

PANEL

Displacement, Livelihoods, and Resistance: Lived Experiences of Myanmar Communities Across Borders

Convener

Andrew Wai Phyo Kyaw

Panel Description

This panel examines how displacement, livelihood insecurity, and shifting resistance strategies influence the daily lives of Myanmar communities in conflict zones, border areas, and refugee camps. Based on qualitative fieldwork in Karenni State, the first paper discusses how internally displaced people in Demoso and Mese manage ongoing food insecurity and disrupted local food systems while developing community resilience through diverse livelihoods, food sharing, and social and cross-border networks. The second paper follows how students displaced by their involvement in the Civil Disobedience Movement reframe disobedience over time, moving from open, collective protests to more covert, dispersed, and sometimes “uncivil” forms of resistance amid increasing authoritarian repression. The third paper focuses on Karenni refugee women in Ban Mai Nai Soi camp, showing how restrictive protection and labor policies create gender-specific livelihood vulnerabilities, even as women engage in craft work and humanitarian activities as coping strategies and informal protective measures. The final paper examines the repression–displacement relationship in post-coup Karenni, differentiating between broad and targeted repression and between collateral and strategic displacement, and illustrating how different types of state violence lead to varied displacement trajectories and blend into a continuum of coercive control. Overall, the panel provides grounded perspectives on displacement, resilience, and resistance, informing humanitarian practice, protection policies, and discussions on authoritarianism in present-day Myanmar.