

Speech to HKIEd on 6 November 2015

I would like to start with a historical fact: Hong Kong Government promised to protect refugees on 9 December 1992 when the United Nations Convention against Torture (CAT) was extended to Hong Kong.

While it is true that Hong Kong did not sign the “Refugees Convention”, nevertheless it signed the “Torture Convention” to protect torture claimants and according to the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) also CIDTP and persecution claimants. Let us call these individuals refugees.

As a result of the above, refugees enjoy fundamental rights and must be protected by Hong Kong Government. Further their basic needs must be met while their claims are being processed. This is not what refugees say, but this is what several High Court judgments have instructed.

Therefore, refugees are not beggars. Refugees are not abusers. Refugees are not parasites or illegal immigrants. Refugees come to Hong Kong because Hong Kong promised the world to protect persecuted people. If you have any doubts, please read the Immigration Ordinance.

Refugees are human beings with basic needs that need to be met by welfare or by working if the Government does not provide enough assistance.

The most important point is **PROTECTION** – Why are 99.5% of the cases rejected?
Can Hong Kong Government honestly say that 99.5% of claims cannot be substantiate?
Instead, is it possible that the USM is unable/unwilling to identify refugee claims?
What is the use of a screening mechanism that rejects 99.5% of cases?
Is the USM used by Immigration as a migration control system to reject unwelcome people?
If USM were designed to protect refugees, wouldn't the acceptance rate be higher?
What would be reasonable by international standards? ... 10%....5%....1%.....
In developed countries the refugee's acceptance rate is between 25% and 45%
How can Hong Kong justify a 0.5% acceptance rate in 23 years since 1992?
These are questions that have not received a satisfactory answer.

Hong Kong being a developed country, refugees deserve all human rights, they should be treated with social justice. They should also be equipped with holistic skill development while their cases under screening process, so that they are better prepared for the future.

Refugees / Asylum seekers are categorized in the following groups: beginners, middle, advanced and professionals. Automatically they differ in all ways. As a new growing group in a society following procedures should be put in place:

- Complete facilitation of education on all levels.
- Introduction of refresher courses.
- Internship training in various areas.
- Developing ability skills in individuals who are often present and future parents.

Above strategies will enable refugees to reduce high stress, reduce incidents of crime and as a result they will be responsible, active instead of being passive.

BASIC NEEDS:

Generally I would like to thank Hong Kong Government for the basic needs offered to refugees, but the assistance is insufficient.

EDUCATION: Hong Kong Government facilitate with school fees only in terms of reimbursement to parents after a long period and other school requirements are not met yet parents do not have finance resources and not allowed to work. We recommend waver system of school fees payment and complete provision of scholastic materials for kindergarten, primary and secondary school.

HOUSE RENT: Every asylum seeker is provided 1500 HKD, paid directly to landlords. However, this is a small amount to acquire single rooms that currently cost a minimum of 3500 HKD.

UTILITIES: The allowance includes electricity, water and gas worth 300 HKD monthly per individual. Refugees have to find the money to pay top up amounts to landlords.

FOOD: At the moment we receive coupons worth 1200 HKD, which are limited by a list of approved items. We need free choice in item selection from supermarkets (excluding alcohol and cigarettes)

MEDICATION: Generally it is limited service due to the fact we are refugees and do not receive referral services. In this matter NGO'S play the biggest part to assist the needy.

TRANSPORT: It is limited only provided for official visits, so we are restricted in movement to any other parts of Hong Kong. This arrangement classifies us a minority group restricted in movement.

All in all kindly we call upon Hong Kong Government to implement and promote human rights to meet our basic needs in full since we are not allowed to work.