CMRS November Seminar

On Wednesday, November 14, 2012, the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) screened the documentary film, Well-Founded Fear, as part of a seminar series. The event was co-facilitated by the CMRS Cairo Community Interpreter Project and the Arabic and Translation Studies division of AUC’s School of Continuing Education. The event, which included the screening of the two-hour film followed by an engaging discussion, was successful, with more than 80 people from a variety of backgrounds in attendance. These included Arabic and Translation Studies faculty members, CMRS students, refugee aid workers and refugee interpreters, as well as members of the general public.

The film follows several asylum seekers who have come to a New York City office of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Through interviews with both asylum seekers and asylum officers, as well as film footage of official INS interviews of asylum seekers, the film explores the process of seeking political asylum in the United States, which is similar to the process of Refugee Status Determination in other countries, including Egypt. The film includes insightful examples of the critical role that interpreters play in the refugee and asylum-seeking process, and, in many cases, how the precision of the interpreter is critical to whether an asylum seeker’s claim is granted or denied.

CMRS Releases a New Publication

In October 2012, CMRS published a new paper as part of its Cairo Studies on Migration and Refugees series. The paper, titled “The Arab Spring and Migration in Egypt, One Year On: Impacts, Perceptions and Attitudes,” was written by CMRS alumna Hend Hafez, with assistance from Ayman Ghali, a current CMRS student. The paper was a result of a collaborative initiative between CMRS and the Migration Policy Center at the European University Institute.

In total, CMRS has published five papers as part of the Cairo Studies on Migration and Refugees working paper series.
CMRS Fall ‘12 Information Session

CMRS organized an information session on Sunday, November 18, 2012 for AUC undergraduates interested in pursuing graduate studies at the center.

Ibrahim Awad, CMRS director, introduced the center to the students, explaining its history and goals. This was followed by a presentation on different CMRS projects and the job opportunities available to CMRS degree holders. Finally, some CMRS faculty members gave brief descriptions of their courses. CMRS faculty members who were present at the orientation included Shaden Khallaf, Usha Natarajan Alexandra Parrs. Yasmine Ibrahim, senior officer for graduate recruitment and fellowships in the Office of Graduate Student Services, was also present and provided an overview of application requirements and procedures, as well as fellowship opportunities for prospective students.

CMRS plans to hold another session at AUC Tahrir Square targeting potential students from outside the AUC community.

For more information about CMRS graduate programs, visit:
www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/Graduate

For more information about graduate application procedures, visit:
www.aucegypt.edu/admissions/grad

Workshop on Emancipatory Politics in the Arab World

On December 18 and 19, CMRS hosted a workshop titled Emancipatory Politics in the Arab World in an Age of Revolutions. The workshop was part of a collaborative initiative between AUC’s School of Global Affairs and Public Policy and the British Academy to establish a research network on the topic of emancipatory politics in the Arab world.
Workshop on Emancipatory Politics in the Arab World Cont’d

The workshop brought together Arab and British activists, academics and researchers associated with the radical left who see revolution not as the replacement of one governing group by another but rather as a process of deep cultural, social and economic transformation in an egalitarian direction.

“The revolution is a jewel, with uprising as its tool” Salameh Kaileh (Palestinian-Syrian Marxist thinker, author and activist)

“Today, Egypt is facing colonization, and forces must join to oppose it. Those trying to stand against change risk the same reactions confronted by the French and British.” Kamal Abu Eita (President of the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions)

“Had our brother Trotsky been alive, he would not have dreamt of such an ongoing Revolution” Hani Shukrallah (Prominent Egyptian journalist, activist, scholar and professor)

CMRS Faculty Activities

CMRS faculty members conducted the following activities:

Ahsan Ullah, associate director of CMRS, delivered a lecture at the University of Osnabruck, Osnabruck, Germany, on December 13, 2012, titled “Migration Policy in South Asia: A Critical Analysis.” The lecture covered major issues of migration policies and management in South East and East Asia.

Usha Natarajan gave a talk at Osgoode Hall Law School, Toronto, Canada, on November 21, 2012, titled, “Locating Nature: Environment and the Making and Unmaking of International Law.” In addition, Natarajan’s chapter “Democratization and Constitutional Reform in Egypt and Indonesia: Evaluating the Role of the Military,” co-authored by Javed Maswood and published in Arab Spring and Egypt: Revolution and Beyond, was translated into Arabic in December 2012.

New Research Projects

CMRS is currently collaborating with the Migration Policy Institute on a survey that aims to gain a better understanding of current perspectives and attitudes on migration among Egyptian youth. The survey is complemented by a labor market analysis. In the framework of the Labor Migration Governance in Contemporary Europe project, CMRS will cooperate with Forum Internazionale Ed Europeo di Ricerche sull’Immigrazione in carrying out a study on ideas and practices in the field of labor emigration management in contemporary Egypt and Tunisia.

Furthermore, CMRS is negotiating a project for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The project will focus on building the migration management capacity of select emigration countries in the Arab region.

Finally, CMRS is planning a collaborative study with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the situation of Syrian refugees in Egypt.
The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) is an interdisciplinary center at The American University in Cairo. Situated at the heart of the Middle East and North Africa, it aims at furthering the scientific knowledge of the large, long-standing, and recent refugee and migration movements witnessed in this region. It is concerned with questions of refugees and migration in the international system as a whole, both on the theoretical and practical levels.

CMRS activities include instruction, research, training and outreach. It offers a Master of Arts in migration and refugee studies and a graduate diploma in forced migration and refugee studies. The center works with AUC’s different departments to offer diversified courses to its students. Its research focuses on issues of interest to the region and beyond. In carrying out this research, it collaborates with reputable regional and international academic institutions. The training activities organized by CMRS are attended by researchers, policymakers, bureaucrats and civil society activists from different countries around the world. CMRS also provides tailor-made training programs on demand. The center’s outreach efforts involve working with the refugee community in Cairo, as well as disseminating knowledge and research findings about refugee and migration issues. It also provides services to the refugee community in Cairo and transfers its expertise in this area to other international institutions.

CMRS Information System Updates

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies aims to develop its information system into a comprehensive library for migration and refugee research material, with a special focus on the Middle East region, to facilitate research and support policymaking.

The CMRS information system is divided into different modules. In addition to country profiles, these modules include a legal database on legislation, migration statistics, contact information for research experts and global research centers, as well as a bibliography that contains articles, reports and publications on issues pertinent to migration.

Since last summer, CMRS researchers have been working on the most recent addition to the information system, the country profiles module. This new module features comprehensive documents covering the issue of migration in 18 different countries in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. These profiles contain both qualitative and quantitative analyses of migration in the following countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

In the previous two-months period, the information system has been updated with a wide array of socio-economic news, legal sources and renowned Arab authors and researchers in the field of migration, to provide a complete coverage of migration patterns, on both, the regional and global levels.

The country profiles and the hundreds of documents available on the center’s information system can be found at:

http://cmrsdb.aucegypt.edu/