

Stateless diasporas project launched

The RSC is pleased to announce the launch of its new research project 'Stateless diasporas and migration and citizenship regimes in the EU' that will investigate the experiences of three stateless refugee/migrant communities resident in the EU: Kurds, Palestinians and Roma. The project is generously funded by The Leverhulme Trust.

The project will explore the extent to which members of these 'stateless diasporas' negotiate, mobilise and/or resist, and ultimately problematise, notions of shared belonging in the EU. Drawing on research to be conducted in France, Germany, Italy and the UK, it will analyse the implications of these EU states' policies towards migrants and minorities who, for a variety of reasons, hold no effective citizenship in their countries of origin. This will include a critical examination of the categorisation of such groups as 'stateless diasporas', exploring both the discourses of diaspora members themselves as well as those of outside observers. The project will investigate the processes through which both statelessness and diasporic are constructed, adopted and/or rejected by individuals and states. This project will also explore under which circumstances stateless diasporas engage in transnational activities and networks, and to what effect. More information about the project is available at the Diasporas Project: www.migration.ox.ac.uk/odp/stateless-diasporas.shtml.

Conference: North Africa in transition

A series of unexpected popular uprisings has spread across North Africa and the Middle East since the end of 2010. The dramatic unfolding of events has disrupted the ever-changing patterns of mobility in the region in new and disturbing ways, including uprooting people, transforming existing migrants into refugees and constraining the movement of mobile populations.

An RSC workshop on 6 May will provide a space for interested academics, practitioners and policy-makers to critically engage with the evolving contemporary crises in North Africa, focusing in particular on the challenges surrounding the displacement of people in their wake, including migrant workers from across the African continent, internally displaced nationals, and sub-Saharan African and Middle Eastern asylum seekers and refugees who had formerly sought refuge within countries including Libya and Egypt.

*North Africa in transition,
6 May 2011, 1pm, RSC, contact:
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Professor Roger Zetter to retire as RSC Director

Dr Dawn Chatty will act as the RSC's next Director on the retirement of Professor Roger Zetter at the end of September 2011. This change is part of a set of exciting initiatives that significantly extend the established academic strengths of the Centre through the planned appointment of a new university lecturer in forced migration studies and the proposed creation of a new professorial post with responsibilities in refugee and migration studies. These new appointments signal a broader set of changes at the Centre designed to consolidate and enhance the Centre's international scholarship and influence on the world of policy and practice. The RSC thanks Prof Zetter for his many years of dedicated service.

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Dynamic new website provides easier access to RSC information

The updated website – www.rsc.ox.ac.uk – offers clearer access to the latest news, publications, event and activities. The research section is organised around a collection of newly-developed themes with improved links to related conferences, workshops and staff presentations and publications. The site also includes a new [sign-up sheet](#) for those interested in receiving email updates and event invitations and [comments and suggestions form](#). We welcome your comments and feedback.



Mae Sot check point, finger-printing an undocumented migrant who was caught on the overnight bus from Bangkok

Photo exhibit showcases lives of Burmese migrant workers

Since the mid-1980s, over two million Burmese migrant workers have entered Thailand, searching for a better future. The jobs they have found are often dirty, dangerous and difficult. Often undocumented, migrant workers risk arrest, extortion, deportation and other human rights abuses. The exhibit of photographs by John Hulme, *'In Search of a Job – Any Job: The Life of Burmese Migrant Workers'*, ran from 17–25 February in Queen Elizabeth House and co-hosted with the International Migration Institute. The photo collection can be viewed online at www.forcedmigration.org/photos/burma.

Prof Didier Fassin to give Annual Colson Lecture

Professor Fassin is Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University and Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. Professor Didier Fassin will explore how asylum is progressively being emptied of its original signification in Western Europe and North America. He will reflect on the discrepancies between the 'abstract truth of asylum and the concrete truth of refugees', thereby questioning the ethical foundations of contemporary societies.

The Vanishing Truth of Refugees, 5pm, 15 June 2011, location TBC.

Conference: Refugees' diasporic memories and the politics of democratisation

As part of the Stateless Diasporas research project, Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Dr Thomas Lacroix (IMI) jointly organised a conference on 'Refugees' diasporic memories and the politics of democratisation' in February 2011. This conference was generously supported by ODS Conference Funding, The Oppenheimer Fund, The Leverhulme Trust, and the Oxford Martin School.

Through case-studies from across the global South and global North (including de facto and de jure stateless refugee diasporas such as the Palestinians, Sahrawis and Bhutanese), four key themes were explored throughout the conference: firstly, how individual refugee memories are processed in exile to produce a collective diasporic memory; secondly, how refugees and stateless persons draw upon these diasporic memories to influence conditions and political outcomes in their homeland; thirdly, how diverse state and non-state actors influence the development, or prevent the re-importation of these memories; and lastly, how the processes of memory construction and mobilization impact upon public opinion, civil society and political processes in both the homeland and the hosting country. Podcasts of the contributions are now available at www.migration.ox.ac.uk/odp/multimedia.shtml. A conference report is forthcoming.



FMR 37: Armed non-state actors

Militia, freedom fighters, rebels, terrorists, paramilitaries, revolutionaries, guerrillas, gangs, quasi-state bodies... and many other labels. The latest issue of *Forced Migration Review* looks at all of these, at actors defined as being *armed and being 'non-state'* – that is to say, without the full responsibilities and obligations of the state. This issue of FMR looks at a variety of such actors, at their behaviours and at efforts to bring them into frameworks of responsibility and accountability.

The issue is available to download free of charge at www.fmreview.org/non-state. The next issue of FMR will be published in September 2011 and will feature 'technology and communications.'

Policy briefing: 'Protracted Sahrawi displacement: Challenges and opportunities beyond encampment'

Policy Briefing 7 by Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh analyses the challenges and opportunities for Sahrawi refugees after 35 years of protracted displacement, their political representatives and international actors. The briefing calls for a careful analysis of alternative solutions to encampment in Algeria that have been adopted or proposed and of the relevant protection concerns. Policy Briefings are available on the RSC website. Send feedback to Héloïse Ruauudel at rsccpolicy@qeh.ox.ac.uk.



Sahar Karmi/IRIN

A boy looks out over Jabalia refugee camp, Gaza

Workshop report: Palestinian refugees and International Law, Damascus, Syria

The RSC conducted a pilot two-day workshop on Palestinian Refugees and International Law at the Danish Institute in Damascus on 18 and 19 March 2011, generously funded by DFID. Its purpose was to examine, within a human rights framework, the policies and practices of Middle Eastern states as they affect Palestinian refugees. Through a mix of lectures, working group exercises and interactive sessions, the participants engaged with the contemporary debates in international law and analyzed the context of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the west Bank and the Gaza Strip, touching on themes of statelessness, right of return, repatriation, self-determination, restitution, compensation and protection.

Among the 20 registered participants were eight UNRWA employees from Lebanon, Jordan and Syria; various UN employees, two Norwegian Embassy employees, and two doctoral students. The workshop proved very popular and was rated highly in the participant evaluations, with participants noting that it provided a much-needed context and legal understanding of the situation Palestinian refugees.

MSc students in Geneva explore challenges to protecting forced migrants

Students from the MSc programme in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies visited Geneva on 14 and 15 March in a trip led by Dr Alice Edwards and Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasbiyeh.

Students engaged speakers from OHCHR, Jesuit Refugee Services, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the International Organisation for Migration, and other agencies in a series of brief presentations followed by interactive question and answer sessions. Students explored 'new' protection issues related to IDPs, gender, statelessness and the protection of migrants with the officials. Many of the speakers also focused on the issues of human rights and how they often extend beyond traditional protection mandates as well as the challenges of depoliticising forced migration issues. The centrality of protection mandates was a cross-cutting theme for OHCHR, the UNHCR and IOM though the expansion of the 'protection role' proved a contentious issue.

The trip provided the students with the opportunity to enhance their understanding of the environment of policy-making and gain insight into careers in the field of forced migration while furthering their dissertation research.

Rachel Mayer and Robyn Plasterer