
The Middle East: Thinking About and Beyond Security and Stability

7-8 FEBRUARY 2019

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, LEBANON

Location: The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International
Affairs (Green Oval)
- 4th floor -

16:30-17:00 *Registration of participants*

17:00-17:30 **Introductory Remarks**

KARIM MAKDISI American University of Beirut (AUB)

LORENZO KAMEL University of Turin

CHARLOTTE BRANDSMA German Marshal Fund of the United States (GMFUS)

NICOLÒ RUSSO PEREZ Compagnia di San Paolo of Turin

17:30-19:00 **Session I – ‘Security’ and ‘Stability’ in the Middle East: the Historical Dimension**

It has become increasingly common, in recent years, to come across academic and journalistic publications in which the Middle East is described as an inherently violent region ‘splintered by sects and tribes’. Session I historicizes these perceptions and explores a complex milieu in which identities were largely flexible, contested, multifaceted. Attention will also be given to the role of external powers in the establishment of communal and/or sectarian institutions in the region as tools for putative stabilization, security and control, as well as on some of the concurrent local and national forms of adaptation and resistance. What do these historical lessons tell us about the ongoing debates on security and stability in the region?

Chair **LORENZO KAMEL** University of Turin

Panelists **NADER HASHEMI** University of Denver

NUSSAIBEH YOUNIS American University of Iraq, Sulaimani

MORTEN VALBJORN Aarhus University Denmark

YONCA KÖKSAL Koç University, Istanbul

Open debate

20:00-22:00 Dinner

DAY 2 - 8 FEBRUARY 2019

9:30-10:00 *Arrival*

10:00-11:30 Session II – Thinking Critically About (In)Security in The Middle East

With the intensification of political violence in the Middle East and the rise of populism and Islamophobia in the West, there is an increasing need to re-evaluate what security and insecurity means to people living in (but also moving in between) the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Europe. Session II lays out the “big picture” thinking about and conceptualizing questions of (in)security in the Middle East on both the regional and local levels. How has the production of (in)security in the region changed over the decades? What has been “secured”, by whom, through which means, and for which purpose, and to whom has “security” been denied? How has scholarship defined (in)security and reflected on this issue?

Chair **RAMI KHOURI** American University of Beirut

Panelists **MELIHA BENLI ALTUNIŞIK** Middle East Technical University, Ankara
WALEED HAZBUN The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
TARIK M. YOUSEF Brookings Doha Center
AYMAN KHALIL University of Jordan, ‘Amman

Open debate

11:30-13:00 Session III – Producing (In)Security in the Middle East: the Regional Perspective

Session III explores the production of (in)insecurity, stability, and order on the regional level, including its international dimension. Speakers have been asked to shed light on a number of security-related topics, such as conflicts in the region and the role of global and regional powers in them, arms flows, securitization of refugees, the use of demographic movements, the politicization of identities, and the role multilateral institutions can play in the production of security (international law, the UN, the ICC, UNWRA, UNHCR, the GCC, the JCPOA, a proposed “Arab NATO” etc).

Chair **LORENZO TROMBETTA** ANSA, Beirut

Panelists **YOUSSEF CHERIF** Columbia Global Center, Tunis
CORALIE HINDAWI American University of Beirut
ABDULLAH AL-ARIAN Georgetown University in Qatar, Doha
ELIJAH J. MAGNIER Al Ra’i, ‘Kuwait

Open debate

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Session IV – Beyond Security: the Region and its Stability Seen from Within

Panel IV explores what a critical approach to thinking about (in)security means from the perspective of people living in the Middle East and North Africa. For decades, global actors such as the US, European states, and Russia have supported authoritarian regimes for “security” reasons. Together with some regional powers, they have invested enormous amount of resources in opposing the rise of any government or party/movement that could have represented a credible alternative to authoritarian regimes. For the large majority of people living in these contexts, this has provided a context of insecurity in their daily lives, including political, social, economic, or identity insecurity. Session IV will problematize these aspects, shedding light, on the one hand, on the importance of a stable and legitimate order that responds to the needs of the population in the region, and

on the other, on “human security”, which encompasses the dimension of human rights, political rights and social/economic security: a crucial factor for the security of both single states and the region at large.

Chair **NOUR SAMAHA** Al-Monitor, Beirut

Panelists **JAMIL MOUAWAD** American University of Beirut
DLAWER ALA'ALDEEN Middle East Research Institute, Erbil
SARAH BOUKRI Institut Marocain de Relations Internationales, Casablanca
YAHIA ZOUBIR Kedge Business School, Marseille

Open debate

15:30-16:00 Concluding Remarks

ROSEMARY HOLLIS City University of London
MARTA DIONISIO Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
ETTORE GRECO Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

16:00 End of the Conference