

CALL FOR PAPERS

***IJMES* Special Issue**

Forced Displacement and Refugees

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Forced migration has come to be the defining feature of the contemporary Middle East, a region that is both the source of and host to some of the largest forcibly displaced populations in the world. In 2015, 65 percent of the world's 19.4 million refugees—including the 5.5 million Palestinian refugees—as well as 30 percent of the world's thirty-eight million internally displaced persons were in the Middle East, while one out of every four refugees worldwide was from Syria. Seeking security and stability, millions of people from the region are on the move within and across social spaces that are at once strange and familiar, and in which they themselves are familiar and strange to others. In 2015, Turkey became host to the world's largest refugee population of over two million, while Za'atari camp in Jordan has grown rapidly to become one of the world's largest camps since the Syrian civil war began. With 7.6 million people—or 35 percent of the population—internally displaced, Syria now has the highest number of internally displaced persons in the world. Iraq has produced multiple overlapping displacements, resulting in one of the largest refugee resettlement programs of the past decade. Thousands of Syrians, Libyans, and Iraqis have undertaken perilous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea to seek asylum in Europe and elsewhere. Palestinian refugees are now in a fourth generation of exile, making their plight the longest running unresolved refugee situation in the world.

Although the scale of forced migration in the current moment is unprecedented, it has long been a defining feature of the region's history. Beginning from the mid-19th century—with what some historians call the first modern genocide of Circassian people—the Middle East has been existentially defined by the stories of displaced and dispossessed people, as well as by communities and associations offering asylum and refuge. However, despite the history of refugees being central to that of the region, refugees' stories have rarely been at the heart of most narratives. Moreover, the Middle East remains largely bereft of legal national and regional asylum mechanisms, offering instead customary traditions of hospitality and refuge, as well as a patchwork of local responses and bilateral agreements with UN agencies.

For this special issue of *IJMES*, we seek the submission of papers on the current Syrian displacement, as well as on the Iraqi, Palestinian, Assyrian, Armenian, and Kurdish displacements that preceded or overlap with it. How have communities in and from the Middle East responded to protracted and repeated forced displacement? In a

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region where displacement is endemic, how have categories of citizen and foreigner, host and refugee, home and exile, emplacement and displacement been reconfigured and reimagined? Has the notion of “crisis” in public and academic discourses been a useful analytic tool to capture regional dynamics? To what extent has displacement been a tool of state building, or a consequence of state collapse? What has been the relationship between displacement, war, and underdevelopment? Has the absence of legal asylum allowed for the emergence of alternative regional coping mechanisms? We are looking for papers that address reception, refuge, protection, and asylum by and for Middle Eastern populations both within and outside the region at any historical moment, and papers that are deeply engaged with the theoretical framing of the refugee as subject and object.

The deadline for submissions is 22 April 2016. Authors should follow the regular guidelines for submitting an article manuscript to *IJMES*, which are detailed at <http://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/submissions.htm>. Please indicate in your cover letter that your submission is intended for the special issue. All special issue articles must be accepted individually through the *IJMES* peer review process.

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