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## MSc students' trip to Geneva

Ten students from the MSc in Forced Migration travelled in April to Geneva and engaged in question-and-answer sessions with several key organisations that are dealing directly with issues of displacement all over the world. On a four-day trip, the group met with staff from ICRC, IOM, and UNHCR, including High Commissioner António Guterres. Jane Rice, a participant on the trip, said, 'I'm so glad that we had an opportunity to be in Geneva. This trip was a real chance to put nine months of academic learning into context.'

Students also conducted individual interviews with experts relating to their dissertation topics. They are grateful to former MSc law lecturer Jean Francois Durieux for his hard work organising this trip, to student organisers Valentine and Rebecca, as well as to the RSC for its financial support.

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## Office and library move

In April, the RSC offices moved into a state-of-the-art new building constructed as an extension of the main departmental site at Mansfield Road ([OX1 3TB](#)). The building designed by Hawkins Brown, echoes the rhythm of the existing structure. We now have new telephone and fax numbers that can be found on this page.

We are delighted to now be housed alongside all of the Department's research Centres which will greatly improve opportunities for collaboration and exchange. We are particularly looking forward to working more closely with other centres such as Young Lives, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and the International Migration Institute. The open layout of the new offices is a great improvement to our work environment, as are the well equipped new rooms and the abundance of light and space. In addition the building provides a 70-seat seminar room and desk space for Master's students.

With some sadness, due both to limits of space at 3 Mansfield Road and the [Oxford University Library Services](#)' collections policy, the RSC library will not be moving with us. It will remain in the current Worcester Street site until August 2009 when the collection will move into the Social Science Library (SSL) in Manor Road ([OX1 3UQ](#)). In this new location it will retain dedicated specialist library staff and the 'grey' (unpublished) literature will be stored as a discrete, accessible collection. Readers will benefit by having access to wider SSL collections and services including a dedicated media room, 400 reader desks, wireless internet and greatly extended opening hours. Importantly, international visitors will still be able to turn up and enjoy free access to the materials on the day.

For more information on the library, please visit  
[www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/library.html](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/library.html)

*Professor Roger Zetter, Director of the Refugee Studies Centre*

## Forced Migration Information Network

The RSC is developing a more systematic approach to international collaboration and partnerships. One element of this ambitious initiative, funded by the UK Department for International Development, is to nurture a Forced Migration Information Network of selected partners working across regions most closely affected by forced migration.

Although the network is still in its early stages, it is already providing mutual support and advice, sharing contacts and country information and improving the dissemination of relevant research materials and findings. The network aims to assist with advocacy work and promote research on difficult or particularly sensitive issues. Possibilities for combined teaching and training are also being investigated. A central component of the initiative is to help communicate refugee and other forced migrants' concerns in their own voices in order to contribute towards their empowerment and engender a richer understanding of their situations.

Initial work plans focus on the collection of these refugee and IDP perspectives. Examples include the Forced Migration Studies Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand which is documenting and publishing the experiences of those affected by recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa; the Refugee Consortium of Kenya, which is documenting the experiences of refugees living in Dadaab Refugee Camp with a particular focus on the survivors of gender-based violence; and, in South Asia, the Calcutta Research Group, which is collecting the experiences of forced migrants in post-conflict Nepal, a project which includes a special reference to IDPs in urban contexts. These perspectives will be widely disseminated across the network through various website portals, volumes of collected testimonies, articles and discussion papers.

*For further details, contact [paul.ryder@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:paul.ryder@qeh.ox.ac.uk)*

## RSC's fundraising aims

Fundraising has always been an essential component of the Refugee Studies Centre's activities. Since its inception, the Centre has relied heavily on the support of its donors in order both to pioneer a new field of academic study and to ensure its successful growth and development. Today, of the thirty current posts at the Centre, four are supported by modest endowments and three are supported by the Department and three by the Oxford University Library Services. The remaining posts exist by virtue of external funding.

Over the years, governments, trusts and foundations, UN agencies, NGOs, corporates and private individuals have collectively ensured that the ambitions of the Centre could be ambitiously pursued: that it could address the complex and changing phenomena of forced displacement in the last quarter of a century, and provide knowledge and understanding to its many and diverse stakeholders around the world.

We are currently working hard to secure funding for a fourth endowed post in refugee and international human rights law at the Centre. This is a subject of universal relevance to every aspect of our work. Forced exile, whether as refugees or by internal displacement, always implies the violation of human rights and the loss of protection. Up until now we have been lucky to attract a number of committed and able legal scholars to the Centre but only ever on a short-term basis. It is our highest priority to create a senior permanent post in this discipline.

In addition, we would like to attract funding for a new research agenda in 'Conflict, Forced Displacement and Protection in a Changing World' as well as for bursary support for our teaching programme and for policy- and practice-oriented activities in our outreach work.

*For further information on the Centre's development activities, please contact [amelia.richards@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:amelia.richards@qeh.ox.ac.uk)*

# Leaving Mogadishu

Researching the causes of displacement, 2007–2008



In 2007 to 2008, some two thirds of Mogadishu's population abandoned the city in the wake of intensified violence following the ousting of the Islamic Courts and the arrival of the (then) Ethiopian-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Whole neighbourhoods emptied as people sought refuge elsewhere in the Somali territories and abroad. Confronted with often massive and precipitous population movements associated with violent conflict, there is an understandable tendency to accept macro-political explanations of the causes of migration: people fled civil war. And certainly, on one level, the question of why people have been leaving Mogadishu since 2006 has an obvious answer. But, on another level, many of the people leaving had lived their entire lives in one of the most insecure urban environments in the world, finding ways to negotiate daily dangers. To understand this exodus, and its future implications, we have to listen to how the conflict and other factors impinged on people's everyday lives, and how this changed over time.

The RSC has been working to develop a micro-sociological analysis of mobility in this specific episode in a protracted

conflict. This research is part of a bigger project on conflict and mobility within the EC-funded consortium [MICROCON](#) (A Micro-Level Analysis of Violent Conflict), and focused on people from Mogadishu seeking refuge in Somaliland, mainly Hargeisa, investigating one fragment of the complex picture of mobility in the Somali territories. From June to August 2008, with a team of research assistants (including two people originally from Mogadishu), we carried out 21 individual interviews and four focus groups, with people of a range of demographic, economic and clan characteristics. Combined with other sources, these accounts provide insights into out-migration from Mogadishu during this troubled period.

Participants described two key shifts in Mogadishu in recent years – the rise of the Islamic Courts, which for a short time brought the capital under a coalition administration and dramatically improved security, and the arrival of the TFG, which was followed by devastating violence between a fragmented, insistent insurgency and counter-insurgent response with little regard for civilian welfare, including indiscriminate bombardments of densely populated

neighbourhoods. This second shift – fuelled by the geopolitics of the war on terror – impinged on participants' varied configurations of capabilities and resources in several ways.

First, many people's human capabilities and resources were decimated as people lost family members when their homes were destroyed, when they took flight, or when they were shot by combatants or arrested. Several participants or their family members had experienced severe disability as a result of violence – including injuries from beatings and rape, loss of hearing, loss of limbs, and psychological problems. This had a huge effect on the emotional lives of individuals and families, as well as on their security and ability to pursue existing livelihood strategies. Second, loss of physical and financial resources – the wholesale destruction or confiscation/occupation of homes, business premises and stocks – was a major precipitating factor for some. While businesspeople had weathered previous crises by temporarily closing down, adapting activities or buying protection, many found it impossible to continue in 2007. Bakara Market, the biggest Somali market and the heart of Hawiye (the dominant clan family in Mogadishu) economic power, has continued to operate but was frequently the epicentre of battles. Meanwhile, physical and financial resources in some cases helped people to cope during turbulent times before they decided to leave, and ready cash significantly facilitated the process of migration. People often tried to convert their physical assets into cash, or place them in the care of others, before leaving Mogadishu.

Finally, but significantly, previous mechanisms of socio-political protection were weakened as patterns of political power in Mogadishu were dramatically reconfigured, exposing people to greater physical insecurity. This affected even prosperous families that had hitherto led relatively comfortable lives. For women, exposure to increased risk of rape often contributed to the decision to depart. For many people, the increased urban insecurity impeded their usual livelihood strategies as it became much riskier to move around the city. Meanwhile, aid workers and journalists were specifically targeted by militant groups and government forces.

The situation in Mogadishu remains volatile. Following the resignation of Abdullahi Yusuf, former president of the TFG, withdrawal of Ethiopian troops, and the inauguration of the moderate Islamic Courts' leader Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as president, some of the internally displaced have reportedly



Photo by Abdurrahman Warsameh. Copyright: ISN Security Watch

returned in 2009 to Mogadishu. But the new president will have to navigate complex political challenges – including political entrepreneurs, clan tensions, extremist militant groups and international pressures – to secure peace in the city.

Detailed findings will be published shortly on the MICROCON website. I carried out the fieldwork as a visiting scholar at the Academy for Peace and Development in Hargeisa, and greatly benefited from the guidance of colleagues there. We are very happy to have secured a MICROCON-funded visiting fellowship for one of their senior researchers, Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim, to come to the RSC in 2009.

*I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Samira Hassan Ahmed, Rahma Cabdulqadir Maalin, Ahmed Mohamed Isse and Mohamed Abdirahman Hassan with this research, as well as the support of Zeinab Haji Mohamed, head of the Gashan Women's Development Organisation.*

*Dr Anna Lindley is a Research Officer at the RSC:  
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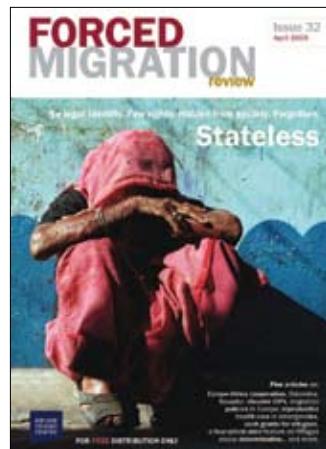
## RSC policy briefings

The RSC has launched a new Policy Briefing Papers series. This series seeks to highlight the very best and latest policy-relevant research findings from the fields of forced migration and humanitarian studies by providing a forum in which academic researchers, humanitarian practitioners, international lawyers and policymakers may share evidence, experience, best practice and innovation on the broad range of critical issues that arise at the intersection of forced migration and humanitarian intervention.

The first of these papers, by RSC Director Professor Roger Zetter, in collaboration with Dr Camillo Boano and Dr Tim Morris, was launched in December 2008 and addressed the question of 'Environmentally displaced people: Understanding the linkages between environmental change, livelihoods and forced migration'.

In May 2009 the RSC will launch three further papers in this series, addressing the topics of: Statelessness (by Dr Brad Blitz); Humanitarian reform and refugee protection (Dr Anna Schmidt); and Targeted development assistance and refugee protection (Dr Alexander Betts).

Further details may be found at [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/pub\\_policy.html](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/pub_policy.html)



## FMR: Statelessness

*Forced Migration Review* carried out a survey of its readers at the end of 2008. Responses showed that the main uses for FMR are for research and as background reference; as training/teaching resource material; and for conferences. There is also a significant use of it for advocacy.

The responses encourage us to continue to seek strategically important themes for the magazine; retain a reasonable balance between the feature theme and the 'general' articles; maintain a wide range of authors; and continue to appeal to a broad range of readers in geography, affiliation, level of seniority, and in terms of activity. A report of the results is online at [www.fmreview.org/2008survey.htm](http://www.fmreview.org/2008survey.htm).

FMR32, with a feature theme on Statelessness, was published in April and is online at [www.fmreview.org/statelessness.htm](http://www.fmreview.org/statelessness.htm). It has 22 thematic articles and 17 additional articles on other aspects of forced migration. To request a copy, please email the Editors at [fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

## Journal of Refugee Studies

The Journal of Refugee Studies (JRS) provides a forum for exploration of the complex problems of forced migration and national, regional and international responses. Published by Oxford University Press (OUP) in association with the RSC, the Journal covers all categories of forcibly displaced people. It is a multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal. Contributions which develop theoretical understandings of forced migration or advance knowledge of concepts, policies and practice are welcomed from both academics and practitioners.

Now in its 22nd year, the JRS has around 2000 subscribers, a good proportion of them in Europe and North America but also including subscribers in Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, China (Hong Kong), the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and Africa. Areas on which the JRS has published relatively little, and where the Editors would particularly welcome research articles, are: Central and South America, West Africa, India, Bangladesh and Southeast Asia, Japan and the former Soviet Republics.

Co-Editors of the JRS are Professor Richard Black (Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex) and Dr Joanne van Selm (Consultant to the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Universiteit van Amsterdam); the Book Reviews Editor is Dr Oliver Bakewell (International Migration Institute, University of Oxford) and the Assistant Editor is Mrs Margaret Okole.

The JRS is published quarterly. Volume 21 number 4 (December 2008) was a special issue on Invisible Displacements, guest-edited by Tara Polzer (University of the Witwatersrand) and Laura Hammond (School of Oriental and African Studies, London). Volume 22 number 1 was published in March 2009. A full list of all issues, contents and abstracts is available [online](#). Subscription details are available from the [OUP web server](#).

Books for review and other correspondence should be addressed to the editors at the postal address of the RSC (please see page 2).

Articles for the Journal and general correspondence should be sent by email – if possible – to [margaret.okole@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:margaret.okole@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

## Wednesday public seminars

The RSC hosts public seminars every Wednesday of the university term. The programme for Trinity term (May to June) includes presentations on Environmentally-Induced Migration in Ghana; the Politics of Refugee Repatriation; the Provision of Employment Services to Refugees; and EU Projects for the Extra-Territorial Processing of Forced Migrants.

The full seminar list can be found on the [RSC website](#).

The seminars take place on Wednesdays at 5pm at the Oxford Department of International Development, 3 Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TB.

The Elizabeth Colson Lecture on 20th May will be held at the Magdalen College Auditorium, Oxford OX1 4AU and will be given by Carolyn R Nordstrom, Professor of Anthropology at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Notre Dame University. She will give a talk entitled 'Fractures and Flows: Africa, Elizabeth Colson, and the Current Global Meltdown'.

## RSC policy workshops

In 2009 the RSC will host a range of policy workshops to bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to discuss the most urgent matters of forced migration policy and practice. The workshops will consider a range of issues from the role of the International Organization for Migration in forced migration management to the influence of shelter interventions on the achievement of protection outcomes for refugees and internally displaced people.

Contributions for the workshop on 'Humanitarian Action in Somalia: Expanding Humanitarian Space' – to be held on 8–9 June 2009 – are currently being solicited from researchers and humanitarian practitioners with an interest in the subject. The workshop seeks to address the question of humanitarian action in Somalia, to share current thinking on the situation and to consider creative solutions to the humanitarian deadlock. For further details on this workshop, please contact [simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

On 21–22 May 2009 the workshop 'Violence and Displacement in Colombia' will take place. Details may be found at [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/conf\\_conferences\\_0908.html](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/conf_conferences_0908.html).

## Forced Migration Discussion List: FM List

**The Forced Migration Discussion List was established in 1998 and is owned and moderated by the RSC. It is an email-based forum to encourage exchange of information and to promote discussion on the issues facing refugees and other victims of forced migration. The list has a membership of nearly 1,200 subscribers. Typical postings include event announcements, calls for papers, notices of publications, descriptions of research activities, invitations to collaborate on projects, job or internship offers, and requests for research assistance.**

In an online environment dominated by blogs, wikis and other social networking tools, the FM List has successfully used the LISTSERV model to exchange information and promote linkages within the forced migration research community. Teachers, students and scholars constitute the largest percentage of subscribers. However, policy makers, practitioners and advocates can also be counted in sizeable numbers. The latest postings are also displayed on the [Forced Migration Online](#) home page.

*For more information or to subscribe, please visit [www.forcedmigration.org/discussion](http://www.forcedmigration.org/discussion)*

## Conference: Protecting People in Conflict and Crisis

Ten years ago the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent held a series of workshops to agree an understanding of the meaning of 'protection' with the proliferating number of international humanitarian organisations. The protection of people affected by conflict and crisis is now not only one of the central aims of the international community of humanitarian and development actors but also one of its challenges. The threats of climate change, conflict, state fragility and economic transformation beg further questions about how rights and security will be protected during the 21st century.

In September 2009 the RSC, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute, will address these questions at an international conference entitled 'Protecting People in Conflict and Crisis: Responding to the Challenges of a Changing World'. It aims to convene academics, practitioners, policy makers and civil society representatives to review policy and practice in the field of humanitarian protection. Paper submissions are currently being accepted.

*Please see [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/conf\\_conferences\\_210909.html](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/conf_conferences_210909.html) for more information or email [simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:simon.addison@qeh.ox.ac.uk)*

## To everybody who has studied and worked at the RSC...

This page of the RSC newsletter is dedicated to you. If you have news about your career, research, publications, organisation, experiences or anything else related to forced migration that you would like to share with our readers in the next RSC newsletters, please send an email to [wouter.tekloeze@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:wouter.tekloeze@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

### **Andrea Pacheco Pacífico, International Summer School in Forced Migration 2004**

In October 2008 I finished my PhD in Social Sciences with Distinction at the Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil.

The dissertation entitled 'The social capital produced by refugees in São Paulo and in Toronto: Cultural background and public policy' can be found in the digital library of the University of São Paulo. The book based on the dissertation will be published in Portuguese and I hope to translate it into English as soon as possible.

Contact Andrea:  
[apacifico@hotmail.com](mailto:apacifico@hotmail.com)

### **Cindy Horst, Foundation Course on Forced Migration 1997**

After finishing the foundation course, I conducted PhD research among Somali refugees in the Dadaab camps in Kenya, resulting in the monograph 'Transnational Nomads'. Then I completed a post-doc while being responsible for a course on forced migration at the University of Amsterdam.

Currently I am a researcher at the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo. PRIO is an independent institute which not only aims to produce sound academic work but also puts great emphasis on conflict resolution, dialogue and reconciliation, public information and policymaking activities. I've always felt an urge to combine the two. There is great need for knowledge-based policy improvements in our research field.

I have focused mainly on the transnational networks and ties that refugees maintain, which have an impact on their lives in countries of origin and settlement, and in regional refugee camps or urban spaces. These include the sending of remittances, the imaginations of 'life elsewhere', and engagements in conflict resolution and peace building. European governments and organisations are increasingly interested in diaspora contributions to development and peace building.

Contact Cindy: [cindy@prio.no](mailto:cindy@prio.no)



Photo by Ben Kelly

### **Christine Bacon, MSc in Forced Migration 2004–2005**

Before coming to the UK in 2004 to do the MSc in Forced Migration, I was an actor, campaigner and coordinator of an informal network called Actors for Refugees in Australia, made up of professional actors who were dedicated to drawing attention to the harsh realities of my country's refugee laws and policies. After graduating from the RSC in 2005, I started planning a similar network in the UK.

By a stroke of magnificent luck, I came across the pioneering theatre company iceandfire, and it was agreed that Actors for Human Rights (as it was re-branded) would be the outreach project of iceandfire. Actors for Human Rights was launched with five actors and a script, *Asylum Monologues*, made up of first-hand accounts of three individuals who have been through the UK's asylum system. Almost three years and 20,000 audience members later, the network is made up of over 350 professional actors and responds to requests for rehearsed readings of no fewer than six documentary plays about contemporary human rights concerns.

As well as directing Actors for Human Rights, I have this year become Co-Artistic Director of iceandfire. Two new Actors-for-Human-Rights scripts will be launched this year, about the UK's counter-terror legislation and older people. Iceandfire is collaborating with leading human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, Save the Children, Reprieve, Refugee Action, British Institute of Human Rights and Index on Censorship, on various performance projects throughout the year.

Contact Christine: [christinebacon@gmail.com](mailto:christinebacon@gmail.com)