

**Twice a month,
Mondays 5 pm - 7 pm****Venue:**Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
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at the following address:
Dr. Nora Lafi
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Phone: (+49) (0) 30 80307- 0**Annual Theme: Refugees in the City****Chaired by Prof Ulrike Freitag and Dr Nora Lafi****Monday, April 18th, 2016, 5 pm****Urbanizations of Refugees:
Understanding Displacements in the
Global South**Lecture by **Romola Sanyal** (LSE)

"It is now taken as axiomatic in much of the sociologically and anthropologically oriented refugee literature that refugees are first and foremost a 'Third World problem' or a problem of 'developing countries'" (Malkki, Liisa H., *Refugees and exile: From "refugee studies" to the national order of things*. *Annual review of anthropology* (1995): 503). Although written some 20 years ago, this point remains largely true, as does Malkki's further elaboration, that this fact is not an accident of geography or history. A lot of refugee literature has focused on producing "knowledge" about humanitarian crises using the Third World as a site of investigation. Humanitarian experts move across countries through their NGOs picking up best practices from different places, attempting to implement policies in each location. The problem of comparability, which lies at the heart of the humanitarian knowledge production, however remains vexing. How do we compare different refugee geographies and fundamentally different political systems within which these refugee flows develop without producing a discourse about refugees that is colonizing? How do we engage in transnational conversations that are productive? Furthermore, what can historical analyses of refugees teach us about the dynamic flows and urbanization of refugees today? In this talk, I place the partition of India in 1947 which produced the largest refugee movement of the 20th century - much of it urban - , alongside the Syrian refugee crisis - the largest refugee movement in this century - which is also an urban phenomenon. I explore the implications of India and Lebanon, being non-signatories to the Geneva Conventions, at the complexity of political systems and the intervention and non-intervention of international humanitarian organizations to reflect on processes of urbanization and ultimately to reflect on questions of state power and sovereignty in these two countries.

Dr Romola Sanyal is Assistant Professor in Urban Geography at the London School of Economics. She is interested in forced migration, urbanization and urban politics in the Global South. She has previously worked on a comparative project between the Middle East and South Asia and has published several articles on this in journals such as *IJURR*, *Urban Studies*, and *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. Her first co-edited book "Urbanizing Citizenship: Contested Spaces in Indian Cities" came out in 2011 with Sage Publications. She is currently working on a collaborative project on the urbanization, policy mobilities and the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon with the American University of Beirut.