

WAR AND POLITICS

IN THE MIDDLE EAST
& NORTH AFRICA

JUNE 25-26, 2025

ORIENTAL HALL,
AUC TAHRIR,
CAIRO, EGYPT

AGENDA

الشبكة
العربية
للعلوم
السياسية

The Arab
Political Science
Network



CEDEJ



The American
University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs
and Public Policy
Middle East Studies Program

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

The Arab Political Science Network (APSN), the American University in Cairo's Middle East Studies Program, and the Center for Economic, Legal, and Social Studies and Documentation (CEDEJ) welcome you to this research workshop on the Politics and War in the Middle East and North Africa.

Throughout history, war has played a profound role in (re)creating and changing structures and practices of political authority and systems of governance and government. War was central to the rise and fall of empires, unifying diverse communities into a sovereign state and the fight over resources, among other motivations. The consequences of wars are numerous, and they intersect widely with social, economic, and developmental outcomes. In MENA, the region seems to be cursed by endless strife and different forms of violence: inter and intra-state wars, proxy wars, coup d'état, insurgencies, and terrorism.

In addition to the protracted Arab/Palestinian wars with Israel since the mid-20s century, including the ongoing genocidal war in Palestine, the countries of the region have been mired in many types of wars, conflicts and violent activities. This includes inter-state wars, such as the Iran-Iraq war, or border clashes between Algeria and Morocco; regional and foreign invasions like the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the American invasion of Iraq; and a plethora of other forms of conflicts that blends civil strife and proxy wars with tacit regional and international support (diplomatic, weapons, and funding), such is in Libya, Yemen, Syria and Sudan.

Moreover, the past decades witnessed new and expanding forms of hybrid and non-conventional wars, cyber-attacks, and an exacerbation in the number of non-state violent actors (armed militias and private military / security companies). These latter groups are, usually, ideologically different from the states they operate within, and in many cases, they also compete with and work outside state control.

Finally, wars and conflicts have tremendous consequences that go beyond questions of institutions, authority and power dynamics. The implications uproot societies, upend economies and leave considerable levels of destruction that take generations to rebuild. These key issues also intersect with questions of gender, youth and state-society dynamics, transitional justice, control / extraction of natural resources and climate change

This workshop brings together researchers tackling the questions of war and its consequences from different interdisciplinary angles and cases. They analyze the role of war on state (de)formation, media and disinformation, infrastructure and destruction and people's everyday life.

A synthesis of the papers will be published in a report in English and Arabic after the workshop.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

DAY 01 - JUNE 25, 2025

9.00 AM

INTRODUCTION

Round of introductions of participants and presenting the workshop's objectives.

9.30 AM

PANEL ONE: ETHICAL & EPISTEMOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

- Sara Bazoobandi, "Morality, Security, or Survival: Theorizing State Ethos in the Iran-Israel Conflict." (Peer discussant: Sammy Badran)
- Mai Abu Moghli, "Academic Knowledge Production in the time of Genocide." (Peer discussant: Sara Bazoobandi)
- Mennatullah Hindawi and Ola Khaled, "Palestinian Urbanism in the Shadow of War: A Systematic Bibliographic Review." (Peer discussant: Charlotte Gradeau)

Discussant: May Darwich

11.00 AM

COFFEE BREAK

11.30 AM

PANEL TWO: EVERYDAY WAR, GENDER & SURVIVAL

- Fadi Hasan, "The Impact of War Structures on the Everyday Life of Syrian Women." (Peer discussant: Mennatullah Hindawi)
- Loubna Madani, "Mothers of the Nation: Women, Militarization, and Identity in the Context of Asymmetric Threats to the UAE." (Peer discussant: Abdullah Al-Kalisy)
- Fatima Moussawi, "Rethinking Everyday Life and Political Activism in Women's Narratives on the Israeli Occupation of Southern Lebanon (1978-1982)." (Peer discussant: Fadi Hasan)

Discussant: Ahmed Morsy

1.00 PM

LUNCH BREAK (PARTICIPANTS & INVITEES ONLY)

2.00 PM

PANEL THREE: MEDIA, NARRATIVES, & PROPAGANDA

- Omar Kouiyache, "War of Words: Framing the Algerian-Moroccan Conflict in MENA Media." (Peer discussant: Mohamed Elgohari)
- Sammy Badran, "Changing Youth Perspectives During War." (Peer discussant: Sara Shaltout)
- Mohamed Elgohari, "Strategic Narratives and the Battlefield of Perception: Hamas's Bilingual Propaganda as a Tool of Political and Military Influence." (Peer discussant: Omar Kouiyache)

Discussant: Khaled Ezzelarab

3.30 PM

COFFEE BREAK

3.45 PM

PANEL FOUR: WATER, FOOD, & ENVIRONMENT

- Noa Sanad, "Agriculture in Times of Crises : the rise of new sociotechnical imaginaries in post-2019 Lebanon." (Peer discussant: Hagar Abdelmonsef)
- Hagar Abdelmonsef, "Water weaponization in the Middle East." (Peer discussant: Noa Sanad)

Discussant: May Darwich & Ahmed Morsy

7.30 PM

**DINNER AT MAZEEJ BALAD ROOFTOP RESTAURANT
(PARTICIPANTS & INVITEES ONLY)**

Address : 7 Champollion Street, Qasr El Nil, Cairo.

DAY 02 - JUNE 26, 2025

10.00 AM

PANEL FIVE: WAR, MILITIAS & SOCIETY

- Sara Shaltout, "Coptic Church Approaches to the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Political and Theological Debates." (Peer Discussant: Mai Abu Moghli)
- Charlotte Gradeau, "Mapping Survival: Civil Society, Foreign Aid, and the Political Economy of Emergency in Lebanon. (Peer Discussant: Fatima Moussawi)
- Abdulla Al-Kalisy, "Informality in Flux: Lenses through Iraq's paramilitaries." (Peer Discussant: Loubna Madani)

Discussant: Frederic Lagrange

11.30 AM

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

12.30 PM

CLOSING LUNCH

PARTICIPANTS BIOGRAPHIES

Abdulla Al-Kalisy is a PhD Candidate and Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of St Andrews. His research interests include protest and revolution in Iraq and the MENA region, with a particular focus on the intersection of movements and conceptualizations of citizenship and the state. This project is based on fieldwork in Baghdad, focusing on a critical discourse analysis of data generated from focus groups and interviews. His MA research, completed in New Zealand, focused on the state through a discourse analysis of the memoirs of monarchy-era political leaders in Iraq. These findings have been recently published in the journal named *Global Studies Quarterly*. He is currently working on a book chapter titled 'Re-reading Iraqi politics: New outlooks, expressions, and lenses post-Tishreen' (est. end of 2025). Overall, he is interested in understanding structural and discursive political concepts such as the state and citizenship through grassroots movements that reimagine state-society discourse.

Charlotte Gaudreau is a PhD candidate in Sociology at McGill University, following her Master's at McGill and BA from Université du Québec à Montréal. Since 2023, she is also an affiliated researcher at the Orient Institute of the Max Weber Foundation in Beirut. She grew up in Montreal and has been based in Beirut since 2014. Her doctoral research investigates the complex intersections between foreign aid, the NGO sector, and grassroots anti-establishment movements in Lebanon. Using a mixed-method approach, she analyzes the role of weak state institutions and foreign actors in shaping and co-opting Lebanese 'civil society'.

Fadi Hasan is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Osnabrück/ Germany. His research is committed to community-engaged scholarship and related to issues of conflict-induced migration and family, with a special focus on refugee and migrant populations. Fadi Hasan obtained his MA degree in International Migration and Intercultural Relations from the same university and was awarded the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD) Prize (2019) and Lower Saxony State Awards (2020 and 2022), which are bestowed upon students who exhibit exceptional academic achievements and noteworthy contributions to social and intercultural involvement throughout their academic journey.

Fatima Al Moussaoui is a gender researcher focusing on the political, social, economic, and cultural life of Arab women in conflict and wars. She holds an MA in Public Health from the American University of Beirut, studied Gender and Conflict at SOAS and graduated from the University of Cambridge with a Master of Philosophy in Gender Studies, where she examined the life of women during the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon. She recently published her book series "Breaking the Mold" that documents a research project that explored the impact of civil society actors on policy making. The project took place at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs where she acted as a researcher and program director for six years. She also worked as a consultant and advisor to several organizations working on gender and women's issues. Her writings focus on women in war and politics, and gender legal challenges.

Hagar Monsef is an Egyptian political specialist with extensive experience in peace, development, and human rights initiatives across various regions. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Political Science and holds an MSc in Political Science from Cairo University. Hagar has held key roles, including North Africa Coordinator for the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations Major Group. She has actively participated in international forums such as COP27, multiple UN Human Rights Council sessions, and UN High-Level Political Forums, in addition to various high-level sessions related to human rights, sustainable development, and peace building. Hagar's work spans several international organizations and initiatives, where she focuses on youth empowerment, human rights protection, and sustainable development. She has also conducted and led training sessions on human rights and peace operations."

Loubna Madani holds a PhD in Political Science from Université Clermont Auvergne and was affiliated with the Centre Michel de l'Hospital. Her research examines the intersection of foreign policy, identity, and security in the Gulf region, with a particular focus on the United Arab Emirates. Her dissertation analyzes the UAE's transformation into an activist power since 2011, exploring how its foreign policy strategies have redefined regional dynamics and challenged conventional understandings of small state behavior in international relations. Drawing from an interdisciplinary background that combines economics, international relations, and security studies, Madani investigates how asymmetric warfare, national identity, and gender dynamics intersect within militarizing Gulf states. Her broader research interests include regional alliances, diplomatic strategy, and peace-building initiatives in the Middle East. In addition to her academic work, she has worked as an independent consultant in the Gulf region, providing geopolitical and economic analysis. She holds a dual MA degree in Economics and International Affairs (Security and Defense).

Mai Abo Mughli is an Assistant Professor at the Human Rights Program of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities. Her fields of specialization include critical human rights and critical development studies, comparative and international education and education in emergencies and refugee studies with a focus on Arabic speaking countries. Dr. Abu Moghli is a member of several regional academic bodies and networks such as the Palestine Policy Network (Al Shabka) and The Arab Council for Social Sciences (ACSS). Her current research focuses on Academic freedoms in higher education institutions globally, decolonizing higher education, and critical research ethics. Dr. Abu Moghli has published numerous op-eds in policy journals, media outlets, and academic blogs targeting a broader audience, including The Conversation, the Nation, NORRAG and INEE, MERIP, Al Shabaka, and the New Arab. She is featured in a number of podcasts: FreshEd and Taqarob.

Mennatullah Hendawy is an interdisciplinary urban planner working at the intersections of cities, media, and technology toward equity and sustainability. She is currently affiliated with the Technical University of Munich, Impact Circles e.V., and the Center for Advanced Internet Studies in Germany, as well as the University of California, Santa Cruz, in the United States of America.

Hendawy received her Ph.D. in 2021 from the Faculty of Planning, Building Environment at TU Berlin in Germany, graded summa cum laude. In her dissertation, she explored the mediatization (and visualization) of urban development in Cairo as a local yet global case. In 2015, Hendawy completed an MSc in Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design from Stuttgart University, focusing on urban policies. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering from Ain Shams University in Cairo, Department of Urban Planning and Design, class of 2012. Hendawy is one of the founding members of Cairo Urban AI, a project exploring the potential of using artificial intelligence to develop just and sustainable cities. She was the principal investigator of the Urban AI MOOC, which is part of the African Cities Lab initiative, funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs.

Mohamed Elgohari is a scholar-practitioner and sociologist whose work bridges academic research and policy analysis on law, governance, power, resistance, and political violence in the Middle East. His research examines how law is instrumentalized to consolidate authoritarian power, with a focus on the legal and institutional mechanisms that enable militarized governance and political repression. He earned his PhD in Sociology from George Mason University, where his dissertation advanced critical debates on authoritarian legalism, state violence, and the strategic use of law as a tool of control. Elgohari previously led the Arabic-language analysis team at the University of Chicago's Project on Security and Threats, where he analyzed how violent non-state actors deploy propaganda to build authority, mobilize support, and sustain insurgencies—briefing U.S. and European policymakers on emerging trends. His work has appeared in Arab Law Quarterly, Foreign Affairs, CNN, and CPOST reports. He holds an MA from New York University and a BA from Cairo University.

Noa Sanad is a 3rd year Egyptian and French PhD student looking at the rise of agriculture alternatives following the 2019 crisis in Lebanon. In that context, I look at the way territory and network work together to create a sense of collective and manifest solidarity in times of crisis and war. I grew up in Cairo and then pursued higher education in France, where I studied European politics at Sorbonne Nouvelle and then Governance and International Action at Sciences Po Toulouse. I then pursued an internship at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut, where my interest for sustainable development and water issues rose. I am now enrolled at Panthéon-Sorbonne University (Geography). I have been doing research in Lebanon since 2019 and my ethnographic work has been hijacked by the concept of crisis, on both empirical and theoretical levels.

Omar Kouiyache is a PhD candidate at the Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Tetouan, Morocco. He holds a Master's degree in Media and Cultural Studies from the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar, where his thesis focused on the Moroccan-Algerian conflict. His research centers on media framing, cultural narratives, and identity formation, with a particular focus on how media frames shape public perceptions, collective memory, and sociopolitical discourses in North Africa and the Arab world.

Sammy Badran is Associate Professor of International Studies at the American University of Sharjah, UAE. My research focuses on Middle East and North African (MENA) politics. I have published articles in the British Journal of Middle East Studies, Journal of North African Studies, The Journal of Human Rights, and the Journal of International Women's Studies. My book, 'Killing Contention: Demobilization in Morocco during the Arab Spring' (Syracuse University Press), examines why protest levels subside when they do. My work shifts the focus from the well-studied causal relationship between repression and dissent to the understudied relationship between concessionary policies (like reforms) and dissent. To investigate these issues, I conducted 46 semi-structured elite interviews with participants from the February 20 Movement. My interviews focused on investigating the impact of the 2011 constitutional reforms on protests in Morocco and the cross-ideological alliances and conflicts between Islamists and leftist organizations.

Sara Bazoobandi is a non-resident research fellow at the Institute for Security Policy of Kiel University in Germany. She is also an adjunct lecturer at Hamburg University's Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy. She was previously a Marie Curie fellow at the German Institute of Global and Area Studies working on Iran's economic diversification and economic resilience strategies. Additionally, she is a non-resident fellow at Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, and ISPI in Milan. Over the past decade, she has worked as a consultant for various global clients in both public and private sector. Between 2013 and 2018, she was a senior lecturer in international political economy at Regent's University London. Prior to that, she was a scholar at the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore.

Sara Allam Shaltout is a PhD candidate at the school of International Relations at St Andrews University. She holds an MA in Theology from Edinburgh University and an MA in Middle East studies, AUC. She is a journalist and a published poet.