Fortress Europe and the Syrian refugee crisis

A special panel discussion co-organised
with MSF Lebanon

Monday 31 January 2022
5:00pm UK via Zoom

Chair: **Annie Slemrod** (Middle East Editor, The New Humanitarian)

Speakers:

Reem Mussa (Médicins Sans Frontières)

Professor Dawn Chatty (Refugee Studies Centre)

Michiel Hofman (Médicins Sans Frontières)

The devastating conflict that caused immense suffering in Syria is now over a decade old, but while the humanitarian and political crisis are far from over, international interest in Syria has been waning. This panel discussion intends to stimulate critical reflection and debate on the dilemmas facing humanitarian and medical action in the Syrian conflict.

Experts with in-depth knowledge of Syria and the region will examine some of the challenges humanitarian organisations faced as a consequence of the war in Syria. They will examine the disjuncture between humanitarian solutions often built around containment policies and refugee populations' request for protection and need to ensure the dignity, well-being, and respect of asylum-seekers.

The discussion will focus on the use of siege tactics from Syria to its neighbours and from Europe to its international allies, highlighting how humanitarian actors are at worst contributing to sustaining besiegement and at best diverting attention from the political choices that lie behind the various forms of containment. Humanitarian actors implemented programmes seeking to contain – to endlessly besiege – Syrians, rather than to assist them in finding protection.

The discussion will draw from the book *Everybody's War: The Politics of Aid in the Syria Crisis* (Oxford University Press, 2021), which was co-edited by Michiel Hofman and to which Dawn Chatty contributed the chapter "When perceptions and aspirations clash: humanitarianism in Syria's neighbouring states".

Full details and registration link at:
www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/fortress-europe-syria-crisis

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