

Expert Meeting Report:

Beyond Encampment: Managing Mass Migration in an Age of Urbanization

University of Oslo, 2 November 2018



HRRL

An international expert workshop, organized by Human Rights Research League (HRRL) and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo.

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Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2018
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Executive Summary:

On 2 November 2018, Human Rights Research League (HRRL) and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) convened an international expert meeting on the challenges posed by mass migration regarding urban areas, refugee camps, and potential future conflicts and humanitarian crises ('Beyond Encampment: Managing Mass Migration in an Age of Urbanization') at the University of Oslo, Faculty of Law. The interdisciplinary workshop, with invited experts from the US, MENA, and Europe, was an in-depth follow-up to a public seminar organized by HRRL on the same topic, held on 10 April 2018 at the University of Oslo as part of the World Seminar series¹. The expert meeting included four sessions, dealing with The Global Compacts and Mass Migration Management, Novel Approaches to Accommodating Refugees and Forced Migrants, Global Trends and the Challenges of Urbanization and Exile, and Fighting Root Causes of Flight: Integration, Circular Migration, and the Promise of Technology. While acknowledging the significant deficiencies of international cooperation concerning global migration management, as e.g. evidenced by the ongoing dispute over the signing of the UN Global Compacts, the meeting also highlighted numerous legal, organizational, and technological developments which may contribute to alleviating the challenges ahead with a view to better protecting vulnerable people.

Introduction:

In the past four years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number of people uprooted by violent conflict and harsh living condition, fleeing their homes, often also their countries. Irrespective of the label we attach to a given situation (IDPs, refugees, forced migrants), the drivers of mass migration will continue to exist and even if we were to reduce the number of new, uprooted people to zero, there would still be many millions in need of support. Hence, in order to cope with today's refugee and humanitarian crises, a two-pronged approach is needed: fighting (underlying) root causes of flight and helping those already negatively affected and living in a state of refuge.

While both push factors, such as political violence, protracted armed conflict, economic and democratic decline, and pull factors, such as the urge to seek physical protection, political freedoms and opportunities abroad constitute drivers (and are sometimes – superficially - called 'root causes') of migration, the real, underlying root causes of those drivers may sometimes have to be found elsewhere, in 'bad governance' and the lack of alternation, leading to the repression of (negative) Human Rights (ICCPR) and the non-provision of (positive) Human Rights (cf. ICESCR).

There are numerous examples of the consequences of overlooking the root causes of flight, from the war in Syria, to the crisis in Venezuela, or the prolific 'constitutional coup d'états' in Sub-Saharan Africa. The latter may e.g. be seen in the significant rise in the number of IDPs in the

¹ See <https://www.sum.uio.no/forskning/aktuelt/arrangementer/gjesteforelesninger-og-seminarer/verdensseminaret/2018/Beyond-Encampment-Mass-Migration-in-an-Age-of-Urbanization.html> ; https://www.hrrleague.org/index.php/?focus=PROISP_cm4all_com_widgets_News_119658&path=?m=d&a=20181002015000-1576&cp=1#PROISP_cm4all_com_widgets_News_119658 .

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) during the so-called ‘glissement’ or ‘slip’, where the government overstayed its constitutional term limits. Increasingly severe refugee situations on either side of DRC’s borders, including the recent expulsion of Congolese refugees from Angola to the DRC, illustrate this urgent point.

A stronger focus on underlying root causes is needed, if we are to avoid or alleviate future global migratory and humanitarian crises.

Also, as to helping those already negatively affected, the majority of people does not live in camps, but in urban settings, and any discussion needs to include increasing urbanization as a factor. Furthermore, there are often significant differences regarding co-habitation and integration challenges in host communities between geographical areas, and between IDPs and refugees in their respective host communities. Local peculiarities matter and need to be considered when trying to integrate people uprooted by flight and conflict with host communities, who often also already lack basic resources.

The response of states and regional organizations to the challenges posed by these patterns of conflict and migration has largely been to limit the influx of refugees and migrants and instead focus attention and resources on cooperation projects in and agreements with the countries of origin. One outcome of this approach was the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa²; the UN Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants, respectively, constitute the latest, and most comprehensive initiative in that regard thus far, to be adopted by the end of 2018.³ But some of these agreements have tended to disregard some decisive points, if mass migration on a global scale is to be addressed: Irrespective of the level of border control, barriers, or cooperative agreements with transit countries, people will still tend to flee and seek access to more secure countries, though not necessarily in Europe or the global north. In fact, the vast majority of those uprooted flees to and stays in neighboring countries⁴, and today most of the people seeking refuge migrate towards and live in urban centers, not in (refugee or IDP) camps. Indeed, according to UNHCR, more than 60 per cent of the world’s 28.5 million refugees and 80 per cent of 40 million IDPs now also live in urban environments⁵, and countries in Central and Eastern Africa face particularly high concentrations, and for all those, viable solutions need to be found.

Looking at innovations in urban agriculture, smart solutions to energy efficiency, access to digital technology, or new ways of integrating refugees and forced migrants into the labor market, into urban life, letting them also take part in making and changing the city, could form

² EU Commission – The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa – Fact Sheet (March 1, 2017), http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/factsheet_ec_format_eu_emergency_trust_fund_for_africa_2017.pdf.

³ Cf. ‘Global Compact on Refugees’, UNHCR, <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/refugees-compact>; and ‘Global Compact for Migration’, UNHCR, <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>.

⁴ Nathalie Bounoux & Rohen d’Aiglepierre, *Les migrations subsahariennes : déconstruisons les idées reçues*, Le Monde (Feb. 15, 2016), http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/02/15/les-migrations-subsahariennes-deconstruisons-les-idees-recues_4865581_3212.html.

⁵ Cf. ‘Statistical Yearbook 2016’, UNHCR (Feb. 2018), available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/5a8ee0387/unhcr-statistical-yearbook-2016-16th-edition.html>; and ‘Flyktningregnskapet 2018’ [‘Refugee Balance 2018’], Norwegian Refugee Council (June 30, 2018), <https://www.flyktninghjelpen.no/flyktningregnskapet2018/>.

part of the answer. While there are some encouraging and innovative approaches to accommodating refugees, promoting local integration, useful co-habitation, and mutually beneficial self-reliance or even group or organization-based rights and collective refugee status, further study on those issues is needed.

This international and interdisciplinary expert meeting, convened on 2 November 2018 by the Human Rights Research League (HRRRL) and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) at the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo, aimed to take stock, compare across regions, and explore avenues and concepts to accommodate the growing number of people fleeing and staying within the respective regions and, not least, in urban areas.

Opening Remarks:



In their opening remarks, **Gentian Zyberi**, Head of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), and **Tom Syring**, Chairman of the Human Rights Research League (HRRRL), welcomed everyone to Norway and the University of Oslo, Faculty of Law, and expressed their gratitude to the participants for traveling from near and far, preparing interventions and comments, and to all staff members for contributing with logistical support to making this workshop happen.



Tom Syring then briefly introduced the four main sessions, and outlined the order and discussion format, before turning to a few general observations. This expert meeting by invitation only represented an in-depth follow-up to a public seminar previously organized by HRRRL within the research project on 'Beyond Encampment: Managing Mass Migration in an Age of Urbanization', held on 10 April 2018 at the University of Oslo as part of the World Seminar series⁶. While the previous seminar *inter alia* served to identify topics in need of further discussion, the hoped-for outcome of this

international expert meeting was to go deeper and further, looking for novel ways to help tackling challenges of mass migration. This expert workshop was truly international and interdisciplinary, consisting of participants from the US, MENA, and Europe, in addition to Norwegian experts (participants from the DRC were unfortunately unable to attend as they were prevented from applying for a visa in the current situation⁷). While all participants had some link to and experience with refugee and migration related work, experts came from a

⁶ See <https://www.sum.uio.no/forskning/aktuelt/arrangementer/gjesteforelesninger-og-seminarer/verdensseminaret/2018/Beyond-Encampment-Mass-Migration-in-an-Age-of-Urbanization.html> ;

https://www.hrrleague.org/index.php/?focus=PROISP_cm4all_com_widgets_News_119658&path=?m=d&a=20181002015000-1576&cp=1#PROISP_cm4all_com_widgets_News_119658 .

⁷ In February 2018, the DRC closed the so-called Maison Schengen, annexed to the Belgian embassy in the DRC, which had been responsible for issuing all visa to Schengen member states. Since then, Congolese citizens have in practice effectively been prevented from applying for a Schengen-visa to Europe.

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background in such diverse disciplines as international law, political science, psychology, sociology, architecture, theology, engineering, and urban planning, and worked at universities and other research institutions as well as IGOs, NGOs and in government service. In other words, the participants of this international expert meeting represented the combined cross-disciplinary expertise needed for fruitful discussions about how to solve the many challenges ahead of us.

The plan for the day was to hear two to three prepared interventions per session, followed by a plenum discussion of the issues raised during the various presentations. In order to facilitate and encourage an open exchange of opinions, also where this in some cases would have touched upon issue otherwise too close to one's place of work to comment, Chatham House rules would apply to all discussions. With those ground rules in mind, the international expert workshop commenced with Session 1.

Session 1: The Global Compacts and Mass Migration Management: Solving or Re-Framing the Problems?

Session 1 intended to lay the groundwork for the ensuing discussions, assessing the status quo of mass migration management, contemplating alternative approaches, and outlining current and ongoing international initiatives, such as the UN Global Compact on Migration, and the one on Refugees, respectively.



In the first presentation, 'Local Overload and the New Hierarchy of Suffering – Why a New Approach to the Global Refugee Crisis is Necessary', **Morten Bøås**, Research Professor at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), painted a grim picture of the way the international community currently addresses global refugee crises. In Bøås' view, there are already many more refugees and displaced persons than the society of states is capable of handling and looking at e.g. countries in the Sahel region, with explosive population growth, poor, fragile and conflict prone states, coupled with the effects of climate change, migration pressure (towards Europe) will continue to increase. As humanitarian and development efforts are underfunded, international interventions only manage to prevent (total) state collapse, they do not have a lasting, mitigating effect. The tip of the most recent migration wave to Europe in 2014/2015 was not an exception; it is prone to be repeated and on an even larger scale. Europe was unwilling and/or unable to absorb the latest wave and further migration flows to Europe will create even more political tensions. Yet, local integrative capacities have been exhausted, overload is a global phenomenon and leads to a new hierarchy of suffering that divides the world's refugee population into 'visible' (those that make it to Europe or its outer borders) and 'invisible' refugees (the vast majority, those that are too far away and lack the means for even considering a journey to Europe).

Hence, if we want to preserve a common understanding to the effect that people fleeing war, conflict and persecution have a right to protection, we need to take some radical steps.

First of all, we need to clearly differentiate between refugee crises and migration crises by establishing a global mechanism to separate refugees from migrants based on the country of origin. We know who the ‘refugee producing countries’ are and such an approach would significantly reduce the number of ‘real’ cases.

Secondly, we should establish a new global quota regime for refugees and introduce a new form of temporary citizenship – an updated version of the ‘Nansen-passport’, granting qualifying persons the right to protection, but only as long as they stay within a designated area or country.

One may claim that such an approach breaks with a liberal tradition, but faced with what is currently going on, where the question of who manages to receive protection resembles more one big lottery or an extreme version of casino capitalism, upholding claims to liberal values is really beside the point. Geographical proximity to Europe, resources, and pre-existing networks in countries of transit and destination are currently decisive for gaining access to Europe, not needs assessment. Therefore, we need to rethink the entire protection regime.



In his opening intervention, **Lars Petter Henie**, Senior Adviser at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norway’s chief negotiator regarding the UN Global Compact for Migration, posed the question, ‘The Global Migration Compact Negotiations – Success or Failure?’. As with any multilateral negotiations, numerous conflicting standpoints need to be reconciled. When it comes to the Global Compact on Migration, a major divide was (naturally) between states that largely would have to be considered as countries of destination, and those that mainly are countries of origin. The latter wanted a legally binding convention, the former were merely interested in a political statement. Furthermore, there was a rift between countries amenable to the idea of a Global Compact, and those that have refrained from participating in the negotiations or have announced that they ultimately intend not to sign off on the final agreement, which is scheduled to be adopted in Marrakech in December 2018. In the latter category are the United States and Australia, but also EU members Hungary, Austria, Italy, and several other European countries have indicated they might renege on their previous standpoints and now leave the agreement. Hence, despite efforts at a common position, division runs deep, also among European states.

The Global Compact on Migration represents the first global document aimed at establishing a common understanding of all sides of international migration. While not legally binding, it is meant to serve as a common point of reference for discussions of migration related aspects between affected states. While Norway is not a member state of the EU, it forms part of the Schengen area, and has played a leading role in the negotiations of the Global Compact. Among Norway’s main points of concern were the continued need to differentiate between regular and irregular migrants, and the rights attached to each category; confirming the international obligation of states of origin to accept the return of their own citizens, if their citizens lack the right to stay in a country of destination; and that the Global Compacts would not encourage or facilitate export of welfare benefits from countries of destination to countries of origin.

The importance of the Global Compact on Migration lies in the fact that the vast majority (about 200 million) of all people on the move today are migrants, many of whom are regular migrants.

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(In addition, there are currently about 25 million refugees—for which a separate Global Compact on Refugees has been negotiated—and 45 million IDPs worldwide.) Hence, the Migration Compact affects a great number of people and contributing to clarification and interpretation of rights and obligations will be beneficial to many.

The negotiations' greatest challenges consisted in finding an agreement among states with diverging domestic education, social security and health benefit systems, and opposing interest (countries of origin versus countries of destination), and the recent withdrawal of several European states from the common European position was not helpful either.

However, while certainly not perfect, the Global Compact on Migration represents a significantly better outcome than no agreement at all.



Stefan Salomon, Lecturer at the Institute of International Law at the University of Graz, Austria, concluded the first set of interventions with a presentation on 'A Contextual Assessment of the Global Compacts: Prevention, Deterrence, Coercion'. Looking at the title, aim and purpose of the two UN Global Compacts, the one for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the one for Refugees, respectively, it appeared that they largely addressed regular migration. The Global Compacts only sporadically mention irregular migration and do not seem to set out, as they do for regular migration, a strategic approach for irregular migration. However, while such a strategic approach is absent in the Global Compacts, achieving the Compacts' ambition of managing borders and migration depends on addressing irregular migration as well. Any facilitation of safe, orderly, and regular

migration implies that there is a category of unsafe, unordered, and irregular migration that 'needs' to be confined. Indeed, irregular and regular migration are two complementary sides of any comprehensive approach aiming at furthering international cooperation on migration.

Hence, in order to assess how the Global Compacts deal with irregular migration, one may identify three distinct areas: prevention, deterrence, and coercion. Furthermore, as both Global Compacts refer to facilitation of international cooperation, an evaluation of the functioning and prospects of that facilitation needs to look at levels and forms of cooperation. Although the Global Compacts provide the broad political framework, cooperation on migration currently neither does nor will occur on a global level or in the form of classical international treaties, but rather on a regional or sub-regional level, and as amalgamations of legally binding and non-binding instruments.

With those stipulations in mind, the presentation focused on the refugee regime and on the European level, reading the Global Compacts through the prism of the European Agenda on Migration as the strategic framework, and legal practices.

There are very few options for (regular) migration outside established, 'orderly' frameworks. This is also critical to any considerations of a future refugee regime. Even places for resettlement (in collaboration with UNHCR) are in very short supply. Resettlement quota agreed upon between the respective states and UNHCR are voluntary, and critically insufficient, faced with the global need. Alternatives to UNHCR refugee resettlement, such as the provision of private

refugee sponsorship, religious sponsorship, or Humanitarian visa have dropped in numbers. Even when focusing on access to protection for refugee, based on a critical assessment of existing (regular) options for achieving protection, such routes are (already) highly inadequate. But the Global Compacts do little to alleviate these shortages, or to provide further (regular) alternatives to accessing protection, leaving even many bona fides refugees often only with the option of considering access as an irregular migrant.

Session 2: Beyond Encampment: Novel Approaches to Accommodating Refugees and Forced Migrants – Legal and Organizational Developments

The second session aimed at exploring new avenues with a view to better accommodating refugees and forced migrants that go beyond and represent alternatives to the still common and sometimes necessary practice of encampment, but also offer radical, novel approaches to conceiving of and conveying refugee status, and the organization of refugeehood, including their integration into or co-habitation with host communities.



Session 2 started with a presentation by **Eva Dick**, Senior Researcher at the German Development Institute (DIE), on ‘Beyond Encampment? Urban Refugee Integration in Kenya in a Multi-Level Policy Context’. Urban authorities are at the forefront in the daily management of large-scale population influxes. Only about one third of the world’s refugees presently lives in camps; the majority settles in urban areas and peri-urban settlements. Due to a universal trend towards prolonged (‘protracted’) displacement, cities are becoming increasingly important spaces of integration.

Against this background, in the New York Declaration for Migrants and Refugees in 2016, UN member states recognized that camps should constitute the exception rather than the rule and that refugees instead increasingly should be allowed to live among host communities. At the heart of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), operational guideline of the (draft) Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), is the recognition that local actors often are the first responders to large scale refugee situations, and the assumption that refugees should gain access to local labor markets, services and education and thus become self-reliant from the very beginning. Furthermore, there is a general change in the international humanitarian approach under way, increasingly linking relief and development and hence emphasizing long-term approaches.

However, as examples from in the Horn of Africa—one of the major refugee producing and hosting regions in the world—show, the implications of changing global humanitarian paradigms are not so clear. On the one hand, the ‘Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan for Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia’ translates the CRRF to the context of this very region and its longest-lasting refugee crisis. Also, national governments in the region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) have committed to applying the CRRF in their respective countries. On the other hand, access of refugees to national and local labor markets, services and infrastructure is still quite limited.

The impact of global and regional refugee policies on national and local outcomes varies significantly, as may also be shown by case studies of selected Kenyan cities. Hence, while changing international policy frameworks and national stakeholder dynamics provide ‘windows of opportunity’ to depart from decade-long encampment policies, e.g. by including refugees in local county budgets and in the National Development Plan, fundamental barriers (related to a lack of awareness, resources and political will) work against a comprehensive local and urban integration of refugees in the country. Development cooperation must take the multi-level opportunities and risks into account and support policy change in critical areas affecting refugees’ livelihoods and self-reliance.



In the ensuing presentation, **Steven Schneebaum**, Washington based international lawyer and Adjunct Professor at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, United States, depicted a special case of ‘Collective Refugee Status and Autonomous Organizations’.

The case pertained to an Iranian opposition group (People’s Mujahedin Organization of Iran – PMOI), residing for several decades in Iraq in what then was known as Camp Ashraf. Neutral during the second Iraq war that started in 2003, the United States recognized

them in 2004 as protected persons according to the Fourth Geneva Convention. When the United States and her allies eventually started to withdraw from Iraq and the new Iraqi government developed close ties with the Iranian regime (the same regime the PMOI had fled), the group found itself in a precarious situation. Victims of several deadly attacks by government agents, they lacked protection in their current host country and risked being sent back to their country of origin, the very country they had fled from, in contravention of the principle of non-refoulement. Furthermore, finding countries willing to accept them for third country resettlement proved difficult due to cross-cutting political pressures, and, not least, the PMOI’s expressed wish to remain together as a group, to preserve their identity and community (they practice e.g. celibacy).

Eventually, Albania (itself a country with rather limited resources) came forward and offered to host the group as a whole, and by now more than 90% of the about 3000 members have been relocated to Albania. The move had been facilitated by UNHCR and UNAMI (United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq) according to a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq in 2011, and supported by the United States, but it would not have been possible without Albania’s exceptional generosity and the opposition group’s own commitment to meeting the bulk of the associated costs, particularly for long term support of all of their members relocated out of Iraq who had no access to state-sponsored assistance.

After initially being hosted in temporary facilities in Albania upon arrival, the PMOI were later provided with land outside the capital of Tirana and given permission to build their own facilities. Based on contributions from the diaspora and other donors, the PMOI have by now reestablished a home reminiscent of a little village, with educational, health, and media

facilities, kitchen and dorms, being largely autonomous and self-sufficient, living side by side with their Albanian hosts.

Given, the case is rare, or rather unique, in that an entire group received protection in a single country, as a group, and, in exchange, were both allowed and expected to largely provide for themselves. Furthermore, while they live in an urban area and have frequent contact with their neighbors in their host country, they are not really locally integrated in that they live in separate communities, in order to preserve their identity and way of living. But, particularities and motivational backdrop aside, there could, at least in principle, be other cases where the granting of collective refugee status is coupled with—or even stipulates—self-sufficiency and autonomous organization. Sometimes, this may be the only viable option.

Session 3: Global Trends and the Challenges of Urbanization and Exile: Lessons for Livelihood and Development Policy

Session 3 continued to explore the topic of local refugee integration by looking more closely at the challenges and opportunities of host/refugee community relations, legal and urban planning approaches to enhancing social cohesion, and psychological aspects of living in exile.



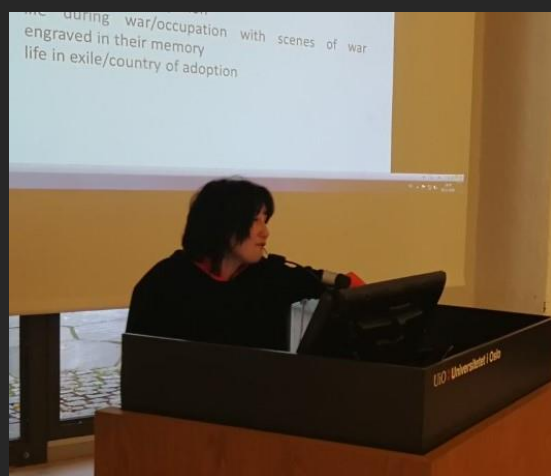
The session started with a presentation by **Giulia Maci**, Urban Planner at the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and Coordinator of the European Think Tank Group (ETTGT), Belgium, on ‘Urbanization in Africa and Implications for EU Development Policy’.

Considering generally higher mobility and increasing migration flows, the Mediterranean region is in the middle of a strong spatial transformation linked to population growth, widespread urbanization and deep socio-economic changes. This transformation is particularly evident in cities. In a context

characterized by disengagement of the state and weak local finances, the Mediterranean towns are or will be faced with management of the contradictory goals between the aspiration to achieve integration in a globalizing economy, the growing difficulties to meet the needs of the local population, and the responsibility of managing urban environment. In this regard, local authorities bring unique added value to sustainable development in the region.

They are key to mobilizing different stakeholders to cooperate, thus generating collaborative approaches for pursuing common development goals. Due to their proximity and territorial presence, as well as knowledge of local needs, local authorities can contribute greatly to maximizing the effects of development assistance provided by bilateral and multilateral donor institutions. However, local capacities for decision-making and management are generally restricted due to a limited transfer of resources and lack of an effective multi-level governance system.

More than 75 % of the Mediterranean population currently lives in urban areas. Cities are changing constantly, and development is needed. It is in Mediterranean cities that many young migrants crossing the sea on their way to Europe stop, or remain. Hence, we need to focus on the youth as a key drivers for positive change in urban areas and thereby as guarantors for stability in the region. In that context, local authorities are decisive for improving the livability of Mediterranean urban areas by involving the youth and engaging them to forming and exercising their right to the city. Such initiative cannot be reduced to articulating a distant, international development policy. Rather, a better integrated relation between the international, national, and local level is essential to ensure a more sustainable development of the region. Such multi-level governance needs to involve a broad range of stakeholders, not least the younger generations who otherwise feel disenfranchised. Focusing on creating common urban spaces, where people from a variety of backgrounds can get together and thus overcome conflicting points of view, may lead to positive, stabilizing spill-over effects from the local to the regional and international level.



Zeina Zerbé, Clinical Psychologist, Psychotherapist, and Lecturer at Saint-Joseph University of Beirut, Lebanon, followed up with a presentation on ‘The Psychology of Exile: Refugee Life and Trauma’, based on the psychosocial dynamics at work in the Lebanese political context.

Both displaced populations and host communities are often overwhelmed and unprepared to deal with drastic psychosocial changes. Refugees suffer from a dual trauma. First, they had to endure mental and emotional hardship in their country of origin, such as extreme fear, threat, loss, scenes of death, disappearance and kidnapping of loved ones etc.

Secondly, they often face precarious living condition, persecution and incomprehension in their host countries and therefore need to develop coping and adaptation schemes to tackle those situations. Finding oneself in such a predicament triggers rupture and disturbances in the constituents of one’s identity and in the intimate relationship with one’s own language (or dialect) and culture. Hence, in order to survive and be able to cope, some displaced persons are prone to developing emotional detachment and psychic amnesia.

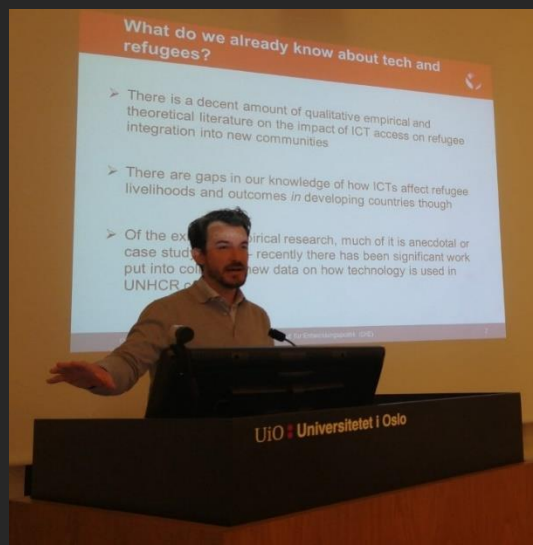
On the other hand, members of the host communities frequently and strongly experience feelings of ‘invasion’. The influx of refugees provokes an impression of looming danger, triggers the fear of the unfamiliar and awakens anxiety towards the uncertain and the feeling of cultural invasion. In Lebanon, such feelings are particularly activated by previous traumas; among them, the armament of Palestinian refugees who fled to Lebanon in two waves – 1948 and 1967 – and contributed to the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war, and the Syrian occupation of Lebanon which lasted for 29 years and generated many psychosocial and political issues which remain unresolved until the present day. The Syrian army withdrew from Lebanon in 2005 and the first Syrian refugees arrived in Lebanon in 2011, i.e. only six years later. In a situation where the wounds of the Syrian occupation remain open, confusion in the mainstream discourse between the Syrian refugees and the Syrian regime often prevails.

In such a context, there is a need for national rules and regulations, as well as for the implementation of international conventions, in order to protect and guarantee the rights and security of both displaced populations and host communities and, thus, transform what is perceived as an identity threat into a transcultural enriching experience.

Also in a country like Lebanon, with a very high percentage of refugees, there may be alternatives to encampment policies, but disseminating refugees across the social fabric of host communities might be experienced by refugees as a negation of their trauma (the war, Nakba or Armenian genocide they fled) and entails a risk of identity dissolution—of host and refugee communities alike. The challenge is to create urban neighborhoods that keep the refugees' cause and history alive and yet avoid the risk of ghettoization. Finding the right measure is a balancing act on a high ridge walk.

Session 4: Fighting Root Causes of Flight: Integration, Circular Migration, and the Promise of Technology

While contemplating approaches that might also contribute to fighting root causes of flight, the paramount focus of the final session of the day was on measures and technological developments that might enhance the living conditions and prospects of all those that—for whatever reason—find themselves in a situation of displacement or (forced) migration.



Session 4 opened with a presentation by **Charles Martin-Shields**, researcher at the German Development Institute (DIE), on ‘Access to Digital Technology and Migrant Integration in Urban Settings’.

While there is a decent amount of qualitative empirical and theoretical literature on the impact of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) access on refugee integration into new communities, there are gaps in our knowledge of how ICTs affect refugee livelihoods and outcomes *in* developing countries.

As digital tools such as mobile phones and social media play an ever-greater role in how people connect with each other, there are increasing opportunities to understand what technology means in the lives of migrants and refugees. UNHCR, the World Bank, and development agencies have begun looking at this issue from the perspective of economic integration and registration, but there are still many questions about how individuals use technology to make migration and flight decisions. Seeking answers to questions of individual choice and exploring how institutions and stakeholders such as the Kenyan government, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and UNHCR integrate digital tools into their migration and refugee policies, may provide valuable insights into how effectively institutional applications of technology align with refugees’/IDPs’ uses of technology.

An ongoing DIE research project looks *inter alia* into how differences in urban, rural and camp environments influence migrants' and refugees' use of digital tools. For example, in a highly administered setting like a camp, digital information may be used for registration, whereas in an urban setting, migrants may use digital tools to find social networks or make migration decisions. A further field of inquiry relates to how institutional actors in migration and refugee spaces use digital tools in their administrative processes and service provision. While UNHCR already has ongoing processes for integrating digital tools into their work, gathering information about how, or if, also the Kenyan government, IGAD and local NGO actors are using digital tools to support refugee and displaced populations, and communicating those findings would likely enhance access to information for the target populations.

Based on an analysis of how IDPs and refugees use digital tools to make migration decisions, the aim is to develop a framework for migrant and refugee digitalization that might inform donors' digital strategies in IDP and refugee support programs. Only if organizations' and institutions' digital strategies are aligned with the targeted populations' actual use of technology, may communication be effective.



In the final intervention, **Fernando de Medina-Rosales**, Global Manager of the Information, Council and Legal Assistance (ICLA) Program at the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and **Martin Suvatne**, NRC's Head of Core Competencies, discussed 'Using Technology to Enhance Legal Identity and HLP Rights in Displacement Contexts'.

People affected by displacement are forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods, and lose enjoyment of a range of rights, such as the right to work or freedom of movement. They often lose identity and other documents (such as identity cards, birth and wedding certificates) when fleeing violence, some have had their

documentation destroyed by conflict or disaster and others did not have documents in the first place. Obtaining these documents without being present in the country or town of one's official residence is a considerable challenge, and may prevent displaced persons from accessing services, such as education, housing, or employment opportunities. Conflict-induced displacement always encompasses violations of housing, land and property (HLP) rights. Displaced persons are forced—often by violent means—to leave their home and property, experience difficulties to enjoy security of tenure in the place of displacement and face all sorts of obstacles to repossess their property in the place of origin.



Responding to these needs is essential, as legal and institutional frameworks, whether statutory, customary or religious, can either provoke or perpetuate displacement and discrimination or serve as instruments of protection and empowerment. While

NRC's ICLA activities worldwide support almost one million people affected by displacement to understand, interpret and navigate these frameworks, the global demand for these services greatly supersedes the ability to respond.

Current approaches are costly as they are heavily reliant on a person-to-person approach. This limits the ability to take services to scale or provide services in hard to reach areas or in urban contexts where displaced populations are mixed with host communities and difficult to find. Digital innovation has the potential to transform ICLA, expanding its impact to serve more displaced people faster and to reach those who are difficult to reach while supporting the ambition to legally empower displaced populations. Yet, bringing about digital transformation also faces numerous challenges that need to be addressed, including the low rate of digital literacy among certain beneficiaries, especially among women and other vulnerable populations; lack of access to smart phones; connectivity; cultural barriers affecting legitimacy and creating mistrust; and questions of data protection.

The use of technology in humanitarian and migration programming has a lot of potential, but its application needs to be both demystified (e.g. by using information campaigns as to its functioning and purpose) and realistic (i.e. acknowledge that complex cases may still require specialist assistance in person).

Cross-Cutting Issues and Plenum Discussions:

The many ensuing discussions, conducted under Chatham House rules, focused in particular on the following cross-cutting topics: Curbing global migration flows versus preservation of individual rights to protection; local integration versus co-habitation; the psychology of exile and identity dissolution; and the challenges and opportunities of employing information technology in communicating with target groups.



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The first bundle of topics pertained to the content of and intentions behind the two UN Global Compacts, and the ongoing international debate connected to finding new approaches to **managing and** (from several European states' point of view) **curbing global migration flows** heading to Western states. Some argue for a radical break from traditional ways of approaching refugee status determination and the 'processing' of people applying for protection and suggest separating likely *bona fides* refugees from migrants without an assumed protection need by dividing people *ab initio* into two rough categories according to their country of origin. A certain pre-selection, it was stated, was also practiced by UNHCR and in a world of limited resources this was a necessary approach in order to preserve some sort of functioning refugee regime. Others opposed the idea of such strict prescreening as an individual refugee status determination was essential to any Human Rights based approach to refugee protection.

There was general agreement that it would be desirable to focus on larger resettlement quota but faced with a lack of willingness on the part of states to commit to accepting larger numbers of resettled refugees, this approach did not seem very promising and, in any case, far from sufficient. Rather, states should realize that by investing much more resources (including development aid) in the countries of origin, one could reduce the global number of people fleeing their homes, which would be beneficial to both sides. Some of the cooperation agreements concluded e.g. between the EU and African states are based on that insight—and others are likely to be concluded in the aftermath of the adoption of the two Global Compacts—but at times they have led to violence as a means of deterrence, rather than creating opportunities as incentives for people to stay.

If managed properly, Africa's projected explosive population growth could represent a competitive advantage, creating a 'population dividend' leading to economic growth as it once did for Asia. But the trouble with the current agreements, including the suggested future measures foreseen in the respective UN Global Compacts, is that they do not go deep enough. They aim at reducing poverty, create jobs etc. and hence address drivers of migration and flight, but they do not confront the real, underlying root causes of those drivers, which in many cases are connected to bad governance, democratic regression, and the lack of alternation. Operating in such an environment may be necessary to a certain extent when it comes to humanitarian emergencies, but long-term development approaches must also include strategies for addressing the underlying root causes of flight.

The second set of topics was related to **local integration versus co-habitation**. Local integration has often been put forward as the 'preferred option', but where do we truly see local integration, and is preference for local integration merely part of an external agenda (i.e., fine with us, as long as 'local' does not mean 'here', where we are)? Local integration works in various ways, hence adopting the same approaches and expecting the same outcomes in different situations, is bound to lead to disappointment. Local integration is very context specific and in order to learn what approach may work in a given situation, stakeholders, donors and development agencies need to acquire 'local literacy'.

On the other hand, while generally representing a desirable outcome, local integration is also tainted with a dilemma: Too much, too deep (local) integration might get in the way of possible future reintegration / return of refugees. Refugees integrating into the social fabric of their host communities, may face serious problems re-adapting and thus reduce their chances of a possible, successful return to their country of origin. That dilemma is especially protruding regarding people with only a temporary right to stay (or even no official right to stay) and it is

exacerbated by the fact that the current trend e.g. in Europe is to raise the number of years it takes until even accepted refugees are granted permanent residency. Furthermore, there is an increase in the application of the ceased circumstances clause, opening for revoking permanent residence status even many years after a positive refugee status determination outcome. And what applies to accepted refugees is all the more relevant regarding people without an official permit or right to stay. Refugees need clarification of their status rather sooner than later, but the global trend points into the opposite direction.

The dilemma of local integration versus co-habitation also cuts into questions of the **psychology of exile and identity dissolution**. As with the former, also the latter represents to a certain extent a double-edged sword. On the one hand, especially in situations of mass influx, displaced populations and host communities alike are often overwhelmed and unprepared to deal with drastic psychosocial changes. Refugees suffer from a dual trauma, caused by the circumstances of their flight and their struggle to tackle the often precarious and sometimes hostile new living conditions, both of which create a rupture in their identity. As a coping mechanism, refugees keep to themselves and to their own—the opposite of (local) integration.

But policies aiming at countering ghettoization and seclusion by dispersing refugees across host countries with a view to enhancing integration, may be problematic as well. On the one hand, they may lead to identity dissolution on the part of refugees, which may further add to refugees' trauma. In addition, as indicated above, it might render refugees less prepared and more vulnerable in case of an eventual return to their country of origin. On the other hand, disseminating large groups of refugees across the social fabric of host communities might be perceived as an identity threat by the latter as well, creating fears of dissolution and marginalization on their part. Finding the right middle ground might be a tricky endeavor.

The final, cross-cutting theme revolved around the **promises and challenges of information technology** in improving the situation on the ground for those living in a state of refuge, and the impact new technology may have in the field of mass migration. To a certain extent, as uprooted people have little access to their traditional networks in the new countries or communities they find themselves in, studying refugees' and migrants' use of social media offers deep and important insight into what works in communication. These groups of people switched e.g. early on from Facebook to WhatsApp as their primary source for gathering information. International organizations, governments, and development agencies need to be aware of technology trends, lest their communication platforms and strategies miss their target group.

There is a lot to be gained from the use of new technology in improving the lives of and communication with vulnerable populations, but there are also obstacles and limitations one needs to be aware of. Employed the right way, information may be faster, cheaper, and more broadly communicated than by traditional person-to-person approaches. One may object to an increased use of technological means of communication in migration management by stating that not everyone might have the means to be part of information flow and reception that requires a certain device, but that might be more of a pretense to remain passive. First of all, looking at cell phones use as one such example, also in poor countries a high percentage of the population—and especially in urban areas—today owns a cell phone, and increasingly also some sort of smartphone—even if this is the only thing of value they own. Furthermore, some basic information might also be effectively conveyed in the form of simple text messages. Secondly, where there is an identified lack of (smart)phones, cheap, basic models could form part of the

emergency package provided by development aid organizations, where needed. Likewise, electronic modes to refill money for modest data packages could be used, or other applications for that purpose developed.

It has also been stated that connectivity might be a problem, as power outages in addition to bad cell phone coverage and internet shortages seriously limit the potential of that line of communication. Power outages and network provider limitations are certainly still a very frequent feature, especially in many African urban centers, but also there, day-long outages are the exception. Hence, unless the information to be shared with target groups needs to be transmitted in real-time, there is no reason not to employ social media and other information technology for that purpose. The refugee and migrant populations of concern would eventually receive the information, as soon as they have connection, and most likely within the same day. This would still be faster and cheaper than depending exclusively on person-to-person communication.

However, for all the advantages of new technologies, we have to accept that certain, complex issues still will have to be dealt with in person. Furthermore, we need to be aware of potential abuse implicit in the transmission of at times sensitive information. How do we provide services to vulnerable people, without putting the very same people at risk? If we take our due diligence serious here, technology may have a lot to offer.



The expert meeting concluded with a brief presentation of ongoing and planned research projects and a discussion of potential future research collaboration, including a further follow-up to the topics raised above.

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University of Oslo

HRRL

Beyond Encampment:

Managing Mass Migration in an Age of Urbanization

International Expert Workshop

2 November 2018

University of Oslo, Faculty of Law

Organizers:

Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) & Human Rights Research League (HRRL)

Introduction:

In the past four years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number of people uprooted by conflict and dire living condition, often traversing multiple regions on their way to safety. In response to the challenges posed by these patterns of conflict and migration, states and regional organizations have attempted to limit the influx of refugees and migrants and instead focus attention and resources on cooperation projects in and agreements with the countries of origin. One outcome of this approach was the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa¹, followed by a 'mini-EU-Africa-summit' headed by French president Macron and German chancellor Merkel, with state leaders from Chad, Libya, and Niger as representatives of some of the most important countries along the main migration routes². The UN Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants, respectively, constitute the latest, and most comprehensive initiative in

¹ EU Commission – The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa – Fact Sheet (March 1, 2017), http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/factsheet_ec_format_eu_emergency_trust_fund_for_africa_2017.pdf.

² Europe-Afrique: Macron présente un plan d'action pour les migrants, RFI (Aug. 28, 2017), <http://www.rfi.fr/europe/20170828-mini-sommet-europe-afrique-macron-presente-plan-action-migrants>.

that regard thus far, to be adopted in the course of 2018.³ But some of these agreements have tended to disregard some decisive points, if mass migration on a global scale is to be addressed: Irrespective of the level of border control, barriers, or cooperative agreements with transit countries, people will still tend to flee and seek access to more secure countries, though not necessarily in Europe or the global north. In fact, the vast majority of those uprooted flees to and stays in neighboring countries⁴, and today most of the people seeking refuge migrate towards and live in urban centers, not in (refugee or IDP) camps, and for those, viable solutions need to be found. This expert meeting aims to take stock, compare across regions, and explore avenues and concepts to accommodate the growing number of people fleeing and staying within the respective regions and, not least, in urban areas.

Beyond Encampment:

Traditionally, refugee camps have been erected in response to the mass outflow of people fleeing conflict and hardship. Usually, these camps were built outside urban centers. In fact, local authorities and refugee agencies have often been working against refugees' access to cities. Initially intended as an emergency response, in reality large numbers of camps have turned into semi-permanent (non-) solutions to those forced to linger on in such temporary, confined and artificial habitats. While camps *may* make it easier for the authorities or aid organizations to provide certain services (food, medical aid, education) to the vulnerable populations residing there, in the long run, living in aid-dependency contributes to poverty, which may lead to protracted refugee situations and in turn provide fertile soil for new conflicts, including with host communities.⁵ Furthermore, there are numerous good reasons why refugees and other people uprooted by conflict might prefer to live in cities and why that is indeed preferable to sprawling refugee camps. One is avoidance of 'the transmissibility of despair through generations, and of its not infrequent translation into active militancy' (Goodwin-Gill, 2014: vii, in Akram and Syring, 2014).

Also, the world is becoming increasingly urban. Not only does the majority of the world's population today live in urban areas, also people fleeing conflict or dire straits predominantly now inhabit urban centers in their host countries. In fact, according to UNHCR, more than 60 per cent of the world's 28.5 million refugees and 80 per cent of 40 million IDPs now also live in urban environments⁶, and countries in Central and Eastern Africa face particularly high concentrations.

Hence, despite the considerable number of camp residents worldwide, they are outnumbered by those living, or dwelling, in urban areas, and any approach towards alleviating the pressure on host communities and improving the living conditions for those living in the region, needs to take these realities into account. In that context, the concept of (long-term) refugee camps is

³ Cf. 'Global Compact on Refugees', UNHCR, <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/refugees-compact>; and 'Global Compact for Migration', UNHCR, <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>.

⁴ Nathalie Bounoux & Rohen d'Aiglepierre, *Les migrations subsahariennes : déconstruisons les idées reçues*, Le Monde (Feb. 15, 2016), http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/02/15/les-migrations-subsahariennes-deconstruisons-les-idees-recues_4865581_3212.html.

⁵ New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (Sep. 16, 2016), para. 7, and *passim*, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57ceb74a4.html>.

⁶ Cf. 'Statistical Yearbook 2016', UNHCR (Feb. 2018), available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/5a8ee0387/unhcr-statistical-yearbook-2016-16th-edition.html>; and 'Flyktningregnskapet 2018' ['Refugee Balance 2018'], Norwegian Refugee Council (June 30, 2018), <https://www.flyktninghjelpen.no/flyktningregnskapet2018/>.

outdated. Rather, focus needs to be on refugee and migrant populations acquiring skills that render them self-sufficient and may enhance the chances of circular migration, thus eventually benefiting host communities and countries of origin alike.

Mass Migration and Urbanization:

For the many millions who fled their homes for various reasons and are already living in neighboring countries or are internally displaced, there is an urgent need to find long term and creative, innovative solutions. Failing to improve the living conditions also of these populations might lead to the implosion or explosion of crises situations in their host countries or communities, thereby providing fertile soil for new conflicts and a perpetuation of flight situations. Furthermore, the majority of those who left their homes now live in urban areas (in the countries or regions they fled to), and often will (have to) stay there for a very long time. That may involve taking—to a much larger extent—the local host population into account when formulating livelihood and development policies for ‘uprooted people’, and rather conceive of the local population and the ‘refugee/migrant’ population as *one* ‘population of concern’.

Looking at innovations in urban agriculture, smart solutions to energy efficiency, or new ways of integrating refugees and forced migrants into the labor market, into urban life, letting them also take part in making and changing the city, could form part of the solution. While there are some encouraging and innovative approaches to accommodating refugees, promoting local integration, useful co-habitation, and mutually beneficial self-reliance (cf. e.g. Uganda, incl. ‘REHOPE’ – Refugee and Host Population Empowerment framework⁷) or even group or organization-based rights (cf. also Albania, PMOI example) – and these important developments may also relate to other country cases – further study on those issues is needed. Facilitating discussion and advancing our understanding of these and related topics will be at the core of this expert meeting.

Conveners:

Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
Tom Syring, Human Rights Research League

Venue:

‘Professorboligen’
University of Oslo
Faculty of Law
Karl Johans gate 47

<https://www.uio.no/english/about/getting-around/areas/city-centre/se04/>

⁷ Anna Patton, *In Uganda, a New Approach for Refugees – and for Ugandans*, Devex.com (Sep. 21, 2016), <https://www.devex.com/news/in-uganda-a-new-approach-for-refugees-and-for-ugandans-88774>.

Program: *International Expert Workshop, Nov. 2, 2018*

- 09:00-09:15 Welcome & Introduction
- Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
Tom Syring, Human Rights Research League
- 09:15-10:45 Session 1: The Global Compacts and Mass Migration Management: Solving or Re-Framing the Problems?
- Morten Bøås, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI): ‘Local Overload and the New Hierarchy of Suffering - Why a New Approach to the Global Refugee Crisis is Necessary’
- Lars Petter Henie, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: ‘The Global Migration Compact Negotiations - Success or Failure?’
- Stefan Salomon, University of Graz, Austria: ‘A Contextual Assessment of the Global Compacts: Prevention, Deterrence, Coercion’
- 10:45-11:00 *Coffee break*
- 11:00-12:30 Session 2: Beyond Encampment: Novel Approaches to Accommodating Refugees and Forced Migrants - Legal and Organizational Developments
- Eva Dick, German Development Institute (DIE) & TU Dortmund University, Germany: ‘Beyond Encampment? Urban Refugee Integration in Kenya in a Multi-Level Policy Context’
- Steven Schneebaum, Johns Hopkins University, USA: ‘Collective Refugee Status and Autonomous Organizations’
- 12:30-13:15 *Lunch break*
- 13:15-14:45 Session 3: Global Trends and the Challenges of Urbanization and Exile: Lessons for Livelihood and Development Policy
- Giulia Maci, European Centre for Development Policy Management, Belgium: ‘Urbanization in Africa and Implications for EU Development Policy’
- Samar Muhareb, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, Jordan: ‘Legal Approaches to Enhancing Social Cohesion and Host/Refugee Community Relations’
- Zeina Zerbé, Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, Lebanon: ‘The Psychology of Exile: Refugee Life and Trauma’

14:45-15:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:00-16:30	<p>Session 4: Fighting Root Causes of Flight: Integration, Circular Migration, and the Promise of Technology</p> <p>Charles Martin-Shields, German Development Institute (DIE), Germany: 'Access to Digital Technology and Migrant Integration in Urban Settings'</p> <p>Fernando de Medina-Rosales & Martin Suvatne, Norwegian Refugee Council, Norway: 'Using Technology to Enhance Legal Identity and HLP Rights in Displacement Contexts'</p>
16:30-17:00	Plans for Further Research and Collaboration
17:00-17:15	Concluding remarks
	<p>Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights Tom Syring, Human Rights Research League</p>

Participant Bios:

Morten Bøås is Research Professor at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). He has published extensively on conflict, war, and complex humanitarian crises in Africa. His latest publications include, *Africa's Insurgents: Navigating an Evolving Landscape*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2017 (Morten Bøås and Kevin Dunn).



Eva Dick, PhD, is a senior researcher in the Research Programme on “Transformation of Political (Dis-) Order” of the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) in Bonn, Germany. She has a Master in Sociology from the University of Hamburg and a PhD in Spatial Planning from TU Dortmund University. Previous to her current position she was a researcher and lecturer at the Faculty of Spatial Planning at TU Dortmund. Her research focus is on multilevel migration governance with a focus on the relevance of diverse forms of mobility for local and urban development and planning.



Lars Petter Henie, senior adviser at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is Norway's chief negotiator in the Global Compact for Migration negotiations. He has been a diplomat for 25 years with a focus on multilateral relations. He has served in Norwegian missions in Washington, Copenhagen and Guatemala.

Stein Erik Horjen is Migration Coordinator in NORAD, Norwegian Agency for Development, and has previously worked on issues of peace and reconciliation, conflict analysis and fragile states. He is member of the Technical Committee for the High-Level Panel on Migration in Africa, chaired by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Horjen is cand. theol. and has for more than twenty years worked on peace and conflict issues in NGOs and various government positions, including as diplomat at the Norwegian Embassies in Kenya and Sudan. He has produced two books, *Lang vei til fred. Om konflikt og forsoning I Sudan og Sør-Sudan* (Oslo 2012) and a revised English version: *Reconciliation in the Sudans* (New York 2016).



Giulia Maci is an international urban development expert. Currently she works at ECDPM, leading the ETTG program and coordinating EU policy-based researches, with a territorial and urban focus. Before becoming ETTG coordinator, Giulia has worked as international consultant at COWI Denmark and as program manager and researcher at IHS in Rotterdam and the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) in Copenhagen, developing and managing international urban

projects. Giulia is an urban planner specialized in smart mobility, urban renovation programs and community-based action planning with work experience in more than 20 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Giulia is also the president and co-founder of Urbego, an international NGO composed by a team of architects, economists and social innovators.



Charles Martin-Shields is currently a researcher at the German Development Institute in Bonn, Germany working on the “Reducing Root Causes of Forced Displacement and Managing Migration” project, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. His research areas include migration and forced displacement, digitalization and ICTs in development, and peace and conflict processes. His work at the German Development Institute focuses on the decision-making processes of migrants and refugees,

particularly those living in and moving through urban environments. He is currently managing projects in Bogota and Kenya, including surveys on ICT use among migrants and how access to digital technologies influences mobility and urban integration. He has also been involved in the T20 process, which gathers policy advice from think tanks across the G20 member states. His policy advice for the T20 focuses on supporting high skill migration, and he will continue to be involved in the T20 migration task force during the Japanese G20 presidency.

Prior to the German Development Institute he worked with the International Security and Development Center, where he is an affiliated researcher, on an FAO-funded project on the political economy of food security and conflict, and was a Visiting Scholar at George Mason University’s School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution during the 2016-17 academic year. During his PhD he was a Fulbright Public Policy Fellow, advising the Samoan Ministry of Communications and Information Technology on disaster response and crisis prevention policy. Outside academia he has consulted for the World Bank, and worked with TechChange Inc and the U.S. Institute of Peace on peacebuilding and training programs. He earned his PhD at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, and holds a MA and BA from American University in Washington, D.C.



Fernando de Medina-Rosales is the Global Manager of the Information, Council and Legal Assistance (ICLA) Programme of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). A lawyer by background, Fernando has dedicated his professional life to work on human rights and rule of law in conflict and development contexts, specialising on housing, land and property and legal identity. He has been driving the development of the ICLA programme during the last decade in particular the use of dispute resolution, monitoring evaluation and most recently the digital

transformation of ICLA’s services. He holds a M.A. in Human Rights and Democratization from the European Inter-University Centre and a LL.M. on International Law from the University of Oslo.

Working with ICLA during the last 11 years, he has explored the links between displacement and statelessness and ensured that NRC’s policies and programmes incorporate adequate responses to prevent statelessness when supporting displaced populations.



Samar Muhareb is Executive Director of Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development – ARDD, a Jordanian NGO which she co-founded in 2008, in response to the Iraqi Refugee Crisis. Having worked as a lawyer for many years prior, Samar realized that one of the most urgent needs refugees and marginalized individuals and communities face, is access to justice regardless of status.

With over 15 years of experience in working for the international aid community, Samar is an expert in the field of human rights, refugee affairs, humanitarian response and women’s empowerment in Jordan and the Middle East. In addition, she actively supports initiatives focusing on environmental justice in the region.

In recognition of her efforts towards furthering social justice and strengthening the role of civil society Samar was awarded the TAKREEM Arab World Young Entrepreneur Award for 2011. In addition, Samar is currently a board member of the START Network, Greenpeace Mediterranean, a member of the Scientific Committee for the Queen Aliya Award, a member of the special committee of the Royal Court’s Human Resources Development initiative, and was also selected as a delegate member to the Arab League under a new initiative to represent the work of civil society in the humanitarian field.

Samar holds a B.A. in Law and a master’s degree in Human Rights and Human Development from the University of Jordan. Since 2014, she teaches Refugee and Migration Studies at the University of Jordan.



Ingvill Thorson Plesner is a senior researcher at the Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Oslo, Norway. She has initiated and is coordinating the Minority Network; a research project on experiences of refugees from Iraq and Syria (with Alexa Døving); and the development of an international online course on minority rights. As part of this work, Plesner had the main responsibility for a two-day international conference on "Minority rights in conflict-ridden societies" on June 18th and 19th 2018, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

In addition to national and international publications, Plesner has developed a number of academic courses in the field of human rights, religion and minority issues, including the massive open online course on “Mass migration and human rights: Legal and ethical dilemmas”, and initiated and directed research projects and edited publications in these fields.



Stefan Salomon is lecturer at the Institute of International Law at the University of Graz, where he is the founder and head of the Refugee Law Clinic. Previously, he worked at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a European Union agency. His research focuses primarily on international and European refugee and migration law, human rights law, and legal theory. Stefan currently works on a research project on how transnational governance of irregular migration transforms citizenship. In a second research project, Stefan looks at the concept of territory in international and EU law.



Steven M. Schneebaum has been a lawyer in private practice in Washington, D.C., for four decades. He established his own firm in 2014, which focuses on litigation and international law, representing clients in U.S. courts as well as in transnational and domestic arbitral proceedings. He also counsels clients on dispute avoidance through negotiation. Steven has been an adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, since 1990.

He has chaired or participated in numerous organizations dedicated to making legal representation available to those who cannot afford it (including victims of human rights violations and inmates on Death Row), and to promoting the study and practice of international law. He was founding Chair of the International Law Students Association in the 1990s, and currently serves as a Counsellor to the American Society of International Law, on the Board of Directors of the American Branch of the International Law Association, and as a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. He is a past Co-Chair of the International Refugee Law Interest Group of the American Society of International Law, and the Death Penalty Representation Project of the American Bar Association.



Martin Suvatne is the Head of Core Competencies of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The Core Competences are NRC's six technical areas of expertise. As of 2019 these are: 1) Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA), 2) Education, 3) Shelter and Settlements, 4) Livelihoods and Food Security, 5) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and 6) Camp Management. Martin also holds NRC's portfolio on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) where NRC is heading the Housing, Land and Property Area of Responsibility (HLP AoR) under the Global Protection Cluster IASC.

In his role as the head of core competences Martin is accountable to the relevance of NRC's programme portfolio. His teams in the six core competences continuously develop policies, approaches and guidance to facilitate displaced people's access to durable solutions and protect their rights.

An architect by background, Martin has been working for several years with disaster risk reduction and local governance programmes for GIZ and with shelter and settlements programmes for NRC. Martin holds a Dipl.-Ing. (Diploma Engineer) degree from the University of Karlsruhe, Germany.



Nora Sveaass, Professor, Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo. As a psychologist my main focus has been both on clinical, advocacy and academic work in relation to torture survivors in general and with refugees in particular. Furthermore - a strong engagement in the work related to the prohibition and prevention of torture and the right to rehabilitation for victims of torture. My research has centered on these issues as well as to family therapy with refugees, psychosocial work with war victims in Central America, early identification of health problems related to torture and other human rights violations in asylum-seekers, and on transitional justice in Latin America. Former member of UN Committee Against Torture (CAT), 2006-2013. At the present, member of the UN Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture (OPCAT/SPT). Publications on human rights and psychology,

political psychology, prevention of torture and rehabilitation to victims of torture.



Tom Syring is Chairman of the Human Rights Research League. He has been a Lecturer in International Law, Political Philosophy, and International Relations at the University of Oslo, a Visiting Fulbright Scholar and Lecturer in International Law at Boston University, a Legal Adviser at the Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board, and a Visiting Scholar at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights. Syring has particularly published and lectured on issues at the intersection of international humanitarian law, international criminal law, refugee law, and human rights. Recent and current research projects include a book on the root causes of protracted refugee crises (*Still Waiting for Tomorrow: The Law and Politics of Unresolved Refugee Crises*, co-edited, with Susan Akram); an inquiry into Constitutional Coups d'état in Sub-Saharan Africa; and a forthcoming, co-edited volume (with Richard Falk) on state responsibility for refugees and other people in need of protection in the context of war and occupation (*War, Occupation, and Refugees*). Tom Syring is a Co-Founder and former Co-Chair of the American Society of International Law's Interest Group on International Refugee Law, a member of the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM), and Co-Chair of the European Society of International Law's Interest Group on Migration & Refugee Law.



Michael Waugh is the Project Manager for Core Competency Digital Product Development at The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Michael has a BA degree in Political Science and Sociology and is a Carpenter/Builder by trade. Working in the humanitarian sector since taking a leave of absence from PhD studies in 2009, Michael has worked primarily in the Shelter and Settlements sector. He joined NRC in 2014 working as Shelter Project Manager and later Shelter Specialist in the NRC Iraq Country Program and during this time co-lead the Shelter Working Group and later the Shelter Cluster. Since September 2016, he has been based in Oslo as a Shelter Adviser and more recently taken on his current role managing two digital product development projects – one exploring the use of digital platforms to facilitate housing for conflict affected populations and the other focusing on digital transformation for the Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance core competency.



Zeina Zerbé is a clinical psychologist and a psychoanalytical psychotherapist. She is also a lecturer at the Saint-Joseph University of Beirut. She has been working for ten years in Palestinian camps in Lebanon as a psychologist consultant and a psychotherapist for local and international NGOs.

Interested and intrigued by the nexus between political phenomena and their psychosocial repercussions, she initiated in 2013, a personal research that explores the psychosocial and political triggers of the Lebanese civil war. Thus, she notably focuses on various episodes of the Lebanese civil war and the lived experiences of politicians and militias' ex-fighters. Through her work, she attempts to propose an understanding of unresolved traumas generated by cycles of violence, which, according to her, are partially but deeply related to the current psycho-social and political impairment. Broadly, the objective of her research is to contribute, through the psychoanalytical perspective and analysis, to the work on collective memory and the writing of history.



Gentian Zyberi is an Albanian international legal scholar and practitioner. Currently, professor Zyberi is the Head of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR, Centre). He holds a bachelor's degree (LL.B) from Tirana University, Albania, and a Master's degree (LL.M) and a PhD degree in International Law from Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Prior to joining the Centre, he has worked at the Amsterdam Center for International Law of the University of Amsterdam and the Netherlands

Institute of Human Rights of Utrecht University, in the Netherlands. His current research focuses on the contribution of the International Court of Justice and other international courts and tribunals to interpreting and developing rules and principles of international law of human rights, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law; protection of community interests under international law; issues concerning the operationalization of the responsibility to protect doctrine; and, on transitional justice issues.

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Human Rights Research League

The Human Rights Research League (HRRL) is a non-governmental organization aiming at protecting individuals by placing human rights abuses, acts contrary to international humanitarian law, systemic grievances as well as humanitarian emergencies on the agenda. HRRL seeks to contribute to knowledge and research based public discussion and problem analysis without geographical, political, confessional or other limitations or alignments.

As our name suggests, we are an organization primarily focused on research from the basis of a strong academic foundation. However, we recognize that lasting impact and positive change also depend on connecting academics and practitioners, combining research on root causes of human rights violations with implementation of projects and policies addressing those grievances.

To this end, we are engaged in four focus areas: Research. Education. Advocacy. Development. (R.E.A.D.), all with a view to bridging the gap between academic and practical approaches to human rights, and between problem analysis and implementation of solutions.

