Men from the Jabal Nuba region of Sudan show asylum seeker cards with appointment dates at the UNHCR office in Amman. ALICE SU

Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan
Hierarchies of Aid in Protracted Displacement Crises

Rochelle Davis, Abbie Taylor, Will Todman and Emma Murphy

In late 2015, hundreds of Sudanese staged a sit-in outside the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Amman, Jordan. Their hope was to obtain recognition of their rights as refugees and asylum seekers, and to receive better treatment from the agency. A previous protest in 2014 had ended when Jordanian police persuaded (or compelled) the Sudanese to leave the site. This time, however, after the Sudanese had camped out for a month in the posh neighborhood of Khalda, the police arrived in force in the early hours of a mid-December morning. They dismantled the camp and transported some 800 protesters and others—men, women and children—to a holding facility close to Queen Alia International Airport. In the ensuing days, the Jordanian authorities, assisted by Sudanese government representatives, deported the majority of these people to Sudan. Nuclear families were split up between countries. More than 100 of those deported were detained and questioned upon arrival in Khartoum. Several reported harassment and intimidation at the hands of the Sudanese authorities from whom they had originally fled. Some had their documents seized and are now on the run. The whereabouts of others are unknown. Those Sudanese who were part of the protests but managed to escape deportation remain fearful for their future in Jordan.

This crackdown on non-violent refugee protest is not unprecedented. In Egypt in 2005, a peaceful sit-in of Sudanese outside UNHCR offices in Cairo turned deadly when Egyptian police attacked the group, killing at least 28

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protesters. More recent reports from Egypt describe how an anti-smuggling law enacted in late 2015 is being implemented to result in the arrest and deportation of those—Sudanese, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Syrians, Palestinians and Iraqis—the government says have paid smugglers to get on boats (in Egypt or Libya) to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.[1] In 2012 in Lebanon, 13 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers who mounted a two-month hunger strike outside UNHCR offices were reportedly arrested and detained.[2] Israel hosts an estimated 45,000 Sudanese and Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers.[3] The vast majority of these people are denied residency or work permits. If they are caught working illegally, following a law passed in 2015, they are detained in a "welcome center" in Holot and then, after 12 months, either imprisoned, forcibly repatriated or sent to a third African country. Thousands have taken their protests to the Knesset, in spite of fears of deportation.[4]

Before rounding up the Sudanese in December, the Jordanian government had deported few refugees and asylum seekers. Those who had been deported seem to be those who had either upset the status quo or acted "politically" in ways deemed undesirable by the government. The mass deportation in December remains, hopefully, an anomaly that does not threaten the hundreds of thousands of refugees of all nationalities who remain in the country and describe Jordan as a place of relative safety.

Nonetheless, it is clear that governments and security services in Jordan and other host countries are sending a message to all refugees, migrants and citizens that their status in the country is not protected by international agreements or norms. The message is to be quiet and accept what is on offer. And there are few or no channels for complaints, whether about the status itself or about inadequate protection and ineffective or imbalanced aid provision.

Read differently, the stated reason behind the Sudanese protests in all of these countries—lack of access to services for refugees—points to a larger pattern in responses to refugees in the Middle East. That pattern shows a hierarchy of policies and agreements based on the national origin or citizenship of the persons, rather than their status as refugees or asylum seekers. A Jordanian NGO, ARDD-Legal Aid, describes this hierarchy and offers better suggestions for how refugees should be treated in a report titled "Putting Needs Over Nationality."[5] We expand on the ideas expressed in that report and elsewhere to analyze how international agencies and host countries in the Middle East have created refugee aid regimes that structure their services based on citizenship. This structure creates a hierarchy of service provision that often addresses immediate refugee flows, but ignores or normalizes as less needy those who come from situations of protracted displacement.

We identify four elements that are part of this hierarchy: size, race, time and awareness. The first element, size, addresses the large refugee populations that have arrived in countries of first asylum—Palestinians in 1948 and 1967, Sahrawis in 1975–1976, Iraqis after 2005 and now Syrians. Because the movements are so large, they become the target of funding and programs (which is not to say the responses are adequate). Refugees who do not fit that citizenship-based designation are often left without emergency care or assistance.

The second element, race, is tied to the African-ness of Sudanese and Somali refugees and the assumptions about civilizational underdevelopment and inferiority that accompany how they are seen in the Middle East. Such inexcusable views reflect the legacy of an Arab nationalism that deemed Semitic Arab-ness superior to other types, particularly those that are both Arab and African, even though both Sudan and Somalia have long been members of the Arab League. These assumptions are also the residue of older experiences with former African slaves or soldiers, who are most often seen as "other" due to their skin color.

The third element is time. And while not particular to the Middle East, the region has endured major population movements as a result of wars in the last 15 years (Iraqis, Syrians and now the ignored Yemenis). The urgent fact that, today, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq are the hosts of 4.8 million Syrian refugees simultaneously obscures hundreds of thousands if not millions of others who are victims of conflicts going back many decades and live in situations of protracted displacement.

The fourth and final element is awareness. Sudanese and Somali refugees in the Middle East are only a small percentage of the many Sudanese and Somali refugees in the world, the vast majority of whom fled south or west to other African countries. Because these people are not a single large concentration in the Middle East (except in Yemen), relatively little is known of the conflicts in their countries or the reasons for their flight.

We focus here on the experiences of Sudanese and Somali refugees and asylum seekers residing in Jordan, a group of approximately 4,000 people, half of whom are children.[6] While recognizing that they are small in number compared to the hundreds of thousands of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in the country, in addition to Palestinians, we chose to write about these two populations because the plight of Somalis and Sudanese illustrates some of the most pressing issues connected to long-standing conflicts and situations of protracted displacement. In addition, because the Sudanese and Somalis come from countries that do not border Jordan, they have arrived there via complicated routes and personal negotiations and are often viewed by Jordanians as travelers or labor migrants, and thus not akin to Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

Due in part to these commonalities, Sudanese and Somali refugees and asylum seekers recount similar experiences in Jordan. Their shared experiences of harassment stand out—their darker skin making them easy targets. Furthermore, their citizenship, rather than their status as displaced, frames how most international NGOs and the UNHCR respond to them, which means provision of assistance and programming only when funds are unrestricted (rarely) or when budgets allow on an ad hoc basis.

A refugee from Darfur at the December 2015 sit-in outside the UNHCR office in Amman. MUHAMMAD HAMED/REUTERS

Conflict in Somalia and Sudan

The time element that relates to Sudanese and Somali refugees in Jordan and elsewhere evidences how drawn-out conflicts result in protracted displacement, which is defined as more than 25,000 people living in exile for more than five years.

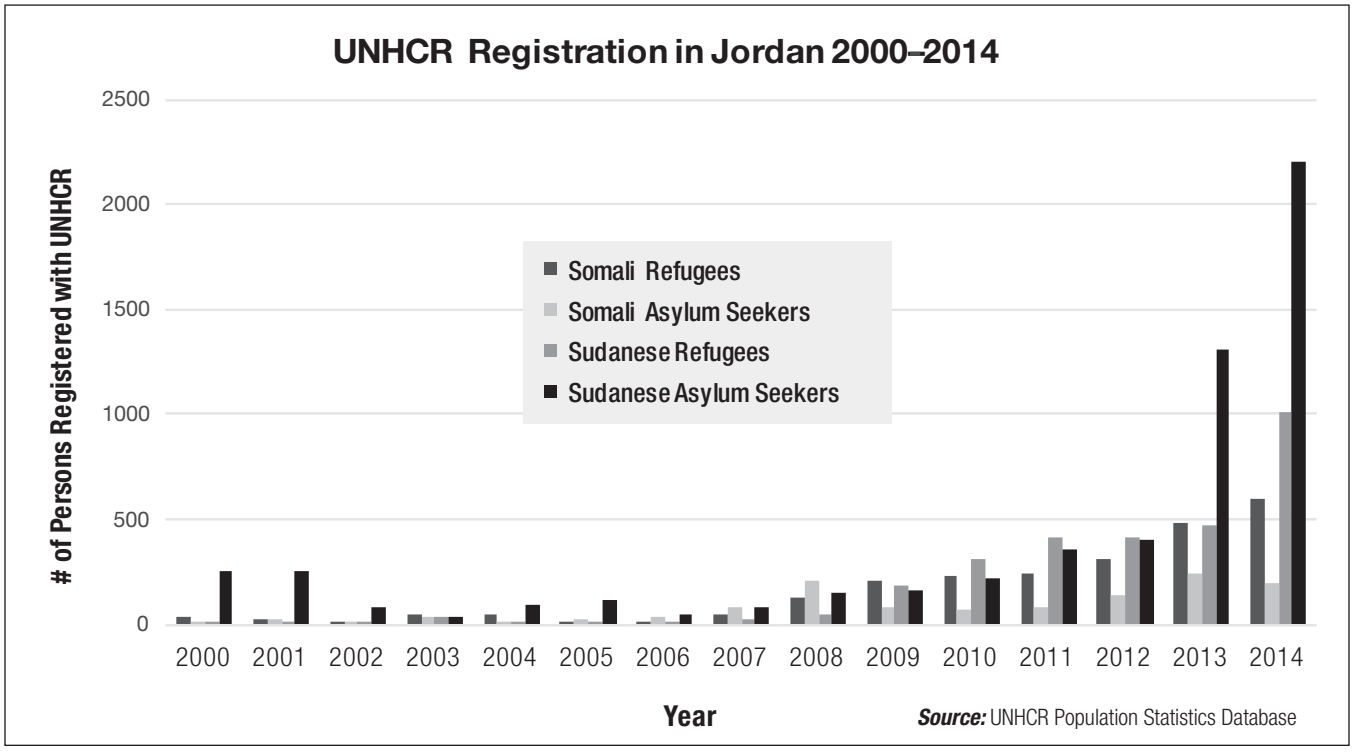
UNHCR data shows that the number of Somalis and Sudanese registered as refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan has increased over the past 20 years. Notably, the number of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers almost quadrupled between 2012 and 2014. Various factors have contributed to the recent rise, including the long-running conflicts and issues connected with access to resources in Sudan and Somalia, as well as the trend of families reuniting in Jordan.

The majority of Sudanese in Jordan came to the country as a direct result of the conflict that began in Darfur in the late 1990s. Despite the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, the fighting continues. The spike in Sudanese arrivals in Jordan in 2013 and 2014 is directly connected to this continuous violence: "Some 450,000 persons were displaced in 2014 and another 100,000 in January 2015 alone, adding to some 2 million long-term internally displaced persons (IDPs) since fighting erupted in 2003."[7]

For Somalis, civil war has been part of life since 1991. Somalis have fled to numerous countries and in large numbers, according to the UNHCR—Kenya (420,000), Yemen (250,000), Ethiopia (250,000), Djibouti and the Gulf states. A similar number of Somalis are internally displaced (1.1 million of a total population of 12.3 million, according to the UN Population Fund), and thousands have been resettled in Europe and the United States over time. These numbers do not reflect the actual displacement, however, as many are not registered as refugees and live either as guest workers or illegal immigrants.

Because the Gulf states do not allow the UNHCR to operate within their borders, Somalis living there often moved to Yemen (before 2015), Kenya, Jordan, Egypt and Syria (before 2011) to register with the UNHCR, gain access to aid or get a chance at consideration for third-country resettlement. Yemen is no longer a safe place, however, due to the Saudi-led attack that began on March 26, 2015 and continues to the present. The total displacement in Yemen (IDPs and refugees) is nearly 2.5 million people, the UNHCR says, of whom some 30,000 are Somalis who have fled Yemen for Somaliland, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Sudanese and Somalis must obtain visas to enter Jordan. To our knowledge, there is no smuggling network that brings them overland from Egypt or Saudi Arabia or Iraq. But only eight of the 20 people interviewed flew directly to Jordan



from their home country (in this case Sudan). Four separate Somali women described traveling via Yemen before eventually arriving in Jordan; prior to Yemen, one had also spent time in Kenya and another in Syria. Two of the women spoke of experiencing violence and insecurity in Yemen, with one revealing that she had been raped while a domestic worker in a Yemeni household. One Somali family fled Somalia after the mother (a health worker) was seriously wounded and another family member was killed in two separate attacks. When explaining why the family traveled to Jordan, the mother said: "I came here [Jordan] to register for the UNHCR and for medical treatment, and because living here is better." The family arrived after living in the United Arab Emirates, where they were able to obtain visas for Jordan. Another man described transit through Bahrain, due to the difficulties of traveling directly to Jordan. A Sudanese woman left Sudan for Iraq, where she and her family experienced violence and harassment, and later she traveled to Jordan with her husband and children; her husband has since been deported by the Jordanian authorities, to where and for what reason she did not reveal.

These experiences highlight two points: first, that these refugees and asylum seekers want to come to Jordan because it is a place of safety; and second, that they are "non-border" refugees who enter with visas and then seek asylum. This second point leads Jordanian authorities to view Sudanese and Somalis (and now likely Yemenis as well) as people who overstay their visas, rather than as refugees. In December, for example, a government spokesman said the Sudanese refugees were being deported "because they had arrived in Jordan under the false pretext of seeking medical treatment," taking advantage of Jordan's "relatively lax medical visa policy."[8] Any future restrictions on visas on such grounds would be a serious blow to all those fleeing conflict. While the Sudanese and Somalis obtained visas to enter Jordan, their stated reasons for leaving their homes were like those cited by Syrians and Iraqis: violence, political threats, the breakdown of services, the desire to avoid participation in conflict and the need for health care, to name some. The Sudanese and Somalis thus rely on the global system of deferring to UN authority to designate an individual as a refugee despite the fact that they may be "illegal" in the eyes of the state. In the case of Jordan, and elsewhere, this system usually protects those designated as refugees, but beyond and before protection, the system has also created a troubling hierarchy of refugee-ness.

Jordan as Host Country

In early 2016, preliminary census results estimated Jordan's total population at 9.5 million, including 2.9 million "guests" of non-Jordanian origin, a category embracing refugees, asylum seekers and migrant laborers.[9] Jordan has earned a reputation of tolerance for refugees and asylum seekers residing in its territory, though it is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. In the absence of international obligations and national refugee legislation, the UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Jordan in 1998 (partially amended in 2014), which, among other things, underlines the principle of non-refoulement—protection against forcible return to country of origin—and agrees that refugees and asylum seekers should receive treatment in line

with international standards. The Memorandum also acknowledges the 1951 Convention's definition of a refugee, and allows the UNHCR to interview and determine the status of persons seeking asylum in Jordan. In spite of Jordan's generosity, and a clear stipulation in the Jordanian constitution that "political refugees shall not be extradited on account of their political beliefs or for their defense of liberty," there are instances of deportation among all refugee populations—from Syrians to Iraqis to Sudanese—instilling feelings of insecurity among all refugees and asylum seekers residing in the country.

In 2015, Jordan was reported to have the second-highest per capita rate of refugees in the world.[10] While this count and other UNHCR statistics do not include Palestinians, nearly half of Jordanian citizens either are or are descended from Palestinians who found refuge in Jordan following the creation of Israel in 1948, and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (and Gaza and the Golan Heights) in 1967.[11] To serve these populations, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was established in 1950 (prior to the existence of the UNHCR). UNRWA is a model of categorization of services and funding by national origin, and still runs schools, clinics and other programs intended for Palestinian refugees and largely staffed by same.

Funding for the UNHCR, the UN body that deals with all refugees other than Palestinians, has followed this "country of origin" model in Jordan in today's refugee crises. For example, in November 2015, the UNHCR reported that it received $197.2 million in donor contributions to its operations in Jordan for 2015, of which $195.4 million went toward its Syria response and $1.8 million toward its response to the Iraq crisis. It had requested $329 million from donors to fund its Jordan operations in 2015, meaning that it had received only 60 percent funding as of November, all of which was contributed under the Syria and Iraq responses, leaving 40 percent of the needs unmet.

The model of refugee engagement by citizenship has not held in other ways, however. With the arrival of tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees in 2005, the government of Jordan was quick to reject the establishment of separate schools or health facilities for Iraqis (citing the Palestinian case as a negative), and instead sought to integrate them into national public services. The same has been true with Syrians. As the government allowed Iraqi and then Syrian refugees into its schools and health facilities, it also pushed for greater development aid to build and support this infrastructure. The US is the largest donor, and Secretary of State John Kerry pledged additional funds to Jordan at the February donor conference on Syria in London. Accordingly, development aid spikes in 2003 (the year the US invaded Iraq), followed by a continuous rise since 2007–2008 with significant increases post-2011, parallel the various refugee flows from Iraq and Syria (or, more precisely, the US decision to provide funding for them).

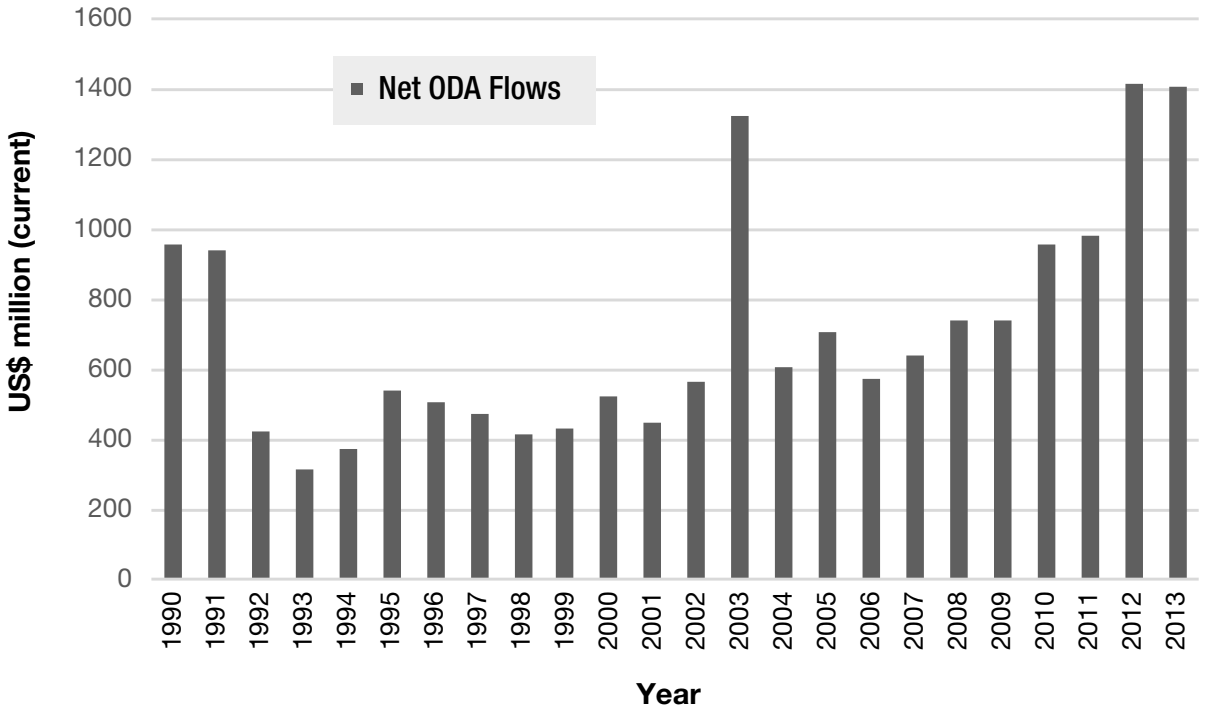
But this targeting of funding at certain populations leaves the populations for whom money is not earmarked to perceive themselves as invisible or ignored by humanitarian actors and the wider international community. The situation in Jordan reveals the realities of humanitarian aid: First, there will never be sufficient aid to meet people's needs; and second, giving is often structured around specific crises and appeals, and as more crises remain unresolved and new ones emerge, a shift in priorities or fatigue among donors can have devastating consequences for those who fall victim to protracted displacement. Above all, humanitarian assistance is and always will be unsustainable and insufficient in the mid- and long term, without either addressing the conflicts that keep people as refugees or modifying host-country policies so that refugees are allowed to work, regardless of their nationality.

Refugees are defined by their national origin as a result of agreements struck between the UNHCR and governments, as well as government policies. Thus, in the case of Jordan, refugee and asylum-seeking populations experience differential access to services as well as differences in how they obtain refugee status: Syrians are granted *prima facie* refugee status and must register with both the government and the UNHCR, whereas others—Iraqis, Somalis and Sudanese—are required to undergo Refugee Status Determination on a case-by-case basis. Palestinians with Syrian, Lebanese or Iraqi travel documents are still a third category: Most often they are not let in to the country, but if they manage to enter, they fall under the jurisdiction of UNRWA. They are not registered with

Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Jordan (December 2015)

Country of Origin	Refugees	Asylum Seekers (awaiting Refugee Status Determination)
Syria	623,112	0 (recognized *prima facie* as refugees)
Iraq	29,263	15,312
Sudan	1,013	2,203
Somalia	598	197
Total	654,141	18,789

Source: UNHCR Population Statistics Database



or provided services by the UNHCR and are not eligible to register for resettlement. UNRWA has had to appeal for additional funding to provide emergency services specifically for these Palestinians.

Life in Jordan

Somalis and Sudanese wishing to claim asylum in Jordan need to make an appointment to register with the UNHCR. After registration, they are issued certificates stipulating that they are recognized by the UNHCR as asylum seekers. To be recognized as refugees, however, they must undergo the Refugee Status Determination process, which consists of multiple interviews and home visits. Each of these steps may involve a wait of many weeks or months. While they await a decision, asylum seekers are not eligible for assistance from the UNHCR or the Jordanian government, though they have been known to receive handouts of cash or in-kind assistance from the UNHCR when funding allows. Some make do with the charity of passersby, neighbors, religious organizations and local NGOs. Those who are recognized as refugees—the vast majority of Somalis and around a third of the Sudanese registered with UNHCR in Jordan in 2014—are eligible for cash assistance and refugee services. They can also be considered for resettlement. According to the UNHCR, 160 Somali households and 176 Sudanese households receive monthly cash assistance.

Seasonal, occasional or emergency aid does not help with everyday expenses such as education and health care, not to mention housing and food. Those registered with the UNHCR can receive subsidized primary health services in government-run health facilities, after paying 2 Jordanian dinars ($3) to open a file, but they still have to pay a part of the costs for medication, surgical procedures, lab tests and other services. Primary and preventive health care for children age 6 and under is free of charge, as is child delivery.[12] Sudanese and Somali refugees, as non-Jordanians, must pay a yearly fee of 40 dinars ($65) to enroll in public schools. This fee has so far been covered by the UNHCR and a contractor aid organization called International Relief and Development, which also provides children with necessary school supplies.[13] One Somali mother said money is so tight that "we share water and electricity with the neighbors. Thank God, my children are in school. But every day I face problems. I don't have enough to cover the expenses. The school tells the children they want money, and now it's cold outside, and I don't have enough for the bus for them, so they have to walk [to school] and come back soaked in rain."

Legal restrictions prohibit Sudanese and Somali refugees, like other non-Jordanian nationals, from working. While it is possible for foreigners to get a work permit in Jordan under

what is called the *kafala* system, it is extremely difficult due to the costs as well as the need to find a Jordanian sponsor (*kafil)* willing to complete the complicated bureaucratic process. Employment agencies that specialize in this process for agricultural laborers, construction workers and food service employees (occupations dominated by Egyptians), and domestic workers (largely Sri Lankans, Filipinos and Indonesians), stipulate that the workers give up their passports in exchange for work authorization. The migrants work long hours and are often confined to their workplaces. No one, and particularly not refugees, should be subjected to these exploitative labor practices. A new Jordanian plan to allow Syrian refugees to apply for work permits is a good move, but deepens the refugee hierarchy-by-citizenship model.

None of our interviewees had been able to work legally in Jordan and many were forced by need to turn to employment in the informal sector. Several interviewees cited the constant fear of being caught by the police or Ministry of Labor officials. Fatima, a 21-year old Somali woman, remarked: "Because we are refugees we can't work at all, and even if we tried to find a job to take care of our food and other daily needs, the Ministry of Labor would catch us and put us in jail and mistreat us, not giving us anything at all, because we are refugees. I was working in a women's gym and a group of women came and asked me if I worked there. They were dressed like normal customers, and so I said, 'Yes, I work here.' They asked me if I had a license to work. I said I didn't have it currently, and they told me to go with them, showing me their IDs, and then without any mercy they threw me in a car, and they took me to a police station with many other Somali girls in the same car."

Other interviews revealed that some Somali and Sudanese refugee families were forced to rely on their children working to meet basic needs. Miriam, a Somali woman, said, "We get by because my teenage daughter works cleaning houses. She works really hard for someone of her age, but it will only be until we can get out of this situation. My son also works cleaning cars, and sometimes he goes to clean bakeries and they give him food and he brings it home." This kind of unregulated labor leaves the worker open to exploitation, because the employer may not pay what was promised or at all. The worker, who is not allowed to work legally in the first place, has no recourse.

In these circumstances, Sudanese and Somalis in Jordan stick together. A study of social relations among refugee populations in Jordan found that Sudanese and Somalis cited the highest levels of "bonding social capital"—relations with others of their own nationality.[14] Not surprisingly, communal living was common among those interviewed, especially young, single men, as were shared finances, such that whoever was able to find work used the income to support those they lived with. Adam, a Sudanese man, said, "We are about 15 or 16 Sudanese in the same house and we all go out to search for work. Any one of us who finds work uses the money to get food for everyone and takes a bit from it for rent. I mean, we make a collection for rent, each one according to his ability, how much he worked and according to his circumstances, 2 or 3 lira and so on. There are no other people to help me and we get no help from the UN." Adam went on to say: "Sudanese… we help each other. Even on the level of when I want to talk to my family, they give me money to talk with my family from a call center." The same study mentioned above found that "Sudanese and Somalis both say that the perceived racial difference makes it harder for them to integrate within the Jordanian community." Both groups reported they had very little "bridging capital," or trusted interactions with Jordanians or other refugee communities.[15]

Perceptions of racism and experiences of discrimination at the hands of Jordanians were prevalent in our interviews. Many interviewees cited verbal and physical racial attacks, often linking those experiences to certain neighborhoods. Zaynab, a Somali woman, reported: "Currently, I am living in al-Bayadir. We are the only Somali family living here and, thank God, this area is pretty safe and we don't face any problems over here. The former area that we were living in was Jabal Amman, but we faced a lot of difficulties there. People beat my kids and they didn't let up on them even when the police came—they were always abusing my kids and throwing stones at them. When the cops came they didn't do anything, even when some boys tried to beat my kids in front of them. They didn't do anything at all and they said we had to get a statement from a doctor to prove that we were honest. That night I was out of my mind and I cried in the street. I even thought of committing suicide and threw myself in front of cars. Because of all these problems with my family, I left that area and went far away because we were treated really terribly and people over there insulted us, calling us 'slaves' and '*abu samra*' [blackie] and bad words. Sometimes they said, 'Why did you Somalis come to our country?'" The UNHCR has similarly documented instances of Jordanians attacking Sudanese refugees, and others describe racism directed at Sudanese and Somalis by schoolteachers and police.[16]

It is important to note that Sudanese and Somalis in Jordan feel a double discrimination, due not only to the color of their skin but also to their status as refugees. Mahaj, a 19-year old Somali woman, recounted the following: "I remember once when I was walking with my sister in the street and there was a man in his forties playing soccer with a couple of boys and they said, 'Move quickly, you [a racial slur I won't repeat].' We responded to him that it was a public street. He got mad at us and started to abuse us loudly saying things I won't mention. Eventually he said he would push our faces to the ground, and we were afraid, but we decided not to talk to him and kept walking home. A couple of days later my mother was coming from her friend's house when she saw three boys beating my brother and throwing stones at him, but when she came they ran away and she called the police because it wasn't the first time they had beaten my brother. When the police came we told them everything. While we were talking with them the 40-year old guy came, and we told the police that he used to

abuse and bother us. When he heard that he tried to beat me in front of the cops. The police stopped him but they didn't do anything else…. My mental state is bad when I encounter rejection and discrimination between white and black—that affects my mental situation a lot. Sometimes I get really mad and cry."

Notably, our interviewees opened up about this discrimination even though it is hurtful and embarrassing to talk about. The interviewees were vocal about this subject because they knew they could trust the interviewers and also because this project was directed by foreigners who are seen as part of the international aid system. On the other hand, our experiences talking about anti-black discrimination in Jordan with Jordanian friends and colleagues reveal that many are unaware of what Mahaj articulated, in large part because they do not interact much with darker-skinned people. This dynamic has a class element, as the refugees live among poorer Jordanians and Palestinians and are perceived to compete with them for housing and jobs.[17]

The Sudanese and Somalis interviewed did also speak of positive interactions with the locals. Mohammad, a 37-year old from Sudan, stated, "My relationships with neighbors are good and strong. Sometimes they send us food, especially on Fridays, and they invite us to visit them. When I first came here, I didn't have a place to live and I didn't have any money. I slept in the mosque with my children, and a Jordanian guy hosted me in his apartment. I am still living there today." Other interviewees cited the support of neighbors, and it can reasonably be assumed that at least some proportion of these helpful people are Jordanians and not other Sudanese or Somalis. Many individual Jordanians hire Sudanese and Somalis informally to wash cars or clean houses, and these jobs are what allows the refugees to survive.

Isra', a 23-year old from Darfur, said: "My relationship with my neighbors is pretty good, and I have good interactions with them. They do everything for us and they help and embrace us. They are much better than the UNHCR, which doesn't care. They just gave us a document to prove that we are refugees without giving us any services or medical, moral, material and humanitarian aid…. Neighbors deal with us like we are humans…. I don't know of any place or international institution that cares about us. They don't even look at us. They just care about Syrians and Iraqis. There is a lot of discrimination even though all of us are refugees, humans and equal. There is no difference between us based on color, be it white, black or red. They don't meet with anybody from African countries. They only care about Syrian and Iraqis who get everything for free; they get heaters, blankets, covers and jackets for winter." These accounts illustrate how a life lived on the socio-economic margins has shaped the ways in which Sudanese and Somali refugees perceive themselves, their status as refugees and their treatment in Jordan. This type of life has also shaped the ways in which they cope, turning to each other—and, to a lesser extent, to Jordanians—rather than to international aid agencies, who often cannot or do not help them.

Why do Sudanese and Somalis come to Jordan if aid provision is scarce, integration difficult and the possibility of resettlement so remote? Those interviewed mentioned that they or their families traveled to Jordan because it is a country where they believed they could find safety, register with the UNHCR and live a better life—even if it meant embarking upon a treacherous journey beforehand. Not all of them intended to go to Jordan when they left Sudan or Somalia. Most went to other countries first. But their experiences of violence, exploitative employers and medical problems, or their desire to reunite with family members, prompted them to search for an alternative location, particularly since protracted crisis at home made return a virtual impossibility.

Life in the International Refugee Aid Regime

At a time when the number of people forcibly displaced around the world is higher than ever before—there are more than 60 million refugees and internally displaced from crises old and new—the deportation of the Sudanese protesters in December 2015 underscores the urgency of lasting and equitable relief for each of these persons. Special attention is owed to those who find themselves out of place in the international refugee regime or left behind by it. These people are paid little attention now, but not because they do not fit the legal definition of refugees. They are passed over because, in a world of protracted emergencies, finite and bifurcated funding mechanisms, and a politics of humanitarian priorities that amounts to selective valuation of human life, what matters is where refugees come from. These refugees in protracted displacement seek only what their peers seek—aid, protection and durable solutions for themselves and their families.

The quandaries of humanitarian assistance are enormous. We relay the experiences and concerns of Somalis and Sudanese in Jordan not only to raise awareness of their particular situation, but also to trigger innovative thinking about ways to ensure that they—and others like them—are afforded a greater measure of dignity. As we surveyed the assistance that these communities do receive, what stands out is that the UNHCR, Christian and Muslim charities, and local Jordanian organizations are the parties that have stepped up.

The Jordanian news site 7iber.com has published a series of in-depth stories about these "second-tier refugees," both before and after the mass deportation in December. Some of the refugees interviewed for the articles tell of receiving mental health and psychosocial support from the Noor al-Hussein Foundation Institute for Family Health, which provides health services for both Jordanian citizens and resident non-citizens. The aforementioned ARDD-Legal Aid advocates on behalf of Somali and Sudanese refugees, including in cases of labor exploitation.

Christian and Muslim charities also included Somalis and Sudanese in their work. Muslim-run soup kitchens helped some. A number of the adults we encountered as part of

our research took advantage of free education provided by organizations like the Jesuit Refugee Service, where classes were open to all, regardless of nationality. It was a rare opportunity for Syrians, Iraqis, Jordanians, Palestinians, Somalis and Sudanese to learn and socialize together, treated equally. Similarly, Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins provides two years of university-level study, regardless of nationality, for those who would not otherwise have the opportunity. In 2011, we also witnessed firsthand the work of the International Catholic Migration Commission, which provided low-cost renovations to rented homes occupied by Somali refugees, among others. The program was particularly important for refugees, who lived in substandard dwellings, and whose landlords often ignored or refused their requests for repairs.

Notably absent from our survey were the international NGOs and development organizations funded by foreign governments and executing contracts awarded by the UN, USAID and other large agencies. The situation of those who do not fit into the targeted refugee categories is the result of an unfortunate, and perhaps even unintentional, collusion of funding drives that seek donations for certain crises and then dole it out to international development organizations, who create those targeted programs. One proposed solution is to include Sudanese and Somalis and others as a percentage of aid recipients, which continues the aid provision by nationality that is the very problem, but widens the range of nationalities. But as Alice Su reports in *The Atlantic*, "Jordan's government has already faced a backlash from international donors for pushing them to spend at least 30 percent of their funding on Jordanian host communities, which are struggling to support the influx of Syrian refugees. Suggesting that funds to deal with the crisis be diverted even further would be difficult."[18]

Another solution is to allow refugees to work, a proposal long rebuffed by Jordanian officials given the high unemployment rate in Jordan. The high percentage of foreign migrant laborers in agricultural, construction, services and industry suggests that there is room for flexibility, perhaps employing refugees rather than importing migrant labor. At the World Economic Forum in January 2015, Queen Rania suggested that Jordan was prepared to create "economic zones where refugees can find employment." The Jordanian prime minister, 'Abdallah al-Nusour, stated the following February that the plan involved employing up to 150,000 Syrian refugees in these zones, conditional on the international community supporting the Jordanian economy with $1.6 billion worth of aid and preferential import tariffs.[19] In April, Syrians were given a three-month window to apply for work permits for free, and as of the end of July, some 23,000 permits had been issued of the promised 50,000 for the year. As they are given only to Syrians, however, the permits reinforce the hierarchy that provides certain services to refugees with certain citizenships.

The best solution would be the end of the conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine and Syria. Amina, a Somali woman, described it most clearly. "There were many positive things about my life in Somalia: I didn't feel alienation [from society], and I wasn't living in a foreign country. I was living with people like me who had the same skin color and nationality. Because of that I was comfortable and there was no kind of discrimination. But in Somalia, everything was dominated by war, hunger and [related] problems. The strong exploit the weak, and injustice and corruption pervades everything." For most refugees, returning home is the ideal solution, as long as that home provides them safety and security, services for their family, and a way to live in dignity. Majida, a 46-year old Somali woman, said: "I hope that when I go back to my country I find it safe and free of wars. My country needs many things, such as hospitals, schools, universities, ministries and a just government that is made up of all the tribes and keeps the country safe and spreads peace among the people." Until that happens, assistance to refugees should "put needs over nationality," in the words of ARDD-Legal Aid, in order to provide the most vulnerable with the protection they deserve. ■

Endnotes

1 *Al-Ahram*, July 18, 2015.

2 *Al-Akhbar*, August 31, 2012.

3 Dan Connell, "Refugees, Ransoms and Revolt," *Middle East Report* 266 (Spring 2013).

4 *Guardian*, January 8, 2014.

5 ARDD-Legal Aid, "Putting Needs Over Nationality" (Amman, February 2015): http://ardd-jo.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/ardd-la_-_putting_needs_over_nationality.pdf.

6 Our fieldwork on these refugees took place as part of several research trips in 2013–2015, when we collected 220 interviews with urban refugees in Irbid, Zarqa and Amman. These interviews were conducted by a variety of people living in Jordan—refugees and Jordanian citizens—who we trained in qualitative research methods and who sought out friends, coworkers, neighbors and relatives to interview. The questions aimed to elicit the refugees' narratives about their experiences living in their home countries and living in displacement in Jordan. We also asked about their aspirations and fears for the future and how they dealt with challenges in their lives. The majority of our 20 interviews with Somali and Sudanese were with young adults who had come alone or with their families when they were children. Half of the interviewees were women. The Sudanese interviewed had mostly fled violence in Darfur, while the Somalis had originated in Mogadishu and Baidoa. See Rochelle Davis, Abbie Taylor and Emma Murphy, "Gender, Conscription and Protection, and the War in Syria," *Forced Migration Review* 47 (September 2014); Rochelle Davis and Abbie Taylor, "What Do You Miss Most? Syrian Refugees Respond," *Jadaliyya*, December 12, 2013: http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15555/what-do-you-miss-most-syrian-refugees-respond; Rochelle Davis and Abbie Taylor, "Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon: A Snapshot from Summer 2013," Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, September 2013: http://ccas.georgetown.edu/story/1242735967441.html. All names used in this article are our creations, as we did not record our interviewees' names. It is important to note that we asked the interviewers to interview refugees in their communities, and these interviewers chose to interview Somalis and Sudanese, as well as Syrians, Iraqis and Palestinians.

7 International Crisis Group, *The Chaos in Darfur* (Nairobi/Brussels, April 2015), p. 1.

8 Al Jazeera America, December 18, 2015.

9 *Jordan Times*, January 30, 2016.

10 See the UNHCR fact sheet: http://www.unhcr.org/4c90819a9.pdf.

11 After Jordan severed legal and administrative ties with the West Bank in 1988, it continued to provide Jordanian passports to West Bankers who sought to travel, but these papers did not confer rights of citizenship. After the Palestinian Authority began issuing passports in 1995, Jordan revoked the citizenship of any of its citizens found to be carrying an Israeli or a Palestinian passport.

12 ARDD-Legal Aid, "Putting Needs Over Nationality."

13 Ibid.

14 Noel Calhoun, *With a Little Help from Our Friends: A Participatory Assessment of Social Capital Among Refugees in Jordan* (Geneva: UNHCR, September 2010): http://www.unhcr.org/4ca0a0109.pdf.

15 Ibid., pp. 10–11.

16 *Vice*, November 20, 2014; *Al-Monitor*, December 2, 2015.

17 *Jordan Times*, March 5, 2014.

18 Alice Su, "How Do You Rank Refugees?" *The Atlantic*, November 22, 2013.

19 *Financial Times*, February 1, 2016. Al-Nusour specified that 50–70 percent of the jobs would be given to Syrians, and the remainder to Jordanians, with no mention of refugees of other nationalities. *Guardian*, February 3, 2016.