



FORCED FROM HOME

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DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS BRINGS REFUGEE CRISIS CLOSER TO HOME WITH INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT

*Forced From Home will tour Boulder, Salt Lake City, Seattle,
Portland, Oakland, and Santa Monica*

NEW YORK, JUNE 20, 2017—The international medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) marks World Refugee Day by announcing the re-launch of Forced From Home, a traveling, outdoor exhibition about the global refugee crisis. MSF calls for greater international efforts to protect people fleeing for their lives from war or persecution.

An unprecedented 65.6 million people are displaced worldwide, many of them refugees and asylum seekers, who are further endangered by the denial of protections and the freedom of movement to which they are entitled. Forced From Home—a guided tour staffed by MSF aid workers—is a key component of MSF’s broader efforts to raise public awareness about the medical humanitarian consequences of the migration crisis and to advocate for concrete policy changes to meet the urgent needs of people on the run.

“Our medical staff treat people uprooted by conflict and extreme violence all over the world. MSF provides care along their dangerous journey—on rescue boats, in refugee camps, and health centers,” said Jason Cone, executive director of MSF-USA. “Forced From Home is an opportunity to bring our patients’ stories to U.S. audiences, to humanize the refugee crisis, and to challenge political leaders at all levels of government to dramatically increase aid and protections for refugees and asylum seekers.”

The Forced From Home exhibition is intended to enhance public understanding of the desperate plight of refugees, migrants, and internally displaced people worldwide. It will travel throughout the Western U.S. this fall. Exhibition visitors navigate a 10,000-square-foot outdoor space designed to simulate the journey of a person forced to flee. Along the way, they engage with images and materials gathered from refugee camps, rescue missions, and emergency medical projects. Throughout the tour, visitors hear from MSF aid workers who provide humanitarian relief on the frontlines of the refugee crisis. The immersive experience also includes virtual reality and 360-degree videos that take participants to Iraq, Lebanon, Mexico, Tanzania, and South Sudan – areas where a large portion of displaced people currently reside.

Forced From Home addresses the inconceivable choices displaced individuals and families make each day. Exhibit visitors are asked to choose what items they would take with them in a moment’s notice to convey the enormous challenges facing those forced to leave their homes and embark on an uncertain new life.

Forced From Home is coming to these cities in 2017:

Courthouse Plaza/Pearl Street, Boulder CO, Sept 4-10
Library Plaza, Salt Lake City UT, Sept 18-24
SLU Discovery Center, Seattle WA, Oct 2-8

More information at www.forcedfromhome.com

Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland OR, Oct 16-22
Lake Merritt Amphitheater, Oakland CA, Oct 30-Nov 5
Santa Monica Pier, Santa Monica CA, Nov 13-19

Worldwide, only a tiny fraction of refugees are resettled. In 2016, the United Nations refugee agency referred 162,600 refugees for resettlement. While the U.S. resettled the largest number of refugees last year, accepting 96,900 people, this figure does not include asylum seekers and displaced persons who have fled violence, but are not officially considered refugees. The U.S. and other countries must do more to ensure that people trapped in violence and war zones find safety, MSF said.

For example, Lebanon—a country of first-asylum which is barely the size of Connecticut—has taken in more than one million Syrian refugees since 2011. In contrast, between October 1, 2011 and December 31, 2016, the U.S. resettled 18,007 Syrian refugees.

Countries of refuge such as the U.S. should increase their formal resettlement and family reunification quotas so that people in need of international protection, including asylum, can reach safety, said MSF.

“At a time when global displacement is at record highs, countries should increase their support for people on the move,” said Cone. “Instead of helping to alleviate this global migration crisis, many of the world’s richest countries—including the U.S.—are closing their borders or sending people back to places where they face death or persecution.”

MSF urges the U.S. government not to return people to places where they face imminent danger, to ensure humane conditions for refugees and asylum seekers while their cases are being processed, and to support access to adequate medical and mental health care services for people who have been forced to flee from their homelands.

More than 22,600 people experienced Forced From Home during the first leg of the tour in the Northeast U.S. last year. “It’s a beautiful thing to witness the way people react to this exhibit,” said Dr. Ahmed Abdalrazag, a former refugee and MSF aid worker who volunteered as a Forced From Home guide in 2016. “I want visitors to know that refugees are artists, athletes, dancers, doctors, philosophers—human beings with ambitions and dreams as simple as finding a place to live, absent of danger and fear. I tell my story on behalf of those whose stories are untold – because I am one of the lucky ones.”

Upcoming tour dates and cities:

- September 4-10: Courthouse Plaza on Pearl Street – Boulder, CO
- September 18-24: Library Plaza – Salt Lake City, UT
- October 2-8: South Lake Union Discovery Center – Seattle, WA
- October 16-22: Pioneer Courthouse Square – Portland, OR
- October 30-November 5: Lake Merritt Amphitheater – Oakland, CA
- November 13-19: Santa Monica Pier – Santa Monica, CA

Forced From Home is a free, outdoor event open to the public. More information is available at forcedfromhome.com. Follow @ForcedFromHome on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ForcedFromHome) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/forcedfromhome) for tour updates.

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an international, independent, medical humanitarian organization that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters, and exclusion from health care. MSF offers assistance to people based on need, irrespective of race, religion, gender, or political affiliation.

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