

 KUALA LUMPUR: The Bar Council Malaysia has called for refugees in the country to be provided with holistic protection, covering healthcare, education and livelihood.
Malaysian Bar president Lim Chee Wee claimed refugees and asylum-seekers here were often subjected to physical and emotional abuse, inhumane treatment and extremely poor living and sanitation conditions. He added that close to 20% of the nearly 100,000 refugees were of school-going age but not given access to formal education.
The Government must agree to be a signatory of the 1951 (United Nations) Convention (relating to the Status of Refugees) as we do not have an administration framework for the treatment of these asylum-seekers.
We also call on the police, immigration authorities, and Rela members to stop harassing (the refugees) and violating their human rights, Lim said at the Bar Council office in conjunction with World Refugee Day 2011 yesterday.
Bar Council Law Reform and Special Areas Committee chair Datuk M. Ramachandran said the council would submit a memorandum relating to the protection of refugees' rights to the relevant ministries soon.
We have drafted short to long term recommendations, including for the Government to take full responsibility of children of refugees and asylum seekers and for them to be integrated into the mainstream education system, Ramachandran said.
He added that close to 92% of the registered refugee population in Malaysia was from Myanmar. Other sizeable nationalities that make up the remaining refugee population were from Sri Lanka, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine