

PANEL

Governing Borders, Governing Crisis: Humanitarian Assistance in the Myanmar Borderlands (Part 2)

Convener

Amporn Jirattikorn

Panel Description

The back-to-back panels examines how borders shape humanitarian access, governance, and crisis in the Myanmar borderlands. Bringing together research on the Thailand–Myanmar, China–Myanmar and India–Myanmar borders, the panels explore both the institutional architecture of cross-border assistance and the broader political and social effects of border regimes.

The first panel focuses on the governance of cross-border humanitarian assistance in contexts where formal aid channels are restricted or blocked. When military regimes or sovereign governments limit international humanitarian operations, assistance must often move quietly across borders through local partners, including civil society organizations, resistance networks, and non-state actors. Three papers in this panel examine how aid delivery is negotiated, coordinated, or constrained. Comparative attention to Thailand and India highlights how different refugee governance regimes produce distinct opportunities and vulnerabilities for displaced populations.

The second panel shifts to case-based analyses of Karen, Karenni, and Chin contexts to examine the ambivalent and productive role of borders in humanitarian crises. Rather than treating borders as inherently crisis-producing, the papers explore how borders simultaneously enable protection, refuge, and cross-border support while also generating exclusion, legal uncertainty, and differentiated crisis identities. By analyzing how border regimes are governed, imagined, and mobilized, the panels collectively demonstrate that borders are not merely lines of separation but dynamic spaces where humanitarian access, political authority, and forms of vulnerability are continually renegotiated.