

The Hong Kong We Want to See

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Voices for Protection is a refugee-led advocacy project of Justice Centre Hong Kong that includes a 3-month human rights and advocacy traineeship for refugees and other people seeking protection in Hong Kong. This is the vision of Hong Kong that the participants of the project have created and a list of their key recommendations to the Hong Kong Government.

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1

A place that welcomes guests and respects the minorities and disadvantaged.

We see Hong Kong as a place where refugees are not strangers, and where the public knows and understands who we are and what our situation is. We believe Hong Kong is part of the world; it is a part of us and we are a part of it.

2

A place that allows us to live in harmony, equality and feel integrated into society.

Nobody should prejudice others for their religion, race, sex, or other reasons. We want to live in Hong Kong where we do

not experience discrimination in our daily lives, and where we can have equal opportunities just like other people.

3

A place that has a fair and fast asylum screening process.

We see a Hong Kong that is a safe and secure place for refugees, with system for screening claims where our cases are not delayed. Resettlement is fast and does not take several years, and local integration is also an option, so that we can be unified with our families as soon as possible.

4

A place that ensures that our basic human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

We want to live as human-beings and enjoy a good life, with full rights, justice, hope, love, happiness and freedom like other people. We want to live in a Hong Kong where living standards are tolerable, and where we enjoy our basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

5

A place that allows us to build a better future for our children.

Like any parent, we want to live in a Hong Kong where we can help our children, give them what they ask of us and provide for our families. We envision a Hong Kong where everyone has the right to work, to practice a career and to educate him or herself.

To make this a reality, we propose that the Hong Kong Government...

- **PROVIDES FRONTLINE WORKERS WITH MORE TRAINING ON REFUGEE ISSUES.**

Frontline workers should be trained to understand refugees' identification (recognizance) papers. We also recommend that these papers be a smaller size to be easier to carry. Frontline workers should know about refugee issues and be respectful, and have interpretation services available.

- **RAISES PUBLIC AWARENESS IN A POSITIVE WAY AND OFFER MORE INTER-CULTURAL EXCHANGE.**

The public should be educated about refugees. There should be opportunities for refugees to interact with local people in a positive way, like through community service, cultural exchanges or social networks.

- **INCREASES AND IMPROVE THE ASSISTANCE FOR DAILY LIVING COSTS, SUCH AS FOOD AND HOUSING.**

The assistance for basic necessities should be increased according to our needs and local living cost. Services should be fast, of good quality and delivered in a respectful manner, and budgets should be transparent. Cash or coupons for food should also be a policy option.

- **ALLOWS REFUGEES TO WORK TO EARN THEIR OWN LIVING AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE HONG KONG ECONOMY.**

The government should allow us to work and offer occupational training and adult education. We can be promoted as a valuable source of manpower to alleviate labour shortages and, by working, we could also pay taxes.

- **LOWERS THE COSTS OF OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND ALLOW ADULTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO TRAINING.**

Education should be recognised as a human right. If we cannot work, better subsidies should be given to cover our children's education costs, such as for transportation, uniforms and school supplies. They also should be allowed to get a high school diploma. Adults should be legally able to access higher education and training.

- **LIMITS THE PROCESSING TIME OF STATUS DETERMINATION AND INCREASE TRANSPARENCY IN THE UNIFIED SCREENING MECHANISM (USM).**

The process for filing a claim and getting a determination is very long in Hong Kong, taking several years. We think there should be an official time frame outlining the stages of application and a limit to the time it takes to receive a decision on our case. If a case is rejected, reasons should be given. A complaint mechanism should be set up.

- **RECOGNISES OUR BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROMOTES EQUALITY.**

The government should recognise that it has a responsibility to recognise our basic human rights. We should also be able to have complaints mechanisms available to us if we experience discrimination.