



Eni Campanini/RSC



Filippo Grandi with Dawn Chatty, Director of the RSC (left) and Barbara Harrell-Bond

Waiting for solutions in uncertain times: Palestine refugees in the Middle East context

The annual Harrell-Bond Lecture was given on 16 November 2011 by Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Mr Grandi spoke passionately yet diplomatically of the situation of the Palestine refugees in the region where UNRWA operates, and of the mandate and work of the agency.

He pointed to the lingering plight of those affected by a conflict that started over six decades ago, and the tragic failure over that time of political actors to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that the refugees have their rights and entitlements. Thus their situation epitomises the refugee case, and the occupied Palestinian Territories are among the most troubling and dramatic refugee situations. The stuttering failure of the peace process to make progress – quite apart from the harsh reality of the refugees' lives – has brought international law and human rights into disrepute.

With the 'Arab Spring' going on all around them, there was a sharp focus, by contrast, on the fate of the Palestine refugees being left behind in the

struggle for freedom, for their voices and their cry for freedom to be heard, for justice, and for their right to self-determination. Their human rights continue to be trampled on and violated.

His overarching theme of the vulnerability of the refugees is what gives meaning to the work of UNRWA to be responsible for looking after them and for their welfare. After such a long period UNRWA has become a part of the world view of the Palestine refugees. Yet it faces a constant narrowing of its "operative space" in the oPT, with the erosion of the status quo there.

Mr Grandi also answered some searching questions from the very full audience. Earlier in the afternoon Mr Grandi had an informal session with this year's MSc students, following the precedent of previous Harrell-Bond lecturers, giving them the opportunity to question him in private about UNRWA and those it works for.

A podcast of the lecture is available to download at www.forcedmigration.org/podcasts-videos-photos/podcasts/annual-harrell-bond-lecture-2011



Message from the new Director

I feel honoured to be following as the new Director in the footsteps of Professor Roger Zetter, who manned the helm for the last five very successful years. With my appointment a new policy commences of rotating the Directorship among the senior academic staff of the Centre every three years in order to maximise internal continuity while also refreshing the RSC's administration with new ideas and initiative.

It is my pleasure to welcome Dr Alexander Betts to our established academic staff, and to welcome back Jean-François Durieux, who previously taught at the RSC between 2007–2009. Recently retired after a distinguished career at UNHCR, Jean-François has kindly agreed to teach our International Human Rights and Refugee law course, much to the delight of his many admirers among the student body. I am also pleased that we will shortly be making an appointment of a new Junior Research Fellow in association with Lady Margaret Hall, thanks to a generous endowment from the Ockendon Trust.

I am most optimistic for the future of the RSC – we have a strong and talented team engaged in many initiatives around the world.

Professor Dawn Chatty

The Arab Spring and beyond: human mobility, forced displacement and humanitarian crises

Migration in its various forms has been part of the popular uprisings that have spread across North Africa and the Middle East in 2011. First, the columns of vehicles escaping from cities and villages under siege in Libya came to represent the plight of civilians caught between conflicting parties and played an important role in galvanising Western public opinion in support for the international involvement, both military and humanitarian, in Libya. Second, the isle of Lampedusa and the boats crammed with migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea contributed to resuscitating the powerful rhetoric of invasion in Europe and have come to represent the ambiguity of Western states' responses to those fleeing from North Africa – this has included proposals for re-negotiating the Schengen Agreement and increasing the role of Frontex, the EU agency tasked to coordinate the operational cooperation between Member States in the field of border security. Finally, the numerous dissidents returning from exile give an indication of the involvement of diaspora organisations in the uprisings and raise interesting questions on the role they will play in the creation and consolidation of new state institutions.

These few examples only serve to alert us of the broader ramifications of the ways in which human mobility is intersecting current events in North Africa and the Middle East.

The 'North Africa in Transition: Mobility, Forced Migration and Humanitarian Crises' workshop organised by the Refugee Studies Centre in association with the International Migration Institute (IMI) on 6 May 2011 offered a platform to begin to explore how these events have affected and transformed existing patterns of mobility in the region and generated new 'mixed' migration flows. As a result of the crises, economic migrants have become forced migrants and forced migrants were forced into entering irregular migration channels in the search for survival, while others, including seasonal and long established migrants have become 'involuntarily immobile', such as migrant workers stuck inside Libya.

See the workshop report, with podcasts, at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/events/north-africa-in-transition

The RSC and IMI are planning a follow-up workshop with the involvement of international scholars, practitioners and policy makers in Spring 2012 which aims to reconsider the relationship between human mobility and the Arab Spring more broadly.

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Design by www.advocatedesign.co.uk
Printed on 50% recycled paper



Forced Migration Online

At the end of September, the Forced Migration Online (FMO) website was re-launched with a new design. FMO is home to a large collection of resources relating to refugees and forced migration. The website is designed for use by students, academics, practitioners, policymakers, the media, forced migrants or anyone else interested in the field of forced migration.

The new design has:

- a cleaner, less cluttered interface;
- a more consistent layout and navigation structure;
- clearer copyright information throughout the site.

All the content available on the old FMO site has been preserved. As far as is possible, individual page links (URLs) have been maintained, so that bookmarks and links from external sites should still work.

It is hoped that the new design will make it easier for visitors to discover, download and share resources on forced migration. Feedback is welcome. Please email us at: fmo@qeh.ox.ac.uk

www.forcedmigration.org

New: Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS) website

The RSC has developed a website on protracted refugee situations (PRS) www.prsproject.org that provides key facts and figures on protracted displacement and offers access to a variety of documents and other resources.

This website builds on the structure of an earlier version of the PRS Project originally developed in 2006 with the support of the Government of Canada and reflecting the work of the PRS Project which has been based at the University of Oxford since 2004.

A selected number of historical and contemporary case studies give insights into individual protracted refugee situations ranging from Africa to Asia, Europe and South America. The website also provides information and further resources for some of the challenges and policy issues most commonly associated with protracted displacement, such as: security; peacebuilding; human rights; livelihoods; solutions to protracted situations of displacement; and the effects of protracted displacement on specific groups.

The creation of this website was supported by the Norwegian Government and relates to the collaborative project on 'Unlocking crises of protracted displacement for refugees and internally displaced persons.' For enquiries about the website or the project contact heloise.ruaudel@qeh.ox.ac.uk



Forced Migration Review 38: 'the technology issue'

The effects of changes in technology – particularly in communications technology – on displaced people and those who work with them are unevenly understood and appreciated. The 32 articles and short pieces in the feature theme section of this FMR look at some of these changes and their implications.

This issue also includes a selection of general articles on migrant deaths at sea, fleeing from Cairo, language training for refugees in the Czech Republic, refugees after the Japanese earthquake, a strategy for urban areas, partner violence, transitional justice in Kenya, and local integration.

New: An expanded contents listing for this issue – called FMR#38 – is available in print and online at www.fmreview.org/technology/FMR38listing.pdf with links to the articles online. FMR 38 and FMR#38 will be published in English, French, Arabic and Spanish.

Forthcoming issues of FMR include 'Young and out of place' and 'Fragile states'. For further details see www.fmreview.org

Support to UNHCR's State Pledges Process

To commemorate its own 60th anniversary – and that of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Statelessness Convention – UNHCR is encouraging States to pledge to identify issues and challenges of importance to them and find realistic ways to respond (see the Guidance Note to Support the State Pledges Process at www.unhcr.org/4d1c95859.html).

The RSC is supporting this process by highlighting a number of its resources which are relevant to the proposed pledges and which, we hope, will help States in their thinking about the issues at stake. These include research projects, books, Policy Briefings, issues of Forced Migration Review, conference reports, Working Papers and FMO Research Guides and are listed on the RSC's website, organised thematically under the pledge themes:

- Addressing statelessness
- Preventing discrimination
- Resolving protracted displacement situations
- Improving humanitarian response

www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/resources/support-state-pledges



New academic staff member at the RSC

We are pleased to welcome Dr Alexander Betts to the RSC, as University Lecturer in Refugee Studies and Forced Migration. He will also be a Fellow of Green-Templeton College. He was previously the Hedley Bull Research Fellow in International Relations. His research focuses on the international politics of asylum and migration, with a geographical focus on Sub-Saharan Africa.

The MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration

This year we have 27 graduate students reading for this course. About half the students come from the United States and Canada. The rest come from Australia, Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, and Sweden. Many are expecting to pursue careers in humanitarian and development aid; others are looking to continue their studies to the doctoral level or to pursue law degrees.

'Stabilizing the Congo', RSC Policy Briefing number 8 (forthcoming)

This Policy Briefing, written by Emily Paddon and Guillaume Lacaille, is the outcome of a series of activities conducted by the RSC on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2010 and 2011, which included a themed issue of FMR (FMR 36 *Democratic Republic of Congo: Past. Present. Future?*).

The Briefing considers the 'stabilization approach' adopted by the international community to address the country's continued insecurity in the DRC. In this Briefing the political implications of the stabilization agenda are brought into sharper relief by focusing on the question: stabilization by whom and for whom?

All RSC Policy Briefings are available at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/policy-briefings

There have also been two new publications in the RSC's Working Papers series:

No. 80 *Rwanda's Ingando camps: Liminality and the reproduction of power* by Andrea Purdeková

No. 81 *Unlocking protracted displacement of refugees and internally displaced persons* by Katy Long

DVD of RSC resources

The disk of all available publications produced since the RSC's inception is available free of charge and can be used without an internet connection. It can be requested by emailing rsc@qeh.ox.ac.uk

International Summer School in Forced Migration

The RSC's 22nd Summer School took place in July 2011 and was attended by 77 policy-makers, practitioners and academics of 35 nationalities from over 43 institutions; of these, 23 participants from the global South were awarded bursaries kindly provided by DfID and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The three-week intensive course included core modules on *Conceptualising Forced Migration*, *Asylum Policy and International Refugee Law*, *Internal Displacement*, and *The Globalization of Forced Migration*, in addition to three optional courses on *Palestinian Refugees*, *Statelessness* and *Trafficking and Smuggling*. The all-day simulation exercise on *Negotiating Institutional Responses* to displacement and post-displacement contexts, based on the case-study of East Timor, was particularly popular amongst the participants.

"The simulation was very well prepared and structured. I was playing a role of a member of the refugee community and it really helped me to understand how a refugee might feel."

As in previous years, the Summer School hosted distinguished lecturers from the University of Oxford and from around the world, including Dr. Walter Kälin, the former Representative of the UN Secretary General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, and Karen Abu Zayd, the former Under Secretary General and Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East, who offered a fascinating Endnote Lecture.

"The best parts of the programme were the lectures and the simulation. There were lots of excellent opportunities to engage with colleagues."

"Guest speakers were superb"

Applications are now being accepted for the 2012 Summer School in Forced Migration, which will be held in Oxford from the 2nd to the 20th July 2012. The closing date for applications is 1st March 2012 for applicants requesting a bursary through the RSC, 1st May 2012 for all other applicants.

The 2012 brochure and application form are available to be downloaded from: www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/teaching_summer.html. Please send all applications and enquiries to summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk