“between the devil and the deep sea,” “to be stuck between a rock and a hard place.”

A slightly different version of the idiom is “進退維谷” (jin4 tui4 wei2 gu3) – which ever way you turn, there are only ravines, meaning “difficult to proceed or retreat,” “trapped.”

A shorter way to express the same meaning is “兩難” (liang3 nan2), which means “to face a difficult choice,” “to be in a dilemma.”

If all tens of thousands of children in the same situation come to schools in Hong Kong, it will be “兩難” (liang3 nan2) for us too – we can't refuse to let them come, but we do not have enough school places.

Terms containing the character “難” (nan2) include:

難題 (nan2 ti2) – a difficult problem
難免 (nan2 mian3) – hard to avoid
難忘 (nan2 wang4) – unforgettable
難民 (nan4 min2) – refugee