

Public talk by ALESSANDRO MONSUTTI:

“Refugees without Borders: Towards a Global Ethnography of Afghan Mobilities.”

Friday, 23 January 2026

11:00 AM

IRMO Library (Lj. F. Vukotinovića 2, 1st floor)

*The Centre for Migration Studies of the Institute for Development and International Relations warmly invites you to a public talk by professor Alessandro Monsutti, titled “**Refugees without Borders: Towards a Global Ethnography of Afghan Mobilities.**”*

Abstract: The refugee might be the political figure of our times, as the citizen was during the French Revolution; a source of ontological anxiety for nation-states. The principle of non-refoulement, so central to international humanitarian law, represents a limitation on the prevailing doctrine of state sovereignty, based on the right to control a territory and its population and therefore to exclude non-nationals. This overall issue will be addressed through a global ethnography of Afghan mobilities.

Afghan society has been marked in a lasting way by war and the exodus of part of its population, but also by the presence of a myriad of international and nongovernmental organisations, as well as armed forces from many countries. The movement of refugees trying to get to Europe, Australia or North America is matched by the flow of experts who exercise their talents in Afghanistan after having been in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Palestine or East Timor. The latter travel from North to South and promote social and political norms supposed to be universal; the former move in the opposite direction and unmask through their mobility the inequitable distribution of resources, whether it is economic well-being or the possibility of living in security.

Brief work overview: Alessandro Monsutti is Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the **Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies**, Geneva. He has previously held research and visiting positions at **School of Oriental and African Studies, Yale University**, the University of Vienna, and Arizona State University, and was a Scholar-in-Residence at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen in Vienna. A former MacArthur Foundation grantee, he has also worked as a consultant for organisations including UNHCR.

Monsutti has conducted extensive ethnographic research in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran since the mid-1990s, as well as among Afghan refugees and migrants in Europe and North America. His publications include *War and Migration: Social Networks and Economic Strategies of the Hazaras of Afghanistan* (2005) and *Homo itinerans: Towards a Global Ethnography of Afghanistan* (2020). He also collaborates with artists and writes poetry, most recently *Destiny/Destination* (2023).