

**The Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**  
**Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities**

**Statement of Concern:**

**To assess public service branches for vulnerable refugee women and children**

1. In 1994, the Hong Kong government signed the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that proposes appropriate allocation of resources for education, though refugee children severely lack substantial coverage.
  - Refugee parents are required to subsist on the same subsidy from Social Welfare Department as everyone else but are required to provide for their children, who need financial assistance to attend school.
  - Expenses of school supplies including but not limited to school lunch meals, uniforms, stationery and textbooks are unwarranted financial pressure on top of monthly school fees.
  - The fee remission and financial assistance schemes issued by the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) and Education Bureau (EDB) are only provided on a reimbursement basis, rendering the payment of tuition fees difficult and regular attendance in schools unsustainable.
  - Monthly transportation costs to schools are not subsidized for refugee children which could further reduce educational participation. The current payment of \$200 fails to cover up daily expenses on school days.
2. Single refugee mothers are unable to rely on a second 'income' with a partner subsidy and only receive HKD\$750 for each child, to go solely towards housing costs. There are testimonies from women living in this situation who all attest the undue burden on a single parent household.
  - Cashless subsidies and handouts of \$1200 to finance food from grocery stores do not suffice monthly food coverage for a family.
  - The \$300 payment for utilities are inadequate to cover necessary products for a single parent family including but not limited to menstrual pads, paper handkerchiefs and baby diapers.

3. Pregnant refugee women are not provided with additional assistance with regards to public hospital services.
  - In emergency cases to perform C-section operations during childbirth, extra fees are required to cover the costs of the procedure but government welfare does not fund special medical operations.
  - Granted there are medical interpretation services provided by the Hospital Authority (HA) and Hong Kong TransLingual Services (HKTS) to foster better guidance accessing healthcare services, patients are nonetheless unaware of their rights to request these services.
4. Single refugee women are unable to access long-term security facilities and healthcare services targeted to provide psychological aid.
  - Assistance in the form of counselling are almost inaccessible for asylum seeking women fleeing sexual harassment and violence. The lack of formal status places single refugee women at serious risk of terminal mental health problems to which access to special medication is also limited.
  - Single asylum seeking refugee women are at a greater risk of sexual exploitation and most one-person accommodations are not prioritized to them, detriment to their right to privacy and freedom as well.
  - Conditions for accommodation usually in crowded flats are insecure and unmonitored, exposing them to the risk of gender-based violence that go unreported and ultimately has a critical impact on their physical and mental health status.

Submitted by:

Refugee Union Hong Kong