

MIDNIGHT TRAVELER

Capturing the Global Refugee Crisis on Film

Monday, November 15, 2021, at 7 p.m.
Ray Stark Family Theatre
University of Southern California

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- *Midnight Traveler* is a 2019 documentary by Afghan-born filmmaker Hassan Fazili, featuring his wife, filmmaker Fatima Hussaini, and children.
- The film was shot entirely on cell phones, over several years and in multiple countries.
- In this event, Fazili and Hussaini (participating remotely) will show sequences from *Midnight Traveler* and engage in discussion with Doris Berger, senior director of curatorial affairs at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures; Bernardo Rondeau, senior director of film programs at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures; and historian Marjan Wardaki.
- The event will be introduced by USC History professor Paul Lerner and Exile Studies librarian Michaela Ullmann.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

HASSAN FAZILI (director) formerly directed short films and wrote popular TV series in Afghanistan. After his documentary *Peace in Afghanistan* aired on Afghan national television, the Taliban assassinated the film's main subject and called for the director's death, putting a bounty on Fazili's head. The Fazili family fled to Tajikistan, where they spent 14 months submitting asylum applications only to receive rejection after rejection until they were deported back to Afghanistan. This

“While it’s true that this film’s story belongs to my family, it’s not just my family’s story. There are many families around the world that are forced to leave their home and country because of war and oppression. I want my audiences around the world to see this movie and have it act as a catalyst for removing borders. . . . I want to inspire people to be hopeful about life, and to try to make life better for themselves and everybody else.”—Hassan Fazili to PBS’s *POV*

launched a precarious journey through multiple countries and refugee camps, which Fazili documented on cell-phone cameras. This footage became *Midnight Traveler*.

FATIMA HUSSAINI (co-producer, camera), Hassan Fazili's wife, is a featured participant in *Midnight Traveler*. She is also a filmmaker who has made works exploring women's ways of asserting power and independence in patriarchal societies.

VOCABULARY CORNER

REFUGEE

A refugee is a person who has fled their country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations, persecution, or armed conflict there. They have a right to international protection.

ASYLUM-SEEKER

An asylum-seeker has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violation in another country, but they haven't yet been legally recognized as a refugee. They are in limbo while they wait for their asylum claim to be evaluated. Seeking asylum is a human right.

MIGRANT

There is no internationally accepted definition of a migrant. The term is often used by NGOs to refer to a person who is staying outside their country of origin but who is not an asylum-seeker or refugee.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Did the film or conversation shift or expand your perspective in any way? How so?
- At one point in the film, Fazili says, "I'm happy I'm a filmmaker. I love cinema. But sometimes cinema is so dirty." What do you think he means by this?
- How might this film have been different if someone outside the family had made it?
- What did you learn from the film about migration, asylum, and immigration policies?
- Why do you think wealthier countries are not doing more to host and protect refugees?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Amnesty International | [amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org)
- UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency | [unhcr.org](https://www.unhcr.org)
- Miry's List: An L.A.-based organization that supports refugee families with supplies, transportation, and more. | [miryslist.org](https://www.miryslist.org)

There are 26 million refugees around the world today.

Half of them are children.

1.4 million refugees need resettlement right now.

In 2019, more than two-thirds of all refugees came from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar.

85 percent of refugees are hosted in so-called developing nations.

The U.S. has admitted just over 3 million refugees since 1980.

Globally, about 1 million people seek asylum every year.

At the end of 2019, more than 4 million people were waiting on a decision on their asylum claims.

Sources: Amnesty International, UNHCR, U.S. Department of State

"Wealthier countries aren't doing nearly enough to share the cost of protecting people who have left everything behind. Appeals for humanitarian assistance for refugees are consistently—and often severely—underfunded."

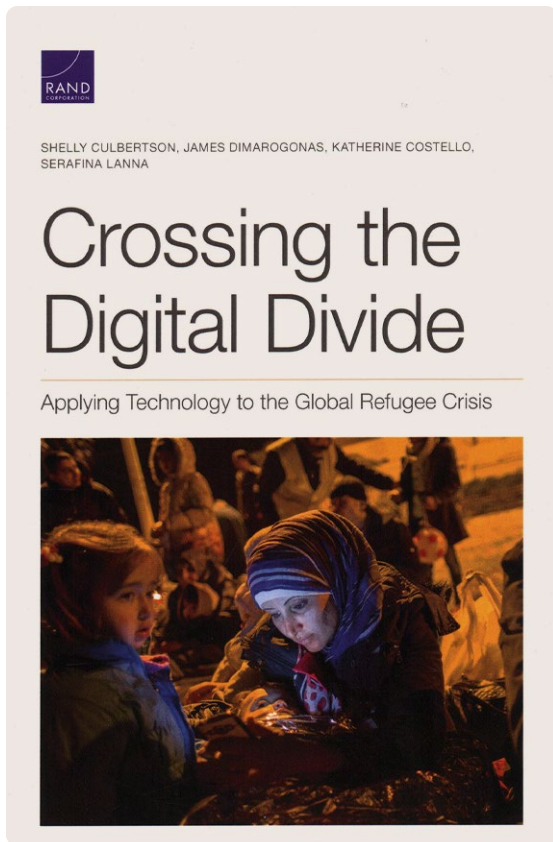
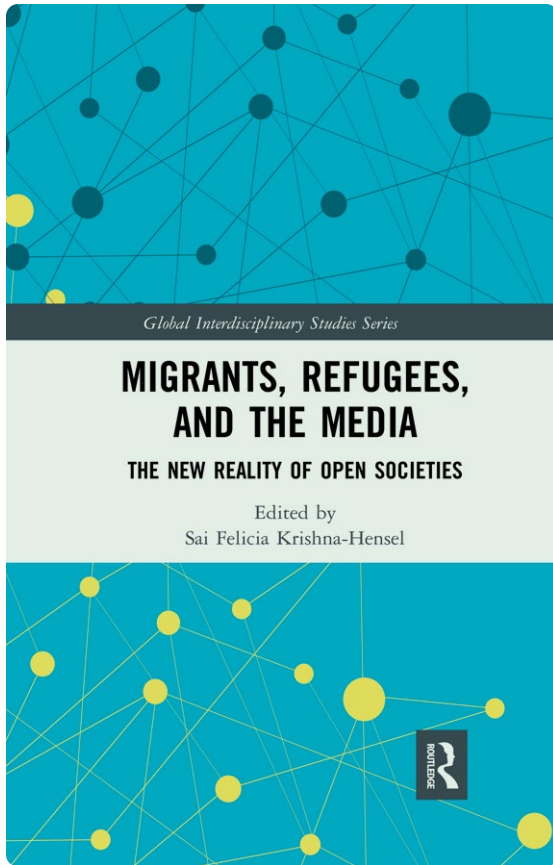
—Amnesty International

THE WORLD'S TOP 10 REFUGEE HOST COUNTRIES

Source: Amnesty International

Turkey
Jordan
Colombia
Lebanon
Pakistan
Uganda
Germany
Sudan
Iran
Bangladesh





DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

KELSEY VUKIC of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

BOOKS

- ◉ Shelly Culbertson, James Dimarogonas, Katherine Costello, and Serafina Lanna, [*Crossing the Digital Divide: Applying Technology to the Global Refugee Crisis*](#) (Santa Monica: RAND, 2019).
- ◉ Elizabeth G. Ferris and Katharine M. Donato, [*Refugees, Migration, and Global Governance: Negotiating the Global Compacts*](#) (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).
- ◉ Sai Felicia Krishna-Hensel, [*Migrants, Refugees, and the Media: The New Reality of Open Societies*](#) (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).
- ◉ Edward Shizha, Rosemary Kimani-Dupuis, and Priscilla Broni, [*Living Beyond the Borders: Essays on Global Immigrants and Refugees*](#) (New York: Peter Lang, 2018).

DATABASES

- ◉ [Immigrations, Migrations and Refugees: Global Perspectives, 1941–1996](#)
- ◉ [Newsweek Archive](#)
- ◉ [ProQuest Central](#)

JOURNALS

- ◉ [World Refugee Survey](#)
- ◉ [The State of the World's Refugees](#)

VIDEOS

- ◉ [Climate Refugees: The Human Face of Climate Change](#) (San Francisco: The Video Project, 2010).
- ◉ [Refugee Women: Beyond Gender vs. Culture](#) (London: SAGE, 2017).

