both planning and running each session. Topics are selected through consultations with the communities to address the legal, human rights, and empowerment issues most relevant to them. Refugees also take on key roles as moderators and speakers. Most sessions are conducted online in an open discussion format. From 2021 to 2025, SUAKA has held 17 sessions, reaching a total of 2,852 participants, including those who joined live and those who watched recordings on SUAKA's YouTube channel.

The topics covered in each session for each year include:

**2021:**

- Mental Health and Well-Being;
- Strengthening Refugee Resiliency;
- What to do if You Faced Legal Problems;
- How to Conduct Safe Demonstration;
- Learning from Malaysia: Refugee Livelihood;
- Vaccination for Refugees in Indonesia

**2022:**

- Freedom of Expression in Times of Pandemic;
- Gender Equality and Women's Rights;
- Digital Security and Protection of Data Privacy;
- Community Based Approach on the Refugee Empowerment

**2023:**

- Education as a Tool of Refugee Communities' Resiliency and Empowerment;
- Written Agreement as a Legal Document on Daily Basis Transaction;
- Implementation of Sexual Violence Law To Combat Sexual Violence in Refugee Community

**2024**

- Advocating the Well-Being of Refugees for Comprehensive Community Empowerment;
- Protecting Refugees Identified as Human Rights Defender;
- Reflecting Human Rights for Refugees in 2024

**2025**

- Abuse is not Love: Prevention of Sexual Violence in a Relationship within Refugee Communities (In collaboration with Yayasan Pulih)

c) Drafting and Updating the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Refugee Rights

The FAQ on Refugee Rights is a knowledge product initially developed through a collaboration between SUAKA and JRS Indonesia.<sup>71</sup> Drawing on earlier legal empowerment activities, both organizations recognized that much of the information being shared was still reaching only limited audiences. To address this gap, SUAKA and JRS Indonesia identified the need for a more

<sup>71</sup> The FAQ document is available at <https://suaka.or.id/faqs-about-refugees/>

accessible resource that responds to questions frequently raised by refugees in Indonesia, while grounding the answers in legal and human rights perspectives. This led to the development of the FAQ document. The FAQ on Refugee Rights is based on questions commonly received by SUAKA and JRS Indonesia and presents clear, accessible answers while maintaining a legal and human rights perspective. When first published in 2021, the document covered four main themes: *Public Services, Social Cohesion, Fair Trial, and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence*. By the end of 2021, the FAQ had been made

publicly available as a legal information resource for refugee communities. It was designed as a living document, to be updated over time as new information became relevant.

In subsequent years, the FAQ was regularly updated to reflect emerging needs. New sections on Indonesian immigration law were added in 2022, followed by additional topics in 2023 addressing legal issues related to daily activities and written contract law. The updated FAQ has been published on SUAKA's website and disseminated through the community-based refugee paralegal network.

***"I see the FAQ developed by SUAKA as an important step in protecting the community. It reflects the real legal challenges that refugees often face, many of which stem from a lack of understanding of basic legal rights and obligations. By providing clear and accessible information, this document helps build awareness and reduce the risk of legal issues in the future. I hope that SUAKA will continue to strengthen its support for the community by sharing more resources like this going forward."***

**- Anis Gul, a community-based paralegal from the Afghan refugee community.**

**d) Legal Information Sessions for Refugee Communities**

Legal information sessions are one of SUAKA's core efforts to strengthen legal knowledge and capacity within refugee communities on specific legal issues. The sessions are designed in response to legal situations identified through SUAKA's case-handling patterns, ongoing formal and informal discussions with communities, and ongoing situation analysis.

In 2022, for instance, SUAKA delivered a legal information session as part of a program organized by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), providing an overview of basic legal principles and available case-handling mechanisms for refugees. In 2023, SUAKA collaborated with the Asia Law Students' Association (**ALSA**) to deliver a session on alternative dispute

resolution. This work continued in 2024 with two legal information sessions for refugee communities. The first was held in February 2024 in Cisarua, Bogor, with support from Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Indonesia, and focused on elections. The session was attended by 15 community representatives from Cisarua and surrounding areas, including representatives of Refugee Leadership Organizations (RLOs). A follow-up session was held in March 2024, focusing on SUAKA's case-handling mechanisms and legal aid services.

In each legal information session organized by SUAKA, the targeted participants are community representatives and leaders. SUAKA also engages representatives from Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs), who attend the sessions and then share the legal

information within their own organizations, extending its reach. Community-based refugee paralegals and community representatives actively contribute to planning, sharing information, presenting materials, and facilitating discussions in every session.

The sessions are designed to reach refugee communities within specific geographic areas. Several challenges arise in implementing the program, including technical issues such as the

its geographic coverage to ensure a more equitable understanding of legal rights across refugee communities in different locations.

Post-session discussions indicate that the sessions are effective in improving refugees' legal awareness and provide valuable feedback on how to increase the frequency of activities. In response to this feedback, sessions in 2025 shifted from a lecture-style format to a two-way discussion approach. This change has



Figure 6. Legal Information Session to Share Legal Knowledge with Refugee Communities

availability of suitable venues for the sessions. These challenges have been a key factor in determining the locations of the sessions. Given that the most adequate venues are available within the refugee community in Bogor, most sessions to date have been held there. Looking ahead, SUAKA plans to expand

#### e) Refugee Community Public Hearing Forum

As part of ongoing communication efforts and to maintain engagement with its network of community-based paralegals, SUAKA initially organized a paralegal network renewal forum, which later evolved into an open community forum. These forums aim to discuss current developments in the community, legal and

created a safe and comfortable space for refugees to share their experiences, discuss legal challenges, and provide input on SUAKA's work. It also ensures that all participants have an equal opportunity to express their opinions and engage meaningfully in the conversation.

human rights issues that are priorities for refugees, and to map the roles and challenges of paralegals in supporting their communities.

Between 2022 and 2023, the forum was limited to SUAKA's paralegal network. It provided an open space for paralegals to share updates from their communities, highlight priority issues, and give feedback to SUAKA. However, as the number of paralegals decreased due to

resettlement and reduced participation for personal reasons, attendance in these forums gradually declined.

In response to these challenges, SUAKA expanded the forum in 2024 to include the broader refugee community. All refugees, not just paralegals, were invited to participate. From 2024 through early 2025, two public hearing sessions were held. The first, in August 2024, drew 35 participants and was well attended, in part due to the temporary suspension of financial assistance, which created a pressing need for solutions from relevant stakeholders. The second session, in January 2025, was attended by 15 participants.

Both sessions effectively identified key community issues, priorities, and feedback for SUAKA. The second session also served as a prelude to SUAKA's annual work meeting (RaKer), ensuring that community input would inform the 2025 agenda. Despite the expanded scope, challenges with engagement remained. Not all participants actively contributed, and overall participation could have included more refugees. Some community members suggested that the dissemination of information about the forum should be improved to encourage broader participation in the future.

Community Public hearing sessions continued into 2025, with SUAKA focusing on targeted engagement with specific refugee communities. One session was held with refugees residing in IOM accommodation in Serpong, while another was conducted online with the Rohingya refugee community in Pekanbaru. Both communities were selected for distinct reasons. The *Serpong* community was chosen because SUAKA had little prior direct engagement with refugees living in accommodation centers, having previously worked mainly with those living independently.

Case-handling data also consistently indicated recurring legal issues within this community. The Rohingya community in Pekanbaru was selected because, both publicly and through direct communications, the community had identified issues that required long-term advocacy. Key documented concerns included inadequate temporary shelter, safety and security challenges, and social discrimination. The community was also growing due to increasing arrivals of Rohingya refugees by sea in Indonesia.

While these legal empowerment activities leave room for further development—particularly in assessing their impact and the changes they bring—have laid the groundwork for community-based empowerment. These programs provide a platform for expanding efforts on a larger scale and through broader collaboration.

*f) Future Directions in Legal Empowerment: Collaborative Practices for Broader Impact*

As concluded in the previous section, legal empowerment initiatives can achieve greater impact when implemented through broader collaborative practices. One of the main challenges in carrying out these efforts is resource limitation. As an organization, SUAKA faces constraints in both funding and human resources available for legal empowerment programs.

Despite these limitations, good practices and examples can still be effectively documented. With additional resources and greater collaborative efforts, many more refugee communities could benefit—both in terms of community diversity and geographic reach.

Regarding challenges related to partners and stakeholders, while understanding of refugee issues is still limited in some quarters, several external actors have demonstrated openness

to collaboration. SUAKA has developed several successful practices in this area. Through collaboration with the Public Interest Lawyer Network (PILnet), SUAKA has worked twice with law firms in Indonesia on legal empowerment initiatives. The first collaboration, with Hogan Lovells/Dewi Negara Fachri & Partners, focused on building the capacity of the paralegal network through information sessions on immigration law and the development of written briefs on Indonesia's immigration framework. The second collaboration, with Herbert Smith Freehills/Hiswara & Partners, involved developing a FAQ on contract law in Indonesia.

These collaborations demonstrate the significant potential of private-sector actors as long-term partners in legal empowerment. Such partnerships provide important opportunities for civil society to advance both empowerment and public awareness initiatives. At the same time, they highlight the need to strengthen the capacity of private-sector actors regarding the basics and broader context of refugee and asylum-seeker issues in Indonesia.

*g) Analysis of the Development of Community Legal Empowerment: Collaborative and Accompaniment Experiences between SUAKA and Refugee Communities*

Over the past three years, refugee communities have shown notable developments and shifts in patterns of empowerment within their daily dynamics. Legal empowerment within these communities has been documented both as organic initiatives emerging from within the communities themselves and through collaborative practices between SUAKA and the communities.

**Community-based paralegals play a crucial role in this process.** Their active participation in empowerment initiatives has contributed to increased legal awareness within the communities, and they have become key actors in disseminating legal information. At the same time, there remains significant potential to expand practical empowerment efforts and increase their long-term impact.

The roles and contributions of paralegals are among the most visible outcomes of SUAKA's collaborative training programs. Beyond formal paralegal training, SUAKA has engaged communities through multiple channels: distributing written legal resources, hosting verbal sessions, and facilitating two-way discussions and consultations. Programs such as the RISE Discussion Series consistently involve paralegal networks and key community leaders, providing tangible examples of community-based empowerment in action.

Empowerment has also occurred organically within refugee communities. Legal empowerment is closely linked to community initiative and the collective drive to engage and support one another. Over the past three years, SUAKA has observed the growth of Refugee Leadership Organizations (RLOs) in several areas, particularly in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). RLOs are critical for spreading awareness, fostering collective empowerment, and supporting independent advocacy. SUAKA has collaborated with RLOs to disseminate legal information, address legal issues of concern, and distribute written resources to all members.

RLOs have also supported independent community initiatives to spread legal information. In parallel, the paralegal network continues to actively and independently disseminate legal knowledge and provide legal assistance to communities through the various platforms that have emerged.

Beyond legal collaboration, SUAKA has also engaged in collaborative practices with RLOs that highlight their specific skills and expertise. For instance, in 2021, SUAKA's official website was redesigned and updated in collaboration with SMART, a refugee RLO composed of community members with web design and technology expertise.

The progress of legal empowerment can also be seen in the changing patterns of legal inquiries received by SUAKA. Over time, the number of basic questions about legal processes or fundamental legal principles, such as filing police reports or understanding the legal basis of crimes like SGBV, has decreased. Instead, inquiries increasingly focus on ongoing cases and practical legal support, such as legal correspondence, detention release, and other procedural matters. This shift indicates a growing legal awareness within the community, particularly regarding essential legal knowledge for pursuing justice. Similar trends were observed during community discussions conducted by SUAKA in Jakarta and Bogor over the past three years.

Nonetheless, there is still room to further develop empowerment activities. Within SUAKA's three pillars of legal empowerment (knowledge, application, and participation in law development), refugee communities have so far shown significant progress primarily in legal knowledge. There remains substantial potential to strengthen their ability to apply what they have learned and to actively engage

in the development of laws that affect them. In particular, engagement in policy advocacy and legal reform requires greater involvement from communities, despite the limited opportunities available for them to contribute to policy formulation and change.

Efforts also need to extend beyond the Greater Jakarta area (*Jabodetabek*). Currently, the paralegal network is limited to *Jabodetabek*, and RLOs are similarly concentrated in this region, with significant disparities in numbers. Coupled with SUAKA's logistical limitations, scaling up legal empowerment and extending its impact will be a major challenge for both SUAKA and the communities in the coming years.

By 2025, legal empowerment has become increasingly critical in response to both national and international developments. Nationally, refugee policies still fall short of providing comprehensive human rights protection, creating a pressing need for communities to empower themselves and engage in advocacy to influence policy change. This capacity is particularly crucial in 2025, as several global policies have made refugee protection more difficult at the international level. Internationally, *resettlement* opportunities are shrinking, and global funding for human rights and humanitarian initiatives is declining, further reducing support for refugee communities worldwide. In this context, it is essential for refugee communities to strengthen their capacity for independent advocacy rather than rely solely on external support, which is increasingly scarce. At the same time, support from local actors—including civil society organizations, academics, youth groups, and others—remains important in strengthening well-being and resilience for independent advocacy.

## B. Legal Empowerment

This report draws on case data directly received by SUAKA through its complaint channels. Details of complaints and cases handled are documented in a confidential case management database, which includes information on the identities of legal aid recipients, case types, and chronological case notes. These records are used to support advocacy efforts and inform the analysis presented in this report. The documentation of complaints and legal assistance provides an overview of the empowerment, protection, and legal experiences of refugee and asylum-seeker communities in Indonesia. SUAKA records cases related to refugee processes—such as status determination, administrative refugee documentation, and comprehensive solutions—as well as cases involving the implementation of national law and human rights violations affecting refugee communities. These records serve as a key source of data for the situational analysis in this report.

a) [Summary of Case Handling Data 2021–2025](#)

Between 2021 and 2025, SUAKA received a total of 503 legal complaints from refugees and asylum seekers (2021: 89 complaints; 2022: 118; 2023: 89; 2024: 92; 2025: 115). These complaints are grouped into three main categories: issues related to refugee processes, domestic legal matters, and cases involving restrictions on fundamental rights.

In addition to the number of complaints, SUAKA also tracks the number of individuals who receive legal assistance. Legal aid beneficiaries are defined as individuals who formally submit complaints to SUAKA. This figure differs from the number of complaints,

as a single complaint may involve more than one complainant. For example, in 2024, SUAKA received a complaint from the Kalideres



Figure 7. SUAKA Providing Legal Assistance During Litigation

refugee community involving 100 individuals. In total, SUAKA provided legal assistance to 627 individuals between 2021 and 2025

b) SUAKA Legal Aid: Access to Justice for Refugees

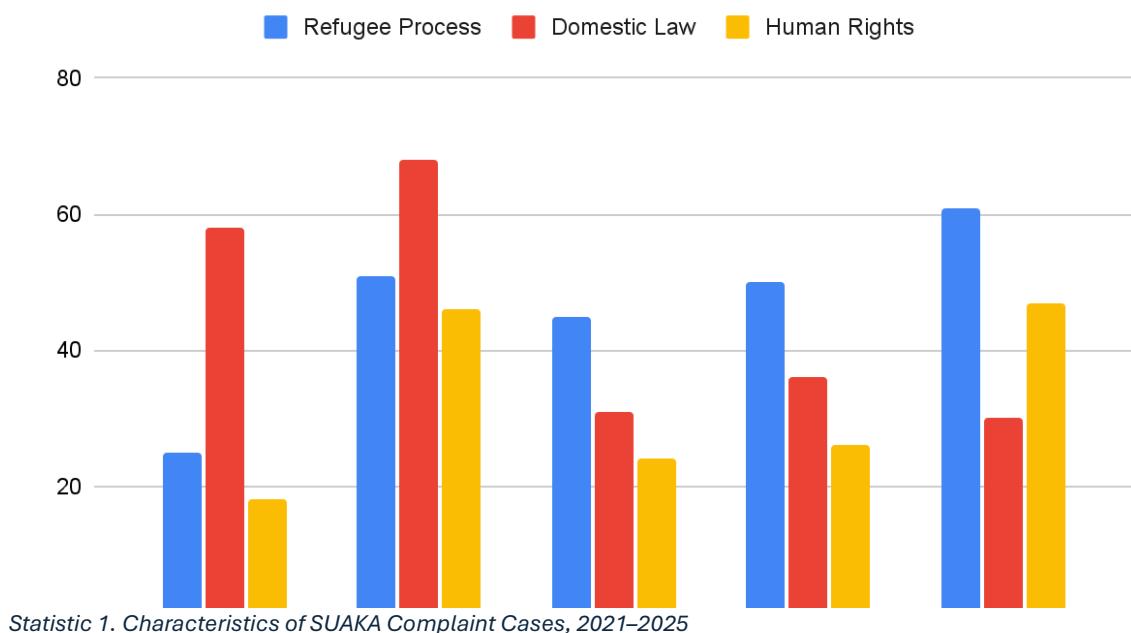
*"I want to express my sincere gratitude to SUAKA for their exceptional support. Their professionalism and dedication and genuine care made a significant impact on my situation as a refugee back in Indonesia. Thanks to them, I not only received the help I needed but also felt supported throughout the process. Thank you for being reliable and supportive specially for the refugee's community".*

- MMA, beneficiary of SUAKA's legal aid program in 2022, originally from Afghanistan, for a refugee-related case.

In line with the Association's mandate, SUAKA has continued its structural efforts to provide legal assistance and legal aid to refugee communities residing in Indonesia. Over the past four years, SUAKA has identified legal issues within these communities as well as the needs for resolving legal cases based on each complaint received.

During the 2021–2025 period, SUAKA's legal aid work has undergone various dynamic

changes, including shifts in the types of legal issues faced by the community, how the community responds to these issues, and the technical approaches SUAKA uses to deliver legal assistance. In 2021, SUAKA also made several adjustments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Legal aid responses and assistance were delivered through online methods to address the pandemic situation. SUAKA operates a legal aid hotline via WhatsApp and email.



c) Characteristics of Complaint Cases 2021–2025

Between 2021 and 2025, SUAKA responded to a wide range of complaints, totaling 616 cases. Broadly, SUAKA classifies these complaints into

three main categories: (1) the refugee process; (2) the implementation of domestic law; and (3) human rights violations or restrictions. Over the 2021–2025 period, SUAKA received a total of 232 cases related to the refugee issues, 223 cases concerning the implementation of

domestic law, and 161 cases involving human rights violations or restrictions. In 2021 and 2022, complaints related to domestic law—58 and 68 cases respectively—outnumbered other types of complaints. However, the number of domestic law-related complaints declined by nearly half in 2023 and continued to decrease in 2024 and 2025, making the refugee process the most frequently reported type of complaint received by SUAKA in those years.

Complaints related to **refugee processes** encompass problems arising in the *Refugee Status Determination* (RSD) procedures conducted by UNHCR, as well as processes associated with comprehensive solutions for refugees. In the context of RSD, SUAKA received requests for legal assistance concerning challenges and information needs at all stages of the RSD process, ranging from registration to exceptional cases involving the *reopening* of applications. Complaints concerning comprehensive solutions primarily related to resettlement to third countries, repatriation, and alternative pathways such as *sponsorship* schemes, family reunification, and other options. In responding to these complaints, SUAKA provided information packages, legal consultations, and case management support in coordination with UNHCR Indonesia.

SUAKA's complaint records indicate that resettlement-related issues consistently dominated refugee process cases throughout the 2021–2025 period. In 2023, complaints concerning resettlement increased notably, in line with a rise in the number of refugees resettled to receiving countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. This increase in resettlement was accompanied by delays in resettlement procedures and limited information provided by UNHCR regarding the

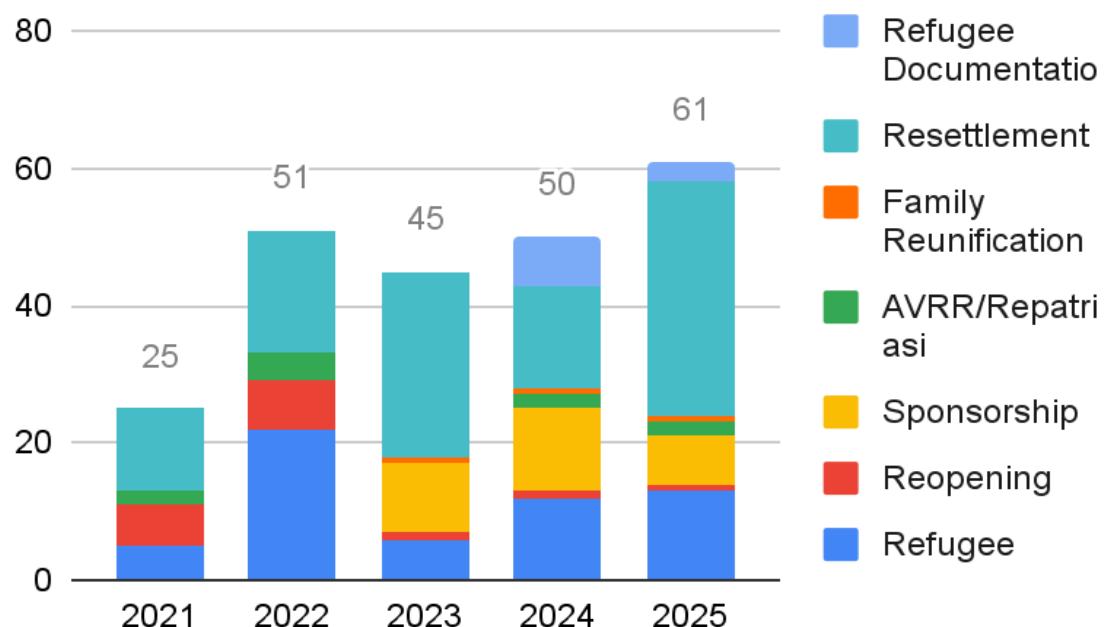
progress of individual cases, which contributed to the growing number of complaints.

**In responding to cases related to refugee processes, SUAKA faces limitations in providing legal assistance, particularly on resettlement issues.** SUAKA is not involved in processes that are conducted internally by UNHCR and third countries, nor does it have the diplomatic authority or capacity to intervene in or influence resettlement decisions for individual refugees.

Due to the limited availability of information regarding resettlement developments, SUAKA has also observed a growing demand for information on sponsorship as an alternative to resettlement. Many refugees view *sponsorship* as a more predictable option, with shorter waiting periods and greater certainty compared to resettlement. In addition to issues related to resettlement and Refugee Status Determination (RSD), SUAKA has also identified a number of complaints concerning voluntary repatriation.

Reports on the **implementation of domestic law** address cases related to the application of national legal frameworks. Several categories of law have been identified, including criminal, civil, immigration, and administrative matters. As a legal aid provider, SUAKA has experience in delivering legal assistance through both litigation and non-litigation mechanisms. SUAKA's network of lawyers has provided representation in judicial proceedings, including a criminal case handled in 2021. Various non-litigation measures have also been undertaken, such as issuing legal notices, pursuing alternative dispute resolution, submitting complaints through alternative mechanisms—including to national human rights institutions such as *Komnas HAM* and *Komnas Perempuan*—filing complaints with the Press Council, and providing legal

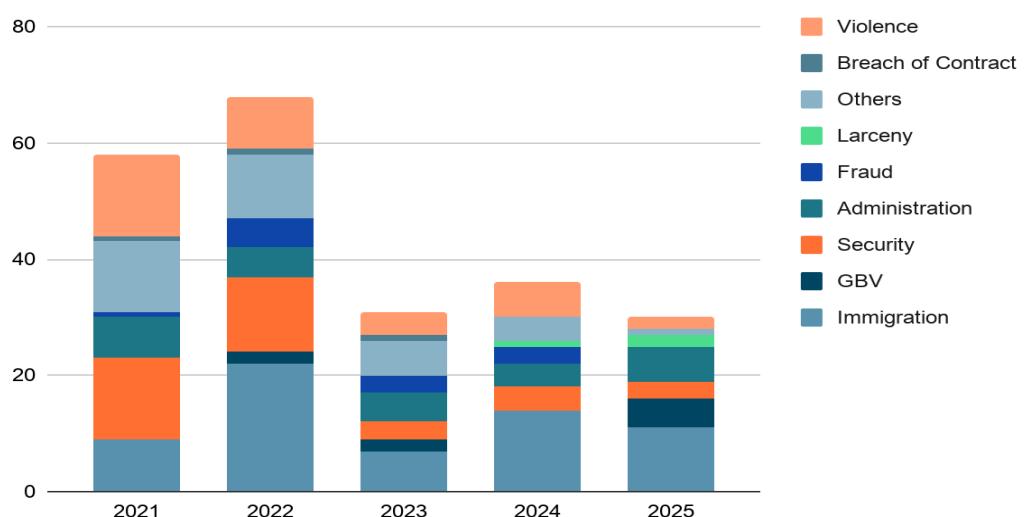
information through consultations and legal documentation.



Statistic 2. Types of Complaint Cases Related to Refugee Processes Handled by SUAKA, 2021–2025

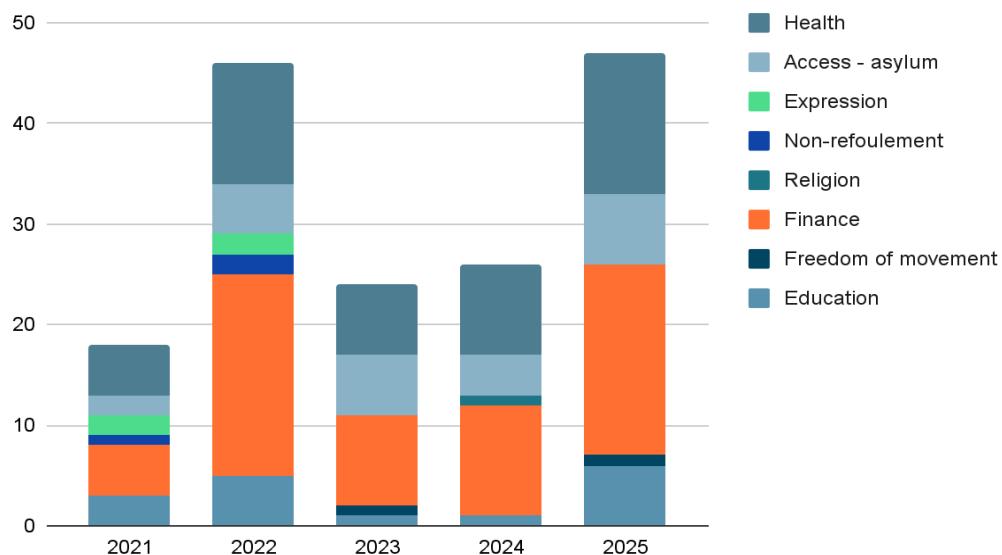
**Cases related to immigration law have been a major focus of SUAKA's work over the past five years.** With a total of 63 cases, refugees have encountered various situations involving immigration-related legal issues. SUAKA has observed how the treatment and monitoring of refugees as “foreigners” under immigration frameworks affect their involvement in such cases. The organization most frequently documents cases related to immigration

detention and inquiries about refugees’ visa or residence permit status in Indonesia. In addition, security-related issues have emerged as a significant concern, bringing refugees into contact with Indonesian domestic law. Of the 37 cases received between 2021 and 2025, refugees experienced threats that in some instances escalated to violence, either from fellow refugees or members of the local community.



Regarding **human rights violations or restrictions**, SUAKA has recorded several complaints indicating practices that limit or

refugees' access to healthcare. While Indonesia provides basic healthcare services to refugees, there are no free medical assistance



violate refugees' rights. These have been categorized into several areas, including the right to health, the right to education, the right to work (linked to financial conditions), access to asylum, and freedom of expression, among others. Not all complaints can be addressed, as some involve services that SUAKA does not provide, such as financial assistance, medical support, or educational aid. To respond, SUAKA refers these cases to organizations that are able to provide the relevant services.

Financial difficulties have become a major issue affecting the community. As a consequence of the work prohibition, refugee communities struggle to meet their daily needs. This situation has been further exacerbated by the cessation of financial assistance from UNHCR Indonesia in 2024. A total of 64 cases related to financial hardship were documented between 2021 and 2025. Financial insecurity also affects

programs or health insurance schemes. This means that refugees and asylum seekers who require medical intervention must cover the costs themselves. Due to limited financial resources, many are unable to access necessary medical care. The medical services provided by UNHCR Indonesia are severely limited in resources. Between 2021 and 2025, SUAKA documented 47 cases related to this issue.

Although relatively few in number (three cases), SUAKA has also documented violations of the principle of *non-refoulement*. Indonesia continues to reject asylum seekers entering the country via air routes, resulting in their return to their country of origin. These cases constitute breaches of international law and human rights obligations for refugees and asylum seekers.

## Case Description

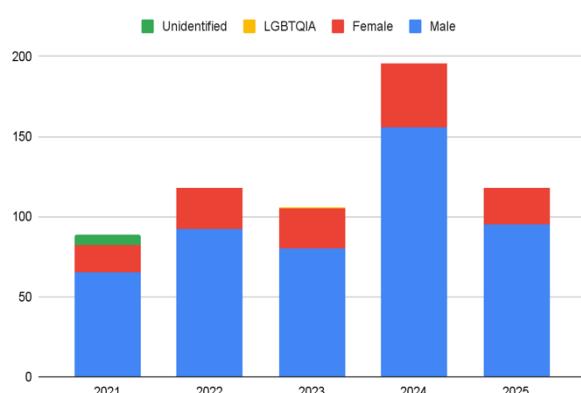
In 2023, SUAKA received a report concerning a Myanmar national who was detained upon arrival at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. The individual identified himself as an asylum seeker, and SUAKA presumed this was the reason for his detention. Further investigation revealed that he had fled Myanmar due to persecution by the military junta, which targeted him because of his political beliefs.

At the time of reporting, the individual was still being held at the airport. In response, a small SUAKA team went to the airport to check on his condition and engage with immigration authorities to secure his release. Unfortunately, by the time the team arrived and began discussions with officials, the asylum seeker had already been deported to Thailand, the country from which he had originally departed. This incident constitutes a violation of the principle of non-refoulement, as documented by SUAKA.

### d) Characteristics of Legal Aid Beneficiaries 2021–2025

Legal aid beneficiaries of SUAKA from 2021 to 2025 by gender:

**The majority of SUAKA's legal aid beneficiaries between 2021 and 2025 were male.** In some cases, the gender of applicants could not be identified due to several factors, including



incomplete information at the time of

submission, loss of communication with applicants that prevented further data collection, and limited time available for follow-up communication.

Beyond gender, SUAKA also recorded beneficiary data based on country of origin. During this period, SUAKA received complaints from individuals representing a wide range of nationalities. When the data are disaggregated to show the three most common countries of origin, the annual figures are presented in the table below:

Refugees and asylum seekers seeking legal assistance from SUAKA most frequently originated from the Afghan community. This trend aligns with the fact that Afghans constituted the largest refugee population in Indonesia during the same period.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Currently, Afghan refugees are the largest refugee community, with a population of 4.859 spread across several locations. Data is based on UNHCR Indonesia's monthly statistical report for September 2025

<https://www.unhcr.org/id/en/media/monthly-statistical-report-september-2025>

2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
Afghanistan	29	Afghanistan	25	Afghanistan	30	Afghanistan	138	Afghanistan	48
Irak	6	Myanmar	11	Suriah	19	Myanmar	9	Suriah	12
Sudan	5	Ethiopia	9	Sudan	8	Somalia	5	Yaman	11

e) Legal Aid and Related Situational Analysis

**1. Gender-Based Analysis and Intersectional Vulnerabilities of Legal Aid Beneficiaries and the Number of Cases Handled by SUAKA**

Based on documented case-handling data from 2021 to 2025, there is a significant disparity among legal aid beneficiaries by gender, including men, women, and gender minorities/LGBTQIA+ individuals. This disparity is clearly reflected in the data, which show that male refugees consistently dominate the number of legal aid beneficiaries across cases received by SUAKA.

Several factors identified by SUAKA contribute to this pattern. Refugees from certain countries of origin, such as Afghanistan, come from social contexts characterized by deeply entrenched patriarchal norms. These dynamics have been further reinforced by the Taliban's return to power following the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in 2021. Since then, discrimination against Afghan women has intensified, as evidenced by increasing restrictions on women's access to basic rights. This situation has further entrenched patriarchal structures within Afghan society. Notably, refugees from Afghanistan remain the largest refugee community in Indonesia.

These patriarchal norms have had tangible effects on both the number of complaints

submitted by female refugees and the responses to cases of sexual violence. One such effect is the power imbalance faced by women who encounter the legal system as wives, often leading to fear, hesitation, and anxiety, as well as concerns about lacking spousal consent or the belief that legal remedies are not part of their rights. These challenges are particularly pronounced in legal issues arising within the family sphere. Additionally, entrenched patriarchal expectations reinforce the stigma that women's primary role lies in domestic responsibilities. As a result, legal processes are often perceived as time-consuming and potentially disruptive to these duties. In some cases, women refrain from reporting legal violations altogether due to fears of further threats or retaliation by perpetrators.

SUAKA has also documented monitoring efforts related to refugee groups facing intersectional vulnerabilities. Among refugees who identify as LGBTQIA+, SUAKA recorded only one case over the five-year period. Refugees from the LGBTQIA+ community face compounded vulnerabilities, exacerbated by Indonesia's conservative social climate and strong narratives rejecting sexual and gender minorities. This environment may discourage LGBTQIA+ refugees from openly expressing their identities. Consequently, when legal problems arise, they may be reluctant to report them. These circumstances likely contribute to the limited data on legal issues affecting LGBTQIA+ refugees.

In addition, SUAKA has documented conditions affecting another group with intersectional vulnerabilities: refugees with disabilities. Although not always reflected through formal case complaints, issues related to the protection of refugees with disabilities frequently emerge during community engagement and legal capacity-building activities. Refugees with physical or psychosocial disabilities face challenges in mobility and in accessing the tools needed to contact legal aid services. Legal processes often require repeated physical presence, such as for filing reports or attending procedures. These

barriers, particularly for those without caregivers or companions, significantly hinder access to protection and legal assistance.

For both LGBTQIA+ refugees and refugees with disabilities, SUAKA is committed to implementing tailored mechanisms to ensure the effective delivery of legal aid. **SUAKA's legal assistance is grounded in the principles of inclusivity and non-discrimination, and a comprehensive response framework applies to these groups as well.**

## ***2. Analysis of Changes in Total Case Numbers and the Role of SUAKA as a Legal Aid Provider***

SUAKA has recorded fluctuations in the total number of complaints received over the past five years, with periods of growth followed by decline, reflecting an overall unstable trend.

Several factors contribute to this pattern. One key factor is the dissemination of information about SUAKA's services. Refugee communities are spread throughout Indonesia, creating a need for SUAKA to expand its national network. However, limited resources for outreach activities and community engagement—particularly outside Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (**Jabodetabek**)—have resulted in uneven awareness of SUAKA among refugee communities. Consequently, the majority of cases received by SUAKA come from refugees residing in the Jabodetabek area.

Despite these internal limitations, several initiatives—both by SUAKA and external partners—have achieved meaningful progress. For example, UNHCR Indonesia established the Outreach Volunteer (**OV**)

network. OVs are selected representatives from different refugee communities who serve as communication bridges between the communities and UNHCR and provide support when issues arise within their communities.

To further address internal capacity gaps, SUAKA has conducted community-based paralegal training for refugees. Three cohorts have been trained to date; however, all trained paralegals are currently based in Jabodetabek. These paralegals play a vital role in disseminating legal information within their communities and raising awareness about SUAKA's legal aid services. The absence of community-based paralegals in other regions remains a key factor contributing to uneven national awareness of SUAKA among refugee communities who require legal assistance.

Second, SUAKA has successfully documented the evolving response of communities to legal issues they face. The presence of community-based paralegals has been a key factor in supporting refugees to prevent legal problems. Paralegals contribute by enhancing basic legal knowledge, assisting community members

with their legal problems, and helping refugees navigate legal processes in pursuit of justice. The latter outcome reflects both the proactive role of community-based paralegals in empowerment and the growing initiative of refugees themselves to learn about applicable legal procedures.

Third, fluctuations in case numbers are also related to the types of complaints received. Refugee communities have experienced growing needs for financial and medical assistance as part of their daily lives. These needs stem from limited work opportunities and rising expenses that require financial support. Unluckily, as an organization, SUAKA does not have the mandate or resources to provide financial or medical assistance. These limitations have affected community perceptions and engagement, resulting in fewer refugees reaching out to SUAKA for support with financial difficulties and basic needs.

### ***3. Other Situations in Legal Aid for Refugees and Asylum Seekers***

In addition to the practices documented above, there are two other aspects that are particularly important to highlight. The first is collaborative practices in case handling. In providing legal aid, SUAKA frequently works in partnership with other organizations to strengthen the effectiveness of its assistance, addressing limitations in its internal capacity.

A concrete example of this collaboration is the development of a two-way case *referral* system. “Two-way” refers to both referrals made by SUAKA to other organizations and referrals made to SUAKA by other organizations. When SUAKA initiates a referral, it is often due to constraints in handling cases outside the Jabodetabek area or the need for non-legal support, such as access to safe houses. Conversely, when SUAKA receives

referrals from other organizations, it is typically because a legal need has been identified by the referring organization, which lacks the capacity to provide legal assistance.

Although collaborative practices are already in place, the number of organizations with the capacity to engage in such collaboration remains limited. Documenting this situation is therefore important to encourage the expansion of collaborative practices—both in terms of diversity and scale—so that legal aid for refugees and asylum seekers can be delivered more effectively.

The next situation concerns the handling of cases and legal responses by law enforcement authorities (**APH**), particularly the police. As the primary entry point to justice in criminal matters, the police have, on several occasions, made it difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to file reports independently. Reports are often rejected due to language barriers, the assumption that refugees must be accompanied by UNHCR Indonesia, or a lack of understanding among officers regarding the legal provisions that allow refugees and asylum seekers to report crimes. Such refusals are inconsistent with Article 12 of the Indonesian National Police Regulation No. 7 of 2022, which also forms part of the police professional code of ethics.

Another common issue is the limited follow-up after a report has been filed. SUAKA has observed that this challenge is not unique to refugees but is also experienced by the general public. To address this, SUAKA monitors the mechanisms outlined in the proposed amendments to the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (**KUHAP**), which include provisions to improve follow-up procedures. Additionally, SUAKA seeks to support ongoing reform efforts within the Indonesian National Police (POLRI).

SeIn addition to working with the police, SUAKA has also encountered challenges in engaging with immigration authorities. In this context, SUAKA regards immigration authorities as law enforcement actors, particularly in the enforcement of immigration law. One of the main challenges is the difficulty SUAKA faces in monitoring the conditions of detainees and obtaining timely updates on each case. There have been multiple instances where SUAKA was unable to meet with or observe beneficiaries in detention directly. Administrative requirements, such as the need for permission to conduct visits, often limit access to detainees.

### C. Campaigns and Public Awareness

Campaign and public awareness efforts are one of SUAKA's priority activities, given that public perception and understanding of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia is still limited. A lack of adequate understanding often leads to stigma and facilitates the spread of misinformation, which ultimately affects public acceptance and the strengthening of protection policies for refugees. In this context, public campaigns aim to strengthen public support for policies that ensure the fulfillment of refugees' basic rights through the dissemination of accurate information and the development of more humanistic narratives in the media.

In general, SUAKA's campaign activities include the use of social media as an advocacy platform, the commemoration of World Refugee Day, public discussion forums, training on refugee protection measures, and collaboration with various civil society actors. This section will comprehensively describe how SUAKA carries out its campaign and public awareness activities, while also tracing the impact of these efforts on improving the protection of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia throughout the 2021-2025 period.

As part of its case management, SUAKA regularly engages in official legal correspondence with immigration offices and detention centers regarding individual cases. However, most of these formal letters go unanswered. Access to information about detainees' conditions and the reasons for their detention is a fundamental aspect of transparency in law enforcement. The lack of response therefore poses a significant barrier to access to justice. To address this, SUAKA has taken additional measures to secure replies, including reporting cases to national human rights institutions, such as Komnas HAM and Komnas Perempuan.

#### a) Information Development through SUAKA's Social Media Platforms

Since the 2021–2025 period, social media has become one of SUAKA's main channels for conducting campaigns and advocacy related to refugee and asylum seeker issues. The initial platforms used included Instagram and websites, which were later expanded with the addition of YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok channels. Over time, SUAKA has adjusted its information dissemination strategy through these channels, streamlining the use of the most effective platforms and expanding its audience reach through various content formats.

In 2021, SUAKA's social media campaign focused on refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar and Afghanistan, as the political situation in both countries deteriorated. In Myanmar, the military coup worsened the situation of the Rohingya ethnic group, who

had long suffered systematic discrimination.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, the Taliban's takeover of power increased the number of refugees seeking protection.<sup>74</sup> SUAKA uploaded content emphasizing the elimination of discrimination and the importance of the state's role in guaranteeing refugee rights and preventing deportation. In addition, SUAKA distributed a *handbook* for refugee paralegals discussing access to justice and case documentation procedures, and utilized collaborators' YouTube channels to upload campaign content, given that SUAKA's official channel was not yet available.

The year 2022 was marked by the addition of the Suaka Indonesia YouTube channel to increase the variety of public awareness content, with a focus on issues still discussing the protection of Rohingya and Afghan refugees, as well as expanding on the analysis of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Through its YouTube channel, SUAKA launched the Freedom Street Talk program featuring the story of Alfred Pek, as well as the first episode of SUAKA Talks discussing advocacy opportunities through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to the UN Human Rights Council. In addition, SUAKA also issued a joint release with civil society organizations regarding the rescue of Rohingya refugees and asylum seekers and the limitations of fulfilling refugee rights in Indonesia. Media monitoring activities have also been developed, showing an increase

in neutral perspectives in media coverage of refugee and asylum seeker issues.

**The 2023 campaign focused on the return of Rohingya refugees to Indonesia and the rise of negative narratives on social media.** In particular, the return of Rohingya refugees to Indonesia sparked greater controversy. Negative narratives developed on social media, ranging from widespread disinformation regarding allegations that they were illegal immigrants<sup>75</sup> who threatened Indonesia's security to public rejection of Rohingya refugees in the form of student demonstrations in Banda Aceh on December 27, 2023.<sup>76</sup> SUAKA responded through a press release highlighting the lack of fulfillment of refugee rights, condemning the deportation by the Kupang Immigration Detention Center, and criticizing maritime patrols to prevent the arrival of new clusters. Additionally, SUAKA updated its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents on public services, social cohesion, access to asylum, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and completed the campaign from the previous Legal Needs Survey. On YouTube, SUAKA Talk Episode #2 highlighted the contribution of civil society organizations in refugee adaptation, and the *Media Information Session* featured Trish Cameron, an international human rights lawyer and member of SUAKA's staff from 2015 to 2017, who discussed "Foreign Refugees Living in Uncertainty in Indonesia."

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<sup>73</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Myanmar: No Justice, No Freedom for Rohingya 5 Years On*, Human Rights Watch, August 24, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/24/myanmar-no-justice-no-freedom-rohingya-5-years>

<sup>74</sup> At the end of 2021, the Taliban succeeded in taking over the Afghan government, which ultimately caused thousands of Afghans to flee. See Visual, T. J. *Afghanistan: Where will people flee after the Taliban takes power?*, BBC News Indonesia, August 24, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-58302355>?

<sup>75</sup> BBC News Indonesia, *Rohingya rejected: "Rohingya in Sidoarjo," "Rohingya ask for land," "Foreign Minister Retno*

*expels Rohingya," – How do narratives of hatred and hoaxes work to corner the Rohingya ethnic group?*, BBC News Indonesia, January 1, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c03y7n3k12lo>

<sup>76</sup> Darmawan, R. K. *Chronology of Students Expelling Rohingya Refugees in Banda Aceh*. KOMPAS.com, December 23, 2023, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2023/12/28/160157878/kronologi-mahasiswa-usir-pengungsi-rohingya-di-banda-aceh?page=all>

Throughout 2024, SUAKA expanded its social media reach in response to increasing hate speech against refugees ahead of the 2024 elections. According to a SAFENet report in September 2024, Rohingya refugees were often the target of hate speech with narratives that incited fear or hostility towards Rohingya refugees.<sup>77</sup> This has encouraged various political narratives that exploit anti-refugee sentiment and calls for the expulsion of Rohingya refugees on the basis of nationalism. Ultimately, throughout 2024, SUAKA was confronted with an increase in misinformation, disinformation, and *hate speech* regarding the arrival of Rohingya refugees at the end of 2023.

**In response, creative content such as *Movie about Refugee of the Week* and *Why They Left? The series* was launched and successfully attracted the audience's attention.** Collaboration with CIMSA, Telkom University, and the BEM Faculty of Health, Udayana University, also marked the involvement of students in public awareness efforts against negative narratives circulating. Furthermore, the SUAKA YouTube channel recorded a growth of 71 subscribers with two episodes of SUAKA Talk, while LinkedIn was reactivated and TikTok was launched with the uploading of 9 educational videos. SUAKA also remained active in publishing media releases, monthly legal briefs, and research results, accompanied by media monitoring that showed that refugee coverage remained active. On December 12, 2024, SUAKA held a *media briefing* on the Rohingya issue, attended by five mass media.

**In the year 2025, there has been an intensification and diversification of SUAKA's social media campaigns, as well as multi-**

**stakeholder collaboration to strengthen public awareness.** Instagram interactions have increased from 504 in 2024 to 1,100, with visits rising from 1,600 to 2,500 and followers reaching more than 2,480. Various collaborations resulted in high views and reach, particularly the World Refugee Day content uploaded in collaboration with JRS Indonesia, UNHCR Indonesia, and refu+ure Indonesia. SUAKA also collaborated with RLO such as The Sisterhood, Jakarta Bersatu Project, and RAIC Indonesia to discuss various issues such as the prevention of *gender-based violence* (GBV), refugee empowerment, and legal protection advocacy.

<sup>77</sup>Muhamad Heychael, Nenden Sekar Arum, and Hafizh Nabiiyyin, *Freedom or Hatred? Examining the Accountability of Social Media Platforms in the Spread of Hate Speech against Vulnerable Groups in the 2024 Elections* (August 2024),

Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFENet),  
<https://mega.nz/file/N7B0nDKb#6wVnAaa-bBH0gtRglhqWmaAfjPob-505ImJuBv4ps> a movie, In the



Figure 8. Documentation of Public Discussion in commemoration of World Refugee Day 2024

Furthermore, SUAKA presents SUAKA 101 content that provides basic knowledge about refugees and asylum seekers and explores the latest topics such as the protection of female refugees and Palestinian refugees. In 2025, SUAKA held a collaborative *media briefing* with Rohingya women-led organizations at the regional and international levels, namely the Rohingya Maiyafuñor Collaborative Network (RMCN), and other organizations in Indonesia such as Artsforwomen, Amnesty International Indonesia, and refu+ure Indonesia to highlight the important role of the media in suppressing *hate speech* against Rohingya refugees. Media monitoring also continued on a limited basis for incidental events, such as the Indonesian government's plan to evacuate Gazan residents. In addition, SUAKA remained active in issuing media releases and joint statements, with a total of eight posts specifically discussing the handling of Rohingya refugees, plans to relocate Gazans to Indonesia, the arrival of Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in

Indonesia, and various calls for solidarity on international days of remembrance.

Overall, the 2021–2025 period shows the continuity and development of SUAKA's information dissemination strategy through social media, with increasingly broad achievements and increasingly diverse collaborations. Social media remains the primary channel for raising public awareness, building empathy, and strengthening support for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, while also affirming the relevance of SUAKA's public campaigns in the context of changing national, regional, and international situations.

b) Commemoration of World Refugee Day (WRD)

World Refugee Day (WRD) on June 20 is one of the key moments for SUAKA to raise public awareness about refugee issues in Indonesia, while highlighting the importance of protecting refugee rights. Each year, SUAKA chooses a topic relevant to the dynamics of refugees, with the hope of covering various aspects of refugee protection, ranging from economics, social inclusion, legal advocacy, to mental health. Through a series of activities held annually, SUAKA not only presents dialogues and digital campaigns, but also builds collaborations with civil society organizations, international institutions, academics, and the refugee community itself.

In 2021, SUAKA organized SUAKA Model United Nations (MUN) in collaboration with UNHCR Indonesia as part of the MUN Refugee Challenge, with a two-day online debate session (June 26-27) discussing the issue of forced displacement. In addition, SUAKA held an illustration competition on the theme of "social inclusion of refugees in Indonesia," a writing competition on the theme of "refugee management in Indonesia," and a social media campaign on the theme of "resilience of refugees and host communities." In public dialogue activities, SUAKA collaborated with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Indonesia to hold two discussions on "economic empowerment of refugees in Indonesia," highlighting economic challenges and opportunities for refugees in transit countries.

In 2022, SUAKA once again held a series of WRD events, starting with an online public discussion on June 11 themed *The In Between: refugees, asylum seekers, and communities weaving together initiatives*, together with JRS Indonesia and HOST International. The discussion emphasized the importance of collaboration between stakeholders in fulfilling

the human rights of refugees in accordance with the Indonesian legal framework. The activities continued with a screening of Alfred Pek's documentary *Freedom Street*, a talk show with JRS Indonesia, and an Instagram Live session with Sandya Institute discussing the article on vagrancy in the Criminal Code and its implications for refugees, with the aim of encouraging more equitable and inclusive policy reforms.

At WRD 2023, SUAKA held an offline talk show in collaboration with JRS Indonesia and the Library and Archives Office on June 24 at Taman Ismail Marzuki, attended by 54 participants from civil society organizations, refugees, and students. Additionally, SUAKA held an Instagram Live session themed "Empowering Resilience," highlighting the inspiring stories of refugee paralegals living in uncertainty while waiting for *resettlement* to a third country.

WRD 2024 showed an expansion in the themes and scope of SUAKA's activities. There were three series of online events with JRS Indonesia, including the *RISE Discussion Series* by ELA, an Instagram Live session on sports with Cletus Blamo, and a screening of the film *Wandering: A Rohingya Story*, which was attended by 27 participants. The highlight was a public discussion on mental health at Taman Ismail Marzuki, attended by 30 participants from academia and mental health practitioners. A digital campaign on mental health was also intensified through eight social media posts during the three weeks leading up to WRD. WRD 2024 showed how SUAKA is exploring the topic of refugee mental health and expanding its collaboration with relevant academics and practitioners.

In 2025, SUAKA collaborated with JRS Indonesia for a series of pre-WRD campaigns that specifically emphasize the involvement of young people in refugee protection through digital campaigns and public lectures at FISIP UIN Jakarta, which were attended by 74 students. Specifically, the public lecture was held under the International Relations department's International Organizations course, with the theme *Examining the Involvement of Civil Society Organizations in Global Protection Solidarity*.

The WRD 2025 culminating event was held at M Bloc on June 21, 2025, in collaboration with UNHCR, refu+ure Indonesia, and JRS Indonesia, attended by around 200 people from the general public. The event featured various formats, including talk shows, film screenings, bazaars, exhibitions, and fun games, with the theme "A Month of Stories and Solidarity." SUAKA organized two talk show sessions. The first session raised the theme *Fighting Forward: Building Resilience Through Storytelling and Sport Empowerment*, presenting two refugees as speakers, namely Ali Reza, the director of the film, and Setayesh, a student of the Cisarua Refugee Shotokan Karate Club (CRSKC). The second session, titled *Youth in Action: How Can We Support Refugee Empowerment*, featured Fikha Adelia from refu+ure Indonesia and Afina Syahrani Damiar from Bridges for Hope as speakers. The 2025 WRD commemoration was one of the largest for SUAKA, marking extensive collaboration between CSOs and the active involvement of refugees as participants.

The 2021–2025 WRD series demonstrates SUAKA's consistency in raising public awareness about refugee issues and strengthening the protection of their rights in Indonesia. Through collaboration with CSOs, international institutions, academics, young people, and refugee communities, SUAKA has

built a participatory and informative advocacy platform. Refugee involvement, a focus on education and digital campaigns, and the strengthening of collaborative networks reinforce SUAKA's strategy of promoting empathy, solidarity, and support for the fulfillment of refugee rights.

c) Development of Forums and Public Discussions to Introduce Refugee Issues

From 2021 to 2025, in addition to a series of World Refugee Day commemorations, SUAKA has consistently organized various public forums, academic discussions, and film screenings to highlight refugee issues, broaden public understanding, and encourage the active participation of various stakeholders on various protection topics. Through collaboration with universities, civil society organizations, international institutions, young people, and refugee communities, SUAKA has created a participatory space that allows audiences to deepen their understanding of the challenges and needs of refugees.

On September 7–9, 2021, SUAKA collaborated with the Resilience Development Initiative Urban Research Group (RDI UREF) to organize *The Forced Displacement and Urban Management Conference*. This conference served as a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences related to international forced migration, with three main sessions—plenary, thematic, and special—held online through pre-recorded sessions and Zoom. The conference outcomes included papers and notes on various refugee issues, including *Urban Refugee Management, Rights to the City*, the daily lives of refugees and host communities, and the perspectives of young refugees as digital natives. The official conference proceedings are available on the RDI UREF

Following up on a similar approach, on September 27, 2025, SUAKA held a screening and discussion of the film *"Life Is Beautiful: A Letter to Gaza"* with the Migration and Human Trafficking Study Group (KSMPM) of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia, which was attended by around 30 participants. The documentary film by Palestinian director Mohamed Jabaly depicts the experiences of stateless individuals in Gaza and Norway due to border closures, serving as a space for reflection and public dialogue supported by Ashoka Indonesia through the Layar Gaharu initiative. The event also featured a response session from students of KSMPM FISIP UI, UI Students for Justice in Palestine, and the National Campus Da'wah Institution Nuansa Islam Mahasiswa Universitas Indonesia (Salam UI).

Within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence **2025**, SUAKA co-organized a digital campaign and public discussion titled *"Voices Behind Asylum: Uniting for the Safety and Protection of Refugee Women"* with the support of Jakarta Feminist under the BANTU & Cari Layanan campaign, which selected one of SUAKA's campaign volunteers, Annisa Rafashafly Hudaya, as a *fellowship* recipient. The digital campaign involved creating content on Instagram about the multiple layers of vulnerability experienced by refugee women, the role of refugee women in their communities, SUAKA's involvement in handling cases of violence against women, and promoting *bystander intervention* in the prevention of GBV.

A public discussion was held on December 12, 2025, highlighting the experiences of female refugees, current protection practices, and the contribution of *community-based refugee paralegals* in preventing violence against female refugees. The speakers at this

discussion were Anis Gul, a female refugee who is involved as a *Member of Sisters in Justice of The Sisterhood & Community-Based Refugee Paralegal*, Frenia Nababan, Chair of the Women's Health Foundation, and Diah Tricesaria, recipient of the Herb Feith Scholar from Monash University and an active member of SUAKA. The event was attended by around 20 participants, with diverse participation from international organizations, civil society organizations, RLO representatives, and refugee paralegals.

**The series of forums and public discussions held by SUAKA between 2021 and 2025 reaffirms the organization's commitment to broadening public understanding and encouraging cross-sector participation.** It is hoped that in the future, more forums and similar initiatives can be held on increasingly diverse and *intersectional* topics, so that refugee issues can continue to be mainstreamed across all levels of society.

d) Student Training: International Refugee Law and Rights, Batch 1 (2024)

showing interest in participating in other SUAKA activities.



Figure 9. Student training participants with Dr. Enny Soeprapto, refugee law expert, as one of the training speakers.

In recent years, the role of young people, especially students, in advocacy and public awareness regarding refugee issues has been identified several times, so that in 2024 SUAKA saw student training as a relevant step to strengthen their capacity. SUAKA held Student Training: Foreign Refugee Law and Rights Batch 1, which was attended by 13 participants from various universities in Indonesia. This training was held on April 19-23, 2024, at Wisma Jambi with the aim of increasing students' awareness, knowledge, and skills in advocating for refugee rights in Indonesia, while encouraging their active involvement in refugee protection advocacy.

The training featured a variety of speakers from trusted institutions, including LBH Apik, JRS, Dompet Dhuafa, Amnesty International, Komnas Perempuan, and UNHCR. Participants were given the opportunity to meet refugees in person, giving them a more realistic understanding of the conditions and challenges faced by refugees. Some students are now actively advocating for refugee rights through social media, getting involved in humanitarian civil society organizations, and

The training material consists of a combination of theory and practice. The human rights material discusses human rights principles and the differences between civil and social rights in the context of refugees. The material on the protection of refugees' basic rights provides a theoretical understanding of human rights protection that is more specific to refugees, based on the theory of human security in international relations. The international law material discusses the history of the development of international law on refugees and the current legal basis for global refugee protection, including its relation to Indonesian law. The Indonesian law material emphasizes an in-depth analysis of the refugee protection situation in Indonesia, including a study related to Presidential Regulation 125 of 2016 and ongoing policy development. Meanwhile, the material on legal assistance for refugees in Indonesia presents real examples of advocacy and legal assistance that have been carried out by CSOs and NGOs, presented by SUAKA representatives to showcase advocacy practices in the field.

This training program exemplifies SUAKA's success in building the capacity of students as agents of change, while also opening up opportunities for the development of similar programs with a broader target audience, more in-depth topics, and a more interactive format in the future. This initiative demonstrates how theory- and practice-based education can strengthen young people's awareness of refugee protection, encourage active participation, and foster sustainable advocacy at the student level.

e) Collaboration with Academics, Researchers, Media, and Institutions in Raising Public Awareness

SUAKA's existence as an organization engaged in refugee protection is increasingly recognized by the public, marked by an increase in requests for collaboration from various parties during 2021–2025. This recognition is reflected in the increasing number of invitations for SUAKA representatives to be speakers in various public discussions, seminars, and workshops organized by civil society organizations, universities, media, and international institutions. With an increasingly extensive network and collaboration, SUAKA can strengthen its role in raising awareness and advocacy related to refugee issues in Indonesia.

Throughout 2021, SUAKA was involved in various public discussions as a resource person, both internally and externally. The topics discussed included refugee economic empowerment, vaccination for refugees, refugee rights, youth, and community empowerment. SUAKA's participation in external activities was a form of recognition of

the organization's competence in refugee issues in Indonesia. In 2022, SUAKA remained actively involved in public discussions on similar topics, although most of them were still conducted online due to the transition period from the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating trust in SUAKA's role in educating the public and fighting for refugee rights.

The year 2023 marked an increase in the diversity of public discussion topics, including health rights, legality, statelessness issues, and strengthening the role of CSOs in the national refugee situation. Discussions began to be held offline in line with the implementation of the new normal policy, and SUAKA became an increasingly important reference for students and researchers who wanted to explore refugee issues, whether for lectures, theses, or dissertations. For example, in November 2024, SUAKA was interviewed by criminology students from the University of Indonesia regarding the criminalization of refugees. In addition to serving as a resource, SUAKA also acted as a partner in organizing public awareness discussions, encouraging more academics, researchers, and students to get directly involved, including through contributions as volunteers.

In 2025, SUAKA's collaboration expanded to the media as part of a more proactive public awareness strategy. One example of this was in November 2025, when SBS Indonesia interviewed SUAKA for a podcast titled "*Indonesia and Rohingya Refugees: Where Does the Hate Come From?*"<sup>78</sup> This interview is expected to be the first step in reporting on refugee protection in a more sustainable manner, not only through incidental coverage, but also by opening up space for broader

<sup>78</sup> Dina Indrasafitri, "*Indonesia and Rohingya Refugees: Where Does the Hate Speech Come From?*," SBS Bahasa Indonesia Podcast, November 5, 2025, <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/indonesian/id/podcast-episode/indonesia-dan-pengungsi-rohingya-dari-mana-ungkapan-kebencian-timbul/t3h02vfpe>

media collaboration to support refugee advocacy in Indonesia.

#### **D. Research and Advocacy**

Throughout the 2021–2025 period, research and advocacy have been SUAKA's work in responding to the dynamics of refugee and asylum seeker protection in Indonesia, which continue to evolve amidst the limitations of an adequate national policy framework. In the past five years, the refugee situation in Indonesia has been marked by intertwined global crises, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing conflicts in Myanmar and Afghanistan, to the increasing influx of Rohingya refugees, highlighting the urgent need for a human rights-based approach and a national protection system.

In this context, SUAKA consistently develops interconnected research and advocacy work to bridge the gap between refugee protection needs on the ground and state policies. Research is conducted not merely as a means of knowledge production, but as a basis for formulating policy recommendations, strengthening advocacy arguments, and building legitimacy in dialogue with stakeholders. This approach enables SUAKA to address strategic issues such as access to health care, education, livelihoods, legal aid, civil identity, mental well-being, and the meaningful participation of refugees in decision-making processes.

Over time, SUAKA's advocacy work has evolved not only as a response to sectoral issues, but also as an effort to promote structural change

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 19 of

within Indonesia's overall refugee protection framework. This is reflected in SUAKA's active involvement in national policy processes, such as discussions on the implementation and revision of Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016, cross-sector advocacy at the regional level, and participation in international human rights mechanisms. Through collaborations with civil society organizations, academics, international institutions, and refugee communities, SUAKA strives to ensure that the experiences and needs of refugees are part of the broader policy discourse.

This section outlines SUAKA's research and advocacy work, exploring key themes, approaches, and contributions to strengthening the protection of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia. This narrative not only showcases achievements but also highlights the challenges and limitations encountered within a policy context that remains insufficiently comprehensive.

a) [COVID-19 Vaccination for Refugees in Indonesia](#)

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic had placed Indonesia's public healthsystem in a state of crisis with widespread impacts, including on vulnerable groups such as refugees and asylum seekers. In this health emergency, refugees faced multiple challenges in protecting themselves from the virus, particularly due to limited access to basic health services that should be universal. The vulnerability was exacerbated by national policies that have not fully accommodated refugees in the pandemic response.

2021,<sup>79</sup> refugees and asylum seekers were not explicitly recognized as part of the affected

<sup>79</sup> Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 19/2021 on Technical Guidelines for the Implementation of Vaccination in the Context of Combating the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic, July 2021,

<https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/171448/permendikbud-19-tahun-2021>

groups in the COVID-19 response scheme. As the national vaccination program for Indonesian citizens began in early 2021, refugees were once again marginalized. The administrative requirement of possessing an Identity Card (KTP) for vaccination access remained a major obstacle, given that the UNHCR-issued IDs of refugees and asylum seekers were not recognized in the national healthcare system.

In response to these conditions, in 2021 SUAKA conducted a series of advocacy efforts, including joint audiences with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Indonesia, Dompet Dhuafa, and UNHCR Indonesia, to encourage the fulfillment of refugees' rights to COVID-19 vaccination. This advocacy was also supported by refugee community initiatives in collaboration with various civil society organizations. In addition to policy advocacy, SUAKA strengthened these efforts through digital campaigns and online public discussions highlighting refugee access to vaccination and the importance of an inclusive public health approach. This collective effort ultimately contributed to the vaccination of approximately 7,000 of the 13,000 refugees in Indonesia by the end of 2021.<sup>80</sup>

According to UNHCR data, the vaccination program was supported by various stakeholders, including the Universitas Indonesia Hospital (RSUI), the Jakarta Provincial Government, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), and Cargill Indonesia.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, this achievement still left approximately 6,000 refugees with uncertain vaccination status at the time. SUAKA viewed this situation as a serious gap in pandemic control efforts,

considering that optimal community immunity cannot be achieved if certain groups continue to be excluded from public health services.

This COVID-19 vaccination advocacy experience reflects broader structural challenges in fulfilling the right to health for refugees in Indonesia. To date, access to healthcare for refugees remains heavily dependent on assistance from international organizations and support from non-state actors, rather than being guaranteed through an inclusive and sustainable legal framework. This situation underscores the importance of policy reforms that ensure refugees are recognized as part of the population entitled to health protection, particularly in the context of preventing future crises.

b) Monitoring the Implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016

From 2021 to 2025, the implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016 concerning the Handling of Refugees from Abroad demonstrated a recurring gap between the national policy framework and refugee management practices on the ground. Although this Presidential Regulation is the only national policy instrument specifically regulating refugee management, its implementation tends to be oriented toward emergency responses to arrivals, rather than ensuring comprehensive and sustainable protection of refugee rights. This situation directly impacts the well-being of refugees and asylum seekers, including aspects of legal certainty, handling mechanisms, and access to basic services.

<sup>80</sup> UNHCR Indonesia Fact Sheet December 2021, UNHCR Indonesia, December 2021, [https://www.unhcr.org/id/sites/id/files/legacy-pdf/Indonesia-FactSheet-December2021\\_FINAL\\_pdf-1.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/id/sites/id/files/legacy-pdf/Indonesia-FactSheet-December2021_FINAL_pdf-1.pdf).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

In this context, SUAKA consistently monitors the implementation of Presidential Regulation 125/2016. This monitoring was carried out in collaboration with Dompet Dhuafa and the Geutanyoe Foundation in 2021–2022, specifically examining the handling of Rohingya refugees in Indonesia. This monitoring aims to assess the extent to which the policy is translated into practice and to identify structural challenges that hinder the fulfillment of refugee rights. The monitoring methodology was developed based on questionnaires administered to actors directly involved in handling Rohingya refugees in 2020, and by comparing these findings with the conditions of handling in 2015 through SUAKA's research entitled "*Hidup yang Terabaikan: Laporan Penelitian Nasib Pengungsi Rohingya di Indonesia*" or in English, "Neglected Lives: A Research Report on the Plight of Rohingya Refugees in Indonesia.<sup>82</sup>

The monitoring results were then summarized in the Monitoring Report on the Implementation of Presidential Regulation 125/2016 on Handling Rohingya Refugee Boats in Aceh.<sup>83</sup> This report shows that Presidential Decree 125/2016 has not been able to address all needs on the ground. One of the main challenges identified is the uneven distribution of authorized institutions, such as Immigration Detention Centers, across administrative regions. Furthermore, in regions where relevant institutions already exist, the lack of clarity regarding their primary duties and functions, as well as implementation guidelines, has resulted in suboptimal implementation of the Presidential Regulation and the potential for human rights violations

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<sup>82</sup>Rizka Argadianti Rachmah dan Zico Efraindio Pestalozzi. *Hidup yang Terabaikan: Laporan Penelitian Nasib Pengungsi Rohingya di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH) Jakarta, 2016, <https://suaka.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/suaka-laporan-penelitian-pengungsi-rohingya-2016-ind-min.pdf>.

against refugees, particularly women and children.

This monitoring work was followed by more targeted policy advocacy efforts in the following years. In 2023-2024, SUAKA continued to oversee the revision process of Presidential Regulation 125/2016 by holding a direct meeting with *Satgas PPLN* on April 2, 2024. At the meeting, SUAKA presented a draft proposal for policy revision and emphasized the urgency of strengthening a human rights perspective within the national refugee protection framework. On 12 December 2024, SUAKA, together with Geutanyoe Foundation and Dompet Dhuafa, also held an audience with the Vice Minister of Human Rights to discuss the situation of refugee protection in Indonesia. During this meeting, During this meeting, SUAKA submitted a policy paper entitled "*Pengungsi Luar Negeri di Indonesia dan Minimnya Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia oleh Negara*" or in English means "International Refugees in Indonesia and the State's Limited Human Rights Protection" which documented various implementation gaps in Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016 and provides cross-ministerial policy recommendations.

<sup>83</sup> Dompet Dhuafa, SUAKA, dan Yayasan Geutanyoe, *Monitoring Report on the Implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016 on the Handling of Internattional Refugees*, Januari 2022, <https://suaka.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Monitoring-5-Tahun-Perpres-No-125-Tahun-2016.pdf>.

**Broadly speaking, SUAKA recommends strengthening the role of relevant ministries and institutions responsible for the protection of foreign refugees** to ensure the revision and implementation of Presidential Regulation 125/2016 is based on a human rights-based perspective, clear delineation of authority, and the prevention of detention and law enforcement practices that violate human rights. At the same time, SUAKA

took place from July to November 2025, reflected various field findings, both during the emergency and waiting periods, related to the implementation of Presidential Regulation 125/2016 and the protection gaps still faced by refugees. This process is planned to continue until January 2026 with the preparation of multi-stakeholder policy recommendations at the national level, which are expected to serve as a foundation for future refugee



Figure 10. SUAKA and its advocacy network on the DKI Jakarta Province Regulation on Legal Aid during an audience with party factions of the DKI Jakarta Regional House of Representatives (DPRD)

emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the basic rights of refugees, including the rights to justice, health, education, and employment, through more inclusive, coordinated, and sustainable policies.

In 2025, this advocacy work was further strengthened through SUAKA's involvement as a participant and one of the resource persons in a series of workshops organized by the National Research and Innovation Agency (Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional/BRIN) on the Governance of Foreign Refugees in Indonesia, in collaboration with JRS Indonesia, the Institute of International Studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada (IIS UGM), UNHCR Indonesia, and IOM Indonesia. The series of workshops, which

management policy reforms in Indonesia.

c) Draft Legal Aid Regulation for DKI Jakarta Province

Over the past five years, SUAKA has consistently advocated for strengthening access to legal aid for refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia as part of fulfilling the right to justice. Given the absence of a national legal framework that explicitly guarantees this right, SUAKA focuses on advocacy at the regional level, particularly in Jakarta. This step is considered strategic for incorporating refugee issues into public policy and protecting them as a vulnerable group at risk of criminalization and legal uncertainty.

Since 2021, SUAKA has actively contributed to

the development of academic papers and drafts of the Draft Regional Regulation (Ranperda) on Legal Aid in DKI Jakarta. Collaborating with various coalitions, SUAKA has conducted a series of activities, including participation in focus group discussions (FGDs), press conferences, and audiences with factions in the DKI Jakarta Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) (such as the Indonesian Solidarity Party/PSI, the Great Indonesia Movement (Gerindra), and others). These efforts aim to broaden the definition of legal aid beneficiaries to be more inclusive, ensuring that refugees are not excluded from the regional legal aid scheme.

Advocacy efforts continued through the 2024–2025 period via public campaigns on social media and intensive coordination with legal bureaus and members of local legislative councils. Although the Draft Regional Regulation on Legal Aid remains listed in the Regional Legislative Program (*Program Pembentukan Peraturan Daerah/Propemperda*) and is planned to become a priority for deliberation in 2026, SUAKA remains committed to closely monitoring the process. The primary objective is to ensure that the regulation, once adopted, genuinely guarantees effective access to legal aid for refugees and asylum seekers at the implementation level.

d) Efforts to Promote an Amendment to the Population Administration Law

SUAKA actively promotes the recognition and fulfillment of the right to legal identity for refugees and asylum seekers as a basic prerequisite for access to other rights, including legal protection, public services, and social participation. In the context of Indonesia's population administration system, which is still oriented toward citizenship status, refugees and asylum seekers are often not integrated into the national civil registration mechanism. This condition strengthens the

legal vulnerability of refugees, especially in crisis situations, law enforcement, and in the run-up to political momentum such as elections.

In the past five years, SUAKA has been involved in various advocacy forums to encourage the consideration of refugee and asylum seeker issues in discussions on population administration policies, including through involvement in civil society networks such as the Legal Identity Working Group. Through this forum, SUAKA contributed to strengthening the network's capacity by introducing the context of refugee protection in Indonesia and highlighting the challenges arising from the absence of legal identity for this group

In 2024, SUAKA's involvement in advocacy for the Population Administration Bill focused on the urgency of legal identity for vulnerable groups ahead of the 2024 elections, including through participation in cross-stakeholder discussions and the preparation of a narrative report for a national seminar highlighting population administration issues for vulnerable groups and policy recommendations.<sup>84</sup> This advocacy effort continued in January 2025, when SUAKA participated in a civil society organization consultation on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) in Indonesia organized by the Center for the Study and Advocacy of Child Protection and Quality of Life (PUSKAPA), in collaboration with Vital Strategies, UNHCR, UNESCAP, and the Global Health Advocacy Incubator. In this forum, SUAKA conveyed various challenges and opportunities related to the integration of refugees in the national civil registration system, including administrative and policy barriers faced so far. Towards the end of 2025, SUAKA was also involved in the latest Identity Working Group network meeting which discussed the planned revision of the Population Administration Law which was reportedly to be included in the National Legislation Program (Prolegnas) in 2026.<sup>85</sup> As a post-meeting response, SUAKA conducted consultations with a network of civil society organizations and related international organizations to gather substantive input regarding the integration of refugee administration and the expansion of more inclusive access to civil registration.

#### e) Survey on Legal Needs

Despite having implemented legal aid programs for many years, SUAKA has observed that the legal landscape is highly dynamic. Policy changes, shifts in social behavior, and the specific legal vulnerabilities faced by refugees and asylum seekers have continually reshaped the range of legal issues and the capacity of communities to respond. These changes have also coincided with the integration of technology into legal aid, adding a new dimension to community capacity to adequately address the legal problems they experience. Given SUAKA's physical limitations in responding to legal issues occurring outside the Greater Jakarta area, SUAKA decided to conduct a survey to map the legal needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia. This survey was conducted to document the types of legal problems experienced by the community, how they responded to these legal issues, the subjects targeted to support their responses, and the communities' broader legal knowledge. The survey was carried out in Jakarta, Bogor, Medan, Pekanbaru, and Makassar. As the survey remains preliminary in nature, the number of refugee respondents was limited. In total, 22 refugees were mapped across the five cities.

Overall, the survey results indicate that legal issues in the public resources sector are the primary issue faced by all respondents. This is followed by consumer issues, housing issues, and state violence. Respondents' behavioral patterns in sharing their legal issues indicate that the majority of respondents chose to

<sup>84</sup> Kelompok Kerja Identitas Hukum, 2024, "Rilis Media Pokja Identitas Hukum: Dampak yang Dialami oleh Kelompok Rentan dalam Pelayanan Adminkuk dan Hak Memilih dalam Pemilu 2024," SUAKA, 15 Februari 2024, [https://suaka.or.id/rilis-media-pokja-identitas-hukum\\_dampak-yang-dialami-oleh-kelompok-rentan-dalam-pelayanan-adminkuk-dan-hak-memilih-dalam-pemilu-2024/](https://suaka.or.id/rilis-media-pokja-identitas-hukum_dampak-yang-dialami-oleh-kelompok-rentan-dalam-pelayanan-adminkuk-dan-hak-memilih-dalam-pemilu-2024/).

<sup>85</sup> Bagus Ahmad Rizaldi, "Komisi II Dorong 'Single ID Number' di RUU Administrasi Kependudukan," Antara News, 29 Oktober 2025, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5206713/komisi-ii-dorong-single-id-number-di-ruu-administrasi-kependudukan>.

share their legal issues primarily with international organizations (UNHCR). In this regard, only one in 22 respondents chose not to share their legal issues. Furthermore, UNHCR was also the primary source of legal assistance for the majority of respondents compared to family or friends working outside the legal field and non-governmental organizations.

Please note, the Legal Needs Survey that has been presented to the public represents the first version compiled in written form. The written documentation for the final version is currently being finalized and will be widely disseminated as the second version of the document.

f) *Pathway to Refugee Wellbeing (PRW) Research Program*

Over the past five years, SUAKA has consistently continued its research collaboration with the Refugee Trauma and Recovery Program – University of New South Wales, HOST International, and Universitas Gadjah Mada through the longitudinal \*Pathway to Refugee Wellbeing\* (PRW) study. This research aimed to understand the mental health conditions of refugees and asylum seekers living in protracted displacement situations in Indonesia. The PRW study is particularly significant, as legal uncertainty, limited access to basic services, and social isolation experienced by refugees have direct and long-term impacts on their psychological well-being.

In 2021, the PRW study conducted data collection involving more than 1,240 refugee and asylum seeker participants aged 18–76 years, comprising 28% women and 72% men. The research was carried out in five languages to ensure inclusivity and data accuracy. Data collection continued into 2022 and specifically captured refugees' experiences during the

COVID-19 pandemic. The findings indicate that 79% of refugees were concerned about family members or close relatives being exposed to the Coronavirus, 75% were worried about their own health, and 73% were anxious that UNHCR's refugee status determination process would be negatively affected. In addition, the pandemic re-triggered past traumatic experiences for 63% of respondents, while 60% expressed fear of being unable to access basic necessities needed to protect themselves from the virus.

In 2022, SUAKA contributed to supporting the implementation of the PRW study both technically and substantively, including in communication strategies with participants and stakeholders, as well as in planning for the dissemination of research findings. The final time point of the first survey wave was completed in July 2022, providing a critical basis for analyzing the impact of the pandemic on refugees' mental health within the context of protracted displacement in Indonesia.

Entering 2023, the PRW study strengthened its participatory approach by holding in-person meetings with refugee communities in Jakarta and Bogor to understand their needs and explore relevant training models. SUAKA played an active role in facilitating the recruitment of facilitators from refugee communities through information dissemination and online recruitment coordination. In the same year, three international academic publications related to PRW were published, including *Intolerance of Uncertainty, Post-Traumatic Stress, Depression, and Fears for the Future among Displaced Refugees*,<sup>86</sup> *Context, Coping, and Mental Health in Refugees Living in Protracted Displacement*,<sup>87</sup> as well as *The Impact of COVID-19 Stressors on Refugee Mental Health and Well-Being in the Context of Sustained Displacement*.<sup>88</sup> This publication is accessible in international academic journal channels and is an important resource in understanding the mental well-being of refugees.

In 2024, SUAKA continued to actively support the promotion of PRW by disseminating information through social media and raising public awareness of the importance of refugees' mental well-being. In addition, SUAKA also continued to assist in promoting the recruitment of facilitators, ensuring that refugees play an active role in implementing the program. These efforts constitute a

strategic step toward strengthening direct engagement with refugee communities and ensuring the sustainability of the program in the years to come.

In 2025, SUAKA also contributed to organizing the Pathway to Refugee Wellbeing webinar for the launch of the PRW research report, which explored key themes including refugee well-being, economic inclusion, social inclusion, and challenges in accessing resettlement pathways.<sup>89</sup> The event was attended by more than 70 participants from various stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academics, government representatives, and Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs). Overall, PRW's research findings serve as an important reference for SUAKA advocacy, particularly in highlighting the lack of structural support, the impact of negative public perception, social isolation, and limited access to education and employment, which significantly impact refugees' mental health. This research underscores the need for long-term interventions that include strengthening coping mechanisms, expanding access to basic services, and creating pathways to long-term security for refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia.

<sup>86</sup> Angela Nickerson, Joel Hoffman, David Keegan, Shraddha Kashyap, Rizka Argadianti, Diah Tricesaria, Zico Pestalozzi, Randy Nandyatama, Mitra Khakbaz, Nindita Nilasari, dan Belinda Liddell, "Intolerance of Uncertainty, Posttraumatic Stress, Depression, and Fears for the Future among Displaced Refugees," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 94 (Maret 2023), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0887618523000105>

<sup>87</sup> Angela Nickerson, Joel Hoffman, David Keegan, Shraddha Kashyap, Diah Tricesaria, Zico Pestalozzi, Rizka Argadianti Rachmah, Randy Nandyatama, Mitra Khakbaz, Nindita Nilasari, dan Belinda J. Liddell, "Context, Coping, and Mental Health in Refugees Living in Protracted Displacement," *Journal of*

*Traumatic Stress* 35, no. 6 (2022): 1769–1782, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/its.22885>

<sup>88</sup> Joel Hoffman, Belinda J. Liddell, David Keegan, Shraddha Kashyap, Anak Agung Istri Diah Tricesaria, Zico Pestalozzi, Rizka Argadianti, Randy W. Nandyatama, Mitra Khakbaz, Nindita Nilasari, dan Angela Nickerson, "The Impact of COVID-19 Stressors on Refugee Mental Health and Well-Being in the Context of Sustained Displacement," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 93, no. 2 (2023): 144–155, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36634011/>

<sup>89</sup> PRW Resources, Refugee Trauma & Recovery Program, University of New South Wales, 2025, <https://www.rtrp-research.com/prw-resources>

g) Strengthening Civil Society Organization Networks in Refugee Protection

SUAKA identifies that the challenges of refugee and asylum seeker protection in Indonesia cannot be effectively addressed by a single

organizations directly working on refugee issues and the broader humanitarian and human rights CSO community. This approach enables knowledge exchange, strategic consolidation, and the strengthening of solidarity across issues in responding to the dynamics of refugee protection in Indonesia.



Figure 11. Documentation of a CSO workshop session that brought together civil society organizations that also work in the protection of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia.

actor, but rather requires strengthening the network of civil society organizations (CSOs) working across issues and areas, including advocacy, governance, services, and campaigns. Given the limited national legal framework, the dynamics of global funding, and the increasing complexity of refugee situations, both in emergencies and during periods of waiting, strengthening CSO coordination and capacity is a strategic step to ensure sustainable and responsive advocacy.

In response to this need, SUAKA strives to position itself as a shared home for civil society organizations concerned with refugee and asylum seeker issues, while also acting as a focal point in network management. This role is carried out through facilitating meeting spaces, managing inter-institutional communication channels, and liaising between This commitment continued throughout 2025 through a series of follow-up meetings that further underscored SUAKA's role in facilitating

As part of this effort, on December 5, 2024, SUAKA, together with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Indonesia and Dompet Dhuafa, held a Workshop on Civil Society Organizations in Refugee Protection, which brought together 33 representatives of civil society organizations. This workshop aimed to align perceptions regarding the situation and needs of foreign refugees in Indonesia, map the capacity and role of each organization, and build an initial commitment to future refugee management strategies. One of the main outcomes of this workshop was an agreement to strengthen inter-institutional coordination more regularly, promote refugee issues through joint campaigns, and encourage meaningful participation of refugee communities in national advocacy work.

the consolidation of civil society organization (CSO) networks. In March 2025, SUAKA took part in a forum for reflection and response to

global funding reductions for refugees, particularly the impacts of United States budget cuts and restrictions on resettlement pathways. The online forum discussed the findings of a mini-research study entitled 'US Foreign Funding Cut Damage Assessment to Refugees' and its implications for the sustainability of refugee services and protection in Indonesia. Through this forum, the network identified the impacts of funding cuts on the continuity of service delivery, assistance, and empowerment programs implemented by CSOs. In addition, the network highlighted the importance of conducting advocacy campaigns on the impacts of declining global funding and exploring alternative funding sources, including through joint fundraising mechanisms. Subsequently, on 4–5 June 2025, SUAKA participated in the NGO Forum for Policy Advocacy on the Handling of Foreign Refugees in Indonesia. The forum served as a strategic space to update the mapping of refugee situations in both emergency and waiting phases, while also identifying the respective roles of each organization in policy advocacy, governance, public campaigning, and the direct provision of services to refugees. Building on the June forum, from July to December 2025 SUAKA also took part in facilitating a series of regular CSO meetings, which were held five times in total. These meetings functioned as coordination and information-sharing platforms on various advocacy initiatives at both national and subnational levels, including updates on the organization of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) webinar on the governance of foreign refugees. The series concluded with a network meeting on 17 December 2025, which focused on preparing national-level policy inputs in line with the

finalization of the BRIN workshops, which are planned to proceed to the policy advocacy stage in 2026.

Overall, the strengthening of CSO networks reflects SUAKA's strategy to build a collaborative, coordinated, and sustainable advocacy ecosystem. By positioning itself convening platform and network facilitator, SUAKA seeks to ensure that refugee protection efforts do not operate in a fragmented manner, but rather reinforce one another and are able to collectively respond to policy dynamics and humanitarian situations in a human rights-based manner.

h) Advocacy for the National Action Plan on Human Rights (RANHAM)

The National Action Plan for Human Rights (RANHAM) is one of the state's policy instruments for realizing the commitment to protect, promote, and fulfill human rights in Indonesia. As a long-term planning document, the National Action Plan for Human Rights serves as a strategic framework to ensure that human rights principles are systematically integrated into cross-sectoral policies, including in responding to vulnerable groups outside the citizenship protection scheme, such as refugees and asylum seekers.

Historically, the refugee issue has received attention in the National Action Plan for Human Rights, particularly in the 2004–2009 and 2010–2014 periods through the agenda of encouraging the ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.<sup>90</sup> However, this agenda has not been realized and has not continued in the subsequent RANHAM periods. This condition continues amidst increasing global conflict, the prolonged refugee situation in

<sup>90</sup>Dita Liliansa and Anbar Jayadi, "Should Indonesia Accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention and Its 1967 Protocol?" *Indonesia Law Review* 5, No. 3 (2015): 324–346, <https://doi.org/10.15742/ilrev.v5n3.161>.

Indonesia, and the limited national legal framework that explicitly guarantees the fulfillment of human rights for refugees abroad.

With the momentum of the development of the 2026–2030 National Action Plan for Human Rights (RANHAM), civil society organizations see the need to revitalize the spirit of

integration of refugee protection within the national human rights policy framework.

In September 2025, the Civil Society Network officially submitted the 2026–2030 National Action Plan for Human Rights (RANHAM) policy brief to the Ministry of Human Rights as input for the development of the next generation of RANHAM documents. Specifically, the Civil



Figure 12. Documentation of the submission of the policy brief from the consensus on the agenda of the audience with the Minister of Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia

mainstreaming refugee protection into national human rights policy. This need is increasingly pressing given the decline in international funding, which has directly impacted refugees' access to basic services, legal aid, and empowerment opportunities while waiting in Indonesia.

In this context, in 2025, the Civil Society Network for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Issues in Indonesia prepared a policy brief entitled "Strengthening the Rights and Protection of Refugees in Indonesia in the 2026–2030 National Action Plan for Human Rights." This document is intended to provide a situational overview, issue mapping, and relevant policy recommendations for the development of the next generation of RANHAM, with the aim of encouraging a more comprehensive

Society Network recommended that RANHAM firmly integrate the protection of refugees and asylum seekers into the national human rights agenda, both through recognizing them as vulnerable groups and mainstreaming refugee issues across all RANHAM pillar

Key recommendations include strengthening human rights-based structural policies through the establishment of legislation and the revision of Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016, encouraging the ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and fulfilling refugees' basic rights to legal identity, education, health, and welfare, including access to job training, economic independence mechanisms, and financial services.

Furthermore, the network encourages an active role for the government in providing access to durable solutions through diplomacy and international cooperation, as well as the development of a comprehensive approach involving international organizations and civil society. To ensure sustainable protection, the National Action Plan for Human Rights is also expected to strengthen the human rights perspective in refugee management by increasing the capacity of state officials and creating an inclusive dialogue mechanism involving all stakeholders, including refugee communities, as part of the strategy to strengthen human rights governance in Indonesia. The submission of the policy brief was followed by an audience with the Minister of Human Rights on 4 November 2025. On that occasion, the Ministry of Human Rights conveyed an initial commitment to follow up through a focus group discussion (FGD) with civil society networks. However, as of the end of 2025, this follow-up in the form of the FGD had not yet been realized. Therefore, entering 2026, the Civil Society Network expects the establishment of a sustained space for dialogue with the Ministry of Human Rights. This advocacy is expected to continue in order to ensure that the protection of refugees and asylum seekers can be concretely integrated into the targets, indicators, and action plans of

RANHAM as part of the state's commitment to inclusive and equitable human rights protection.

i) Advocacy for the Reform of the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP)

The Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) is a legal instrument in the Indonesian criminal justice system that regulates the law enforcement process from the investigation stage to trial.<sup>91</sup> The KUHAP, in effect since 1981, replaced the criminal procedure system derived from the Herziene Inlandsch Reglement (HIR) and embodied the spirit of human rights protection, particularly through recognition of the rights of suspects and defendants. However, in practice, the KUHAP appears to be unable to fully address the dynamics of contemporary law enforcement, including the need to protect vulnerable groups in the criminal justice process. Therefore, the discourse on KUHAP reform continues to roll out until the 2024–2029 legislative period.

During this process, SUAKA was actively involved in various consolidation efforts with civil society throughout 2024–2025. Given the implementation of the territoriality principle in Indonesian criminal law, the KUHAP will also apply to refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, the various problems contained in the KUHAP will also impact them. One frequent occurrence is the failure to process police reports filed by refugees and asylum seekers who have experienced alleged criminal incidents.

In various advocacy forums, SUAKA has highlighted that refugees often encounter the criminal justice system without adequate recognition of their specific vulnerabilities. This includes limited access to interpreters who

<sup>91</sup> Willa Wahyuni, *Understanding the Difference between KUHP and KUHAP*, *Hukumonline*, 30 Mei 2025.

<https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/a/mengenal-perbedaan-kuhp-dan-kuhap-168396822959c4/>

understand the language and context of refugee communities, minimal recognition of the role of community paralegals, and the tendency of the legal aid system to be insensitive to the legal and social conditions of refugees.

As part of its efforts to broaden public and stakeholder understanding of this issue, SUAKA also participated in a media discussion titled "Constitutionalism of the Criminal Procedure Code: The Relevance of the Principle of Functional Differentiation in Law Enforcement," held on August 15, 2025. In this discussion, SUAKA emphasized that the low level of understanding of refugee issues has direct implications for refugees' limited access to legal services, and therefore that a refugee protection perspective needs to be mainstreamed in both the deliberation and implementation of the KUHAP.

With the enactment of the new KUHAP in January 2026, SUAKA considers it important to continue its advocacy role by monitoring the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code, particularly in ensuring that the principles of human rights protection and access to justice for refugees abroad are not only enshrined in legal norms, but also implemented in real law enforcement practices.

#### j) Research and International Advocacy

Throughout the 2021–2025 period, SUAKA consistently expanded its research and advocacy work to the international and regional levels as part of its strategy to strengthen the protection of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia.

<sup>92</sup> Alysa, Angga Reynady Hermawan Putra, Anggraeni Puspita, Ariela Naomi Syifa, Atika Yuanita Paraswaty, Daniel Awigra, Jesse Adam Halim, Monica Susanti Rahadsih, Rizka Argadanti Rachmah, Telly Nathalia, dan Zico Efraindio Pestalozzi, *Mapping the Situation of Persons at Risk of Statelessness in Indonesia*

Through engagement in international human rights mechanisms, multilateral forums, and collaboration with civil society organizations and refugee communities, SUAKA advocates for greater attention to the refugee situation in Indonesia within the framework of global and regional human rights obligations.

In 2022, SUAKA submitted Indonesia's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report to the UPR Secretariat, a process that began in 2021 with other civil society organizations and refugee paralegals. The report was accompanied by two public discussions that yielded key recommendations, including the need to strengthen refugee rights protection, implement the principle of non-refoulement, revise Presidential Regulation 125/2016, diplomacy to accelerate resettlement, and a long-term approach towards ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention. The report also highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly children.

**Indonesia accepted the recommendation to ratify the 1951 Convention at the 2022 UPR session, although the government rejected the recommendation.** However, the issue of refugees and asylum seekers was explicitly highlighted by other countries, such as the Marshall Islands and Sudan, demonstrating the influence of advocacy within the forum. In 2023, SUAKA, along with the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) and VOICE, published the study "Baseline Research: Mapping the Situation of Persons at Risk of Statelessness in Indonesia."<sup>92</sup> This research mapped the risks faced by vulnerable groups, including Rohingya refugees, asylum seekers with double rejection status, and intermarried

(baseline research report, SUAKA/HRWG/VOICE, 2023),  
<https://suaka.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Mapping-the-Situation-of-Persons-at-Risk-of-Statelessness-in-Indonesia.pdf>

couples with undocumented children. The study highlighted their limited access to basic rights and recommended strengthening legal protection, more inclusive policies, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. That same year, SUAKA also submitted a pledge to the Global Refugee Forum. The commitment was related to the implementation of legal empowerment, through community-based paralegal training for refugees and subsequent network management. Several CSOs and international organizations based in Indonesia made pledges covering education, empowerment, women's protection, and other areas. SUAKA noted that the Indonesian government did not make a pledge at this forum. In a statement made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, the Indonesian government focused solely on handling Rohingya refugees and strengthened its position on the importance of combating human trafficking and human smuggling.

Continuing into 2024, SUAKA was involved in the preparation of a shadow report for the UN Human Rights Committee (CCPR) at the 140th ICCPR session, together with a civil society coalition facilitated by HRWG. In the report, **SUAKA highlighted the absence of refugee and asylum seeker access to justice issues in the official report of the Government of Indonesia**, despite the serious limitations faced by these groups in accessing education, health care, and employment. The ICCPR review process was also observed by the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), which noted that in its concluding observations the UN Human Rights Committee underscored the need for Indonesia to ensure better protection for vulnerable groups, including refugee women, and to strengthen policies aligned with international human rights standards. In the same year, SUAKA also organized a diplomatic briefing together with Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) and Geutanyoe Foundation,

attended by representatives of several embassies, as part of efforts to broaden advocacy on refugee issues at the diplomatic level.

In 2025, SUAKA's international advocacy was further expanded to the ASEAN regional level and various UN human rights mechanisms. SUAKA was involved as a facilitator and discussion participant in a series of focus group discussions organized by the Indonesian House of Representatives' Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Agency (BKSAP) together with Amnesty International Indonesia in March and May 2025, which discussed human rights protection for Rohingya refugees and Indonesia's strategic role in promoting ASEAN regional protection mechanisms, including coordinated rescue. At the international level, SUAKA also contributed to civil society organization consultations with the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) to develop APHR's advocacy strategy for the 2025–2029 period, with particular attention to the protracted Rohingya crisis.

In October 2025, SUAKA also submitted input to the OHCHR Secretary-General's Report on the Human Rights of Migrants with a network of CSOs, which highlighted the human rights conditions of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia. Specifically, the network sought to highlight the specific conditions in the protection of Indonesian refugees, such as access to justice, employment, education, health, and issues related to detention in immigration matters. Towards the end of the year, SUAKA also began exploring the issue of freedom of religion and belief for refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia, especially for those living independently, in response to the interim report of the UN Special Rapporteur on

freedom of religion or belief for people on the move issued in July 2025.<sup>93</sup>

Overall, this series of international research and advocacy demonstrates SUAKA's efforts to consistently elevate the issue of Indonesian refugees into global and regional human rights conversations, while ensuring that the experiences and needs of refugees, including the most vulnerable groups, are part of cross-border policy recommendations and international mechanisms.

k) Issue Monitoring, Forum Participation, and International Networking

Furthermore, SUAKA continues to strengthen collaboration and knowledge sharing within international networks and forums that support refugee protection efforts at the international level. These include membership involvement in:

- Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)

APRRN is a network established to advance refugee rights in the Asia-Pacific region. The network was established in 2008 by several civil society organizations that recognized the importance of collaboration to protect and defend refugee rights. APRRN focuses on refugee protection, empowering marginalized communities, and advocating for the fundamental rights of refugees and groups in need of protection in the region.

- Namati - The Grassroots Justice Network

Namati is an international organization dedicated to strengthening social and environmental justice through legal

empowerment. Namati works by building a global movement of community paralegals, individuals trained to provide basic legal support to communities, helping them access justice and assert their rights. Namati focuses its efforts on empowering communities to understand, use, and shape the law to address the legal challenges they face. The organization also seeks to create transformative change by engaging local communities and partners to expand justice rights and services to millions of people across the world.

- Global Strategic Litigation Council for Refugee Rights (GSLC)

GSLC is an organization or body focused on the use of strategic litigation to protect and advocate for refugee rights globally. The primary goal of GSLC is to leverage international and national legal systems to improve legal protection for refugees, ensure their access to justice, and advocate for more refugee-friendly policy changes. As part of a larger movement to champion refugee rights, GSLC collaborates with various institutions, civil society organizations, and legal practitioners to promote justice for refugees worldwide

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<sup>93</sup> Nazila Ghanea, *Interim Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief: Freedom of Religion or Belief of People on the Move*, U.N. Doc. A/80/205, 18 July 2025, United Nations, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a80205-interim-report-special-rapporteur-freedom-religion-or-belief>.

- Statelessness And Dignified Citizenship Coalition Asia-Pacific (SDCC-AP)

The SDCC-AP is a coalition focused on citizenship and statelessness in the Asia-Pacific region. The coalition aims to raise awareness, advocate for, and provide solutions to the problems of stateless persons, who often face discrimination and limitations on their basic rights. The SDCC-AP works to ensure that every individual in the region has the right to obtain a legal nationality, which gives them access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, and employment. In addition, several regional and international networks have been successfully initiated, of which SUAKA is a member. Specifically, these networks include the OHCHR Asia strategic litigation network for immigration issues, the NFA statelessness network, the UNODC transnational crime network, and others. Furthermore, to expand collaboration with international organizations dealing with refugees, SUAKA has convened or participated in meetings with the IOM and UNHCR to discuss current refugee situations and future refugee protection strategies. Through this participation, SUAKA can expand its network, maintain its network, and encourage opportunities to collaborate and share knowledge with its network.

#### **E. Secretariat**

Throughout the 2021–2025 period, SUAKA's Secretariat functioned as a key driving force in ensuring that all organizational bodies operated in a coherent, accountable, and sustainable manner in accordance with the mandate of the Charter (Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga/AD-ART). The Secretariat not only carried out administrative and financial functions, but also assumed essential responsibilities in member consolidation, the convening of the General Assembly (Rapat Umum Anggota/RUA), Work

Meetings (Rapat Kerja/Raker), Monitoring and Evaluation (Monev), and in ensuring that institutional processes were conducted in compliance with the Charter (AD/ART).

The year 2024 was a particularly challenging period due to a fire at the LBH Jakarta office (YLBHI Building), which has served as SUAKA's office since its establishment. This resulted in limited workspace, disrupted administrative activities and face-to-face consultation services for refugees, and necessitated relocation and adjustments to work systems. The Secretariat responded to the situation by strengthening remote work systems, enhancing digital archives and documents, securing organizational inventory, and adjusting internal meeting and coordination mechanisms.

Currently, to ensure the organization's sustainability, SUAKA's workspace is shared with a SUAKA member as a form of internal solidarity to maintain the organization's sustainability, as well as utilizing offline resources.

Along with strengthening governance and carrying out organizational work, SUAKA is also strengthening the role and involvement of activists as part of the organization's sustainability efforts. SUAKA's activists include individual and organizational members, volunteers, and interns

- **Individual and Organizational Members**

Individual and organizational memberships are developed to broaden SUAKA's support base and network, as well as to encourage active engagement in advocacy and community empowerment. New individual members are selected from volunteers who have been actively involved in SUAKA's work, with existing members nominating several volunteers to become new members. Membership is determined through a majority vote in the General

Assembly (RUA) and Work Meeting (Raker) forums.

SUAKA Individual Members as of 2025 consist of:

1. Febi Yonesta
2. Atika Yuanita Paraswaty
3. Gading Gumilang Putra
4. Rizka Argadianti Rachmah
5. Shaila Tieken
6. Zico Efraindio Pestalozzi
7. Yunita
8. Ali Akbar Tanjung
9. Muhamad Hafiz
10. Julio Castor Achmadi
11. Anak Agung Istri Diah Tricesaria
12. Anggraeni Puspitasari
13. Monica Susanti
14. Shaffira Gayatri
15. Telly Nathalia
16. Roichatul Aswidah
17. Zainal Abidin
18. Angga Reynady
19. Rachmawati Putri

Apart from individual members, SUAKA membership also consists of organizational members, namely:

1. Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH) Jakarta
2. Human Rights Working Group (HRWG)
3. Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Indonesia

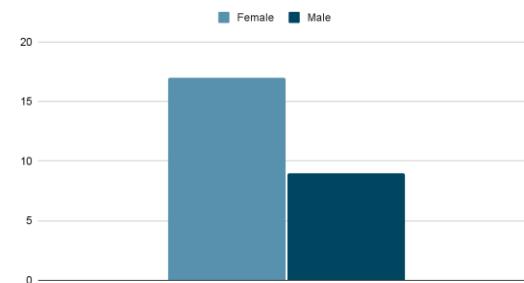
- **Volunteers**

Volunteers play a role in supporting the implementation of SUAKA activities according to program needs. Over the past five years, volunteer enthusiasm has shown a consistent increase, especially among young people, both domestically and internationally. SUAKA volunteers come from diverse educational backgrounds, with a predominance in Law and International Relations, as well as other disciplines such as communications, pharmacy, English and Arabic literature, Accounting, Anthropology, and Criminology. This diversity

strengthens SUAKA's multidisciplinary approach in responding to refugee issues legally, socially, culturally, and practically. The majority of volunteers are women, who play a crucial role in creating an inclusive and empathetic work perspective in handling refugees, especially on gender-related issues. The role of volunteers is crucial in supporting SUAKA's work to fulfill refugee rights.

Volunteers are involved in public awareness activities, empowerment activities, and research report writing. SUAKA has found a strong interest in volunteerism among students and the general public. However, SUAKA still faces challenges in responding to and accommodating this goodwill due to limitations in volunteer governance. Furthermore, SUAKA is still unable to develop knowledge specifically for volunteers according to their capacity and interests.

VOLUNTEER



- **Interns**

SUAKA offers internship programs to provide activists, students, or anyone interested in refugee issues with the opportunity to join and contribute to SUAKA's work and mission. Interns are involved in the organization's work, supported by staff to strengthen their capacity and understanding of refugee issues, and gain practical experience, including direct interaction with refugee communities.

Internship programs are relatively short-term, lasting approximately 3-6 months, and involve involvement in various SUAKA work areas, such

and networking, promote discourse on refugee protection law reform, enhance the refugee advocacy ecosystem in Indonesia, and mainstream refugee issues at the national and global levels.

In 2025–2026, SUAKA had the opportunity to host a Fellow through the Luce Scholars Program of The Henry Luce Foundation, in collaboration with The Asia Foundation. Through this program, the Fellow contributed to strengthening SUAKA's research- and policy-based advocacy by preparing studies, policy analyses, and policy briefs related to

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Volunteers	7	21	24	29	26
Interns	12	8	7	6	2
International Interns	-	1	3	1	1

as legal assistance and empowerment, campaigns, information, and advocacy.

Almost every year SUAKA accepts international interns from abroad, including: in 2022, SUAKA accepted 1 intern from Juris Doctor Melbourne Law School, Australia. In 2023, the enthusiasm of international interns increased to 3 people from Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany, Western Sydney University and Deakin University, Australia. In mid-2024, SUAKA once again accepted an intern coming from Tokyo University, Japan.

The acceptance of these international interns is also based on SUAKA's need to strengthen and enhance its work implementation and organizational capacity. This involvement is expected to strengthen evidence-based advocacy, expand international collaboration

Indonesia's refugee protection framework, including Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016 and the National Action Plan on Human Rights (RANHAM) 2026–2030.

The following table lists SUAKA activists from 2021–2025:

- During the 2021–2025 period, SUAKA hosted volunteers and interns, including students, recent graduates, and professionals, who came from, among others, the following universities:
  - Universitas Brawijaya, Malang
  - Universitas Katolik Atma Jaya, Jakarta & Yogyakarta
  - Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta
  - Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta
  - Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya
  - Universitas Bina Nusantara, Jakarta
  - Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran", Yogyakarta

- Universitas Terbuka, Jakarta
- Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Ponorogo
- Universitas Bung Karno, Jakarta
- Universitas Katolik Parahyangan, Bandung
- Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung
- Universitas Al-Azhar, jakarta
- Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta
- Universitas Yarsi, Jakarta
- Universitas Andalas, Padang
- Universitat Hamburg, Germany
- Leiden Law School, Netherlands
- University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Université Paris Cité, Paris
- The University of Groningen, Netherlands
- University of Glasgow, Scotland
- University of Melbourne, Australia
- University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

Over the past five years, SUAKA has observed growing enthusiasm among both Indonesian and international students for its internship program. Looking ahead, SUAKA hopes to open opportunities for refugees to participate in the internship program.

Providing such opportunities would enable refugees to develop practical and professional skills, while also contributing directly to programs focused on empowerment and legal aid for their own communities.

Overall, the Secretariat played a crucial role throughout 2021-2025 in maintaining the continuity of the institution's governance, administration, and work coordination. Through the management of the General Meetings (RUA) and Work Meetings (Raker), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), induction and capacity-building sessions, management updates, the preparation of the Strategic Plan (Renstra), and institutional administration management and response to the workspace crisis, the Secretariat ensured SUAKA remained consistent in carrying out its mandate to

protect refugee rights in Indonesia. Amidst organizational dynamics, limited resources, and the expansion of its work and network, the Secretariat continued to strive to maintain accountability, order, and responsiveness in supporting all SUAKA programs and activists.

A participatory, adaptive, and collaborative approach is the Secretariat's primary focus in supporting the roles of its members, staff, volunteers, and partners. With a continuously strengthened institutional foundation, the SUAKA Secretariat is committed to continuing to support advocacy efforts for the protection and rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia in a sustainable, inclusive, and impactful manner.

## F. Finance

### a) Income

During the 2021–2025 period, SUAKA generated income from various sources, reflecting a combination of institutional donor support and internal organizational contributions. These revenue sources included international and national donors, public donations, merchandise sales, membership dues, and bank interest. This diversification of income sources played an important role in sustaining the organization's basic operational needs, particularly during periods of limited donor funding.

Institutional donor income constituted SUAKA's primary source of funding, particularly in supporting the implementation of its programs. During the reporting period, SUAKA's total income exhibited fluctuations influenced by donor availability and funding cycles. Overall, SUAKA's income throughout 2021–2025 reflects the organization's sustained efforts to manage financial resources responsibly in order to ensure organizational operations continued and programs were implemented in line with available capacity.

The following table shows SUAKA's income report for the 2021-2025 period:

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Host-International</b>	261.586.557	53.234.870	-	-	
<b>Julia Taft</b>	82.707.000	-	340.754.054		
<b>WFA</b>	55.019.250				
<b>ISHR</b>	46.925.000				
<b>GI-RF</b>	98.347.359	100.091.107	-		
<b>DRC</b>			868.367.650		
<b>VOICE - HRWG</b>		154.987.000	139.482.000	24.000.000	
<b>UNSW</b>				1.299.500.000	758.548.000
<b>Henry Luce Foundation &amp; TAF</b>					82.377.125
<b>Jakarta Feminist</b>					5.070.000
<b>Donation</b>	29.351.669	27.928.034	61.380.187	4.830.593	2.232.500
<b>SUAKA Contribution</b>	11.421.500	132.659.875	242.569.200	114.148.750	14.922.500
<b>Merchandise</b>		4.500.000	650.000	-	220.000
<b>Membership Dues</b>					7.550.000
<b>Bank Interest</b>	3.263.061	2.722.098	4.778.763	4.665.681	2.046.597
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>588.621.396</b>	<b>476.122.982</b>	<b>1.657.981.854</b>	<b>1.447.145.024</b>	<b>872.966.722</b>

a) Expenditure

During the 2021-2025 period, SUAKA's expenditures were allocated to support the implementation of work programs and maintain the organization's operational continuity. Expenditures were grouped into three main categories: program expenditures, operational expenditures, and other costs, adjusted to the organization's needs and priorities during the reporting period.

Program expenditures increased during periods when donor support was available and large-scale programs were implemented. However, in 2024, SUAKA's funding began to experience constraints due to the lack of new donor support. Under these circumstances, SUAKA utilized the organization's reserves to maintain operational continuity and ensure priority programs continued to run within available capacity.

Operational expenditures were allocated to support the organization's basic functions, including staff salaries, administration, communications, and other supporting needs. These expenses were a critical component in ensuring the

organization could function sustainably, regardless of the availability or absence of program funding. Meanwhile, other costs included supporting and incidental expenses, which were managed in a controlled and proportionate manner.

The following table shows SUAKA's expenditure report for the 2021-2025 period:

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Program</b>	104.231.080	231.704.431	920.922.753	1.518.097.062	718.901.531
<b>Operasional</b>	268.723.416	433.468.604	231.869.959	309.429.456	247.486.265
<b>Others</b>	33.963.284	44.026.092	27.272.993	6.273.503	12.235.527
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>406.917.780</b>	<b>709.199.127</b>	<b>1.180.065.705</b>	<b>1.833.800.021</b>	<b>978.623.323</b>

As part of its commitment to accountability and transparency, SUAKA has undergone an external audit for the 2021-2023 period. Meanwhile, its 2024 and 2025 financial statements have not yet been externally audited and are still undergoing internal management and preparation for the next audit.

Going forward, SUAKA still requires additional funding support to ensure the continuity of organizational operations, the implementation of priority work programs, and the strengthening of institutional capacity. This funding support is crucial for SUAKA to continue its role in advocacy, assistance, and the sustainable advancement of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

As a complement to the financial section and as a form of accountability, SUAKA intends to include a financial audit report for readers. The audit agenda is carried out as an obligation of SUAKA, which has responsibility to the public in the financial management process and program implementation. Audits were

conducted in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Audits were not conducted in 2024 and 2025 due to budget constraints. All three audit reports can be found and read in full at <http://tiny.cc/LaporanAuditSUAKA>.

#### F. Opportunities and Recommendation

Based on the aforementioned explanation, we see the opportunities and recommend several things pertaining to SUAKA's work and institutions, which are stated as follows:

- a) Case Handling and Community Situation
  1. **Strengthening Referral Mechanisms:** Strengthening service-based referrals, especially non-legal services, considering SUAKA's limitations in providing non-legal assistance.
  2. **Expanding the Pro Bono Lawyer Network:** Strengthening referrals and the network of pro bono lawyers outside Greater Jakarta to expand the reach of concrete legal assistance for refugees.
  3. **Synergy of Legal Aid Actors:** Strengthening networks and networking agendas

between legal aid actors (pro bono lawyers, Legal Aid Institute (LBH) / Legal Aid Organization (OBH), advocate organizations, Campus Legal Aid and Consultation Institute (LKBH), academics, etc.).

4. **Coordination with Law Enforcement Officials (LEO):** Increase capacity and coordination with LEO to prevent legal problems and restrictions on rights due to a lack of understanding of the concept of refugees and asylum seekers.
5. **Local Paralegal Development:** Consider building a locally based paralegal network.
6. **Providing Information on Alternative Solutions:** Increasing engagement and providing information to the community regarding alternative solutions (e.g., sponsorship mechanisms).
7. **Approach to IOM Accommodation:** Improving community engagement in IOM accommodation to understand the dynamics and drivers of legal issues there, as the focus has so far been predominantly on self-isolating refugees.
8. **Technical Assistance Standardization:** Determining SUAKA's internal position in providing technical assistance related to the resettlement process and alternative solutions (such as recommendation letters or statutory declarations) which are predicted to increase.
9. **Community Legal Knowledge Evaluation:** Noting an increase in basic legal knowledge in the community (such as types of crimes and police reporting) thanks to empowerment programs from various organizations.
10. **Focus on the “To Shape the Law” Pillar:** Engaging refugee communities more actively in advocacy agendas or capacity-building program design, enabling them to independently conduct policy advocacy.
11. **Continuous Dialogue for Advocacy Support:** Establishing regular communication with the community to build support and align understanding in advocacy efforts.
12. **Expectation Management:** Engaging directly with the community to clarify SUAKA's position and manage the community's high expectations of the organization.
13. **Consideration of Protection-Related Non-Legal Services:** Where budget allows, considering non-legal services that complement legal aid (e.g., funding for sexual violence medical exams, safe houses, or psychological support).
14. **Strategic Campaigns and Litigation:** Strengthening case management and advocacy campaigns, including the possibility of strategic litigation for broader impact.
15. **Increased Outreach:** Increasing the agenda of in-person community visits to maintain consistent dialogue.

b) Campaign, Advocacy, and Networking

1. **Leadership Momentum under the Philippines' ASEAN Chairship in 2026**

The Philippines' leadership as ASEAN Chair in 2026 presents a strategic opportunity to strengthen the refugee protection agenda at the regional level, both through ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR). The Philippines is one of the ASEAN member states that has ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention. This ratification reflects the country's commitment to refugee protection principles, which can help align refugee and asylum seeker management agendas under the Philippines' ASEAN Chairship in 2026.
2. **Utilization of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the Bali Process**

The GCM and the Bali Process remain important advocacy tools, particularly in encouraging governments to engage in refugee protection. These forums can be used to draw the attention of countries in the region to take more concrete steps to provide protection and enhance cooperation in handling refugees

### **3. Strengthening the Advocacy Network**

The advocacy network established through the Civil Society Coalition of Refugee and Asylum Seekers presents a significant opportunity to strengthen cross-organizational collaboration. A solid network can enhance advocacy effectiveness, both in sharing resources, enhancing organizational capacity, and designing joint campaign strategies to influence refugee protection regulations.

### **4. Increasing Public Attention, Especially Among the Younger Generation, to Refugee Issues**

Coverage of refugee issues, particularly the Rohingya, is gaining increasing media attention. This can be leveraged to raise public awareness and garner broader support for refugee protection policies. In particular, youth involvement in refugee advocacy is growing, particularly through digital campaigns, campus communities, and youth organization networks. Reflecting on the positive assessment of previous student training, youth involvement presents an opportunity that can be further developed in the future to promote refugee protection.

### **5. Involvement of Academics and Human Rights Institutions in Advocacy**

More and more academics and human rights institutions are involved in research and advocacy related to refugees. One example is the National Commission on Violence Against Women, which has begun conducting research on women refugee issues. This provides an opportunity to strengthen databases, produce evidence-based studies, and strengthen arguments in promoting more inclusive policies for refugees in Indonesia and the region.

### **6. The Role of Ministries in Handling Refugees**

- Coordinating-Level Ministries: Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs (Kemenko Polhukam), Coordinating Ministry for Law, Human Rights, Immigration, and Corrections (Kemenko Kumham Imipas), and Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs (Kemenko PMK).

As coordinating ministries, the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs (Kemenko Polhukam) and the Coordinating Ministry for Law, Human Rights, Immigration, and Corrections (Kemenko Kumham Imipas) play a central role in ensuring that the handling of foreign refugees is carried out in a coordinated, consistent, and human rights-based manner. In the process of revising Presidential Regulation No. 125 of 2016, a comprehensive human rights understanding is required, along with an approach capable of addressing the various implementation challenges that have arisen in the field. Furthermore, the new Presidential Regulation 125/2016 and future legal frameworks also need to align human rights perspectives with existing laws to prevent implementation confusion on the ground. For example, this includes recognizing refugees and asylum seekers as a vulnerable group eligible for legal aid, and incorporating human rights protection into immigration regulations that specifically address refugees and asylum seekers. In the context of refugee governance, the continuity of the *Satgas PPLN* is crucial, including clarity regarding the execution of duties and functions across ministries and agencies in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework.

Additionally, the government needs to view refugees and asylum seekers as part of the social community in the long term, given the increasing difficulty of achieving comprehensive solutions for them. Therefore, policies and programs on social and cultural integration become essential for community

empowerment and the enhancement of protection and human well-being. This role can be coordinated by the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs (Kemenko PMK) together with its sectoral ministries.

- Ministry of Human Rights

The Ministry of Human Rights plays a crucial role in safeguarding Indonesia's commitment to protecting human rights, both at the national and international levels, including for refugees and asylum seekers. Recognition of refugees as recipients of concrete human rights protection mechanisms at the national and regional levels needs to be strengthened by integrating the issue of refugees abroad into various human rights protection policies. Furthermore, developing human rights policies or guidelines specifically addressing the handling of refugees abroad can be an important instrument in strengthening a more systematic and sustainable protection framework, including in the context of the development of the 2026-2030 National Action Plan for Human Rights (RANHAM).

- Ministry of Immigration and Corrections

In the context of law enforcement and immigration oversight, it is important to clearly distinguish between refugees from the category of "foreigners," given their differing characteristics, vulnerabilities, and protection needs. Recognition of refugee identities issued by the UNHCR as legitimate legal status needs to be strengthened through written regulations, including in the granting of residence permits. Furthermore, refugee detention practices need to be placed within a proportional and human rights-based framework, in line with the principles of non-penalization and non-refoulement, and supported by implementing regulations that provide procedural clarity for implementing officials.

- Ministry of Women Empowerment and Children Protection

Refugee women and children are a group with multiple vulnerabilities that require special protection. Therefore, written recognition of refugee women and children as vulnerable groups in women's and children's protection policies and programs is crucial. This recognition can strengthen the legal basis for providing protection services, improve clarity in inter-agency coordination, and support planning and budget utilization that are responsive to the protection needs of refugee women and children in their daily lives.

- Ministries in the Context of Education (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education/Kemendidasmen and Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology/Kemendiktisintek)

Through the existing Circular Letter on Education, the educational context is indeed more progressive compared to the fulfillment of other basic rights. However, policy development still needs to be carried out. One example is administrative integration, which is part of the comprehensive fulfillment of rights. The awarding of diplomas (with a special mechanism) should be considered. Furthermore, it is crucial to open doors and support for refugees and asylum seekers to access higher education (at university level). Considering that a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers are currently of higher education age and have the potential to become productive resources that can also benefit Indonesia as a nation.

- Ministry of Health

The inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in healthcare access is essential, particularly in terms of financial inclusion. Refugees and asylum seekers often experience difficulties accessing medical services due to financial constraints. Given that refugees and asylum seekers lack income and are unable to work, these difficulties arise. **Moving forward, the Ministry of Health needs to consider and analyze financial support for medical care for refugees, both preventative and responsive.**

- Ministry of Manpower

The Ministry of Manpower can play a strategic role by expanding access to vocational training and competency certification through Job Training Centers (BLK) for refugees, as initiated through a 2023 Official Note permitting their participation in skills training programs. This step needs to be strengthened by formulating regulations that provide limited work permits or economic self-reliance schemes, for example through the creative economy or social entrepreneurship sectors, to reduce refugees' dependence on international aid while making productive contributions to the local economy. Furthermore, Kemnaker can collaborate with UNHCR and partner organizations to map refugees' skills to align with global labor market needs, thereby increasing their opportunities to access labor mobility pathways to third countries as a dignified, long-term solution.

- Ministry of Social Affairs

The Ministry of Social Affairs can play a central role in strengthening humanitarian protection for refugees through the integration of inclusive social assistance services, particularly for vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children, women, and persons with disabilities.

Given its mandate to address social welfare issues, the Ministry of Social Affairs needs to improve the standard of facilities in shelters to meet psychosocial and mental health needs, and expand refugees' access to emergency support services, which have so far been limited to citizens. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs can initiate social cohesion programs through community-based empowerment that connect refugees with local communities in socio-economic activities, in order to minimize stigma and the potential for horizontal conflict while building more harmonious community resilience while they await certainty about long-term solutions.

- Law Enforcement Officers (Police, Prosecutors, Judicial Institutions)

As part of a social community and as human beings, access to justice is a fundamental right that must be fulfilled for refugees and asylum seekers. This role is a legal obligation for the police, prosecutors, and judicial institutions. In practice, the legal process often fails due to a lack of awareness and legal knowledge regarding the existence of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia. Therefore, increasing capacity building and legal education is crucial. Furthermore, expanding civil society oversight is essential to ensure the continued existence of checks and balances. In the judicial context, independence and impartiality must also be ensured. Given the distinct identities of refugees and asylum seekers, they face unequal treatment in some legal cases, particularly those involving local communities.

- c) Secretariat and Finance

## OPPORTUNITIES

## **1. Strengthening Governance and Member Participation**

The consistent holding of the Annual General Meeting (RUA) and the Annual Working Meeting (Raker) provides opportunities to further strengthen member participation in strategic decision-making. With a diverse membership of individuals and organizations, SUAKA has a strong foundation for enriching perspectives, expanding networks, and enhancing organizational legitimacy.

## **2. Sustainable Capacity Building**

The various induction and capacity-building sessions conducted so far demonstrate significant opportunities for developing a more structured capacity-building curriculum for members, staff, and volunteers. Topics such as refugee protection, mental health for human rights activists, and sustainable funding strategies can be further developed.

## **3. Community-Based Participatory Approach**

Direct involvement of refugee communities in the development of SUAKA's Strategic Plan presents a crucial opportunity to strengthen the needs-based approach. This practice can be further developed in future program planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

## **4. Strengthening Hybrid and Digital Work Systems**

Hybrid work experiences in meeting management, monitoring, and evaluation provide opportunities to improve work efficiency, expand member and volunteer participation across regions, and strengthen the organization's digital documentation and archiving systems.

## **5. Diversifying Support and Organizational Sustainability**

The knowledge-sharing session on fundraising strategies demonstrated opportunities to expand the organization's support base, whether through institutional donors, cross-organizational collaboration, or fundraising initiatives involving members and networks.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Strengthening Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

It is recommended that the Secretariat continue to develop more systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, with clear and documented indicators, as a basis for improving organizational performance and strategic planning.

### **2. Induction and Capacity-Building Programs Standardization**

The Secretariat needs to develop a well-documented, reusable induction and capacity-building modules to ensure a shared understanding of SUAKA's values, mandate, and work ethics among members, staff, and colleagues. Maximizing discussion/meeting spaces to strengthen and understand the context of SUAKA's work for members, volunteers and staff.

### **3. Enhancing Member and Volunteer Engagement**

Maximizing the role of members. Members play a crucial role in maintaining SUAKA's sustainability by disseminating understanding and context about refugees, sharing information on human rights and the network's work, and gaining access to and understanding of funding (donors).

Creating more opportunities for substantive participation for members and

volunteers, whether in planning forums, thematic discussions, or capacity-building activities, in order to maintain organizational dynamism and sustainability

#### **4. Strengthening Funding Sustainability Strategy**

The secretariat together with the management needs to promote medium and long-term funding strategies that are integrated with the organization's Strategic Plan, including increasing internal capacity in fundraising and managing relations with donors.

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#### **Annex**

- **Audit**

