

storytellers interviewed for this publication



Shehrazad Siraj

I am a student of political science and contributor to the PAM Pan African Music magazine. I was born in France and my parents are both Moroccan. France is a country with many diasporas, and I always try to capture this diversity in my articles. I write about things like art, feminism, anti-racism and religion. My fiancé is French of Algerian descent. It is important for both of us to be at the Saint Michel bridge in Paris each year in October, to commemorate the 1961 massacre when French police attacked and killed, by mass-drowning, Algerians protesting against the war in Algeria.

contact: www.instagram.com/shehrazaaaad



Sam Mustelin

I am a freelance writer and content manager based in Berlin. My academic background is in media and cultural studies, and I have an interest in how racism and different kinds of privilege and

prejudices shape how migration stories are told in the media, in particular local media. My own migration background is European: I hail from two different European countries and have lived in a third country in the region. Having grown up bilingual, I am interested in stories about migration and identity. As a writer, I want to find ways to explore my own voice as well as to amplify the voices of others.

contact: about.me/samustelin



Simone Spera

I am a PhD researcher in anthropology at a university in Paris and I come from Italy. My grandparents were among the many peasant and working-class families that migrated from southern Italy to countries like Germany, Switzerland and France in the 1960s in search of job opportunities. Myself, I left my hometown at 15, to study at an international boarding school in the U.S. Since then, my studies have brought me to Spain, France, Greece and Lebanon. I am interested in how displacement affects our lives and worldviews, and my current research looks at alternative education programs in northern Lebanon, put in place for (and by) Syrian refugees.

contact: www.lesc-cnrs.fr/fr/cb-profile/459/userprofile



Fatima Alhaji

I am a journalist and activist from Damascus and came to Lebanon in 2013 as a refugee from Syria. Since then, I have worked with refugee communities in Lebanon, including as a freelance journalist and for different media platforms on refugee and human rights. In Lebanon, I worked as a video reporter and documented the daily lives of Syrian families in the country. I was also engaged in several advocacy campaigns on refugees' right to health. Since the end of 2019, I live in Berlin.

contact: www.facebook.com/fatimaha0



Abby Sewell

I am a journalist based in Lebanon, where much of my work since 2016 has focused on migration and refugee communities. I also have volunteered with local NGOs and initiatives providing relief and English classes for migrant workers and refugees. My interest in migration goes back to the years I spent growing up in Arizona close to the U.S./Mexico border and later in Los Angeles, which is home to immigrant communities from around the world. It was in L.A. that I had my introduction to the Syrian community, which led to my interest in reporting in the region. I live in Beirut with my cat, Darwish.

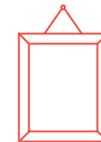
contact: www.twitter.com/sewella



Jelena Dzekseneva

I am an artist and anthropologist living in Lyon. I was born in Kazakhstan, where my family hails from. In their youth, all of my grandparents moved to Lithuania – they did not know it back then, but that is how the migration story of my scattered family started. My parents, after they met, moved back to Kazakhstan in search for a better future. Myself, I moved from there to France when I was 18. I often feel that I am a stranger without a real home. Then, after studying anthropology, I started to look closer at the issue of identity. This led me to realise that migration is not a problem, but an opportunity.

contact: www.instagram.com/jelenadz



Rayan Sukkar

I am a journalist working with the online media platform Campji in Lebanon. I am a refugee: I am the daughter of refugees and have 25 years of refugee history in my family. My grandparents came to Lebanon from Jaffa in Palestine in 1948. Myself, I only saw the city in a picture hung on the wall of my grandfather. My own story of migration started when I was born in the Palestinian refugee camp Burj El Barajneh in Beirut, and went to a UN school for refugees. The word 'refugee' has been with

me all my life – even now, I have fallen in love with another Palestinian refugee.

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Inga Hajdarowicz

I am a researcher and activist from Poland, a country where migration for a long time has been either forced or restricted. The autonomy of migration has therefore always been my concern. The 'migration crisis' in Europe in 2015 inspired me to get involved directly in the topic. My own interests and experiences of participatory democracy and grassroots mobilisation led me to seek out initiatives creating spaces for people, with or without migration experiences, to collaborate. I joined the local initiative 'Welcome to Krakow' that prepares the ground for refugees in Poland, and volunteered in grassroots initiatives in Serbia, Greece and Lebanon.

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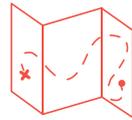


Laure Makarem

I am caregiver, coach and member of different initiatives working towards migrant rights, racial justice, queer mutual support and feminist movement building in Lebanon. I am currently working with the Anti-Racism Movement (ARM), pursuing

a masters in Gender Studies at LAU and caring for a cactus named Prickles.

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Samih Mahmoud

I am a citizen journalist with the online platform Campji in Lebanon. I think of migration as something fundamental to humanity: human life started with movement from place to place, in search for food and water. Throughout history, migration has been fundamental for human beings to learn, grow and develop. I have a personal link to migration as well: I am the son of a Palestinian refugee who was born in Syria, and came to Lebanon as a refugee when the war started in Syria.

contact: www.facebook.com/samihmhd



Nour Ghoussaini

I am a journalist and social media specialist based in Beirut. More than 60 years ago, my grandparents migrated to Kuwait, and my mother was born and raised there. They all grew up with the Kuwaiti culture, and my grandmother hid her Druze religion from her kids until my mother's teenage years, so that she would not face any kind of discrimination. My grandmother now says that migration was the best choice they could make in a time of instability in Lebanon. Kuwait became their home away from home. My mother

returned to Lebanon in the 1980s, but still holds on to some traditions from her childhood in Kuwait.

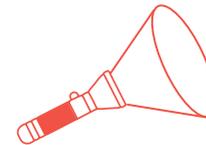
contact: www.instagram.com/nourghoussaini



Ghadir Hamadi

I am a journalist and communication specialist based in Beirut. I spent my childhood in Saudi Arabia, where I grew up with my Lebanese family. As someone who went to an international school and lived in the cosmopolitan city Al-Khobar, with residents from many different countries, I have always felt at home with people from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. As light as it may sound, I try to focus my journalistic work on the positives, and tell stories that build bridges between communities and help to create a friendlier world.

contact: www.instagram.com/ghadir_hamadi



Omar Saadeh (not his real name)

I am a filmmaker based in Beirut. My mother's family, who come from a European country, escaped war and emigrated to Lebanon. Growing up, we often celebrated the heritage from that side of the family. But my migration background is one of privilege. My family

never faced discrimination because of our European descent. When I started to work with Syrian refugees, I was able to see firsthand how racism and alienation go hand in hand. Trying to shed light on this is an ongoing struggle. I don't claim to know how. I can only tell stories. We have a long way to go but by telling stories, we can shift one perspective at a time.



Doha Adi

I am a journalist and activist and have worked in the humanitarian and development fields since 2015, supporting Syrian refugee communities with local and international organisations. I am one of the founders of the M23 filmmaking team, which founded the Beirut Film Institute and produces feature and short films revolving around war, migration and refugees. As a teenager, I fled with my family to Syria, escaping the 2006 Israeli assault on Lebanon. We lived there as refugees for 40 days, which was one of my most life-changing experiences. It is the reason why I am so adamant to support refugees in Lebanon, since I can relate to their fears and loss of a sense of belonging.