



مركز البحرين للدراسات الاستراتيجية والدولية والطاقة
Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies

Perspectives on the Safe Return of Syrian Refugees


September 5, 2019





Concept Note





The UN security council resolution 2254 (2015) has stated the need to build conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees to Syria, yet how this will actually be implemented is unclear. There is much talk of safe zones and voluntary return, but all hinge on what assistance and protection the refugees might have access to and whether conditions are conducive to a return especially with regards to security and economic concerns.

The workshop seeks to discuss the diversity of perspectives on the issue of return and to determine the Western position, with the aim to clarify understanding of existing policies and strategies and to consider potential pathways that will contribute towards security and stability.

The specific objectives of the workshop are to:

- Present an overview of the situation of the refugees in neighboring countries.
- Discuss the implications of safe return in the current politico-economic -security conditions.
- Clarify understanding of the UN resolution and various policies on the safe return of the Syrian refugees.
- Give an international overview of perspectives on policies and implementation plans adopted on the issue of return.





Agenda



From	Program
09:00	Registration
09.30	<p>Welcome Remarks Mr. Katadah A.Hameed Zaman, Executive Director, Derasat</p> <p>Keynote Address HE Dr. Sh. Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Derasat</p> <p>Moderator Synopsis Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib, Affiliated Scholar, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy & International Affairs, American University of Beirut</p>
09.45	<p>SESSION 1: Syrian Refugees: an overview</p> <p>Dr. Nasser Yassin, Director of Research, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy & International Affairs, American University of Beirut , Lebanon</p>
10:30	<p>Session 2: Reintegration & Return Programs: opportunities & challenges</p> <p>Ms. Soha Farouk, Program Officer, UN Habitat Regional Office for the Arab States, Egypt</p> <p>Ms. Riwa Nassredine, Programme Manager, National Agenda for the Future of Syria Phase II, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Lebanon</p> <p>Ms. Haneen Sayed, Lead Social Protection, Jobs and Gender Specialist, World Bank, Lebanon</p>
11:45	Break
12:00	<p>Session 3: A Western Perspective: clarifying policy & positions</p> <p>Mr. Joel Rayburn, DAS Levant and Special Envoy to Syria, State Department, USA</p> <p>Dr. Martin Longden OBE, Head, Near East Depart. & UK Special Representative for Syria, FCO, UK</p> <p>Mr. Gavin Evans, Syria Policy Officer, European External Action (EEAS), EU, Belgium</p>
13:15	Closing Remarks
13:30	Lunch





Speaker Profiles



Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

Affiliated Scholar, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy & International Affairs, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Dr. Khatib specialty is US-Arab relations with a focus on lobbying. Dr. Khatib research also spans media biases, sectarianism, extremism and governance. She authored a book on the Arab lobby and the factors for success and for failure. Her book is published by Routledge UK. Her second book is under the title: 'The Arab Gulf States and the West: Perceptions and realities -Opportunities and perils. She is a regular publisher on the US relation with the Arab Gulf in several outlets among which UPI and Arab News. Dr. Khatib has presented papers and spoken in numerous workshops and conferences in the Middle East, US and Europe. Dania holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Exeter. She is an affiliated scholar with the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International affair at the American University of Beirut.



Dr. Nasser Yassin

Director of Research, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy & International Affairs, American University of Beirut , Lebanon

Dr. Nasser Yassin is the Director of Research at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, and Associate Professor of policy and planning at the Health Management and Policy Department at the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon. He co-chairs the AUB4Refugees Initiative that aims to bring together and build synergy among faculty and departments in AUB responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. He holds a PhD from University College London (UCL), an MSc from London School of Economics (LSE), and an MSc and BSc from the American University of Beirut (AUB). His research adopts multidisciplinary and innovative approaches to understanding the ways civil society actors, citizen groups and informal community networks can influence public policies in contexts of uncertainty and state fragility. In his latest research, he focuses on examining how refugees in the Middle East are developing adaptive mechanisms to confront the burden of displacement. He is author of more than 40 internationally published articles and chapters. His two volumes entitled, “101 Facts and Figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis”, are widely referred to by decision-makers and in the media.



Ms. Riwa Nasreddine

Programme Manager, National Agenda for the Future of Syria Phase II UN
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Lebanon

Ms. Riwa Nasreddine is the Programme Manager of the National Agenda for the Future of Syria Programme within the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA). She has been with UN ESCWA since 2012 and previously worked as First Economic Affairs Officer in the Economic Development and Integration Division. Prior to working at UN-ESCWA, she worked as a Senior Economic Officer with the United Nations Development Programme in Lebanon within the Lebanese Ministry of Finance between 2009-2012. Her role as an economic policy advisor to the Minister of Finance focused on Donor Coordination and Aid Management for the Government of Lebanon. In 2007, she worked as a Consultant on a European Commission funded SME development project for the Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Trade. She holds a Master in Money and Banking, American University of Beirut and a Bachelor in Administration from the University of Ottawa, Canada.



Ms. Soha Farouk

Associate Program Officer, UN-Habitat, Egypt

Soha Farouk is a Program Officer with UN-Habitat Regional Office of Arab States. She has been involved in the development and execution of a variety of development, research and capacity-building projects and programmes in the Mashreq and Maghreb countries with focus on migration and displacement issues, urban governance indicators, and management of land and natural resources. Prior to this post, she worked with UNDP, providing policy advice to Arab countries on water governance and sustainable development. She has contributed to many UN regional publications related to water and land governance, urban security as well as migration and displacement challenges in the Arab region. She holds a Master in International Development from the University of Montreal and Master in International Relations from University of Paris 1, Pantheon-Sorbonne.



Ms. Haneen Sayed

Lead Social Protection, Jobs and Gender Specialist, World Bank, Lebanon

Haneen Sayed is a Lead Specialist at the World Bank working on human development and social protection the Middle East and North Africa region. Based in the World Bank regional office in Beirut, Lebanon. Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Haneen has managed the World Bank response including operational programs, analytical work and donor/partner coordination. She is co-author of the recently published seminal World Bank book “The Mobility of Displaced Syrians”. More recently, Haneen has joined the World Bank Human Capital Project (HCP) global team helping HCP countries to accelerate human capital development. Haneen is an economist by academic training and has more than 25 years of experience in leading dialogue and programs in human and economic development. Haneen joined the World Bank in 1992 from Stanford and Columbia Universities where she earned her M.A. and M.Phil degrees in economics.



Mr. Joel D. Rayburn

Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Levant Affairs and Special Envoy for Syria,
State Department, USA

Joel Rayburn began serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Levant and Special Envoy for Syria on July 23, 2018. He previously served in the Administration as Senior Director for Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon at the National Security Council from January 2017 to July 2018.

Rayburn is a retired U.S. Army officer who served in a variety of assignments in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States from 1992 to 2018. He also taught history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and is the author of several books and articles on the Iraq War. He was commissioned into the Army after graduating from West Point in 1992 and holds a master's degree in History from Texas A&M University and in National Security Studies from the National War College. He is originally from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



Dr. Martin Longden OBE

Head, Near East Department & UK Special Representative for Syria, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, UK

Dr Martin Longden is Head of the Near East Department and the UK's Special Envoy to Syria. Prior to this he was Deputy Ambassador in the British Embassy, Kabul, between February 2015 and July 2017. Before coming to Afghanistan Martin spent 3 years as Head of Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, responsible for the UK's Overseas Territories. From 2009 to 2011 he was Head of Communication at the British Embassy in Washington DC. Other previous diplomatic roles have included Deputy Press Secretary to the Foreign Secretary and Strategic Policy Advisor working on Middle East affairs. Martin is a keen historian, and was awarded a PhD in History at the University of Leeds in 2000.



Mr. Gavin Evans

Syria Policy Officer, European External Action (EEAS), EU, Belgium

Mr. Evans, an official of the EEAS, has broad experience of EU external action in a number of regions, not least the Middle East. Prior to his current assignment, he worked in the EU's Support Group for Ukraine, and in crisis management, from Brussels. Previous to that, he ran the Political Section at the EU's Delegation to the Russian Federation in Moscow, for the period 2009-2013. He has also worked on Sudan, and on the Balkans, serving in Tirana, Albania, for the four years from 2001-2005. Mr Evans began his career as Desk Officer for the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the mid-1990s, going on to serve at the Delegation of the European Commission in Jerusalem for three years.

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