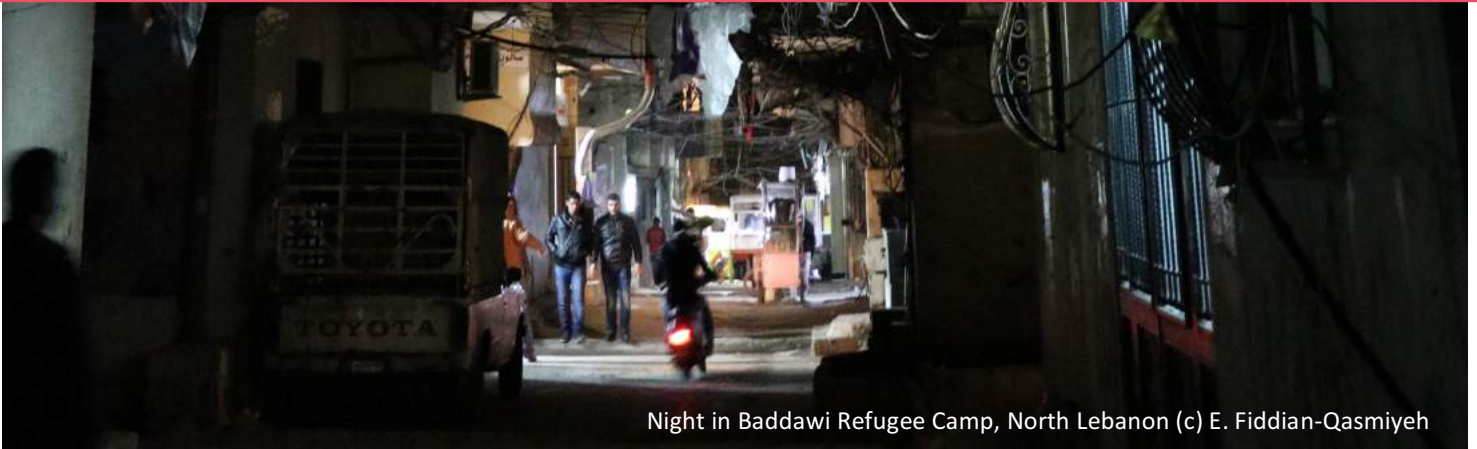REFUGEE HOSTS

Newsletter No. 3 Winter 2017/18

Night in Baddawi Refugee Camp, North Lebanon (c) E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh

Contents

Looking Ahead: Project Milestones in 2018

The Refugee Hosts research project has now entered its second year. In this time, the research team has developed a thriving community of conversation on our website, developed and piloted our research tools and conducted preliminary research in our field sites in Lebanon and Jordan. Moving forward, the research team, including our local researchers, are conducting research in Lebanon and Jordan, deploying social mapping methods and participatory observation to build a sense of the spaces where refugees from Syria (including displaced Syrians, Palestinians and Iraqis) are living alongside host communities. In the coming year, the Refugee Hosts project looks forward to completing our data collection, which will include over 500 interviews with refugees from Syria and members of host communities, over 20 participatory workshops, a series of creative writing workshops and 100 interviews with representatives of international, national and local organisations. We are also continuing to run series on our blog to hone in on key themes explored by our project. Currently, we are focusing on the localisation of aid agenda. You can read more about our new series, "Contextualising the Localisation of Aid Agenda", on page 16, or visit our website (www.refugeehosts.org) for information on this and past series.

One of our project's aims has been to disrupt mainstream humanitarian narratives which have traditionally represented, and therefore *constituted*, refugees as individual suffering victims, passive recipients of aid and/or as unique 'ideal' refugees who are *truly* worthy of international sympathy, assistance, and protection. By disrupting these and other established narratives and representational strategies, we ultimately aim to document, trace and examine alternative ways of seeing, knowing, feeling, listening to, writing, reading, drawing, conceptualising, and otherwise responding to displacement.

In order to achieve this, between September and November 2017 we invited submissions to our website series, called 'Representations of Displacement' that reflect on and critically examine how, why and with what effect refugees are represented. This series brought together insights, creative pieces and new research that goes beyond a focus on the exceptional victim of the humanitarian imagination, to explore ways of representing the diverse, everyday role(s) played by both refugees and local hosting communities in responding to the challenges of displacement.

Contributions to this series also examined different ways that local communities can be brought into representation. How can a focus on the 'spaces' where refugees are living, and the communities that they have (or have not been) welcomed into, help us to better understand diverse experiences of and responses to displacement? How are both hosting and displaced communities represented and conceptualised in public and academic circles, and what impact does this representation have on policy and practice both locally and internationally? To further this critical aim, the Refugee Hosts team has outlined a 'spaces and places, not faces' approach, which is introduced in more detail by Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Principal Investigator) in the following article.

Below you can read a selection of pieces submitted to this series. For the full collection, including soundscapes, photo galleries, poems and new research, visit the Representations of Displacement Series page on our website.

Spaces and Places, Not Faces: Introducing the Refugee Hosts Approach
By Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Refugee Hosts PI, UCL

Disrupting Humanitarian Narratives?
Mainstream humanitarian narratives of victimhood, suffering and – more recently – of what we can call 'the super-refugee' (i.e. the Olympian swimmer who has overcome herculean feats, the hyper-successful entrepreneur, the genius who changed the world), have often been heralded as offering an important corrective to media and political representations which frame refugees as 'waves' and 'masses' which threaten individual, communal, national and international security.

'Humanising' refugees by centralising 'the human face'; recounting 'refugee stories' and listening to refugees' 'lived experiences' of surviving harrowing journeys and different forms of violence, are all key components of such an approach: they are perceived as essential ways to enhance public understanding, compassion and sympathy. In an era of hostility towards refugees, of closed borders and push-backs, it could appear counter-productive – unethical even? – to interrogate the foundations, nature and implications of such approaches. As Harrell-Bond asked when interrogating whether "humanitarian work with refugees can be humane," could critiquing 'well-meaning,' 'humanising,' 'humanitarian' representations of worthy refugee victims, ultimately be like "sending mother's apple pie to the Federal Drug Administration for chemical analysis or turning the dog over to medical research"?

As unsettling as such a critique may be for many, representations of 'worthy' refugees which fit the humanitarian narrative – vulnerable, suffering, grateful, *appropriately* resourceful and *positively* contributing to the local economy – are of course themselves not apolitical depictions of reality. While they may lead to compassion – even acts of solidarity – they nonetheless actively *constitute* problematic and at times deadly *realities,* including for the 'worthy' refugees who are forced to fit into this narrative, and also for the unworthy refugees and migrants against whom they are explicitly and implicitly compared and contrasted (as I argue here). These representations are permeated by hierarchical processes of inclusion and exclusion, including on the basis of gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion: only certain faces, bodies, identities, voices, stories, words, are seen, heard, read, and empathized with, while others remain – or are purposefully rendered – invisible and on the margins.

Representations of Everyday Lives in Displacement

In light of the dangers – and epistemic violence – inherent within mainstream humanitarian narratives, this blog series aims to examine different ways of representing *everyday* processes of displacement *and* of hosting, and to critically explore what the implications of these different approaches might be.

Photos of everyday life. Left to Right: Making it work: electricity cables and clothes lines over one of the alleyways in Baddawi refugee camp, Lebanon (c) E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh. In Burj El-Barajneh camp (Lebanon) Palestinian and Syrian refugees collaborate on a building project inside the camp (c) S. Maqusi. Shadows of everyday life in Baddawi (c) E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh.

On the one hand, this entails examining ways of representing the diverse roles played by both refugees *and* local hosting communities in responding to the everyday challenges of displacement. Indeed, while acknowledging the roles played by individuals and families, we especially wish to examine how local *communities* (such as the ones Refugee Hosts is working with in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey) can be brought into representation in ways that are humane and respectful, and which neither dehumanize nor idealize their members. To this end, we are particularly interested in considering how a focus on the 'spaces' where refugees and hosts are living, and the communities that they have (or have not) been welcomed into, can help us to better (or at least differently) understand displacement and hosting. In turn, what impacts do public, NGO and academic representations of host and displaced communities have on politics, policy and practice on local, national and international levels?

On the other hand, it involves going beyond the focus on the actions, agency and experiences of individuals affected by conflict, to examine diverse ways that different refugees and hosts themselves may *conceptualise* and *represent* the encounters that take place throughout displacement *and* hosting.

As Refugee Hosts' Writer in Residence, Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, reflected in an earlier piece entitled 'The Camp is Time':

> *Who writes the camp and what is it that ought to be written in a time where the plurality of lives has traversed the place itself to become its own time. […]*
>
> *What am I saying right now, in this specific instant and under the false impression that the camp is mine? I say that it is the autobiography of the camp that is autobiographising the camp, suspended in time it is, while we deliberate the impossibility of narration in that context. In order to think of narration (not necessarily its narration), we follow it discreetly in the shape of ash.*

And, in his latest piece published as part of this series, he posits:

> *Only refugees can forever write the archive.*

Through our research we aim to centralise the ways that people affected by displacement are *analysts of their own situations*, and those of others. This will be achieved, for instance, through exploring the intersections between historical and contemporary journeys of displacement and hosting, including through a combination of interviews, focus groups, and creative writing workshops with members of host and refugee communities in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

Rather than asking people to recount their harrowing experiences of displacement, by bringing together people who are now refugees but once were members of host communities, and hosts who have themselves experienced displacement (including refugees hosting refugees), we intend to examine how people affected by the Syrian conflict *conceptualise* the encounter between refugees and hosts, and how they represent – and *perform* – this to one another, to us and to themselves.

Importantly, as we have argued on Refugee Hosts,

> *Creative methods may enable diverse forms of 'self-exploration' and 'self-expression', but they can (and perhaps should) also simultaneously provide a space for participants to transcend and resist different forms of externally imposed expectations. This can include providing a space to resist the expectations inherent within the scripts referred to above – of the vulnerable/ violent/ bogus/ grateful refugee -, but also the very expectation that participants will (or should) be performing in an 'authentic' way and 'revealing' their 'true self' during workshops.*

Furthermore, as Refugee Hosts Co-I Lyndsey Stonebridge has argued here:

> *Poetry is not therapy, and writing is only creative to the extent that can be accommodated between people. It is a kind of host. We will be developing and exploring the kind of hosting that poetry and translation can make possible throughout Refugee Hosts.*

Spaces and Places, Not Faces

As one of the precursors to this Representations of Displacement series, Aydan Greatrick and I concluded in our earlier reflection on The Roles of Performance and Creative Writing in Refugee-Related Research, that

> *Meaningfully engaging with diverse narratives around refugees' encounters in different spaces requires us to continue thinking critically about the different roles that diverse creative practices can play when conducting research with people affected by conflict and displacement.*

It is also this focus on *encounters* over time and *space*, and our focus on 'communities' (noting that this is itself a problematic concept and 'unit of analysis'), that guides our project's foundational approach to photography, what I call our '*Spaces and Places, not Faces*' approach.

Our decision not to take photographs of, or publish the faces of people affected by conflict and displacement is of course far from unique in the context of Refugee and Humanitarian Studies (for instance, see Oxfam's guidelines on Photography in humanitarian crises, and *Forced Migration Review*'s photo policy). In part, the Refugee Hosts' policy echoes the – by now almost standard – acknowledgement of the risks and ethical quandaries of displaying refugees' faces in publications and on websites, or the dehumanizing implications of pixelating or otherwise blurring facial features.

However, beyond these quandaries, our provocation to approach representation through a 'Spaces and Places, not Faces' paradigm is an invitation to rethink the potentialities and limitations of different modes of photography in contexts of displacement and hosting (see the new photo-essay on page 7 as an example of this approach). It raises, amongst other things, the question: Does the absence of 'the humanizing face' in our photographs necessarily embody a failure to *resist* the dehumanization of refugees? Or might it offer a productive alternative mode of 'seeing', 'feeling', 'understanding' and 'being with' communities affected by displacement: refugees and hosts alike? It is our hope that our approach (or at least the provocation) can be viewed as offering an entry point for the latter, with other modes of representation – and hosting – which we are exploring in this vein including soundscapes, poetry, graphic novels, painting and creative writing.

Hearing Social Encounters: Soundscapes and Sound Essays

As part of the Representations of Displacement series, we have highlighted the role soundscapes can play in social science and interdisciplinary research. Along with soundscapes from several of our research sites, including Baddawi and Hamra in Lebanon, we have also featured a sound essay from Athens, that the authors have described as an 'anthropology in sound'.

Summer in Athens: A Sound Essay: This soundscape is the product of a collaboration between Tom Western, Said Azim Karimi, Muhammad Sukarno Kurdi, Georgios Sourmelis and Sofia Zafeiriou. It is 'an anthropology in sound', capturing diverse social encounters that have emerged in response to the arrival or refugees in Athens. Image (c) T. Western.

Sounds from Hamra, Lebanon: This soundscape was recorded by Prof Alastair Ager (Refugee Hosts Co-I) and documents the different encounters and sounds of everyday life in a neighbourhood of Beirut that has hosted many refugees from Syria. Image (c) WikkiCommons

Listen to these soundscapes on our website.

The Multiple Faces of Representation

By Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, Oxford University, and Odile Ammann, University of Fribourg

The face of the Other – under all the particular forms of expression where the Other, already in a character's skin, plays a role – is just as much pure expression, an extradition without defense or cover, precisely the extreme rectitude of a facing, which in this nudity is an exposure unto death: nudity, destitution, passivity, and pure vulnerability. Such is the face as the very mortality of the other person.

I
Representation is never a word. Its deceitful individuality is a precept to the repressed many.

II
Representation consists in trusting the eyes completely (but whose eyes?), privileging the face at the expense of the body – the body proper – whose dweller is never absent but absented.

III
Representation persistently leans on othering. It leans until its entire body is above the Other.

IV
To represent is to say, in the language of the absolute, loudly, so loudly, "this absence of the Other is precisely its presence as Other".

V
Representation has more than one face. In German, the verb 'to represent' can be translated by *darstellen* (to display, portray, express), by *verkörpern* (to embody), or by *vertreten* (to replace, act on behalf of).[3] The third of these conveys the legal meaning of the word representation: to act on behalf of, with legally binding effects. Consequently, the many other layers of the word *vertreten* reveal the complexity and manifold connotations of this term. Such equivalents are 'to be present besides others'; 'to defend a point of view'; 'to stumble'; and, finally, 'efface' and, thereby, 'to bring into an unsightly state through stomping'.

VI

Representation lies precisely in detecting the face and presupposing its disfigurement. Without the face, the represented is not present by means of his sheer presence, but to a large extent is there(in) at the expense of his presence. These two propositions are what precipitate the finitude of the face. Indeed, the representer portrays it as a defining element that not only represents the whole, but equally nullifies it.

VII

Can a face with a body that is barely visible claim to be the face of an entity? Or is it the deferred face of a deferred body? The refugee face is both the animate and the inanimate of a face. It is the animate in its potential to be 'such as', 'as', and 'like' a human face. It is inanimate in its association with, inherence within, and clattering against the antithesis of a human – or simply the beast.

VIII

The verb 'to represent' has the clatter of a slap; of an abrasive touch that aggravates the touched and lingers. As it always touches the face and nothing else, it abates the distance between the slap and the face. Hence, this process can reach the status of an experience.

IX

'To represent' also consists in not giving the face time with itself. The representer manipulates it in a way that asserts its disappearance from its body. Despite the suggested neutrality of the infinitive 'to represent', representation always occurs in the past; the past of the past, the farthest past, as if representation were always akin to the ritual of burial, a burial normally preceded by an insignificant death.

X

The refugee is never the representer unless in death. The refugee dies alone, and this lonely death, singular and subjective, suddenly becomes that of all.

XI

But will this death retain the face in its fullness, in its entirety?

XII

The face of the refugee is no longer part of the proper body, but the trace of a presence. Everything returns to the origin, that is, the body.

XIII

The face is the only part deemed worthy of representation, regardless of the body.

XIV

The represented exists on his own, a shadow, an attained nothing, devoid of parameters. Like a scarecrow, veiled by twigs and straw, he scares off other strangers and guards the fields of the citizen.

XV

If the skin were to speak, it would utter the language of disappearance, not the nonexistence of the self, but the suddenness of the face's image.

XVI

What if the refugee were born without a face?

The remnants of a library with pots and pans on the roof of a house in Baddawi refugee camp (c) E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh Jan 2017.

Walking at night in Baddawi refugee camp

Invisible (At) Night: Space, Time and Photography in a Refugee Camp
By Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Refugee Hosts

If our perceptions of refugees' experiences of displacement were based on photographs produced and disseminated by the UN, NGOs and the media, we could be forgiven for assuming that refugees' daytimes are either seemingly eternal or that night-time merely exists for sleeping. However, photographers capture the spaces and times where/when humanitarian officials, journalists and academics (typically non-refugees) have visited a given refugee context, rather than the spaces and times inhabited – day and night and everything in between -, by diverse groups of refugees and hosts.

Many – or perhaps most – external visitors to the spaces inhabited by refugees in camps and cities arrive after dawn and depart before dusk, with their cameras' lenses capturing refugees' day-time endeavours and activities in a selective way.

Whether for reasons of safety or comfort, due to official restrictions or personal decisions, visitors and their cameras may remain during daylight hours, but then typically return to their own temporary or permanent homes elsewhere, withdrawing their gaze from the diverse spaces inhabited by refugees.

And yet these spaces, and their inhabitants, not only remain after dusk, but come to life in different ways. As I look back at the photographs I have published on Refugee Hosts of the last four fieldtrips I have made to the urban Baddawi Palestinian refugee camp in North Lebanon between 2015 and 2017 – when I resided in the camp for several weeks at a time -, I found a preponderance of images depicting diverse spaces and people under the sun and in daylight shadows and shade, with only a handful of evening and sunset photographs.

Some photographs were taken at night, but the viewer may not have known this, as they are images I took indoors under artificial light. As a research project aiming to explore the 'everyday' spaces of encounter between refugees from Syria and their diverse hosting communities – in this case, established Palestinian refugees in Baddawi camp – my photo-essays seem, so far, to have centralised representations of 'the day' to the detriment of the diverse temporalities of these encounters and spaces.

Over the course of this photo-essay, I purposefully include night-time images of the camp's alleyways, cemetery and skyline, as a means of taking a few further steps towards reflecting on the invisibility **of** the night and refugees' (in)visibility **at** night in this and other refugee contexts.

Part of this reflection is offered as a means of highlighting the extent to which certain facets of refugees' lives, and indeed certain refugees, can become invisible through this tendency to photograph during the daytime. However, it also opens up – or requires – a space to acknowledge the decisions – including aesthetic ones – which may consciously or unconsciously drive the framing and dissemination of particular depictions of certain people and spaces while others remain, or are rendered, invisible.

Arriving in Baddawi: a night-time view
This photo-essay traces the steps one might take – whether as a visitor, long-time resident, or new arrival – when entering and walking through Baddawi refugee camp in the evening and night. The photographs were taken on a series of 'walking tours' I took with different people in and around the camp, in which I follow the steps of camp residents to enter the camp, walking through alleyways which are variously dark or brightly lit, traverse the camp's original cemetery, and pass shops whose owners' relatives – I am told – have lost their lives whilst trying to reach Europe.

While I was often invited to photograph these and other people during my walks, here, as elsewhere on our blog and in our Refugee Hosts project more broadly, I have consciously decided not to place individual people's faces on display. Rather, through these photos I aim to invite the reader/viewer to consider the dynamics – social, economic, religious, political, historical and contemporary – which have created and continue to create these spaces of encounter between different groups of hosts and refugees. This is one of the decisions – which may itself be contested and challenged on different levels – which guides our project, and is explored through this new blog series on 'Representations of [everyday life in] Displacement'.

### *'Nobody knows for certain where the camp's entrance is' – Y. M. Qasmiyeh*

Approaching one of the entrances to Baddawi

As this first series of photographs depicts, the contours of where the camp begins and ends are both clear and blurred – the electricity generator, with a Palestinian flag waving above it, is both **of** the camp and **for** the camp, and yet is not '**in**' the camp's officially designated territory. The generator is situated outside Baddawi's narrow alleyways which separate the buildings constructed upon land leased by UNRWA for Palestinian refugees' 'usage'. Equally, the shops and houses on the borders of the camp –run by Palestinians, Lebanese, Iraqis – cater to refugees and non-refugees who live inside and outside of that space; and the cars parked in what initially appears as a 'cul-de-sac' upon arrival belong to people of diverse nationalities, legal statuses and none. The apparent 'cul-de-sac' itself does not only **not** lead to an 'end' but rather to multiple beginnings of and entrances to the camp.
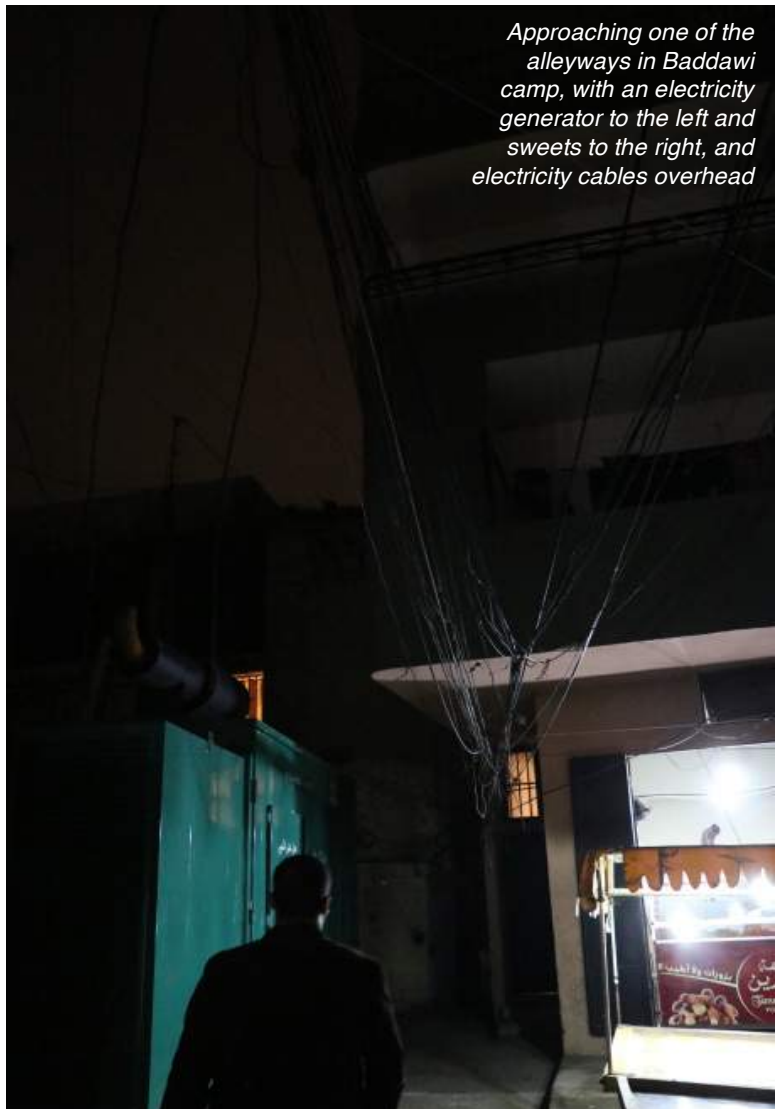
Approaching one of the alleyways in Baddawi camp, with an electricity generator to the left and sweets to the right, and electricity cables overhead
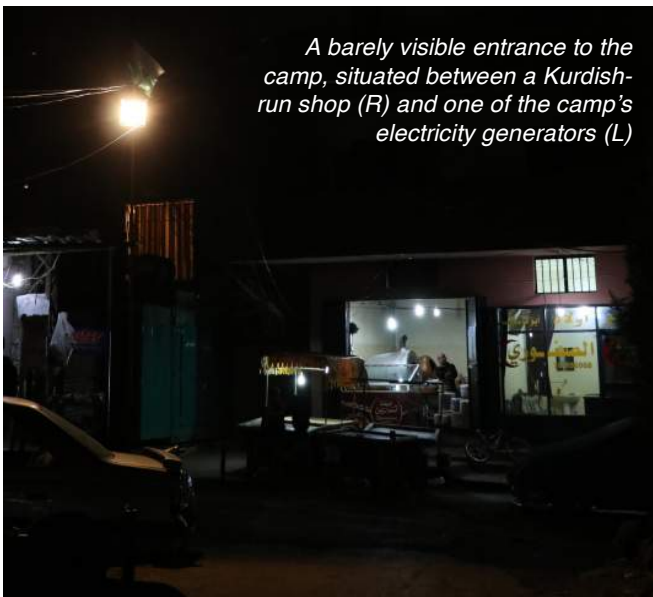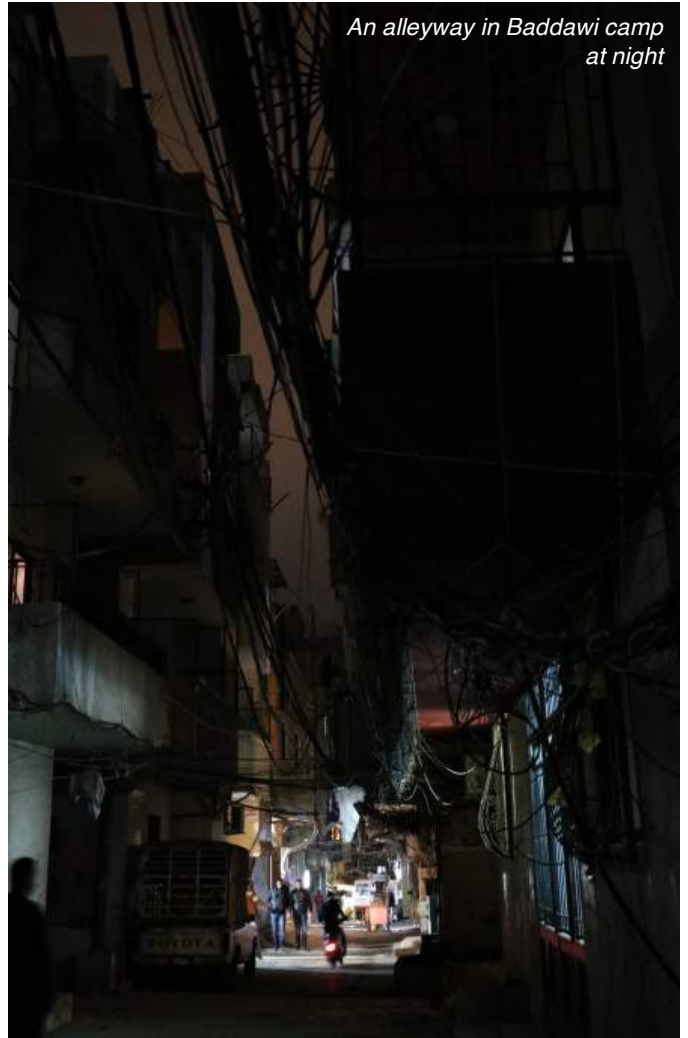

A barely visible entrance to the camp, situated between a Kurdish-run shop (R) and one of the camp's electricity generators (L)

Electricity cables congregating to enter Baddawi camp

An alleyway in Baddawi camp at night

Another alleyway at night in Baddawi refugee camp

Electricity cables at night

'Refugees. Present/Absent' Escaping the Traps of Refugee (Mis)Representations

By Dominika Blachincka-Cicek, University of Sheffield

Hypervisibility and invisibility of the displaced

In contrast to some approaches which highlight the suffering individual through photographs, I would echo Refugee Hosts' assertion that focusing on 'spaces and places not faces' can potentially help us understand the complexity, relationality and everydayness of displacement.

In November 2016, I built on this idea when preparing an exhibition about representations of the 'refugee crises' in Poland with Przemysław Wielgosz, the co–curator of the event. The idea for the exhibition emerged from our dismay that the so-called 'refugee crisis' had become the single biggest political issue in Poland, despite receiving hardly any refugees from the Middle East or Africa. Since 2015, people fleeing to Europe – voiceless, powerless and, largely, absent – have become the major target of a hateful campaign pursued by the right-wing government. Despite this, no other institutions in Poland – the private media, other political parties, or the Catholic Church – challenged the hateful and racist language used by the government and state-run media.

The exhibition, which we called 'Refugees. Present/ Absent', was held in Kraków at Galeria Księgarina/Wystawa, and run by Pamoja Foundation. It was our attempt to engage with the horrifying paradox of refugee hypervisibility/ invisibility in Poland, and to offer a critical response to the ways in which the figure of 'the refugee' has been hijacked by the right and abused for their own short-term political goals. The aim of the exhibition, and the accompanying cultural programme, was to expose the dehumanizing and demonising mechanisms of refugee representations in public discourse, in which refugees are reduced to a 'threat': the ultimate 'other'.

Turn to places, spaces and material traces of displacement

To break away from the fixity of visual representations, we turned to the spaces, places and objects that had 'witnessed' people's flight across the Balkans. The photographs of Mikołaj Długosz and Kuba Czerwiński, taken on the so-called West Balkan Route, focused on the traces and material proof of refugee flight across Europe. They looked to the backyards of the Albanian Preševo in Serbia, where asylum seekers stopped to rest, to the petrol station and the adjacent meadows on the outskirts of the town of Idomeni in Greece, where people slept in the absence of much needed infrastructure. Finally, their lenses looked at the architecture of control – border crossings, registration centres and train terminals – the sites and agents of power that regulated and constrained the movement of people across the borders. There are no close-ups, no photos of children, no attempts to exoticize the displaced, no desire to highlight the 'difference' between us and them. Długosz and Czerwiński's photographs were interested in traces of refugees' everyday lives: rubbish, abandoned blankets and wet clothes – remains of refugees' material presence and the temporariness of their existence.

This shift of focus has enabled us to create a different framework of conversation that – we believe – is less bound by an ideological appropriation of the refugee narrative. The focus on materiality – on remains and traces – has helped us to move the conversation about refugee experiences to a different ground, rooting representations of displaced peoples in the physical and material aspects of their flight. The focus on materiality somehow enabled us to shorten the distance and turn our gaze away from an obsession with the identities and 'otherness' of refugees, in order to rebuild a sense of compassion instead. As Przemek observed:

> It was in these wet blankets, in the abandoned shoes that the photographs – the reality which we have strived so hard to ignore – have helped us reclaim space not only for a critical analysis of political and economic reasons of displacement, but also, when thinking about European politics – its function in managing the European crisis and legitimizing the 'state of exception'.

This piece has been edited for this newsletter. You can read the full article on our website.

Hope, Resilience and Uncertainty: A Day with Displaced Syrians in Turkey

By Charlotte Loris-Rodionoff, University College London

"Look! All the paths are closed!" Hanan says pointing at the drawings the coffee has left in her cup. "There is no opening… This is not a good sign!" she continues while turning the small white coffee cup in her hands. It is early morning, and Hanan and I are the only ones awake in the flat. The children are still asleep on the living room floor, where we are sitting drinking our morning coffee, and reading our future. Hanan has been obsessed with coffee reading for the last couple of weeks as she is looking for signs and answers about her future. Will she stay in Turkey? Will she return to her parents' village in Syria? Or will she cross to Europe? In this morning's cup, rather than giving a possible direction, the coffee just shows that the future is dark and without much hope.

I have been sub-letting a room in Hanan's flat for the last six months in a city near the Turkish-Syrian border where I am doing my PhD fieldwork. My research examines Syrian revolutionaries' everyday life in exile, and the ways in which involvement in the revolution and the climate of uncertainty, mainly due to the absence of clear status for Syrians in Turkey, generate different temporal horizons and economies of hope. The small ethnographic vignettes I present in this piece reveal the everyday practices and worries of Syrians in Southern Turkey and their links with their revolutionary past and their hopes for the future, whether they imagine it in Syria, Turkey or Europe. It also gives a glimpse into what a life in displacement means at personal, familial and intimate levels for people whose families are scattered in different countries.


Turkey's urban centres offer opportunities for refugees, but also new spaces of exclusion and exile (c) C. Loris-Rodionoff

It has been a week now that I have been awoken by Hanan's early Skype calls with relatives and friends either in Europe or in Syria. Everyday she announces the departure or the arrival of another person. Since the summer, the number of Syrians fleeing to Europe has increased greatly, and everyday she hears of another acquaintance who is on her way or has arrived in Europe. But to her, leaving the border town where we live means abandoning her country and most importantly giving up her hope that the regime will finally fall and the revolution will succeed, which she is not yet ready to do.

When I ask her what she is planning to do, she says she doesn't know: "As long as I can stay here I will, but as soon as the border opens I will be on my way home…" But in order to be able to stay in Turkey she needs to find a job, as she will not be able to survive another six months with the money she has managed to save. She is pulled apart between three horizons: returning to her hometown, living in exile, becoming a refugee in Europe. She doesn't find an answer in today's coffee cup. She only notices that everything is dark and all the paths are closed. She points towards the white lines that close up towards the edges of her cup, and shows me that those lines are wide open in my own cup. We go to the kitchen to finish our morning ritual: she flips the cup on its saucer and observes the drawings left by the coffee on it. She does not see any relevant pattern so we decide to leave it here for today. "Let's see what we'll have tomorrow!"

I hurry to get ready as I promised my friend Amal that I would accompany her to the gynaecologist. I met Amal a year ago while volunteering in a Syrian local organisation. She is also the person who introduced me to Hanan as she was looking to sublet one of her rooms. Amal is visiting a Syrian doctor despite the precariousness of some of their 'underground' practices, as she has no trust in Turkish doctors, and doesn't speak the language. Officially, Syrian doctors are not allowed to work in Turkey although surgeries have been opening in incongruous locations all over the city. Officiously the authorities turn a blind eye to Syrian surgeries as long as they only treat Syrians.

The doctor's surgery is located in a recently built neighbourhood far from the centre, in a former shop on the ground floor. A woman unlocks the door of the surgery which is covered with old newspapers and white paint to go unnoticed. In the waiting room, there are a dozen white plastic chairs where female patients sit accompanied with their children or female friends (men are not allowed in the surgery). The receptionist sits behind a small school desk when she does not have to run to unlock and lock the door after each patient. She asks Amal for her card – they made carton cards with a number and the patient's name so they can find them easily – and 10TL for the consultation.
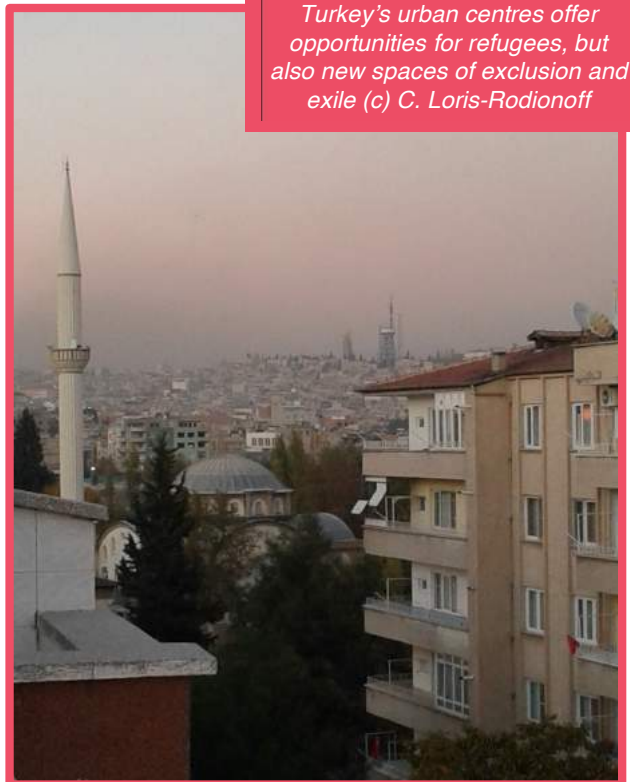
As we wait, Amal shares with me her worries about her unborn baby: how will she take care of him without her family around and a full time job? Would her baby be stateless or will she be able to get him a Syrian passport? She thinks that the latter option is rather unlikely given that her husband and herself are wanted by the regime for their participation in the revolution. Most importantly, Amal wonders whether staying in Turkey is a good idea for her baby's future as Syrians are 'guests' and not refugees in Turkey and therefore do not have the rights and protection refugees usually have. She is thus worried that they could find themselves in a position where they would no longer be welcomed to stay in Turkey, yet they would be unable to go back to their home. Amal wants to offer her unborn child a safe and stable future, which to her includes mainly a protective legal status and a proper education.

We are finally called into the doctor's room. Amal wants me to come with her so I can take pictures of the ultrasound. She wants her husband to see the pictures. She is also planning to send them to her mother, who took refuge in another country, and cannot travel to Turkey as she would be unable to leave again because of visa requirements. The doctor makes us sit in front of her large desk, and looks for Amal's details in a wide black notebook, where she keeps a double page for each of her patients. The desk is separated by a small curtain from the medical chair and the ultrasound screen. The doctor points at the screen and tells the future mother 'look, this is her head, here are her legs (…)'. Amal and I look at one another puzzled by the description as we don't recognise any of the body parts she points at. The doctor goes back to her desk and writes down on a small piece of paper, as an informal prescription, the formula of a medicine they used to find in Syria. 'Give me the name so I can try to get it from Syria,' Amal asks. The doctor tells her 'No one has managed to find it anymore, even in Damascus…' before bringing us to the door.

As I return home later that day I find the children sitting on one of the sofas in the living room watching videos of the protests which took place in their city during the revolution; this is one of their favourite pastimes. The children spend most of their day indoors, watching the news, archive videos of the revolution, or TV series. They arrived from Syria recently with one of Hanan's brothers, as the situation deteriorated in their city. They had to be smuggled across the border, which has already been closed for several months. They now live with us as they wait to receive travel documents to join their father in Europe. They were not admitted to school, as they do not have a *kimlik,* a document that all Syrians must have in Turkey, but that the city in which we live has stopped providing. Their lives have thus turned into some kind of unlimited waiting, as they do not know how long it will take for their visas to be delivered, so they can join their father in Europe. Their everyday seems shared between memories of the past and Skype and WhatsApp calls with their parents respectively in Syria and Europe.

Hanan arrives a couple of minutes after me from a meeting with a group of Syrian revolutionaries, in which they discussed news from their cities and political options for their country. She gives me a summary of the meeting as we eat a quick meal before relaxing, smoking arguileh. As we sit next to one another on a sofa facing the living room, drinking tea and passing one another the pipe, the house is animated by the voices of the children speaking with their mother and one of their younger siblings who are a couple of hundred kilometres away on the other side of the border. We spend the rest of the night chatting, with the TV on showing the latest news from Syria. When we go to sleep it is already early morning, the children falling asleep an hour or two later as they don't have school the next day. They continue chatting online with whoever is still awake, laying down on the mattresses they installed for the night.

Photographing Faith and Displacement: UNHCR's 30 Days of Faith

Bridging together our Representations of Displacement and Faith and Displacement Series, UNHCR's Photography Unit has kindly granted refugee Hosts permission to reproduce their 30 Days of Faith photo essay. This collection of 30 photos, which documented displaced people's celebration of Ramadan in 2013, arguably reshaped the representation of refugees in the secular gaze of humanitarian institutions.

The everyday experiences of refugees and IDPs during Ramadan, and individual reflections on past, present and future lives, are represented in the context of a range of spaces and places. In spite of its primary focus on refugees, a number of photographs also reflect the experiences of Muslim internally displaced people (IDPs) and members of host communities too. The full 30 photographs, along with an introduction to the photos by Prof Alastair Ager and Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, can be found on our website.

All photos reproduced with kind permission from UNHCR

Giving Refugees a Voice? Looking Beyond 'Refugee Stories'

By Leonie Harsch, Refugee Hosts local researcher (Lebanon)

Previous studies of humanitarian discourses have highlighted universalising patterns in depictions of refugees. Referring to representations from the 1990s, Malkki argued in a seminal paper that the figure of the refugee is discursively constructed as an "ahistorical, universal humanitarian subject" rather than a specific person. Through the lens of such discourses, refugees are perceived as victims who are essentially helpless. This leads, in turn, to the neglect and subsequent loss of refugees' voice and agency.

However, such critiques seem to show impact. The public relations strategy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) can be considered an exemplary case: the UNHCR *Emergency Handbook* notes that "[s]tories and images that focus on an individual are almost always more engaging and memorable than general stories or images of a crowd". Furthermore, a UNHCR representative told me during an interview that they seek *not* to portray refugees as passive victims, but instead stress their resilience and capacity to contribute to host communities. The 'refugee stories' told by the organisation illustrate this approach. Examples are found on the "Tracks" website, which is dedicated to accounts of individual experiences of displacement. UNHCR's "Refugee Storytelling Project" likewise exemplifies the development of UNHCR's narratives of displacement towards a focus on individualised stories and refugees' agency.

A screenshot of UNHCR Tracks website

At first sight, these representations appear to counter universalising and victimising depictions. However, the narrative pattern which is used raises the question of 'voice'. It is noticeable that the stories share a specific structure. They usually culminate in the refugees' demonstration of resilience and, often with the help of UNHCR, reconstruction of the lives disturbed by displacement. So, despite the different social, political, and historical circumstances of the represented experiences, their narratives follow a recurring pattern. This observation suggests a certain dramaturgy of forced migration in UNHCR campaigns. The similarity in the narrative structure of refugees' stories is indeed not coincidental, as UNHCR's Chief of Content Production explained: narratives created by UNHCR intentionally distinguish four phases in the experience of displacement – the refugee's life before displacement, the decision to leave, the challenges faced in the new place, and finally the refugee's plans and hopes for the future. This shall emphasise their ability to cope with the situation. The strategy behind this storyline is based on the expectation that the public is more inclined to engage – which, not least, also translates as 'to donate' – if displacement is presented through a 'positive' and optimistic frame. Thus, in the discourse of UNHCR, the image of the resilient, self-reliant refugee has replaced the image of the helpless victim.

Despite seemingly portraying individual experiences in such campaigns, it can be argued that the narrative authority is maintained by UNHCR. Although resulting in a form which is radically different from the figure of the 'universal victim', the procedures of selecting and framing stories may be understood as yet another way of generalising narratives of displacement, producing a figure of the refugee as 'universal entrepreneur'. Rather than creating a platform for refugees to speak about their diverse individual experiences and perspectives, UNHCR renders these into a specific master narrative of what it means to be displaced.

The resulting humanitarian narrative shapes an epistemological framework which places the refugee in a position from which she has to demonstrate her 'deservingness' of reception and aid through mitigating the host's burden by acting as a 'good' resilient refugee. With reference to Didier Fassin's work, it can be noted that such approaches to engendering compassion imply that refugees should restitute the attention they receive through "mendin[g] their ways" in order to satisfy the expectations of donors. This, in turn, may reinforce already unequal power relations between the displaced person and the spectator of her story and potential benefactor. Not least, a focus on achievement may silence demands for the *right* to protection.

The current emphasis on resilience and associated agency, which individuals can be shown to either have or have not, reinforces the dualism in which the humanitarian refugee figure seems to be caught. This risks the exclusion of those experiences which resist or are not considered to fit into this frame. As this piece argues, disrupting unifying humanitarian narratives of displacement might require taking a step back and reconsidering the impetus to render refugees' experiences into coherent 'stories' in the first place. By contrast, an emphasis on everyday encounters and "spaces and places not faces" as explored by the Refugee Hosts Project, may be one way of opening up opportunities to narrate displacement yet elude expectations of a (happy) ending.

This piece has been edited for this newsletter. You can read the full article on our website.

Memory as Host: Poetry and History in Baddawi – An Extract

By Lyndsey Stonebridge, Refugee Hosts Co-I, UEA

From the late nineteenth century through to much of the twentieth, refugee memory would commonly be assumed to mean a memory of a home brutally lost, however imaginary that home might have been – I'm thinking here, for example, of Stefan Zweig's *The World of Yesterday*. It still means that, even if some of the homes, such as in the case of second and now third generation Palestinians, have never been lived in. But refugee memory now also means the long memory of what historian Peter Gatrell calls refugeedom: a shared and often conflictual memory of multiple displacements across generations that stretches from the colonial mandate system and the minority treaties of the early twentieth century through de-colonisation and the Cold War to the permanent refugee camps, urban ghettoes, and detention centres of today.

This tombstone, marking a grave in Baddawi camp's fifth cemetary, offers testament to the contours of a journey which has come to end in this space
(c) E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, January 2017

In this paper, I want to talk about how this (relatively) new archive of statelessness challenges ways of thinking about refugees, community, and citizenship. Arendt once wrote of how the stateless, the refugees, the disenfranchised others of colonialism, capitalism, and totalitarianism dwelt in what she called the dark background of difference. As scholars such as Seyla Benhabib, Patricia Owens, and Ayten Gündoğdu, have shown, this dark background is less – or at least not only – the vanishing point for political sovereignty it is often assumed to be, as a place where the meanings of human community are at their most charged, and, consequently, sometimes at least, creative. Now also repositories of refugee memories, today's refugee communities are also living – dangerously and precariously – archives that record the long story of refugeedom and, crucially, the different modes of citizenship it renders both necessary and possible.

Baddawi refugee camp in North Lebanon was created in 1955. Home to approximately 40,000 'established' Palestinian refugees, over the years the camp has created communities and cultures and endured civil war and lawlessness. Since 2011, the people of Baddawi have also hosted thousands of refugees fleeing the war in Syria, itself a country that owes its borders to the shifting refugee populations of twentieth-century colonial, mandate, and postcolonial politics (Thomas-White, 2017). There is much shared refugee history between Baddawi's old and new residents, so much so that many refugees from Syria identified the camp, and not Lebanon, as their desired destination even before they left (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). Baddawi today is a kind of *lieu de mémoire*, operating proleptically for the nation-less, not analeptically, as memory sites tend to do in nation building.

Since 2011, ethnographer and geographer, Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, and the poet and translator, Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, who was born in Baddawi but now lives in the UK, have been documenting how refugee-refugee humanitarianism (the phrase is Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's) is transforming the physical, social, existential, and psychic life of Baddawi. In 2016, I, along with theologian, Anna Rowlands, and Health and Development specialist, Alastair Ager, joined them as part of a larger project on Refugee Hosts in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, funded by the UK's Research Councils (AHRC-ESRC) and the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

Baddawi is a comparatively small Palestinian camp, so the physical impact – rendered in several powerful photo essays by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh – of the new arrivals is not hard to see. Its architecture has been squeezed upward: concrete scrambled onto concrete, new homes made out of courtyards and balconies, vegetable gardens improvised wherever the sun might catch. The camp is crowned with the densely knotted wires of Baddawi's erratic, and dangerously contested, electric economy. With spaces so compacted, it is difficult to navigate what is immediately in front of you: small wonder that many visitors remark on the birds that fly above the camp, sometimes on the strings of the boys perched on the rooftops.

> *Refugees ask other refugees, who are we to come to you and who are you to come to us? Nobody answers. Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis, Kurds share the camp, the same different camp, the camp of a camp. They have all come to re-originate the beginning with their own hands and feet.*

<div align="right">

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, 'Vis-à-vis or a camp'

</div>

But for the archive – the 'camp-archive' – to survive on its own terms, it must also guard against the very historical violence that constitutes it. No more than the history of the nation state is refugee history homogenous history. Baddawi is a 'same-different camp', where 'a sudden utterance' as Qasmiyeh puts it in one poem, 'is a stranger.' 'Those who are arriving at the threshold are not one of us. It will take them time to know who they are…' he says in another. The hostility that Derrida taught us to hear in hospitality is as present in Baddawi as it is in any other resource-deprived refugee hosting community.

But there is a crucial difference. In the West, here in the U.S., in Europe, and in Australia, those who understand rights as a property to lose have recently turned hostility into a civic virtue – a defensive repudiation not only of refugees but of the history that links democratic citizenship to territorial violence and aggression, and the benefits of that citizenship to the losses of refugeedom. The suppression of refugee memory is an ideological constant in our current political culture. By contrast, having nothing to lose, the rightless of Baddawi have no choice but to live with refugee history – more of it arrives daily. Because it cannot be pushed out, forgotten, banished, this archive of statelessness does something extraordinary: it weaves a web, often silently, in the intangible – in a new sound, in the smell of new dishes, another knot of electricity wires, different footfalls – that holds the community of the camp together. It does this precariously, contingently but, by and large, in far more good faith than in the dully-imagined evocations of communal cohesion we hear so much of, but rarely experience, in Europe and the U.S.

©Lyndsey Stonebridge

Cenne Monestiés, December 2017

The above is extracted from Lyndsey's long-essay in progress "Hannah Arendt in Baddawi"

Birds fly over Baddawi, as the sun sets (c) E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2017

The Virtual Reality of the Refugee Experience

By Aikaterini Antonoupoulou

Going to school, still from Clouds Over Sidra, Gabo Arora and Barry Pousman (dir.) 2015

Clouds over Sidra is a Virtual Reality short film directed by Gabo Arora and Barry Pousman that boasts an immersive experience of the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, through the eyes of Sidra, a twelve-year-old girl who has lived there for eighteen months. Commissioned by the United Nations and sponsored by Samsung, the film was launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos, at the height of the refugee crisis in January 2015, in order to raise awareness of the situation. With the help of Virtual Reality headsets that provide a 360-degree view of the setting, the viewer takes the place of the young girl and wanders from the family's accommodation through the streets of the camp, to the school and the neighbourhood's bakery, to the gym and the football pitch. They can examine closely the camp's spaces, while they listen to Sidra describing moments of her life: her baby-brother crying; studying and keeping her books clean at school; cloudy weather that gives her a sense of protection; how the boys in the camp like to play video games while the girls play football; her reflections on the end of the war and the return to Syria. The film is saturated with detail, both in visual and acoustic terms, in a pursuit of a life-like experience.

Clouds over Sidra is not the only Virtual Reality movie that aims to evoke "empathy" and "immersion" in the life of refugees (see *The Displaced* and *Carne y Arena*). Since the intensification of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, multiple stories of displacement have reached us and our screens in various forms. From diagrammatic interactive "games" to high definition films, and from graphic novels to Instagram snapshots, journeys, refugee camps, and lives re-established in exile are staged before us in an attempt to simulate the experience of those who are displaced. The question of the role and agency of contemporary imagery when it comes to seeing and understanding the refugee crisis arises here: how much detail is enough detail in such representations? Do such digital reconstructions create a real-like experience or rather a hyper-real condition?
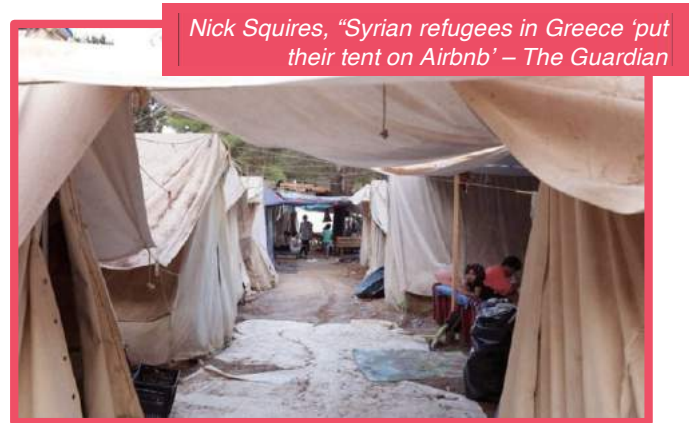
Two years after the launch of the *Clouds over Sidra*, in January 2017, the participants of the World Economic Forum in Davos were invited to experience a new, more tactile take on the refugee crisis. Organised by the Crossroads Foundation and designed by refugees and NGO representatives who have worked with refugees, *A Day in the Life of a Refugee* is a participatory, "real-life" simulation that calls us to walk "in the shoes" of the refugees in order to understand some of their struggles and decisions in life. The performance begins with participants being assigned a refugee identity and the story that accompanies it. Then they flee from home in the dark and amidst the sounds of sirens and bombardments, they negotiate with smugglers, and are interrogated by soldiers. Similar to the military simulations that become training fields for the targeting of existing urban conditions (see Theme Park Archipelago, in *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*), the set where this takes place is meticulously designed: tight spaces; makeshift tents; dirt; rusted metal sheets; barbed wire. The experience is described as "powerful" and "moving," but is the return to the physical here a return to the reality of things?

A participant is interrogated by soldiers during night-time in the camp at A Day in the Life of a Refugee, image courtesy of David McIntyre/Crossroads Foundation Ltd, used under Creative Commons License

In *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, Slavoj Žižek agues that the obsession to get as close as possible to this reality makes our everyday environment increasingly "virtualised." As in Virtual Reality, where things maintain their appearance, but are deprived of their substance, our "real reality" (meaning here "physical") is experienced itself as a virtual entity: "coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol, (…) sex without sex, (…) warfare without warfare, (…) politics without politics, (…) the Other deprived of its Otherness." (pg.10-11) Both in *Clouds over Sidra* and the *Day in the Life of a Refugee*, great attention has been paid to the representation of the refugee camps; however, the absence of pain, the possibility to leave the simulation at any point, and, most importantly, the absence of the fear of death confirm this virtualisation and even the "gamification" of everyday life: in other words, the increasing perception of our lived world as if it were a video-game-like environment, where we are offered intense experiences, yet deprived of their consequences.

According to Žižek, in order to maintain this realm of virtualisation we often have the impulse to "return to the Real," and to ground ourselves in it; this "Real" comes back to us as yet another semblance, an image, and an "effect," which "has to be perceived as a nightmarish unreal spectre" (pg.19) in order to be sustained. In response to the simulations described above, this "return to the Real" comes through the ironic gesture of a group of refugees in the Ritsona refugee camp, Greece, to advertise their tent on the popular platform *Airbnb*, inviting us to "a real opportunity to experience life as a Syrian refugee." The advertisement is not ample in detail; on the contrary it gives limited information and in a humorous rather than dramatic tone: "if you are lucky you might get one of the

Nick Squires, "Syrian refugees in Greece 'put their tent on Airbnb' – The Guardian

two hot showers. There is a large vacant lot where the toilets are, which the children use as a playground. Please join in the games." The image that accompanies it is, again, so bare that it exposes a very different reality; one that calls for meaningful understandings instead of spectacular effects when it comes to humanitarian crises.

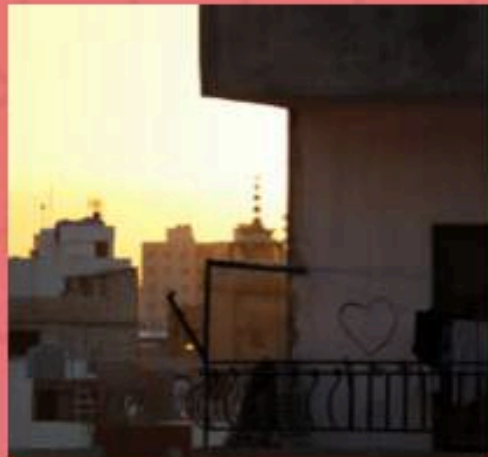# Full List of Blog Articles Summer-Winter 2017

We would like to thank everyone who has featured their research and creative pieces on our blog. Below is a full list of published pieces since August 2017. To receive updates straight to your inbox, subscribe to our website using the form on the top right hand side of our project webpage. Please also visit our submissions page on our website for information on how to write for our blog (www.refugeehosts.org/submissions).

Ager, A. and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2017) "Photographing Religion and Displacement: UNHCR's 30 Days of Faith"

Ager, A. (2017) "Sounds from Hamra, Lebanon"

Antonopoulou, A. (2017) "The Virtual Reality of the Refugee Experience"

Balestra, G. (2017) "Stelle (Stars)" and "Paese (Country)"

Blachnika-Ciacek, D. (2017) "Refugees. Present/Absent. Escaping the Traps of Refugee (Mis)Representations"

Davies, D. (2017) "Hard Infrastructures, Diseased Bodies"

El Sheikh, S. (2017) "Dehumanising Refugees: Between Demonisation and Idealisation"

Emami, T. H. (2017) "Reflections on Alice's Alternative Wonderland"

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2017) "Invisible (at) Night: Space, Time and Photography in a Refugee Camp"

Harsch, L. (2018) "Giving Refugees a Voice? Looking Beyond 'Refugee Stories'"

Loris-Rodionoff, C. (2017) "Hope, Resilience and Uncertainty: A Day with Displaced Syrians in Southern Turkey"

Mantzios, G. (2017) "Leviathan's Maw"

McGuirk, S. (2018) "Psychogeography, Safe Spaces and LGBTQ Immigrant Experience"

Qasmiyeh, Y. M. and Ammann, O. (2017) "The Multiple Faces of Representation"

Qasmiyeh, Y. M. (2017) "Refugees are Dialectical Beings Part One: Writing the Camp-Archive"

Qasmiyeh, Y. M. (2017) "Refugees are Dialectical Beings Part Two: Refugee are Dialectical Beings"

Qasmiyeh, Y. M. (2018) "The Camp is the Reject of the Reject Par Excellence"

Weatherhead, K. T. (2017) "Thinking Through the Concept of 'Welcoming'"

Western, T. *et al.* (2017) "ΤΣΣΣΣ ΤΣΣΣ ΤΣΣ ΣΣΣ: Summer in Athens – a Sound Essay"

Zbeidy, D. (2017) "Widowhood, Displacement and Friendships in Jordan"

Join our Conversation: Contextualising the Localisation of Aid Agenda – A New Blog Series on Refugee Hosts

This call for submissions invites contributions that add to on-going debates about the 'localisation of aid agenda', encouraging in particular pieces that help to conceptualise and contextualise 'the local' in the context of responses to displacement in the global South:

- How is 'the local' understood and engaged with in responses to conflict-induced displacement? Neighbourhoods? Municipalities? Nations? Geopolitical regions? What is the relationship between these different 'scales' of response?
- How are local responses conceptualised, activated, negotiated or resisted by people affected by displacement?
- What conceptual, political, policy, pragmatic and ethical challenges and opportunities exist in relation to the 'localisation agenda'?
- What are the roles of history and geography in understanding, implementing and/or critiquing the 'localisation of aid' agenda?
- Which local actors are supported and viewed as 'good partners', and which local actors are viewed with suspicion? Why, by whom, and with what effect?
- How are conceptualisations of 'the local' framed by assumptions and beliefs about religion and gender (amongst other factors)?
- What roles can interdisciplinary research methods – from and beyond the Arts and Humanities, the Social and Political Sciences, and Architecture, Planning and Design – play in informing academic, policy and practitioner engagements with local communities**.**

We invite contributions in the form of short pieces drawing on original research, creative pieces including poems, soundscapes and artwork, photo essays or reflections from the field. In exploring these questions as part of this series, the Refugee Hosts team is keen to explore the ways that interdisciplinary methods can help us better understand the local, both in policy discussions and in academic and public debates.

The Forthcoming Series in Context

In recent years, and especially since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the 'localisation of aid agenda' has become prominent in many discussions about and responses to displacement. This agenda starts by recognising that 'local actors' play key roles in responding to displacement and other humanitarian situations; it subsequently aims to shift resources from 'international actors' – including UN agencies, donor states, and international NGOs – to 'local actors' and to develop modes of partnership and co-working that go beyond 'subcontracting' local actors to work on 'international' programmes. The 'localisation of aid agenda' therefore attempts to bring local-level responses to displacement into the nexus of international humanitarianism by developing policies and strategies that effectively engage with local actors.

However, in practice, the 'localisation of aid agenda' often equates 'the local' with 'the national' (the state level) and/or the 'sub-national' (including on municipal levels), leading to questions such as: 'what' or 'who' is the local; 'where' is the local; and how are different local actors (including local communities implicitly or explicitly motivated by faith) perceived and engaged with by national, regional and international actors. These questions are at the core of our Refugee Hosts research project, and also to our new blog series.

Local people and communities are often, if not always, the first providers of assistance in contexts of displacement. These include not only 'host communities' composed of local citizens, but also refugees and displaced peoples, who, whilst typically represented by humanitarian narratives as passive victims, are increasingly recognised as key providers of aid; this includes processes that Refugee Hosts PI Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh refers to as 'refugee-refugee humanitarianism'

The Refugee Hosts research project aims to contribute to the 'localisation agenda' by developing a better understanding of the roles and motivations of local hosting communities in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. However, for this contribution to be meaningful and effective, we also believe it is vital to critically investigate the ways in which 'the local' is conceptualised by Northern humanitarian organisations and practitioners.

As such, and in drawing on Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's work relating to South-South humanitarianism, we also believe it is vital for knowledge about local responses to displacement to be formed co-productively so that perceptions and assumptions are challenged (and potentially changed). The aim here is to also ensure that the localisation agenda can be carefully contextualised, taking note of the diverse histories, cultures, religions, geographies and epistemologies that frame local-level humanitarian responses to displacement, and the challenges and opportunities that the 'localisation agenda' presents.

How to Submit

Submissions must be a maximum of **900 words** and written in a way that is **accessible to a wide audience**. Pieces must **reference using hyperlinks only**: our online contributions do not use footnotes or other forms of referencing such as Harvard style referencing. Where necessary, a bibliography can also be included containing the list of sources used.

Submissions are welcome on a rolling basis. Please send your submission, along with a short biography of no more than 100 words, to the Refugee Hosts Project and Communications Coordinator Aydan Greatrick on aydan.greatrick.15@ucl.ac.uk.

We also welcome submissions that touch on other aspects of this project and which contribute to our broader community of conversation. As such, we also invite you to look at our open call for submissions as well as our other series, including Representations of Displacement, Translation, Poetry and Displacement and Faith and Displacement. Please email Aydan Greatrick to discuss possible ideas for a general submission.
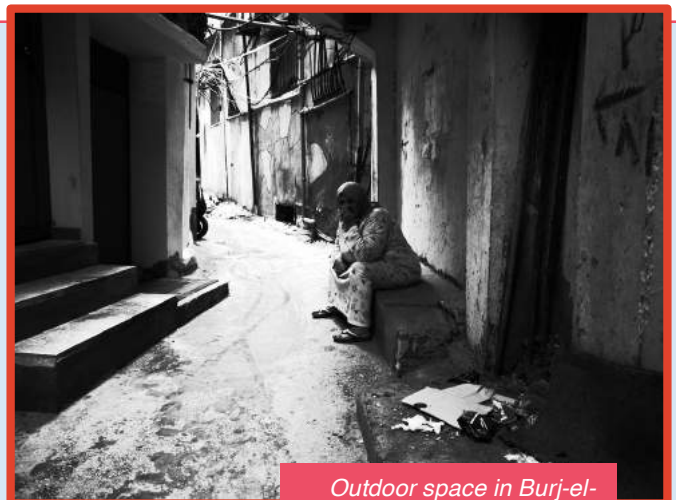
Outdoor space in Burj-el-Barajneh is scarce. This photo is part of a photo series on the refugee camp by Samar Maqusi (c) S. Maqusi 2014

Project News and Past Events

The Refugee Hosts project has had a very exciting year talking about the preliminary findings of our project at a range of events and workshops. Below is a record of several project related events that our research team has contributed to since Summer 2017. For regular event updates, follow our website and Twitter on @RefugeeHosts. For more information visit our news and events page (www.refugeehosts.org/category/news-and-events).

Artwork of Parmis Vard as featurd on the MOAS podcast

MOAS Podcast on Refugee Art, July 2017: Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Principal Investigator) and Yousif M. Qasmiyeh (Writer in Residence) spoke to the Migrant Offshore Aid Station about the creative research methods Refugee Hosts is using to capture diverse experiences of and responses to displacement from Syria. You can listen to the full episode by visiting our website.

Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh delivers the keynote address at the Disasters conference

Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh gives Keynote Address at ODI *Disasters* Conference, 14 September 2017, London: Elena's keynote address at the *Disasters* conference drew on the approach taken through the Refugee Hosts research project. Elena invited the audience of academics and policy makers to consider ways to continue advancing research, policy and practice in situations and processes of disaster and displacement in a way that simultaneously acknowledges, and transcends a focus on the 'experiences', 'voices' and 'perceptions' of people affected by displacement. In particular, Elena also argued that academic research to date has demonstrated the necessity of looking back (through historical analyses), looking around us (through geographically sensitive lenses attentive to scale and space, and by acknowledging the significance of Southern-led responses), and through different lenses (including through intersectionalist and interdisciplinary research, and also by questioning the locus of our gaze). A video of Elena's keynote is available on our website.

Prof Lyndsey Stonebridge presents at the PaCCS workshop

PaCCS Workshop: Interdisciplinary Research into Conflict, UCL, 21 September 2017: The Refugee Hosts team led a knowledge exchange workshop on interdisciplinary research into conflict. During the workshop, which brought together academics funded through the AHRC PaCCS Conflict theme, a number of challenges and opportunities relating to interdisciplinary research were discussed. These will be reflected on throughout the next stage of our research and in further meetings with PaCCS projects in 2018 and beyond.

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh Poetry has been projected as part of Jenny Holzer's light display in Blenheim Palace, Oxford between 28 September-31 December. You can find out more about this event on our website.

Cultures and Commemorations of War Seminar, British Academy, 10 November 2017: Prof Lyndsey Stonebridge drew on the preliminary Refugee Hosts research findings at this interdisciplinary workshop on war and memory.

Being Human Festival, 17-25 November 2017, University of East Anglia: Prof Lyndsey Stonebridge was involved in several events convened by the Being Human Festival of the Humanities. Lyndsey presented at the opening of the festival, and also read from some of the poems written by the Refugee Hosts Writer in Residence Yousif M. Qasmiyeh.

Prof Lyndsey Stonebridge presented at the University of Oxford's Conflict and Community Panel-Led Workshop on 'Textual Commemoration', 24 November 2017: In particular, Lyndsey drew on her research on Arendt and on the history of displacement, which she has written about on the Refugee Hosts website. You can watch and listen to the workshop panel discussion on the University of Oxford website.

UNHCR High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, 12 December, United Nations, Geneva: On Tuesday 12 December, Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh was invited to present insights from her research at the UNHCR High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges. As one of four panelists discussing 'Reception and Admission', she spoke alongside H.E. Ambassador Mr. Boudjemâa Delm (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations), H.E. Ambassador Antje Leendertse (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations), and Mr. Jan Egeland (Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). Elena's presentation focused on the importance of sensitivity to gender, religion and refugee-host relations in Reception and Admission processes, addressing sone of the greatest challenges faced by the international community: the need to reconcile 'immediately' responding to 'mass' emergency experiences and needs, with attention to individual needs and rights in contexts of displacement. She drew on the research (funded by the Henry Luce Foundation) underpinning her MRU Policy Brief on Gender, Religion and Humanitarian Responses to Refugees, in addition to her long-standing research with and about refugees and host communities in the Middle East (including research funded by the UK's Research Councils, the Leverhulme Trust, and the European Research Council).

Modern Language Association 2018 Convention, 4-7 January 2018, New York, USA: Prof Lyndsey Stonebridge was invited to speak at this conference on the theme of Refugee Memory. For this, Prof. Stonebridge wrote the piece Memory as Host: Poetry and History in the Baddawi Refugee Camp", which reflected on Refugee Hosts research in Lebanon, as well as the poems and creative pieces of our Writer in Residence, Yousif M. Qasmiyeh. You can read an extract of this paper in this newsletter, which is an extract from Lyndsey's long- essay in progress "Hannah Arendt in Baddawi".

Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh addresses the UN High Commission on protection Challenges along with co-panellists H.E. Ambassador Mr. Boudjemâa Delm (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations), H.E. Ambassador Antje Leendertse (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations), and Mr. Jan Egeland (Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

Contact the Refugee Hosts Team

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PROJECT ROLE: Elena is the project's Principal Investigator. As an expert on the lived experiences of, and diverse responses to forced displacement in the Middle East, Elena brings both her regional and thematic expertise to Refugee Hosts. In addition to leading the project as a whole, Elena will in particular be overseeing the research taking place in Lebanon, and will be working closely with Alastair to develop the fieldwork in Turkey.

Prof Alastair Ager (Co-I)
Institute for Global Health and Development, Queen Margaret University Edinburgh
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PROJECT ROLE: Alastair (Co-I) is an expert on health, development and humanitarianism who has an established record of working in the Middle East. For Refugee Hosts he will be leading the research taking place in Jordan, and working closely with Elena to coordinate the research in Turkey. Together with Anna and our project partner the JLI on Refugees and Forced Migrants, Alastair will be exploring the roles that faith plays in local hosting practices and experiences.

Dr Anna Rowlands (Co-I)
Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University
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PROJECT ROLE: Anna (Co-I) is a moral and political theologian with expertise in asylum and migration, and will offer the project a unique insight into questions related to faith-based and faith-inspired responses to displacement. Working closely with Alastair and with our project partner the JLI on Refugees and Forced Migration, she will lead on activities relating to the roles of faith in displacement and on the development of a Religious Literacy Handbook.

Prof Lyndsey Stonebridge (Co-I)
Department of History, University of East Anglia
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PROJECT ROLE: Lyndsey (Co-I) is an expert on modern writing and history, and refugee studies, and will lead Refugee Hosts' innovative creative writing components - through convening both a series of writing workshops in the Middle East and a series of translation workshops in the UK, in collaboration with our partners PEN-International, English-PEN and Stories in Transit. With Anna, Lyndsey will be exploring the ways in which political philosophy and political theology bring particular insights into experiences of exile and hosting.

Aydan Greatrick
**Project and Communications Coordinator**

Aydan works closely with Elena, Alastair, Anna and Lyndsey to coordinate the different strands of the research project and ensure that the project's findings are widely disseminated, translated and accessible to the communities participating in this research project.

Contact him with any general enquiries on:
aydan.greatrick.15@ucl.ac.uk

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh:
Writer in Residence

Yousif is a poet and translator who has regularly led literary translation workshops with student English-PEN groups. As our project's Writer in Residence, Yousif is writing creative contributions on our project's key themes, and will co-convene the creative writing workshops in the Middle East and the translation workshops in the UK with Lyndsey and our project partners, PEN-International, English-PEN and Stories in Transit.

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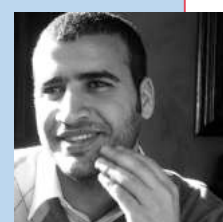
NOTES

Only refugees can forever write the archive.

The camp owns the archive, not God.

For the archive not to fall apart, it weds the camp unceremoniously.

The question of a camp-archive is also the question of the camp's survival beyond speech.

Circumcising the body can indicate the survival of the place.

Blessed are the pending places that are called camps.

An extract from Yousif M. Qasmiyeh's
Refugees are Dialectical Beings Part One

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh
Writer in Residence, Refugee Hosts

Narrow views of life on an evening in Baddawi camp (c) E. Fiddian Qasmiyeh

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