



Rzeczpospolita Polska
Ministerstwo
Spraw Zagranicznych

Thursday 26 January

15h00 – 16h30

University of Warsaw Library – room 256

Panel discussion

Refugee crisis in the Middle East: Protracted and precarious situation of Palestine refugees in focus

The world has recently witnessed large movements of population which resulted, among others, from the conflict in Syria and the rise of Daesh in the Middle East. Such flows put a spotlight on the conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Among the millions of people affected by the increased volatility in the region, Palestine refugees living in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip face a particular vulnerability due to the protracted nature of their situation and their precarious status in host countries.

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Palestine. In the West Bank, violence and deprivation of human rights continue to be a daily reality. In Gaza, three rounds of conflict and ten years of blockade have led to a sharp socio-economic decline and a total absence of prospects for an entire generation of highly motivated and educated youth.

In other parts of the region too, Palestine refugees face many challenges. In Lebanon, they suffer from severely curtailed access to public services, little job opportunities and limited rights. A situation only made worse by the influx of Palestine refugees from Syria which, as in Jordan, has severely strained the Agency's response capacity. Within Syria, the ongoing conflict has severely impacted the Palestine refugee population, 95% of whom now rely on humanitarian assistance from UNRWA to meet their most basic needs.

Speakers

- ❖ **Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl**, UN Under-Secretary General and UNRWA Commissioner-General
- ❖ **Ambassador Piotr Puchta**, Department of Africa and Middle East, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ❖ **Dr. Patrycja Sasnal**, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Project, Polish Institute of International Affairs

Panel moderated by **Dr. Elzbieta Mikos-Skuza**, Associate Professor of Public International Law at the University of Warsaw.

The discussion will be in English (no translation).

Location: room 256, new University of Warsaw Library, ul. Dobra 56/66

Admission is free.

Registration at i.roeu3@unrwa.org

Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl

Appointed by the Secretary-General in November 2013, Pierre Krähenbühl became Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) on 30 March 2014. As Commissioner-General, he serves at the level of Under-Secretary-General.

A Swiss national born in 1966, Mr. Krähenbühl has 25 years of experience in humanitarian, human rights and development work.

Prior to joining UNRWA, he served as Director of Operations at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from July 2002 to January 2014, responsible for the conduct, management and supervision of 12,000 ICRC staff working in 80 countries. In this position, he directly oversaw that organization's response to conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Colombia and Libya, among others. He led senior-level negotiations with a range of governments, armed forces and other groups to secure access to conflict-affected populations.

Mr. Krähenbühl's experience also includes diverse and demanding field assignments in places experiencing profound social change and armed conflict, including El Salvador, Peru and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The father of three boys, he holds a BA in Political Sciences and International Relations from the University of Geneva.

Ambassador Piotr Puchta

Piotr Puchta is an Ambassador Titular at the Department of Africa and the Middle East at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Poland.

From 2014 to 2016 he worked as a Director at the Department of Africa and the Middle East at the MFA in Warsaw. From November 2009 to December 2013, Piotr Puchta he was an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland to the Arab Republic of Egypt. From 2005 to 2009 he was a Representative of the Republic of Poland to the Palestinian National Authority, Ramallah. From 1996 to 2001 he was a Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Poland in Tel-Aviv.

He graduated from the Polish Institute of Foreign Affairs and the Technical University in Warsaw and obtained his matriculation certificate from the Victory College in Cairo.

Dr. Patrycja Sasnal

A 2010 Fulbright scholar at Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science. She was associate at the American University in Beirut and visiting student at Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III.

She previously lectured at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland where apart from the PhD she also holds MA in International Relations and MA in Arabic Language and Culture. She has written on U.S. and EU policies in the Middle East, the challenges of transition in the Arab world, the Arab-Israeli conflict, modern Arab thought, Turkey's new role in the Middle East and published in Al-Ahram, LeMonde.fr, Insight Turkey, EUobserver and Polityka.

Dr Elżbieta Mikos-Skuza

Dr Elżbieta Mikos-Skuza is an associate professor of Public International Law at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw. She served as Faculty's Vice-Dean in 2008 - 2012 and since 2008 has been the NOHA Director at the University of Warsaw (NOHA is the Network on Humanitarian Action composed of European universities running interdisciplinary programmes on humanitarian action). She is also the director of Post-Diploma Studies on Humanitarian Action at the University of Warsaw and she established a course on International Humanitarian Law at the Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Warsaw. She was a guest lecturer at some European universities, including Aix-Marseille, Belgrade, Rovaniemi.

For thirty years, she has been volunteering with the Polish Red Cross. In 2004 - 2012 she was Vice-President of the Polish Red Cross and in 1999 - 2012 - President of the Polish Red Cross Commission for Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law. In 2002 - 2012 Dr Mikos-Skuza was a vice-president of the International Humanitarian Fact Finding Commission established under Art. 90 of 1977 I Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions on the Protection of Victims of War of 1949. Now she serves as a member of this Commission. She is also a member of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo and of the International Law Association ("London List").

Dr Mikos-Skuza is the author and co-author of numerous publications on Public International Law and International Humanitarian Law, including the collection of IHL documents published in Polish language.