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John Fell OUP Research Fund award

Nando Sigona and Professor Roger Zetter have received the John Fell OUP Research Fund award for their project on 'Mapping Contemporary Roma Mobilities in the EU'.

Large groups of Roma have migrated from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe towards the more affluent countries of the European Union. With EU enlargement, more than two million Roma became simultaneously citizens of the EU and members of its largest minority, making the social, rights and security issues surrounding Roma an internal EU issue.

The aim of this research is to map contemporary Roma movements into, out of and within the EU, including economic and forced migration, and either forced or voluntary repatriation. The project will investigate the relationship between the indigenous Roma population in Western Europe and newly arrived Roma migrants; interrogate the concept and practice of freedom of movement in the EU; and explore developments in Romani politics.

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RSC raising public awareness

One aim of the RSC is to raise public awareness about forced migration. The RSC welcomes the opportunity to speak on national platforms, to advise interest groups or to conduct media interviews.

Recent visits to the RSC by both of Oxford's Members of Parliament enabled us to discuss how the RSC's work can be supported by our MPs and how we can contribute to political lobbying on refugee and asylum issues. The RSC was asked by the Liberal Democrat Party to advise on policy formulation on the impact of globalisation on patterns of migration and the implications for refugees and asylum seekers. RSC is non-partisan and we welcome these opportunities to engage with national policy debates.

RSC's director Professor Roger Zetter was recently interviewed by the BBC World Service for their 'Instant Guide' series on the theme of refugees. His work on environmental change and migration has led to a podcast for the Open University and an interview for the Financial Times.

RSC contributes to the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection

In December 2008 the RSC attended the UNHCR annual Dialogue on Protection in Geneva. The meeting was devoted to 'protracted refugee situations' and saw participation from several hundred representatives from UN member states, international humanitarian and development organisations and academic institutions.

RSC Visiting Professor Gil Loescher was invited to address the meeting. In his presentation he reinforced the need for international actors to take a solutions-oriented approach which acknowledges the need to establish comprehensive multi-lateral coordination between humanitarian, development and security actors. He also emphasised that there is no universal solution and that there must be collaborative action to address the specifics of each particular context.

These points were reflected throughout the proceedings, and were included in the High Commissioner's summary. He highlighted three principles in addressing protracted refugee situations: there is no one-size-fits-all solution; the necessity of international solidarity and burden-sharing; and the need for comprehensive, complementary approaches.

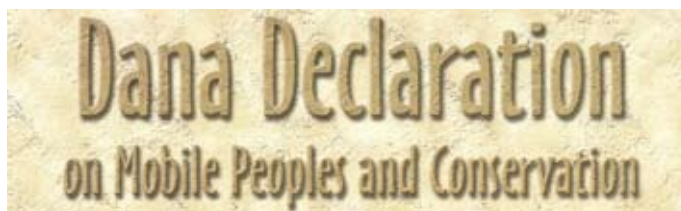
Re-launch of FMO's Digital Library

The Digital Library and Journals sections of the Forced Migration Online (FMO) website were re-launched in December 2008, with substantial modifications and upgrades, including a new content storage and search facility. This work was undertaken as part of the FMO team's Open Access Repository System (OARS) project funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). The aim of this 18-month project was to improve the management of the Digital Library content and make it more open and accessible to external systems such as Google. There is an improved user interface and searching and browsing the Digital Library's contents are now faster and more accurate than before.

When FMO was constructed in 2001 and 2002, there were no suitable 'open source' (e.i. free to use and widely interoperable) technologies that could be used to develop its key components. So of necessity they were implemented using proprietary software purchased from external suppliers. This made the management of FMO difficult and limited the accessibility of the content. For example, the document and journals within FMO's Digital Library could not be located directly by external systems such as Google. It became clear that if the proprietary software could be replaced by open source technologies, FMO could be significantly improved.

The repository and user interfaces for the Digital Library and Journals sections of FMO were completely redeveloped by an outside consultancy. The FMO team then worked on integrating these back into FMO. The project activities were conducted in consultation with a network of advisors comprising representatives of higher education institutions in the UK who use FMO in their teaching, research and dissemination activities. Students, researchers and academics form the backbone of FMO's user community, and it is this community that JISC-funded projects seek to serve.

The project is due to be completed in February 2009.



Mobile Peoples and Conservation

The mobile and nomadic peoples of the world have faced enormous pressure to change their way of life and adapt to a more 'modern' and settled existence. These peoples are increasingly threatened by international biodiversity and conservation movements, which do not recognise their rights to use land that has been traditionally inhabited by them.

Significant steps have been taken to address the rights of largely settled indigenous and traditional peoples. These measures have not been applied to mobile peoples. They continue to be ignored or find their traditional hunting, grazing or farming lands being confiscated, cordoned off and marked out as 'nature reserves' without consultation. It is the very fact of their mobility and requirement to move that acts against them on the national and international stage. In a world where land law is written by those of fixed abode and is defined by private property, it is difficult to make a case of land loss when the aggrieved party is not permanently situated on the contested site. Mobile peoples' wide-spread distribution over vast tracts of land, their low land-people ratios and the distrust with which governments treat such groups have rendered them marginalised, silenced and disempowered.

One step in the direction of specifically recognising the rights and contributions of mobile peoples in conservation and biodiversity was set in motion by the RSC in Jordan in 2002 with the setting down of conservation principles promoting the practices of mobile peoples known as the Dana Declaration. In September 2003 it was endorsed at the 5th World Parks Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and in October 2008 by the 4th World Conservation Congress of the IUCN.

Dr Dawn Chatty is Deputy Director of the RSC and Chair of the Standing Committee for the Dana Declaration.

A safe return? The deportation of Afghan asylum seekers

Dr Susan Zimmermann calls for a better understanding of Afghan refugees' perceptions before assuming that they can be sent back safely or suitably to Afghanistan

Since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, host states and the UNHCR have described the country as being largely safe and suitable for refugees to return to. In 2002 the UNHCR said that 'many of the reasons which prompted people to flee only a year ago... no longer exist' and 'a legitimate government' is in place. It has since maintained the position that the focus should shift to voluntary return and points to the high rate of returns that have in fact occurred to justify this continued emphasis.

Since 2002, an estimated five million Afghan refugees have returned, mostly from Pakistan and Iran. It is not clear how many returns have been truly voluntary. Pressure has been put on refugees to return. Conditions of reception in host areas became less welcoming and more hostile, various refugee camps were closed, and some forced deportations have taken place.

Few have returned from developed countries, except forcibly. In November 2002, European Union members agreed a plan not only to promote voluntary returns, but also to enforce removals. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have accused the UNHCR of prioritising or playing into the hands of hosts that seek to restrict asylum immigration and have expressed concerns of ongoing human rights violations taking place.

More questions need to be asked about the more than 74,000 Afghan asylum applications being made to industrialised countries since 2002. Can it be assumed that many were coming from a country largely safe for them? If also claims that many of the dangers have been removed are correct, then why have they sought asylum and why have not more returned voluntarily? Most importantly, why is Afghanistan still the country of origin for most refugees under UNHCR mandate, at 3.1m in 2007 and with more living in 'refugee-like situations'? Is it right to suggest that many of the remaining obstacles to return are social or economic, or alternatively, to what extent are conflict or abuses still to blame? While the UNHCR and host countries recognise the continuing challenges of hardship, limited access to basic services, and insecurity, they tend to approach these as problems to be solved in order to assist return. Discussions are generally framed within this narrow context but the experiences, daily lived realities and understandings of Afghan refugees need to be taken into consideration.

My research seeks to explore these experiences and perspectives based on interviews with Afghan asylum seekers in London.

The Afghan interviewees all disagreed strongly with suggestions that Afghanistan was safe and suitable for return. The



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continued involvement of warlords, commanders and factions in the different roles of control in the country were threatening. The present system of governance was not seen to represent a break from the history of violence, rights abuse, and control. Many of the 'same people' and factions who were held to be responsible for this before, were now involved in the new central government or local leadership. The power and effectiveness of the central government, being unable to control the various militias and individuals in power was strongly doubted.

All believed they had reason to fear what would happen if they were sent back. Most believed that they would be killed or arrested by the faction leaders/members who still perceived them as political rivals. Persecution was feared on political grounds or through the abuse of power by faction members. Some had fled Afghanistan during the apparently safer period, when militias took control of their home areas after Taliban rule ended, and most after UNHCR's announcement in 2002. More feared the 'same people' who were in power would threaten them as before. Several had relatives who had remained in Afghanistan since and had been killed or threatened by the groups that were in power now, since the end of Taliban control, or who were warning them not to return.

This snapshot of the issues raised by the interviewees suggests a need to better incorporate refugees' concerns, and to have realistic approaches that reflect conditions on the ground. The issues raised were recognisable, from what human rights organisations, news sources and academics report. The optimism shared by host states and the UNHCR may work for some, but at a time when millions are still living as refugees, it is important to understand their perspectives more closely and to ask whether ideas about this being more a time of return than a time for protection are justified and helpful. Governments and the UNHCR should listen more closely to refugees' reasons for not returning. They should consider whether there is a greater case for prolonging external protection, and should question their return agenda.

Dr Susan Zimmermann is an (ESRC) Postdoctoral Fellow at the RSC.

Working Papers Series

The RSC 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](#).

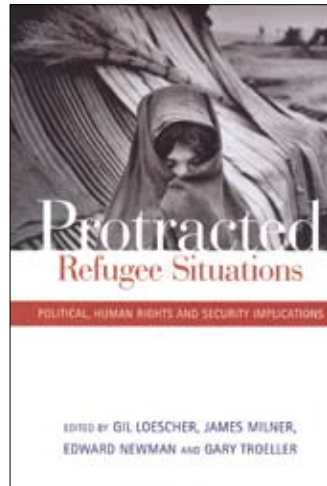
The RSC recently added four new titles to its Working Paper Series:

Working Paper 49: *Salah Sheekh is a Refugee: New Insights into Primary and Subsidiary Forms of Protection* by Jean-François Durieux.

Working Paper 50: *UNHCR as an Autonomous Organisation: Complex Operations and the Case of Kosovo* by Ann McKittrick.

Working Paper 51: *Family Reunification: A Right for Forced Migrations?* by Anne Staver.

Working Paper 52: *Understanding and Addressing the Phenomenon of 'Child Soldiers'* by Ah-Jung Lee.



Book

Gil Loescher, Visiting Professor at the RSC, has co-edited with James Milner, Edward Newman and Gary Troeller a volume examining our understanding of prolonged exile and its humanitarian, political and security aspects – including the role of UNHCR. The problem is growing in scale and significance: there are now more than 30 protracted refugee situations comprising over two thirds of the world's refugee population.

Leading scholars and experts in the field also examine six contemporary protracted refugee situations and argue for the need to move from simply managing long-term refugee populations to resolving these situations through an integrated and 'solutions-oriented' approach. Such an approach requires the active engagement of peace and security and development actors as well the humanitarian community.

Gil Loescher, James Milner, Edward Newman and Gary Troeller (co-edited), *Protracted Refugee Situations: Political, Human Rights and Security Implications*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press (2008) ISBN 978-92-808-1158-2.

FMR: Islam, human rights and displacement

Forced Migration Review (FMR), with support from UNICEF Iran, has published a supplement focusing on Islam, human rights and displacement. The supplement is available in [Arabic](#) and [English](#).

10 December 2008 marked the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The Declaration and subsequent instruments of international human rights law and international humanitarian law play a vital role in providing protection for refugees and IDPs. Yet the claim to universality has been disputed. Not all states have acceded to these legal instruments. It seems that a particular point of controversy in the Islamic world is their compatibility with *sharia* (Islamic law).

This debate is of considerable importance: nearly half of the world's 16 million refugees come from Muslim countries, which also host 15 million of the world's 26 million IDPs. We hope this supplement will help enhance debate and understanding of human rights in the Islamic world.

It is impossible to do justice to such a complex and charged debate in one short publication. The three articles included argue that both Islamic and international precepts recognise, in principle, that the needs and rights of displaced people are of primary concern. The articles also debate aspects of the applicability of international laws and conventions in Islam. This allows us to call on the strength of both traditions in support of displaced people.

The supplement includes the text of the UDHR and the 'Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam', a list of human rights conventions and treaties that have direct impact on the situation of displaced people, and a resources page.

We hope the supplement will enable those concerned with assisting and protecting displaced people to advocate more strongly on their behalf. We also hope it will be of use to displaced people and to those living in host countries and communities.



Workshop: A non-negotiated solution to the Colombian conflict

Analysis of the Colombian conflict reflects the polarisation of the conflict itself. Arguments are placed in the 'pro-government' or 'pro-guerrilla' camps. Some argue that the only solution to the conflict is the military defeat of the FARC or a negotiation forced through on terms dictated by the government. Our intention is to organise a new encounter which would explore the implications of a non-negotiated solution to the conflict and raise some considerations if a sustainable peace is to become possible.

This workshop will take place on 21 and 22 May 2009 and aims to foster a more nuanced approach to the conflict, which gives space to Colombian intellectuals, leaders and practitioners interested in exploring its wider implications and the multiple factors to take into account in its closure. Amongst these are how to ensure that the ending of the conflict lays the foundations for a lasting peace, and what the implications are for Colombia's large displaced population.

The main themes that the workshop addresses:

- War and economic change: What kind of economic pathway will emerge from a non-negotiated solution?
- Security after war: How might a non-negotiated solution affect the state security sector and security at the community level?
- The implications of a non-negotiated solution for democracy building.
- Building a non-violent society: How will a non-negotiated solution interrupt the inter-generational transmission of violence and contribute to a non-violent future?
- The future of Colombia's peace building community and civil society organizations in the wake of a non-negotiated solution.
- War, victims and displacement: What are the prospects for the victims after a non-negotiated solution, and for processes of justice and reconciliation?

Convened by [Sean Loughna](#) (FMO Content Manager, RSC) and Professor Jenny Pearce (Prof. Latin American Politics, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford).

Annual Elizabeth Colson lecture

The 2009 Elizabeth Colson lecture will be given on 20 May 2009 by Carolyn R Nordstrom (PhD University of California, Berkeley), Professor of Anthropology at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Notre Dame University. Professor Nordstrom's principal areas of interest are the anthropology of war and peace; illegal economies and power; gender, justice and human rights; globalisation; and culture theory. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in war zones worldwide, with long-term interests in Southern Africa and South Asia. The Elizabeth Colson lecture is held annually in honour of Elizabeth Colson, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. She was one of a group of academics who played an important role in consolidating the RSC in its early years, working closely with the founding director Dr Barbara Harrell-Bond.

The lecture will take place in Oxford on 20 May 2009 at 5.00pm. Title and venue to be confirmed.

Wednesday Public Seminars

The RSC hosts a series of public seminars every Wednesday of the university term. The programme for Hilary term includes presentations on Spirituality, Livelihoods and Related Temporal Complexities; Participatory Theatre among Refugees; Reflections on the Cairo Protest against UNHCR; Exceptional Politics of Internal Displacement in Northern Uganda; Education of Citizen and Non-citizen children; and Pro-asylum Advocacy.

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

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



International Summer School in Forced Migration, 6–24 July

Conflict and displacement remain intractable problems in the contemporary world. Understanding the causes and consequences of forced migration and possessing the practical skills to deal effectively with its challenges are essential both for the development of effective programmes to assist refugees, and in addressing the root causes of human displacement.

Over three weeks the RSC's Summer School, now in its 20th year, looks at the complex phenomenon of forced migration through a range of lenses, reflecting on the diverse ways of conceptualising forced migration, considering the political, legal and wellbeing issues associated with contemporary displacement, and tackling other topics, including globalisation and forced migration, and negotiating strategies in humanitarian situations. Other topics are offered as elective courses.

Some 70 participants study together, take part in group activities and produce independent presentations. Participants have the time and space to reflect on their own work and to benefit from the international mix and varied professional experience of other participants. They engage in reflection–analysis–synthesis–teamwork, via critical engagement with lectures, readings, case studies, interactive exercises and the sharing of insights and experiences.

The Summer School is designed for practitioners involved with assistance and policymaking for forced migrants, and for researchers. Tutors and lecturers are drawn both from the RSC and from outside institutions. They include research staff, academics and professionals from a number of disciplines and practices.

The course is residential, this year at Wadham College, Oxford. The closing date for bursary applications is 1 March 2009, for all applications 1 May 2009.

For more information, please contact the RSC Outreach Programme Manager: summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Sicel'mpilo Shange–Buthane: Skilled lobbying

Sicel'mpilo Shange-Buthane attended the International Summer School in Forced Migration in 2008. She was back in Oxford in January to take part in the new RSC short course on Statelessness, and took time to share her thoughts about her experiences at the Summer School.

Sicel'mpilo is a human rights activist, currently working as advocacy officer and lobbyist at the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA). This is a national network of organisations working with refugees in South Africa tasked with promoting and protecting refugee and migrant rights. CoRMSA uses its membership network to advocate for rights-based refugee and immigration policies and laws, to promote best-practice models, and to encourage compliance with minimum international and national constitutional standards.

"I applied for the Summer School to learn more about forced migration and different perspectives of practitioners from all over the world and to share South African experiences with refugees and forced migration."

She explains she got more than what she came for. She particularly liked the work in the small groups. The Summer School opened her mind by exploring forced migration from different lenses and by going beyond the legal framework she is used to working in. She also got insights from other regions and perspectives which helped to broaden her mind.

"Normally practitioners don't go beyond their professional lens. The Summer School gives the opportunity to explore the different scopes of forced migration. The course taught me for example a better understanding of the power of political institutions and reaffirmed the importance to influence the political processes. It helped me with my lobbying work and to change strategic thinking at CoRMSA."

Sicel'mpilo says she particularly appreciated the simulation exercise on humanitarian intervention in East Timor. Apparently some of the things said and the behaviour of government officials during the simulation exercise were directly manifested during negotiations in South Africa. An example is a meeting that took place in August 2008 when CoRMSA negotiated with the government to assist in the process of reintegrating displaced foreign nationals after the violence against them in May 2008.

"I find myself sometimes in a state of déjà-vu. I am now much better able to manage difficult situations that otherwise would have been very frustrating when negotiating with government officials and other stakeholders."