



# PRAY FOR ROHINGYA MALAYSIA

## STATISTICS

There are an estimated 200,000 Rohingya refugees living in Malaysia. The majority are single men, working to support family members in Bangladesh/Myanmar. In the past couple of years, there has been an increase in the number of women being trafficked into Malaysia as brides; with marriages being arranged in the refugee camps of Bangladesh. People tend to cluster around big cities where work is available: Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Klang Valley, and Johor Bahru have the largest populations.

## HOW CAN WE PRAY?

- That the Rohingya will have a thirst for truth and soft hearts to receive the Father's love.
- For peace and love to be present in Rohingya homes within Malaysia.
- For the women living in a country foreign to them, for them to be open to the love of Isa.
- That local believers and Malaysian churches will grow a heart for the Rohingya.
- That the Malaysian government will give the right to work and access education to refugees.
- For protection and safety for people making the journey to Malaysia who are currently in the hands of traffickers.

## WHAT LIFE IS LIKE

Amira is 16 years old – she was trafficked to Malaysia to marry, and within a month of arriving she was married and pregnant. She spends her days alone, as her husband works long hours six days a week on a construction site.

About to start her own family, Amira deeply misses her mother. She has not accessed any pre-natal care because she doesn't have a UNHCR card and is scared of being arrested. Unable to speak the local language, she will soon deliver her baby at hospital with no understanding of what is happening.

## CHALLENGES

### WHAT CHALLENGES DO THE ROHINGYA FACE IN MALAYSIA?

#### 01 TRAFFICKING ROUTES

#### 02 NO PROTECTION OR WELFARE

#### 03 ILLEGAL FOR REFUGEES TO WORK

#### 04 ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

#### 05 CHILDREN CAN'T GO TO WORK

#### 06 ADEQUATE HEALTHCARE

**01 TRAFFICKING ROUTES** People arrive in Malaysia through trafficking routes. Most travel by boat; some come overland via Yangon and Thailand; a few come by air using fake passports.

**02 NO PROTECTION OR WELFARE** The state offers no protection or welfare for refugees in Malaysia. The UNHCR is present and works to protect the rights of refugees in Malaysia. Many Rohingya do not have a UNHCR card which puts them at risk of arrest and time in detention.

**03 ILLEGAL FOR REFUGEES TO WORK** It is technically illegal for refugees to work, leaving the Rohingya open to exploitation. Most men work long hours, earning up to US\$15 a day. Sadly, many bosses are unscrupulous, often paying less than promised or withholding salary. People send money to their families in Bangladesh/Myanmar, leaving very little for food and rent.

**04 ISOLATION AND LONELINESS** Rohingya women typically do not leave the home, so do not learn Bahasa Melayu or English. This can lead to isolation and loneliness. Sadly, domestic violence is prevalent within many homes.

**05 CHILDREN CANNOT GO TO LOCAL SCHOOLS** Rohingya children cannot go to local schools. There are some refugee schools, but they are not accessible to all. Currently very few children have access to education past elementary level.

**06 HEALTHCARE** Access to safe and affordable healthcare is a challenge for many refugees. Those without a UNHCR card fear arrest and high medical bills; with a UNHCR card people are entitled to a 50% discount at government hospitals and should not be arrested.

## HOW IS THE LOCAL CHURCH RESPONDING?

There are a handful of local churches committed to serving and loving the Rohingya across Malaysia. Efforts include helping start and sustain refugee schools, medical outreach and teaching English. These churches are a beacon of light in an otherwise bleak situation. Many Christians are still fearful of reaching out to Muslims, or simply unaware of the needs that exist in their city.

