

## UN High Commissioner for Refugees comes to Oxford



Mr António Guterres and Professor Roger Zetter

THE Refugee Studies Centre was honoured to welcome Mr António Guterres, High Commissioner for Refugees and former Prime Minister of Portugal, as guest speaker for its eleventh annual Harrell-Bond lecture in human rights.

Addressing a full house of 300 students, academics and members of the public at the University Museum of Natural History, Mr Guterres outlined the themes challenging UNHCR in the 21st century: the intractable nature of armed conflict and the diminishing space in which UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations are obliged to operate; the increase in protracted refugee situations as the availability of solutions declines; the threat to asylum space, particularly in the developed world; and the growing number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The High Commissioner voiced his concern over the burden of responsibility shouldered by the poorest countries and called upon Europe to be a 'cornerstone of refugee, asylum and international

cooperation policy'. He also raised the issue of the risks to which many refugees and asylum seekers, especially children, are exposed, drawing particular attention to the difficulties and dangers young Afghans encounter in pursuit of safety and protection, and the plight of Somali refugees, whom he described as 'the most systematically undesired, stigmatised and discriminated against' in the world. Commenting on inconsistent and restrictive European asylum policies, he said that multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious societies are not just good but inevitable. He dispelled the idea that UNHCR's growing sense of responsibility towards IDPs risks weakening its mandate, and believes that as the world changes, UNHCR must also evolve to take account of the new trends in forced displacement.

On a final note, and of particular pertinence to the audience in Oxford, the High Commissioner said that he would welcome greater collaboration between academic institutions in the global north and those in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America in order to promote a better awareness and understanding of refugee protection issues in those regions. Praising recent engagement between the RSC and UNHCR on environmental and urban displacement, he expressed his appreciation of the benefits that the type of research, analysis and study that are undertaken in Oxford can provide.

The High Commissioner fielded a diverse range of questions from the audience, responding with his extraordinary depth of experience and understanding, and a lively exchange of views continued during the drinks reception held on the ground floor under the watchful gaze of the museum's most famous exhibit – a life-size *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

*A podcast of the lecture is available on [Forced Migration Online](#).*

*The Harrell-Bond lecture was the first of this term's [Wednesday Evening Seminar Series](#) which is addressing the theme of 'dynamics of forced displacement, humanitarian intervention and conflict resolution'.*



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## New funding for research on diasporas

The RSC is part of the new Oxford Leverhulme Diasporas Programme exploring the complex and multiple impacts of diasporic movements in contemporary society.

Over the next three years RSC researchers will investigate the extent to which members of three 'stateless diasporas' (Kurds, Palestinians and Roma) variously negotiate, mobilise and respond to notions of shared belonging in the European context. Against the background of EU and EU member states' migration and asylum regimes, processes through which both statelessness and diasporic identities are constructed, adopted and/or rejected by individuals and states will be explored.

*Further details on the programme are available at: [www.imi.ox.ac.uk/news/imi-wins-leverhulme-grant-for-work-on-diasporas](http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/news/imi-wins-leverhulme-grant-for-work-on-diasporas)*

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## Faith-based humanitarianism workshop

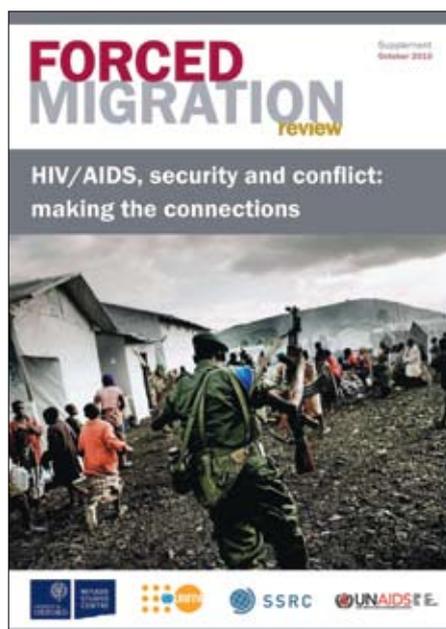
In September, the RSC held an international workshop on 'Faith-based humanitarianism – the response of faith communities and faith-based organisations in contexts of forced migration'.

The event brought together over 60 scholars and practitioners from different faith perspectives and diverse disciplinary backgrounds to explore the motives and practices of faith communities and faith-based organisations in their response to forced displacement. The workshop also examined the role of faith, religious conviction and spirituality in the experiences, practices and behaviours of forced migrants themselves. A selected number of papers will be included in a special issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* to be published in late 2011.

The event was supported by the Commonwealth Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation and DFID. The podcast of the closing lecture by Dr Elizabeth Ferris of The Brookings Institute is available on [Forced Migration Online](#). A workshop report is available on the [RSC website](#).

## Refugee Status Determination and rights in sub-Saharan Africa

The RSC and the International Refugee Rights Initiative in Uganda will be hosting an invitation-only, two-day workshop on the state of Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and refugee rights in sub-Saharan Africa, generously funded by the Commonwealth Foundation. The workshop, which will be held on 16–17 November 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, is aimed at practitioners and academics working on RSD, refugee rights and related themes in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, countries where governments have assumed full or at least some responsibility for carrying out RSD from UNHCR. The workshop aims to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and insights with a view to building capacity around refugee rights across the region.



## HIV/AIDS, security and conflict: making the connections

HIV/AIDS affects the lives of many: those people caught up in conflict, those who are the protagonists in conflicts, and those whose role it is to provide security during and after conflict. The AIDS, Security and Conflict Initiative (ASCI) undertook research over a number of years to examine the connections between conflict and HIV/AIDS, to gather evidence and to advance analysis.

A special supplement of Forced Migration Review (FMR), which is being published in English and French, presents a selection of the ASCI case-studies alongside a number of other articles on the subject written by practitioners, policymakers and researchers. Articles in the supplement show how the interconnections between conflict and HIV/AIDS are more complex and less obvious than is often thought, and cover a range of geographical and contextual settings.

This 32-page special FMR supplement, produced in collaboration with UNAIDS, UNFPA and the Social Science Research Council, is now online at [www.fmreview.org/AIDS](http://www.fmreview.org/AIDS)

It will be distributed to FMR's usual English and French mailing lists with FMR issue 36 in November/December. If you wish to request a copy, please email the Editors at [fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

FMR 36 will include a major feature on the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its launch will coincide with a public photo exhibition in Oxford: 'No peace of mind – stories of displacement in the DRC'.

Full details at [www.fmreview.org/DRCongo](http://www.fmreview.org/DRCongo) and on the [RSC website](http://www.rsc.org).



Cyclone Aila, Bangladesh

## Protecting environmentally displaced people: developing the capacity of legal and normative instruments

**This research project, co-funded by UNHCR and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Governments of Norway and Switzerland and led by RSC Director Prof. Roger Zetter, is now in the final stages of reporting to donors, following a presentation in Geneva in September. The study seeks to explore the capacity of national-level legal and normative frameworks to safeguard the rights and lives of environmentally displaced people. Research for the study was conducted in Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya and Vietnam. The final report will form the basis of one of a number of discussions at the High Commissioner's Dialogue in December on protection challenges.**

*The full report will be available on the RSC website in December.*

## Policy briefing on the protection of Palestinian children

The latest policy briefing paper 'Protecting Palestinian children from political violence: the role of the international community', written by Dr Jason Hart, former RSC Departmental Lecturer and current Lecturer in International Development at the University of Bath, and his research assistant Claudia Lo Forte was launched in London on 30 September 2010. Those attending the launch included representatives of child protection organisations and donors, plus a number of Palestinian and international researchers.

The paper challenges the nature and level of international protection efforts towards children in the occupied Palestinian territory and traces the international community's inadequate response through consideration of conceptual, institutional and political factors. It calls upon the international community to engage more fully in public advocacy by addressing the sources of violation, to prioritise child protection over national self-interest and to expand child protection measures beyond those conventionally pursued within a social work/mental health paradigm.

The briefing is available in PDF format from the [RSC website](http://www.rsc.org).

*The editor of the series, Héloïse Ruaudel, would welcome feedback on the briefing at [rscpolicy@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rscpolicy@qeh.ox.ac.uk)*

## Results of Forced Migration Online's survey

Forced Migration Online ([www.forcedmigration.org](http://www.forcedmigration.org)) recently conducted a survey to determine who uses the FMO website and for what purposes. The response was terrific and the feedback was generally very positive.

Almost all respondents felt that visiting FMO had helped to improve their work in some way. Resources singled out for particular praise include the Forced Migration Discussion List, the extensive Digital Library and the growing collection of Resource Summaries and Research Guides.

FMO staff would like to thank all those who completed the survey, whose comments and suggestions will help them improve FMO and better address user needs.

### Prize draw

Congratulations to Eman Nahhas from Israel, the winner of the User Survey prize draw. Eman won a bundle of six books on forced migration issues. Two runners up, Lian Yong from Cambodia and Aspasia Papageorgiou from Greece, were each awarded a copy of *Deterritorialized Youth* (Chatty, D. 2010).

### New resources

Recent additions to Forced Migration Online focus on subjects such as fragile states, disability, protection, Rwanda, Sudan, Italy, Korea, Palestine, Burma and Kazakhstan. For more information, please see: <http://bit.ly/fmo-blog>.

A full summary of the results of the FMO survey is available from: <http://bit.ly/fmo-survey-results>



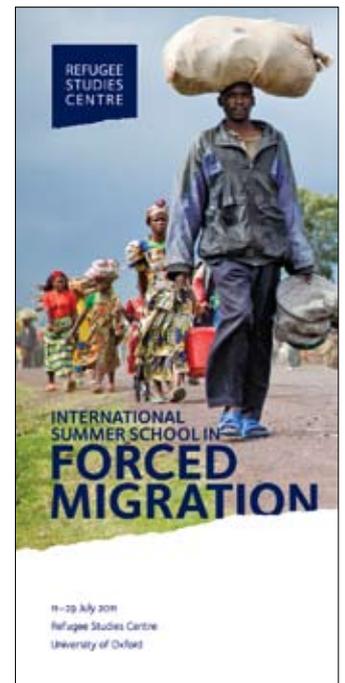
## Migration Oxford website launched

The University of Oxford is a world leader in the study of international migration, whether forced or voluntary. A new website now showcases this work: MigrationOxford ([www.migration.ox.ac.uk](http://www.migration.ox.ac.uk)).

MigrationOxford has been developed by three collaborating centres in the Social Sciences Division: the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), the International Migration Institute (IMI), and the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC).

MigrationOxford provides:

- A downloadable calendar of migration-related events across the University
- A list of all academics within the University who have an interest in international migration
- An introduction to the University's portfolio of research into the causes and effects of migration
- Information about migration-related teaching programmes within the University
- Links to the latest publications for policy, practitioner and academic audiences



## Course applications opened

The RSC's nine-month MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies offers a dynamic and intellectually rigorous path for the examination of forced migration.

There are two deadlines for the academic year 2011–2012. These are 21 January 2011 and 11 March 2011.

The 2011 International Summer School in Forced Migration will take place from 11–29 July. It offers an intensive, interdisciplinary and participative approach to the study of forced migration.

Application deadlines are: 1 March 2011 for bursary applicants; and 1 May for self-/ employer-funded applicants.

Further details at: [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/teaching\\_master.html](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/teaching_master.html) and [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/teaching\\_summer.html](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/teaching_summer.html)