

Everyday Experiences of Exiled Myanmar Agricultural Workers on the Mae Sot Border

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Abstract

Following the 2021 coup, a surge of Myanmar nationals fled to Thailand, with the border town of Mae Sot often serving as their primary gateway. Many economically vulnerable individuals seek employment in the agricultural sector due to its low barriers to entry. However, they face a convergence of hardships, including precarious employment, legal insecurity, exploitation, restricted mobility, and unstable living conditions. These difficulties include unstable job condition, insecure legal status, exploitation, restricted mobility and instable living condition. This article examines the coping strategies these agricultural workers employ to navigate such adversities. I argue that they rely on social and kinship networks, the cultivation of informal ties with local authorities, or simply raw endurance to survive. While post-coup literature has primarily focused on the experiences of youth and women, less attention has been paid to the struggles of economically marginalized workers in the agricultural sector. However, these individuals constitute the vast majority of undocumented Myanmar migrants, making their presence impossible to ignore in practice. This study contributes to the broader understanding of Myanmar's diaspora by expanding the post-coup research agenda to include the often-overlooked agricultural workers in Mae Sot.