

# A warm welcome

WELCOME to the first issue of our newsletter, a new initiative to keep fellow academics, partners, friends and supporters of the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) up to date with current work and activities.

In the last year the Centre has evolved dramatically and we continue to maintain an exciting pace of forward momentum. We have celebrated 25 years of pioneering knowledge, teaching and shared understanding in our field. We have developed a new, cutting edge research agenda to address the diverse challenges of forced migration in the 21st century and pursued a strategy of reshaping our work in order to inform and enhance policy. We have restructured our MSc course and started to build a global alumni network to connect and support all those who have spent time at the Centre.

We hope that a lively and informative newsletter will help to highlight significant aspects of these activities. It will not be an exhaustive account of everything that goes on in the RSC, but showcase our work, publicise new developments and demonstrate the continuing call on our resources as the pioneering centre for the study of forced migration.

Additionally, we want to improve the way we communicate with and update the diverse audiences interested in our work – our donors, alumni (from our Masters course, the Summer School and Visiting Fellowships), academics, policymakers and practitioners, politicians and the numerous humanitarian organisations with whom we are in contact. While we all scan websites for news and, occasionally, read annual reports, we believe that a periodic and focused account of our work will capture the dynamic quality of the RSC in ways that these other media do not.

In short, we are proud of what we continue to achieve and want to 'spread the word' encompassing the breadth of our endeavours. Do please give us your reaction to this first issue and, of course, to the wider work of the RSC.

Professor Roger Zetter, Director of the Refugee Studies Centre.



REFUGEE  
STUDIES  
CENTRE



## Dr Anna Lindley wins award

RSC Research Officer Dr Anna Lindley has won the 2008 Award for Research in Developing Countries of the Centre for International Development and Environmental Research, University of Giessen in Germany.

The decision to present the award to her was made for her dissertation on *The Dynamics and Effects of Migrants' Remittances in Insecure Settings: The Somali Case*. Her doctoral research explored the dynamics and effects of migrants' remittances in insecure settings, focusing on the Somali case, and was based on ethnographic and survey research in Hargeisa, Nairobi and London. The thesis in Development Studies was supervised by Dr Nicholas Van Hear (Centre on Migration, Policy and Society) and co-supervised by Prof David Anderson (African Studies Centre). Follow-up research was conducted during an ESRC postdoctoral fellowship at COMPAS under the supervision of Prof Stephen Castles (International Migration Institute).

## 'Refugees in International Relations' seminar series

The 'Refugees in International Relations' seminar series invites a range of established and emerging scholars of international relations to consider the relevance of core ideas and themes within international relations to understanding the international politics of forced migration. The purpose of this two-term series is to bridge the divide between international relations scholarship and forced migration scholarship, mainstreaming consideration of refugees and internally displaced people within political science and international relations. The seminar is part of the [Global Migration Governance project](#) and is jointly convened by the RSC, the Centre on Migration Policy and Society (COMPAS), the Global Economic Governance Programme and the Centre for International Studies.

Enquiries can be addressed to Dr Alexander Betts ([alexander.betts@politics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alexander.betts@politics.ox.ac.uk)) or Professor Gil Loescher ([gilbert.loescher@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:gilbert.loescher@qeh.ox.ac.uk)). A list of the speakers is on the [RSC website](#).

*Mondays, 5pm, Lecture Theatre, Manor Road Building, Oxford OX1 3UQ.*



## John Fell OUP Research Fund award

RSC University Reader in Politics and Forced Migration Dr Matthew Gibney, together with Dr Bridget Anderson from COMPAS, has received the John Fell OUP Research Fund award for his project on *Deportation and the Development of Citizenship*.

Over the last decade there has been a prodigious rise in the use of deportation – the enforced and authorised removal of non-citizens from state territory – by Western countries as a way of dealing with failed asylum seekers, unlawful migrants, criminals and suspected terrorists. Scholars of human rights and migration and refugee studies have analysed this development primarily through the lens of immigration control. This project will examine deportation's broader social and political effects, exploring the ways in which the rise of deportation reflects and generates changes in conceptions of membership in liberal states, which in turn affect the terms on which immigrants are expected to integrate into Western societies.

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## Forced Migration Policy Briefings

As part of its developing programme of policy-related work, the RSC is launching a new series of Forced Migration Policy Briefings, the first of which is entitled *Environmentally Displaced People: Understanding the Linkages between Environmental Change, Livelihoods and Forced Migration*.

The Forced Migration Policy Briefings will highlight the very best and latest policy-relevant research findings from the related fields by providing a format that allows for more detailed discussion of the critical emerging issues in policy and practice. This exciting new series will provide a forum for academic researchers, humanitarian practitioners, international lawyers and policymakers worldwide to share evidence, experience, best practice and innovation on a wide range of critical issues that can positively influence the development of policy and practice in a manner that is current, credible and critical.

The series is designed specifically to target and influence the community of policymakers and practitioners working in the relevant fields and will provide a clear and accessible means by which research and analysis can be targeted to influence a wide and influential audience.

Amongst other themes, we are rolling out programmes of work on environmentally displaced persons and protection, statelessness, protracted displacement, protection in a changing world and regional impacts of Iraqi displacement.

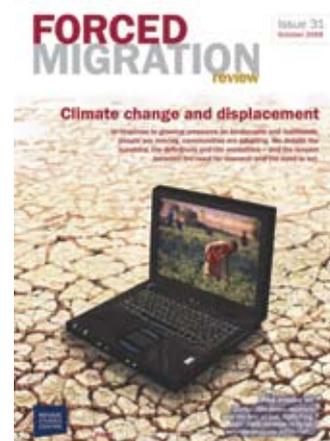
The RSC invites the open submission of papers on topics of relevance to policy and practice in the fields of forced migration, refugee protection and humanitarian intervention. For further details please contact the Senior Research Officer & Policy Programme Manager, Simon Addison ([simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk)).

## FMO research guide on climate change and displacement

Recently added to the RSC's online resources project, **Forced Migration Online (FMO: [www.forcedmigration.org](http://www.forcedmigration.org))** is a research guide on *Climate Change and Displacement*. Research guides provide an overview of key issues, literature and resources related to forced migration studies, policy and practice. Like most of the research guides, this new release is complemented by a resource summary. These gather resources available online from FMO and elsewhere, including documents, podcasts and details of key organisations.

The research guide on *Climate Change and Displacement* offers an introduction to ongoing debates around the links between climate/environmental change and migration/displacement. It addresses the controversy surrounding terminology and definitional issues, such as 'environmental refugee'. It attempts to ask whether environmental factors can be scientifically identified as a root cause of displacement and explores the issue of protection for environmentally-induced displaced people.

Other research guides recently launched include: **Local Integration and Reparations, Reconciliation and Forced Migration**. In the coming months, further research guides will be launched on: **Statelessness, Tanzania and Protracted Refugee Situations**.



## Forced Migration Review no. 31

The latest issue of Forced Migration Review (FMR 31), with its major feature on climate change and displacement, has already attracted international media coverage and interest around the world. Thirty-eight articles by UN, academic, international and local actors explore the extent of the potential displacement crisis, community adaptation and coping strategies, and the search for solutions.

*Our programme partners are encountering the effects of climate change in their programmes throughout Asia. The FMR issue is perfect!* (from FMR 31 reader)

This issue is online at the FMR website ([www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org)) and is being printed in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. For copies, please contact the editors at [fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

Call for articles!  
FMR 33 – due out May 2009 – will focus on protracted displacement situations. The call for articles can be found on the [website](#).

Please remember that all issues of FMR are online – now with new search facility.

# Understanding environmental change and displacement

Professor Roger Zetter calls for a coherent approach to overcome misconceptions and develop tools for responding to environmentally-induced displacement

THE SCIENCE of climate change from an environmental perspective has been widely publicized and debated. Far less understood are the potential implications from a social science angle. How will socio-economic systems cope? What will be the impact on people's livelihoods? What role should civil society and government institutions play? How will human and civil rights be affected and how might legal systems adapt to these new conditions?

## Environmental change and population displacement

Among the most demanding social science questions posed by climate change, and for which we have few answers, are those concerning the population displacement effects of environmental degradation – the who, when, where and how many. For millennia, people have migrated as an adaptive response to changing environmental conditions. In the present era, predictions of hundreds of millions of people displaced by climate change have figured in many recent reports. However, they are based on scanty empirical evidence and grossly simplified assumptions about people's migratory decision making.

Nevertheless, a growing body of research is developing our understanding of the displacement processes and impacts of environmental change, typologies of displacement and identification of 'tipping points', and exploring adaptation and resilience responses.

## The RSC's research

Within the RSC's new ambitious four-year research strategy – *Conflict, Forced Displacement and Protection in a Changing World* – we have identified *Environmental Change and Displacement* as one of our six major interdisciplinary research themes.

Although displacement due to environmental degradation is more difficult to identify than forced dislocation triggered by conflict or development projects, nonetheless we cannot ignore it. The extent to which it is forced is an important conceptual and policy question which our research will investigate. Neither can we ignore the potential for conflict in extreme circumstances – for example over declining resources such as water, forests and agricultural land – to produce refugees and Internally Displaced Persons as we more conventionally understand the labels.

While considering all these factors, the unique focus which the RSC brings to bear on these questions, and which we are exploring in the early stages of our funded research, concerns the issue of protection. Since its inception over 25 years ago, protection of those forced to leave their homes has been a fundamental precept of the RSC.

Through exploring legal and normative frameworks, we are investigating the capacity of the domestic and international apparatus – law, norms, human and civil rights, human



security – to afford protection to people vulnerable to environmental displacement induced by climate change. Equally, we are investigating the extent to which protection frameworks support livelihood adaptation and resilience strategies which might avert population displacement.

The label ‘environmental refugee’ – now widely used to describe this migratory phenomenon – is inappropriate and dangerous. The case of Darfur has been cited by some as an environmental conflict and the victims as ‘environmental refugees.’ The term not only neglects the multi-causality of displacement where environmental change may be only one of the factors triggering migration but it also ignores the complexity of individual decision making and disregards the needs of those who cannot or do not migrate despite declining livelihood options. Above all, it undermines the very specific meaning of the term ‘refugee’, protected from persecution and with specific rights under the 1951 Geneva Convention. We will recognise the agency of the migrants and those who remain behind – again, another core precept of the RSC.

### **Coordinating the RSC’s approach**

Linking scholarship to policy and practice, combined with extensive dissemination, lies at the heart of the RSC’s mission. Our research programme on environmental displacement demonstrates an important development in the way we organise

ourselves at the RSC to fulfil this mission.

A coordinated approach across the Centre will maximise our impact in policy making and academic arenas. In addition to this research programme, we have produced: a report on *Environmentally Displaced People* in our new DFID-funded Policy Briefing Series; FMR 31 on *Climate Change and Displacement* has just been issued alongside new FMO material on this subject including a Research Guide, a Resource Summary and a podcast; and a conference for academics and policy makers on *Environmental Change and Migration: Assessing the Evidence and Developing Norms for Response* will be held on 8–9 January 2009. All these resources can be found on our [website](#).

Further longer-term research projects are also being developed; these will address the need for sound empirical evidence and rigorous analysis of the migration impacts of environmental change. They also include an assessment of the capacity of domestic and international legal apparatus – based on norms of protection, human and civil rights and human security – to support the needs of the affected people. ■

## Wednesday Public Seminars

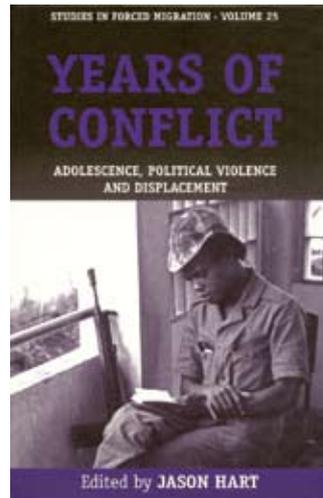
The RSC hosts a series of public seminars held every Wednesday of the University term. The programme for Michaelmas term includes presentations on the Global Crisis of International Displacement, Iraqi Refugees, Greek Cypriot Forced Migration, Framework of the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants and Perceptions of Democratisation in Palestine. The full seminar list can be found on the [RSC website](#).

*Wednesdays, 5pm, Oxford Department of International Development, 3 Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TB*

## Annual Harrell-Bond Lecture

**The Rt Hon Sir John Waite, co-chair of the Independent Asylum Commission, will be giving the ninth Annual Harrell-Bond Lecture (named in honour of our founder, Dr Barbara Harrell-Bond). Sir John is a former Judge of the High Court (Family Division) and of the Court of Appeal. Following seven years as chair of the children's charity UNICEF UK, he was appointed co-chair of the Independent Asylum Commission whose final report was published in July of this year. Waite's lecture, entitled 'Asylum: A new Perspective', will focus on the origins and work of the IAC and the implications of its wide-ranging review and recommendations.**

***Wednesday 9 November 2008, 5pm, University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW***



## Books

As part of the Studies in Forced Migration book series, Berghahn Books recently published in cooperation with the RSC two books:

Jason Hart (ed.), *Years of Conflict: Adolescence, Political Violence and Displacement*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books (2008).

Peter Loizos, *Iron in the Soul: Displacement, Livelihood and Health in Cyprus*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books (2008).

Gil Loescher, visiting professor at the RSC, has co-authored with Dr Alexander Betts and Dr James Milner a concise and comprehensive introduction to the world of refugees and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It traces the relationship between state interests, global politics and the work of UNHCR.

Gil Loescher, Alexander Betts and James Milner, *The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): The Politics and Practice of Refugee Protection into the 21st Century*. London: Routledge Global Institutions Series (2008).

## Working Papers Series

The Working Papers Series aims to stimulate discussion among the worldwide community of scholars, policymakers and practitioners. They are distributed free of charge in PDF format via the RSC website.

The RSC recently added two new titles to its Working Paper Series:

**Working Paper 47: *Conflict-induced Migration and Remittances: Exploring Conceptual Frameworks* by Dr Anna Lindley.**

**Working Paper 48: *State, Nation, Citizen: Rethinking Repatriation* by Katy Long.**

**Forthcoming editions will address issues of child soldiers; the workings of UNCHR; family reunification; and the qualification for international protection in the EU.**

## Short courses

The RSC is pleased to announce a new three-day course on *statelessness*, to be held at St Catherine's College, Oxford (9–11 January 2009). Devised by Jean-François Durieux, Departmental Lecturer in International Human Rights and Refugee Law, the course, intended for experienced practitioners and graduate researchers, will be interdisciplinary and participative, drawing on the expertise of RSC staff and associates, as well as members of outside institutions, including UNHCR. The RSC anticipates this course to be the first in a series that will continue in coming years.

The issue of statelessness is steadily gaining prominence on the agendas of international and regional institutions, governments and civil society throughout the world. It is also at the heart of a growing body of theoretical and empirical research looking at citizenship and lack thereof from various perspectives.

The RSC's short courses offer the opportunity to receive additional professional training and develop expertise in particular refugee-related areas. Other short courses on offer over this academic year include *Palestinian Refugees and International Law* (29–30 November 2008) and *Psychosocial Responses to Conflict and Forced Migration* (7–8 February 2009). The former, led by RSC deputy director Dr Dawn Chatty and Lena El-Malak, places the Palestinian refugee case study within the broader context of the international human rights regime. It examines, within a human rights framework, the policies and practices of Middle Eastern states as they impinge upon Palestinian refugees. The key themes, which have taken centre stage in the debate on the Palestinian refugee crisis, are statelessness, right of return, repatriation, self-determination, restitution compensation and protection. The latter examines mental health and psychosocial support in emergency and protracted refugee settings. Convened by Dr Maryanne Loughry and Dr Mike Wessels, it invites practitioners and theorists to struggle with complex intercultural issues associated with psychosocial programming.

For further details, please contact the RSC Outreach Programme Manager Katherine Salahi (katherine.salahi@qeh.ox.ac.uk / +44 1865 270723).



## Conference: 'Protecting Civilians in a Changing World'

**In a rapidly changing world, the protection of civilians is a challenge that is becoming more complex, raising questions for international humanitarian actors: What is meant by the concept of protection? How can civilian protection be practically achieved? What challenges face those who seek to protect civilians? How do those affected by crisis understand the meaning of protection themselves, and how do they experience the interventions of those who seek to protect them? How can states, organisations and citizens respond to the challenges of a changing world?**

**In 2009 the RSC will seek to address such questions by hosting with the Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute an international conference to consider the challenges facing communities, governments and international organisations in protecting civilians affected by crisis in a potentially turbulent 21st century.**

**Conference date and venue to be confirmed. For further details, please contact Simon Addison (simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk).**

## Workshops

Three workshops are currently scheduled to take place in early 2009, convened by RSC Senior Research Officer & Policy Programme Manager, Simon Addison.

The first, focusing on Environmental Change and Migration, will be held 8–9 January at Rewley House, Oxford. Another two workshops will be held in February, on State Fragility and Forced Migration and on Faith-based Humanitarianism. For more information, contact Simon Addison (simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk).



An overview of the makeshift Krinding encampment in West Darfur.

## MSc in Forced Migration

The essence of the MSc in Forced Migration at the RSC can be expressed in one word: diversity. The course embraces perspectives on forced migration from different academic disciplines, including law, politics, international relations, anthropology, sociology and philosophy.

In addition, while the course consistently attracts students of the highest calibre, beyond this common denominator the student body is equally characterised by its diversity. The 20–25 applicants admitted each year come from all corners of the globe. Most have experience in a related field, having worked in international development, human rights or humanitarian aid. For some the course is a stepping-stone to further academic study; others use it to provide theoretical grounding for humanitarian work or human rights advocacy at an advanced level.

During the course, particular emphasis is placed on providing individual support for each student. Lecturers devote considerable time and thought to helping students develop knowledge, skills and direction through regular one-to-one supervision.

In order to better meet the specific interests of different students, we recently introduced a range of course options. These include geographically-focused modules on regions such as Africa and the Middle East, thematic modules discussing subjects such as humanitarian intervention and refugee livelihoods, and modules that look at forced migration through the lens of disciplines such as international relations or moral philosophy. Building on the popularity of this approach – which enabled teaching to take place in small-group format – we shall be introducing further options in the coming year. We shall also be increasing our efforts to help students pursue independent study.

Our new intake of students joins us from a wide range of backgrounds, from medicine to the military, ensuring that this year's course promises to be an especially lively one!

More information on requirements and applications can be found under the Teaching Section of the [RSC website](#).

## Annabel Mwangi: From RSC Student to Practitioner

At the RSC we are keen to stay in touch with our former MSc Students, Summer School participants and Visiting Fellows. Beyond the online community we are hoping to build, we will provide space in the RSC newsletter for people who have spent time learning at the Centre. Please do get in touch if you would like to contribute a piece for a forthcoming edition.

After Annabel Mwangi completed her MSc in Forced Migration in 1999, she kept in touch as a Visiting Study Fellow while conducting her DPhil research in Development Studies, researching in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Before moving to West Darfur where she is currently working as UNHCR Protection Officer, Annabel spent two years in Ethiopia as a resettlement officer.

*“My work consists of monitoring protection issues relating to basic human-rights violations of internally displaced persons and following up insecurity as well as sexual and gender-based incidents in rural areas in the northern corridor of West Darfur and in refugee camps surrounding its capital, Geneina.”*

Annabel considers the knowledge gained at the RSC as extremely valuable in giving her not only the theoretical grounding needed to embark on fieldwork but also the opportunity to consider many of the issues she is now dealing with on a daily basis.

*“It has given me a bit of an edge and, in terms of decision-making, an objective setting to critically examine the work the UNHCR does.”*

Annabel's knowledge of the field of forced migration enabled her to offer training sessions at the UNHCR offices in Ethiopia and Darfur, particularly to local staff who do not have the opportunity to access education relevant to this field.

*“The best RSC memory I have is the variety of academic, professional and multi-cultural backgrounds of the people at the RSC.”*

The small size of the RSC's course allowed for intensive interaction between lecturers and students. High-level external speakers gave both a practical and theoretical analysis of the subject, contributing greatly towards her learning experience. Many of the lecturers cultivated strong relationships with the students during the course. Annabel still maintains contact with some of them and does not hesitate to turn to them for advice.

*“I'm still in touch with everyone on my course and continue to exchange information in both private and professional capacities.”*