



oxford monitor of forced migration
Volume 5, Issue 2, December 2015



Editorial

Dear Reader

The Society for the German Language selects a Word of the Year every December in an attempt to capture the dominant political and cultural theme of the nation. For 2015 they chose *‘flüchtlinge’*, the German term for refugee. In a similar process, the Danish Language Board selected the word *‘flygtningestrømme’*, which translates to ‘stream of refugees’. And while Oxford Dictionaries edgily declared this emoji 🤔 to be word of the year, ‘refugee’ was at the top of the shortlist.

Since the ninth issue of the Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration (August 2015) the topic of refugee rights and border control has been elevated from a salient political issue into a zeitgeist-level question of justice, largely as a result of forced migration from Syria.

Videos of German towns welcoming resettled Syrians with communal singing have gone viral, as have photos of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau meeting refugees at Toronto airport. We’ve also seen displays of creative responses and commentary through, for instance, the development of an Airbnb for refugees and ‘techfugee’ hackathon events that seek to engage the tech sector in refugee support. Banksy’s latest blockbuster image depicted Steve Jobs as a refugee stencilled onto a wall in Calais and the musician M.I.A released the single ‘Borders’ in which she asks her listeners: ‘borders, what’s up with that?’

The turning point for all of this was, perhaps, the singular photo of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned at sea and was washed ashore on a Turkish beach. This image, ‘the picture that moved the world’ (Sydney Morning Herald, 2015), spurred compassion, scepticism, and debate on how to respond to forced migration out of Syria as well as significantly broader debates on the problematic nature of border controls in a world of massively unequal access to security.

This tenth issue of OxMo facilitates reflection on a fragment of the complicated universe of issues relating to forced migration. This edition—complete with seven articles written by graduate students, young researchers, and an individual who was resettled to New Zealand as a refugee—has been produced by an editorial board comprised of students who finished their Master’s degrees in Forced Migration and Migration Studies in 2014.

In the policy section, we have two pieces that provide unique perspectives on challenges in Syria. Alex Odlum’s piece ‘Syrian informal tented settlements in Jordan: humanitarian gaps and challenges’ draws attention to the neglected plight of informal tent settlements in Jordan and the challenges faced by Syrian refugees living in these settlements. Lewis Turner critically analyses the centrality of camps in the UK government’s attempt to deal with refugees in his ‘On encampment and gendered vulnerabilities: a critical analysis of the UK’s vulnerable persons relocation scheme for Syrian refugees.’ He argues that resettlement schemes which focus on those living in camps fail to recognise the realities of Syrian displacement and draws attention to the way that a gendered discourse enforces a neo-colonial view in which only vulnerable refugees can be resettled.

In the academic section Nikolas Feith Tan examines Australia's use of extraterritorial migration controls to prevent to arrival of asylum seekers. In his article 'State responsibility for international cooperation on migration control: the case of Australia' Tan considers avenues for holding Australia responsible for possible human rights law violations that take place in the context of co-operative non-entrée policies.

In the law section we have a timely piece by Lorne Allan Waldman and Warda Shazadi Meighen: 'The wrong end of the wedge: migrants and Islamophobia in the 2015 Canadian federal election'. The authors consider anti-Islamic sentiment in Canada, and the danger of policy and legislation emerging from mistrust. The second article in the law section addresses the war crime of forced displacement in non-international armed conflicts (NIACs) under the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC Statute). The author of this piece, Anubhav Dutt Tiwari, evaluates the foundations of the prohibition of forced displacement in NIACs under international humanitarian law (IHL).

In the field section, Silvio Majorino reflects on six months of work experience in a migration reception centre in Italy in order to assess how Europe could more effectively receive asylum-seeking migrants. His piece, 'The Italian reception system in the context of southern Sicily', he forwards suggestions that could reveal long-term solutions for refugee integration, even in resource-poor localities.

Finally, in the first hand section, Dr Mayan shares her personal experiences of growing up as a transgender woman in Yemen and charts the experience of being resettled as a refugee in New Zealand.

We hope the collection of articles here facilitates a reflection on a small fraction of questions that are raised by forced migration, an issue that for many will define 2015. Your comments, questions, and continued interest in these matters are encouraged and we invite you to please be in touch.

Sincerely

Andonis Marden & Angelica Neville

Editors in Chief

December 2015

The next volume of OxMo will be published in mid-2016. Please see the Call for Papers at the end of this issue for submission details.