

## Central and West Asia and Diasporas Research Network Seminar

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Type:

Seminar

Date:

November 18, 2016

Location:

Australia

Subject Fields:

Asian History / Studies, Middle East History / Studies, Immigration & Migration History / Studies, Humanities, Human Rights

CWADRN Seminar, 11am-12:30pm, Room H2.22, Monash University Caulfield Campus

Special guests Farkhonda Akbar and Mediya Rangji present their research

Farkhonda Akbar: **The Hazaras of Afghanistan and Hazara activism in the diaspora**

The Hazaras of Afghanistan are a long-persecuted minority group. Their facial features and religious sect set them apart from the rest of their countrymen. As a result, 63 percent of the Hazaras have been persecuted in the 1890s and thousands massacred by the brutal Taliban regime. The US invasion of Afghanistan brought hope for the Hazaras as the new constitution guaranteed their equal rights. However, the century-old discrimination did not disappear from the ground reality. Since 2001 the Hazaras are struggling to raise their voice against 'systematic discrimination' from the Kabul Government through civil activism.

The recent example is the Ghani Administration diverging the route of a billion-dollar aid project from impoverished Hazara provinces. The Hazaras protested in millions on streets of Kabul and around the world to demand their equal rights. The failure of the Government to protect their security resulted in twin bomb blasts that killed more than 90 people and wounded another 300 people - 95 percent of whom were young and educated Hazaras. The Hazara diaspora plays an important role in solidarity and support of their people in homeland. In the midst of other chaos in Afghanistan, the Hazaras have another layer of wounds to be part of their wounded homeland.

Bio: **Farkhonda Akbar** arrived in Australia as a refugee in 2003. She began her first year of formal schooling from grade 8. Farkhonda is an active member of the Australian-Hazara community and an enthusiast cultural and human rights activist. She has just completed an Advanced Master in Diplomacy at the Asia Pacific College of Diplomacy, the Australian National University. Motivated and passionate to bring peace to her homeland, Farkhonda wrote her thesis on whether the Taliban can be a diplomatic actor and negotiate a meaningful peace settlement in Afghanistan. Farkhonda also obtain a Master in International Relations from The University of Melbourne and a Bachelor in

International Relations from La Trobe University.

In 2014, Farkhonda interned at the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Headquarter in New York, and worked with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in Kabul.

Mediya Rangi: **Australian Kurdish Youth - Leading Diasporic Consciousness**

Kurdish people, known as the largest stateless nation on earth, numbering approximately 40 million, are dispersed across all corners of the world. They have formed diverse diasporic communities in Europe, Americas, Asia, and Australasia. Although the largest Kurdish diaspora of Northern and Western Europe have been the subject of extensive academic research, their counterparts in Australia and New Zealand remain largely neglected by the scholarship. Additionally, Kurdish diasporic identity has been a topic of discussion in the last decade, with a particular focus on Europe's Kurdish communities. This paper argues that Australian Kurdish youth are leading the collective diasporic consciousness in new directions. Similar to their European peers, the second generation Kurds born and/or raised in Australia are interested in homeland politics via engaging in diplomatic and lobby activism within the hostland political landscape. However, they are also key players in creating and maintaining social cohesion within their diasporic communities. They are also locally recognized as integral contributors to the multicultural fabric of their hostland society. Presented here are the Australian Kurdish youths' lived experiences of transnational identity formation via a narrative ethnography. Furthermore, the study of youth enlightens the diaspora studies literature on the potentials of such communities moving beyond identity politics and belonging.

Bio: **Mediya Rangi** is a migrant from Iran who lived in New Zealand for 10 years before moving to Australia in 2013. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne. Mediya's academic background is in Sociology with a focus on Iranian peoples' resistance movements and artistic expressions particularly art cinema. Her current project focuses on the ethnic repression of Kurdish people via a narrative ethnography.

All welcome!

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