



## From the editors

### Forced Migration Review

(FMR) provides a forum for the regular exchange of practical experience, information and ideas between researchers, refugees and internally displaced people, and those who work with them. It is published in English, Arabic, Spanish and French by the Refugee Studies Centre of the Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford.

### Staff

Marion Couldrey &  
Maurice Herson (Editors)  
Kelly Pitt (Funding &  
Promotion Assistant)  
Sharon Ellis (Assistant)

### Forced Migration Review

Refugee Studies Centre  
Oxford Department of International  
Development, University of Oxford,  
3 Mansfield Road,  
Oxford OX1 3TB, UK

[fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

Skype: fmreview  
Tel: +44 (0)1865 281700

[www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org)

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Seeking asylum is not an unlawful act. Yet asylum seekers and refugees – men, women and even children – are increasingly detained and interned around the world, as are numbers of other migrants. Sometimes detained indefinitely and often in appalling conditions, they may suffer not only deprivation of their liberty but other abuses of their human rights too. Families are separated. Medical and psychological needs are ignored. Contact with the outside world is fractured. Rigid rules, surveillance and restraints degrade, humiliate and damage. And lack of information and hope leads to despair.

Detention may appear to be a convenient solution to states' political quest to manage migration but it is an expensive option and has lasting effects on people and on their capacity to be independent, self-sufficient and fulfilled members of the community when released. In the search for a more humane – and cheaper – approach, agencies and government authorities have trialled a variety of alternatives to detention, some of which are promising in terms of low levels of absconding, a greater degree of normality for the people involved, and improved chances of eventual integration. It will take shifts in attitudes as well as successful pilots, however, for alternatives to detention to become the norm.

For many people, their detention is the precursor to their deportation (or 'removal'). Here again, there seems to be a marked lack of care for people's rights and protection, as well as for their safe, successful and sustainable reintegration.

We would like to thank Jerome Phelps, Robyn Sampson and Liza Schuster for their assistance as special advisors on the feature theme. We are very grateful to the the Oak Foundation and UNHCR for funding this issue.

This issue also includes a mini-feature on the current **Syria crisis**, plus a number of general articles on other aspects of forced migration.

The full issue is online at [www.fmreview.org/detention](http://www.fmreview.org/detention) in html, pdf and audio formats. It will be available in print and online in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. An expanded contents listing for the issue is available at [www.fmreview.org/detention/FMR44listing.pdf](http://www.fmreview.org/detention/FMR44listing.pdf)

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With our best wishes

Marion Couldrey and Maurice Herson  
Editors, Forced Migration Review