



Australian Beauty Queen Fights to Raise Awareness for Rohingya Refugees

Australia's first Rohingya beauty queen, Pan Sandar Myint is advocating for hundreds of Rohingya refugees, who have arrived in Indonesia after six months at sea.

A wooden boat carrying 297 Rohingya refugees, including 14 children, was spotted several miles off the coast of Lhokseumawe city on Sumatra's northern coast by local fishermen in early September.

The refugees set sail from southern Bangladesh at the end of March or early April, bound for Malaysia, but were turned back by both Malaysian and Thai authorities because of coronavirus restrictions.

There are fears the refugees may have been held hostage at sea for a period by traffickers demanding money before allowing them to disembark.

The Rohingya have for years been fleeing persecution in Myanmar for other south-east Asian nations.

Ms Australia World Universal 2020 national finalist, Ms Myint recently signed on as the ambassador for the Australian Burmese Rohingya Organisation (ABRO), and intends to use her beauty pageant platform to advocate for what has been declared by the United Nations as "one of the most persecuted minorities in the world".

"Most people assume that beauty pageants only promote physical beauty, which is not the reality; beauty pageants aim to promote the beauty of emotional intelligence and to savour humanitarian values in modern society," said Ms Myint.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Ms Myint has kept active with many opportunities through her pageantry platform aside from her ambassadorship for non-profit firms (ABRO & Humanity) including becoming a translator and language reviewer for Polaron European Language Services.

With the Ms Australia World Universal crowning event postponed until March 2021, Ms Myint has also been productive by launching her own YouTube web series entitled "Empower Success", which aims to promote human rights issues and female empowerment.

"Empower Success Media is my own female empowerment web series on YouTube where I present on such topics as Cyberbullying and The Art of Make up & Confidence," said Ms Myint.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has taught me that humanitarian efforts are of utmost importance. This is the perfect time for us all to change our actions to moral and ethical ones to save our beautiful world."

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