

Israel: A Safe Haven for Whom?

Thursday, Feb 8 | 7:30-9pm | @Makom - 402 College St.

In 1951, Israel was among the first states to sign the UN Refugee Convention that protected the rights of persecuted people to cross borders in search of asylum. It was unimaginable at the time that non-Jewish Africans fleeing persecution would one day seek asylum in Israel. But just as unlikely as most of Israeli history is, this is exactly what happened.

Version A: Who are these people? Where did they come from? And how has the Jewish state responded to their presence?

Version B: The current situation for African asylum seekers in Israel is dire. In a country made up of refugees the government is deporting people who fled persecution in search of asylum. How did this happen? What are the political interests? And do we have any responsibility?

Tamara Newman is the Director of International Relations at the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, an Israeli NGO based in Tel Aviv. The Hotline is Israel's leading organization protecting the rights of refugees, migrant workers and victims of human trafficking. They represent some of the most vulnerable people in Israel and advocate for government policies consistent with a just, equal and democratic Israel.

Also, see T'ruah's statement on the issue: <http://www.truah.org/press/asylumletter/>