

LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY



UCL

REFUGEE HOSTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

WITHOUT EXCEPTION: THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF
LOCAL RESPONSES TO DISPLACEMENT

24th-25th October 2019

“In the absence of a place, who invites who?”

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh



Welcome

Welcome to the Refugee Hosts International Conference, *Without Exception: The Politics and Poetics of Local Responses to Displacement*.

Our two day conference brings together academics, practitioners, creatives and other experts in the fields of migration, displacement and refugees. Over the course of the next two days we aim to challenge, debate and inform dominant humanitarian discourse, the politics and ethics of knowledge production, and current theory and practice in relation to forced migration.

Through presentations, panel and roundtable discussions, workshops and film screenings, the conference provides an opportunity to join Refugee Hosts' 'community of conversation'. For more details on the themes that will be discussed at the conference please click on the links below:

- [Disrupting Humanitarian Narratives](#)
- [Writing Displacements into Literature](#)
- [Hosting, Hospitality and Displacement](#)
- [Displacement in/through Film](#)
- [The Politics and Ethics of Knowledge Production in Refugee Situations](#)
- [Translation, Literature and Precarity](#)
- [Locating Faith in Humanitarian Practice and Local Community Response](#)
- [Rethinking Community, Rights and Displacement: Theory and practice](#)

Our Distinguished Keynote Speakers are:

[Homi K. Bhabha](#) (Opening Keynote Speaker) is the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities in the Department of English, the Director of the Humanities Center and the Senior Advisor on the Humanities to the President and Provost at Harvard University. Prof. Bhabha has authored a number of publications exploring postcolonial theory, cultural change and power, and cosmopolitanism. His work includes [Nation and Narration](#) and [The Location of Culture](#), reprinted as a Routledge Classic in 2004.

[Patricia Daley](#) (Keynote Speaker) is Professor of the Human Geography of Africa and Vice-Principal and The Helen Morag Fellow in Geography at Jesus College, Oxford. Prof. Daley's main research interests are the political economy of population migration and settlement (forced migration, identity politics and citizenship); the intersection of space, gender, militarism, sexual violence and peace (feminist geo-politics); racial hierarchies and violence (geographies of racialization and coloniality using Critical Race Theory and decolonizing methodologies); the relationship between conservation, resource extraction, and rural livelihoods (political ecology). She has authored, edited and contributed to numerous publications, including her 2018 co-edited book, [The Routledge Handbook of South-South Relations](#).

[Sari Hanafi](#) (Keynote Speaker) is Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut and editor of Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology (Arabic). He has served as a visiting professor at the University of Poitiers and Migrintern (France), University of Bologna and Ravenna (Italy) and visiting fellow in CMI (Bergen, Norway). The former Director of the Palestinian Refugee and Diaspora Centre (Shaml) from 2000-2004, Prof. Hanafi has authored a number of publications including [Knowledge Production in the Arab World](#) (Routledge). He is the co-editor of [Palestinian Refugees: Identity, Space and Place in the Levant](#) (Routledge).

Our Confirmed Chairs are:

[Prof. Alison Phipps](#)

[Sarah Clarke](#)

[Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh](#)

[Prof. Alastair Ager](#)

[Dr Saiful Huq Omi](#)

[Yousif M. Qasmiyeh](#)

[Prof. Philippe Sands](#)

[Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge](#)

[Dr. Anna Rowlands](#)

The conference is convened by Refugee Hosts' Principal Investigator, [Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh](#) (UCL), and the project's Co-Investigators, [Prof. Alastair Ager](#) (Queen Margaret University), [Dr. Anna Rowlands](#) (Durham University) and [Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge](#) (University of Birmingham). It marks the start of the fourth and final year of our AHRC-ESRC funded [Refugee Hosts project](#), which began in 2016 and has been investigating local community responses to and experiences of displacement in and from Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

Translation & Live Streams

The conference proceedings are being translated into Arabic and live streamed in both English and Arabic through UCL's YouTube account.

Twitter

Please tweet updates from the conference using the following tags and hashtags: [@refugeehosts](#) [#RHIC19](#) [#PoliticsAndPoetics](#)

WIFI Code: [refugeehosts](#)

Feedback and Evaluation

Please help us to evaluate and document the 'impact' of this conference by filling in the feedback forms when you register and when you leave the conference and by participating on our 'feedback wall.'

Contributing to the Refugee Hosts

You might like to consider writing a blog post based on your engagement with the topics and issues explored throughout the Refugee Hosts International Conference. We encourage submissions from anyone interested in contributing to our 'community of conversation' and welcome submissions in a variety of formats, languages and styles. We are particularly interested in creative submissions, including poetry, creative writings, photographs and podcasts, on themes including.

- Refugee/Host encounters
- Everyday lives in displacement
- Refugees as hosts
- Humanitarianism
- Theology, faith and displacement
- Narrative, literature and history
- Policy processes
- Intersections of gender, faith and secularism
- Interdisciplinary refugee research

If you are interested in writing a blog or contributing a multimedia piece, please send a message outlining your idea to Sorcha Daly on sorcha.daly@ucl.ac.uk

A note on our caterers:

Proud Kitchen is a social enterprise founded in 2018, which works with refugee and migrant women, offering employment opportunities through catering services and an inclusive community where they build their skills, confidence and feel at home.

<https://proudkitchenuk.wordpress.com/>

The Syrian Sunflower is a catering and educational organisation started by Majeda Khoury, a human rights activist and refugee from Syria. The Syrian Sunflower believes in bringing people together through cooking and provides job opportunities for refugee women.

Facebook : [@thesyriansunflower](#)

Conference Programme



REFUGEE HOSTS

Without Exception: The Politics and Poetics of Local Responses to Displacement

#RHIC19 | #PoliticsAndPoetics | Twitter: @RefugeeHosts |

DAY ONE: 24th October 2019

- 09:30-10:00 *Registration and refreshments*
- 10:00-10:15 **Opening Remarks**
Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – UCL)
- 10:15-11:00 **Distinguished Keynote**
Prof. Homi Bhabha (Harvard University)
- 11:00-11:15 *Coffee break*
- 11:15-12:45 **Panel 1: Disrupting Humanitarian Narratives**
Chair: Sarah Clarke (Article 19)
Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – UCL)
Dima Al-Hamadmad (Refugee Hosts)
Dr Tom Western (University of Oslo)
- 12:45-13:45 *Lunch and exhibition*
- 13:45-14:45 **Roundtable: Writing Displacements into Literature**
Chair: Prof. Philippe Sands QC (UCL and English-PEN)
Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge (Refugee Hosts – University of Birmingham)
Yousif M. Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – University of Oxford)
- 14:45-15:00 *Coffee break*

- 15:00-16:30 **Panel 2: Hosting, Hospitality and the Common Good**
Chair: Prof. Alison Phipps (University of Glasgow)
Bayan Itani (Refugee Hosts)
Dr Estella Carpi (Southern Responses to Displacement – UCL)
Dr Karen Lauterbach (University of Copenhagen)
Dr Ann Christin-Wagner (University of Edinburgh)
- 16:30-17:00 **Closing Remarks**
Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – UCL)
Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge (Refugee Hosts – University of Birmingham)
Dr Anna Rowlands (Refugee Hosts – Durham University)
Prof Alastair Ager (Refugee Hosts – Queen Margaret University)
- 17:00-18:30 **Film Screening and Panel Discussion: Displacement in/through Film**
Chair: Saiful Huq Omi (Principal, Counter Foto Centre for Visual Arts)
Dr Daniele Rugo and Abi Weaver (Directors of 'About a War')
Dr Stefano Fogliata (Screenwriter of 'Footballization')
- 18.30 – 19.30 Closing Reception

DAY TWO: 25th October 2019

- 09:45-10:00 *Registration and refreshments*
- 10:00-10:10 **Opening Words of Welcome:**
Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – UCL)
- 10:10-11:45 **Keynote Conversation: The Politics and Ethics of Knowledge Production in Conflict Settings**
Chair: Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – UCL)
Prof. Sari Hanafi (American University of Beirut)
Prof. Patricia Daley (University of Oxford)
- 11:45-12:00 *Coffee break*

- 12:00-13:30 **Workshop: Translation, Literature and Precarity**
Facilitator: Yousif M. Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – University of Oxford)
Prof. Wen-Chin Ouyang (SOAS)
Prof. Matthew Reynolds (University of Oxford)
- 13:30-14:15 *Lunch*
- 14:15-15:45 **Workshop: Locating Faith in Humanitarian Practice and Local Community Response**
Prof. Alastair Ager (Refugee Hosts – Queen Margaret University-Edinburgh)
Dr Anna Rowlands (Refugee Hosts – Durham University)
Dr Olivia Wilkinson (Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities)
Atallah Fitzgibbon (Islamic Relief)
Fernando Espada (Save the Children)
- 15:45-16:00 *Coffee break*
- 16:00-17:30 **Panel 3: Rethinking Community Rights: Theory and Practice**
Chair: Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge (Refugee Hosts – University of Birmingham)
Dr Tamirace Fakhoury (Lebanese American University)
Dr Anna Rowlands (Refugee Hosts – Durham University)
Dr Zeynep Kivilcim (Humboldt Universitat zu Berlin)
- 17:30-18:00 **Closing Roundtable Discussion**
Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts – UCL)
Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge (Refugee Hosts – University of Birmingham)
Dr Anna Rowlands (Refugee Hosts – Durham University)
Prof Alastair Ager (Refugee Hosts – Queen Margaret University- Edinburgh)
- 18:00-19:00 *Closing reception*



It is a camp despite the name

by [Yousif M. Qasmiyeh](#) and [Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh](#), *Refugee Hosts*

Existence, as it is, happens in the intentions of things.

A sign or signs piled on top of one another, barely separated by air and the narrowest of voids: white on blue or blue on white. There is a background – an undercoat – and then the words. But which is which? On the sign are arrows pointing to places, including to Baddawi camp. Names of old and new places neatly and orderly enclosed in this rectangular space. Positioned then adjusted to be made more visible to passers by and cars alike.

It is the Baddawi slope. The road that leads to everywhere and nowhere. The exact road which gave us and my mother trepidations as she stopped taxis on the main road going to Nahr Al-Bared camp. We would, upon my mother's prodding, hide behind her. Most of the time seven little bodies clutching her dress, looking for a handful of cloth, most of the time ending up inadvertently clutching each others' hands. The taxi driver would normally drive off the moment my mother would start asking him for a discounted fee: 'They are little, treat them as one. All of them on one seat and myself on another.'

My mother, to secure a ride that does not go beyond our limited financial means, would contract us into one: one body made of seven heads like a mythical creature who only grows in the camp. Many self-subtracted to one.

The sign is new or at least it previously was not there. The first sign to point to "Baddawi camp" alongside other places. The first sign to have the word 'camp' within its folds – a piece of evidence to the existence of the camp. To the presence of a place whose name is validated by a correspondence, a genitive one, between the proper "Baddawi" and the noun "camp" and yet it is the latter which is always remembered. It is a camp despite the name.

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This and the following piece continues a series of poetic responses to photographs taken by Refugee Hosts PI Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh during a field-trip to Baddawi refugee camp and the neighbourhood of Jebel al-Baddawi in North Lebanon, and to a range of neighbourhoods in Beirut 2018-2019. Written by Refugee Hosts Writer-in-Residence Yousif M. Qasmiyeh and PI Prof. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, they reflect on everyday encounters in and dynamics of displacement.

Photograph Credit (c) E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh. Signalling the camp at the start/end of Baddawi slope, N. Lebanon



To the Plants is Her Face

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Refugee Hosts)

The plants which appear in this picture hinge partly on a short wall and partly on a used wooden chest of drawers primarily staged to encircle the entrance to the house and protect it from the curious eyes of passers-by. Or to ‘privatise’ part of the public space by appropriating it.

Underneath some of the pots, to the woman’s left, a recycled banner made of fabric, likely nylon, from a previous event that still bears the Arabic: ... *Palestine, Baddawi Camp, 8pm, All Welcome.*

It is clear that the woman tending to the plants is the owner of the house. She waters the plants through a yellow hose that enables her to reach the other end without substantially altering her position.

Dressed in kohl-like blue, contrasted with a headscarf of a lighter shade of blue, she leans towards the first row of the plants with her back to the main road.

She looks engrossed in what she is doing, with her right hand almost touching a pale leaf – perhaps to snap it off its mother plant.

The non-ordinariness of this scene does not lie in the co-presence between the canonical grey of the camp and the green exception, but precisely in its interruptive nature as an anomaly whose sole value is to overpower the norm in/of the camp to make it more visible and ‘normal’.

It is the “beauty” “at the expense” and never “in conjunction with” or “in accordance to” that matters in this photograph – a photograph whose meaning is that of the place.

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Photograph by © Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh. A woman waters flowers on the threshold to her home in Baddawi refugee camp, North Lebanon.

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