

CMRS World Refugee Day Statement

This year's World Refugee Day comes at a time of exceptional uncertainty, and yet at a time of unwavering hope. As the world grapples with the coronavirus pandemic, we are reminded that our wellbeing and survival depend on our collective solidarity, not on individual interests. And there is no better reminder of this than the acts of solidarity that millions around the world have taken part in over the last few weeks following the killing of George Floyd. In light of these challenges and hopes, it is important that we stand with some of the most vulnerable among us, refugees. The theme of World Refugee Day is, aptly, Every Action Counts. Everyone, including refugees, is needed to contribute to inclusive, healthy societies.

We at the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo recognize the inherent right for every refugee to live in safety and dignity and urge our community to take action. According to UNHCR, as of February 2020 Egypt is host to 256,632 refugees and asylum seekers from 58 countries of origin, in addition to countless others who are unregistered.

Since its inception, CMRS has been dedicated to researching critical refugee issues in Egypt and across the region. Our recent work includes researching refugee legal entitlements and working with community partners to provide professional development courses to refugee populations in Cairo. CMRS offers trainings for interpreters, often refugees themselves, to assist newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers with their interpretation needs. In addition to offering a Master's in Migration and Refugee Studies, CMRS also holds monthly seminars on various topics related to refugees and asylum seekers in the region. We do this with the hope to foster increased understanding and dialogue on refugee issues.

More work is needed to be done to assist refugees and asylum-seekers in areas such as protection, access to education, health, and work, as well as legal aid. Given the specific challenges of the spread of COVID-19, we must ensure the health of refugees and asylum seekers.

To learn more about refugee and migration issues we invite you to join the conversation with us on social media. We hope to look back on World Refugee Day 2020 as a day of collective action and solidarity with refugees around the world and at home