

Summary of report

In the first half of 2021, UNHCR organized **comprehensive consultations with Rohingya refugees** across the region to better understand how they envision their future — and what challenges stand in the way of their desired solutions. Teams across Asia interviewed a total of 2,846 Rohingya refugees in the six Rohingya-hosting countries in the region: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, and Thailand, which together host one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.

As the majority of Rohingya refugees enter their fifth year of displacement, and many others endure their second or third decade, **these consultations gave them an opportunity to voice their views on their future. A large majority said they intend to return and live in Myanmar one day.** They described the key issues that need to be addressed in Myanmar for them to consider return, but the longer they had been in exile, the less likely they were to believe that those issues will ever be addressed. While they wait to return, most Rohingya refugees said they had both the desire and potential to contribute to their host communities. But they also recounted the ongoing limitations on their education and livelihoods in countries of asylum that stifle that potential and leave them vulnerable to despair and exploitation.

Findings

- **Rohingya refugees express a diversity of views on their future intentions and current concerns.**

The consultations revealed **Rohingya refugees' differing opinions on their future intentions and current concerns** based on their gender, age, family status, sexual orientation, and whether they have a disability.

- **While waiting for return, Rohingya refugees are most concerned about their livelihoods and education.**

Some 27% of **Rohingya refugees cite livelihoods and education as their main concerns** in their country of asylum. The vast majority say they have no access to formal employment or education and must work to survive. Nearly half (45%) of all Rohingya refugees believe they have skills and experience suitable for legal employment.

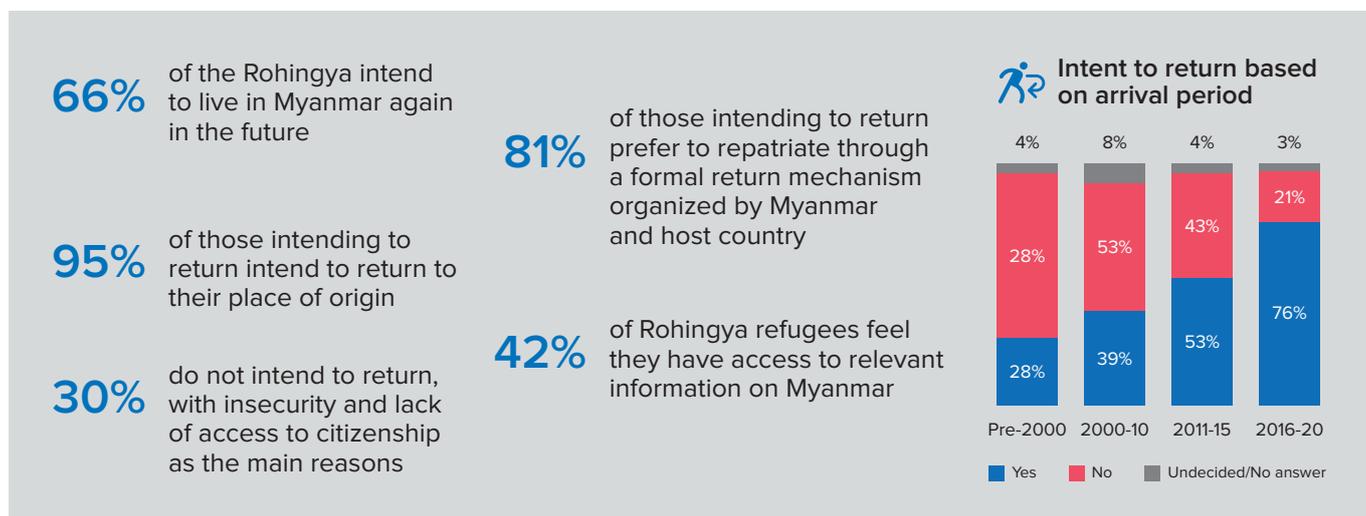
- **Most Rohingya refugees maintain their intent to return, as early as possible, but some say they would not return due to security concerns.**

A large majority (66%) of **Rohingya refugees interviewed across the region say that they intend to return to and live in Myanmar one day.** Despite the persecution and exclusion they experienced in Myanmar, Rohingya refugees largely reported continuing to feel rooted in Myanmar. But they say they are not ready to return yet, and highlighted **five key issues that must be addressed in Myanmar:**

1. Safety and security
2. Citizenship and documentation
3. Land and livelihoods
4. Freedom of movement
5. Education

Some 76% of Rohingya refugees who arrived in their country of asylum in the last 5 years intend to return, compared to 28% of those who have spent more than 20 years in exile.

While most Rohingya refugees say their future lies in Myanmar, **30% say that they do not intend to live there ever again, primarily because they do not believe that they would ever be physically secure or obtain citizenship in Myanmar.** Some Rohingya refugees said they may never be able to return due to the violence they experienced in Myanmar, the absence of any remaining family members in Myanmar, and their distrust in Myanmar authorities.



UNHCR also consulted Rohingya refugees about their **access to information**. Across the region, 42% felt they have access to relevant information on Myanmar, 72% on their country of asylum, and 48% on third countries. Several groups of Rohingya refugees felt that they did not have adequate information about the situation in Myanmar or elsewhere to make an informed decision about their future, namely older refugees, female heads of households, LGBTIQ+ refugees, and refugees with disabilities.

The way forward

A comprehensive approach to solutions for Rohingya refugees is urgently needed to prevent them from the increasingly protracted exile — and corresponding loss of hope — already endured by tens of thousands of other Rohingya refugees who have remained displaced for decades.

As refugees noted in the consultations, **restrictions on Rohingya movement and citizenship and inter-communal tensions in Rakhine State have persisted** since the events of 1 February 2021. Efforts to restore peace and stability in Myanmar must therefore include realizing the vision of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State of a “peaceful, fair, and prosperous future for the people of Rakhine” in which Rohingya refugees are able to voluntarily return in a safe, dignified, and sustainable manner.

In the meantime, **countries and communities hosting Rohingya refugees cannot be left to shoulder that responsibility alone.** Other countries in the region and beyond must support them by directing resources and expertise to maintaining the dignity and hope of Rohingya refugees wherever they are.