

UNHCR wants Malaysia to give work permits to Rohingya refugees
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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has requested the Malaysian government to provide work permits to 46,581 Rohingya refugees residing in the country.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said the matter was recommended by UNHCR to provide work opportunities for refugees to earn their own income.

"In view of the circumstances in Malaysia, which require foreign workers, the UNHCR recommends granting work permits (foreigners) to Rohingya refugees who have been issued with UNHCR cards," he told reporters at Parliament lobby, in Kuala Lumpur today.

He, however, said his ministry had informed UNHCR that the application could only be made through the Home Ministry.

Meanwhile, Shahidan also requested UNHCR to investigate and take action on UNHCR card forgery cases as there were many reports of card forgery as well as buying and selling of these cards.

In the meantime, he said statistics released by the UNHCR Office, showed there were 153,004 asylum seekers and refugees registered with UNHCR up to May 31.

He said 142,224 refugees were from Myanmar, comprising 49,340 ethnic Chin, Rohingya (46,581), Muslim Myanmar (12,298), Arakanese (7,266), Mon (5,378), Kachin (4,476), Karen Kayin (4,508), Burmese (3,329), Shan/ Thai Yai (1,510) and others (7,538).

There are also refugees and asylum seekers from other countries, including 3,817 from Sri Lanka, Pakistan (1,193), Somalia (1,072) and Syria (938). – Bernama, June 22, 2015.

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