



Middle East
Centre

LSE MIDDLE EAST CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2023|24



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WELCOME

It is not possible to review the work of the LSE Middle East Centre this year and not recognise the extraordinary and earth-shattering vortex of war that followed the Hamas-led attacks on Israel on 7 October. As I write these introductory remarks, over a year later, commentators are still struggling to capture the unspeakable levels of destruction caused by the response of the Israeli military in Gaza, particularly the mass killing and maiming of civilians – and annihilation of civilian infrastructure – that international humanitarian law (IHL) was designed to prevent. While some academics have declared the demise of IHL, what we have at least seen is the very public collapse of the ‘organised hypocrisy’ of American and European claims to support a rules-based international order. Geopolitical realignments are still underway, but the Middle East will continue to be a region whose peoples are blighted by (neo)imperialist interventions, governance failings and sectarian ideologies. Former colonial powers will continue to display amnesia over their legacies of violence, whilst ignoring legal responsibilities to protect the most vulnerable.

In such circumstances, a serious and necessary task for the Centre is to make sense of the senseless, to adhere to the core ethos of LSE – applying rigorous and ethical social science to understand the causes of, and possible solutions to, contemporary challenges. We responded in the short-term with several events and our ‘Gaza in Context’ videos, featuring Centre-affiliated experts providing the type of historical and analytical insights largely missing from the mainstream media. We also established a programme of research and capacity-building to support Palestinian higher education institutions, scholars and students. In these activities, we continue to draw inspiration from the example set by our much-missed colleague, Dr Ian Black, whose journalism and scholarship on Israel and Palestine demonstrated the highest standards of evidential robustness and integrity. Following his passing in January 2023, we were delighted to establish, with the blessing of his family, the Ian Black Memorial Lecture Series starting in the 2024/25 academic session.

The Middle East Centre is the hub for research, events and debate on matters across the region. This Annual Report provides ample evidence for the excellent work carried out. Under the very able lead of Kuwait Programme Director, Professor Toby Dodge, the LSE Kuwait Academic Collaboration was renewed in December 2023 for another five years (thanks to the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences for their generous funding), and Centre colleagues followed up with a successful promotional visit to Kuwait. Important research on peacebuilding and governance in Iraq continued under the UK Government-funded PeaceRep programme, while the Centre’s longstanding lead in Kurdish Studies saw a successful Kurdish Studies Conference (May 2024), co-organised with the University of Sheffield.

Across our various research programmes and activities, many publications were issued by the Centre in 2023/24. Most of these were translated into Arabic under our Arabic Content project. Centre colleagues worked extremely hard to ensure that all these publications underwent the peer-review processes (internal and external referees) that provide essential quality assurance. As usual, we had a busy events schedule characterised by a great diversity of speakers, topics and formats: it’s always pleasing to see how much LSE students engage with our events. We also continued our measured and effective forays into social media. Amongst our podcasts, stand-out productions included the third series of our popular Instant Coffee series, reflecting on the role of technology in the Middle East, and the fascinating ‘Conversations on Positionality’ conducted by the Centre’s visiting fellow, Dr Anne Kirstine Rønn.

As always, I express my deep gratitude for the wonderful group of staff who work with me at the Middle East Centre, as well as the wider community of colleagues across the School and beyond who engage with our work, including of course those we collaborate with across the Middle East and North Africa. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those in the region currently impacted by violence.

Michael Mason
Centre Director

ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST CENTRE

The Middle East Centre builds on LSE's long engagement with the Middle East and provides a central hub for the wide range of research on the region carried out around the School. LSE is one of the world's leading social science institutions and comprises departments covering all branches of the social sciences. The Centre taps into this expertise to promote both public understanding and innovative interdisciplinary research on the region, with foci on history, political economy, society and international relations.

Student Careers Panel

Speakers: Marwa Baabbad, Arda Bilgen & Jack S

Chaired by Michael Mason

lse.ac.uk/middleeastcentre
[@LSEMiddleEast](https://twitter.com/LSEMiddleEast)
[#LSEMiddleEast](https://twitter.com/LSEMiddleEast)

OBJECTIVES

- Promoting independent and critical research on the Middle East and North Africa;
- Fostering open and critical debate about the politics, societies and economies of the region;
- Disseminating knowledge about the Middle East through the Centre's events, digital resources and publications and through LSE's community and media activities;
- Providing a rich research environment for scholars and students;
- Establishing and cultivating ties with colleagues in the Middle East and international institutions.

FUNDERS

- Emirates Foundation
- Aman Trust
- Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences
- UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- The Leverhulme Trust
- The Henry Luce Foundation
- Council for British Research in the Levant
- British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI)
- Centre for Justice and Accountability
- Carnegie Corporation New York
- LSE Global Partnership Development Fund
- UKRI Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

CENTRE STAFF

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Professor Madawi Al Rasheed

Dr Huda AlRashidi

Professor Fulya Atacan

Dr Richard Barltrop

Mariam Behbehani

Dr Marouf Cabi

Dr Jeroen Gunning

Dr Zeynep Kaya

Dr Mostafa Khalili

Dr Anne Kirstine Rønn

Dr Sana Murrani





Research project 'Palestinian Attitude Change in Response to Conflict in the Palestinian Territories'

RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Middle East Centre conducts and facilitates original research on the politics, societies and economies of the Middle East and North Africa. Research is conducted by Centre staff and by academics based in LSE departments and the region.

Understanding Barriers and Enablers to Women's Leadership in Sudan

Analyses the development of female leadership by looking at the major barriers women face in rising to senior positions, as well as proven useful practices in the development of Sudanese female leaders.

Supported by Ethar Relief

Principal Investigator

Dr Souad Mohamed, LSE Middle East Centre

Managing Religious Diversity in the Middle East: The *Muhasasa Ta'ifia* in Iraq, 2003–2018

Studies the efforts of Iraq's post-2003 ruling elite to build a democratic system to manage religious and ethnic diversity, investigating the creation and evolution of the *Muhasasa Ta'ifia* system.

Supported by the Henry Luce Foundation

Principal Investigator

Professor Toby Dodge, LSE Middle East Centre

Gendered Networks of Power: The Parliamentary Quota and Women's Substantive Political Representation in Iraq

Examines the effectiveness of Iraq's gender quota, which reserves 25% of all seats in the Council of Representatives for women, in enabling women's substantive political representation since its implementation in 2005.

Supported by the British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI)

Principal Investigator

Taif Alkhudary, Middle East Centre

The Political Economy of Water in the MENA Region: A Cross-Regional Assessment

Examines the challenges faced by MENA countries in their attempts to achieve water security including the prospects for constructive cooperation and, when those prospects seem poor, the likelihood of increased tension or even conflict between state.

Supported by UKRI Engineering and Physical Science Research Council

Principal Investigator

Greg Shapland

Legitimacy and Civiness in the Arab World

Explores the gaps in understanding civiness and legitimacy between external policymakers and local citizens.

Supported by Carnegie Corporation New York

Principal Investigator

Dr Rim Turkmani

Urban Development of Arab Jerusalem in the Aftermath of the Nakba – Documenting the Revival of Local Administration and Infrastructure in Jordanian-ruled Jerusalem (1948–1967)

Looks into the social and legal history of urban institutions operating under the Jordanian-ruled parts of partitioned Jerusalem.

Supported by Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL)

Principal Investigator

Dr Haneen Naamneh

PEACEREP: THE PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION EVIDENCE PLATFORM



PeaceRep is a seven-year research consortium led by the University of Edinburgh Law School. The LSE Middle East Centre is a consortium member, and our research focuses on peacebuilding, conflict and democratisation in Iraq and the regional roles of Turkey and the GCC states. PeaceRep is funded by UK Aid from the UK government.

Higher Education in Iraq after 2003: Ongoing Challenges

Examines the structural and systemic issues facing Iraq's higher education sector in the aftermath of 2003, highlighting the need for reforms to foster political stability and peacebuilding.

Principal Investigators

Ilham Makki, LSE Middle East Centre

The Trouble with Halbousi: the Rise of, and Resistance to, Iraq's Sunni Strongman

Explores the ascent of Mohammed al-Halbousi, Iraq's parliamentary speaker, and the challenges he faces within the Sunni political landscape, focusing on his consolidation of power and the resulting opposition in his home province of Anbar.

Principal Investigator

Simona Foltyn, LSE Middle East Centre

The UN's Humanitarian Transition from Emergency Assistance to Development Funding in Iraq: The Politics of Delivering Aid in a Country of Protracted Post-Conflict Displacement

Examines the United Nations' shift at the end of 2022 from providing direct humanitarian assistance to focusing on system-building in Iraq, analysing the implications of reduced international humanitarian funding on internally displaced persons, including those perceived to be affiliated with ISIS, and Syrian refugees, particularly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Principal Investigator

Alannah Travers, LSE Middle East Centre

The Competition for Control in Sinjar: How External Actors and Local Interests Inhibit the Sinjar Agreement

Examines the persistent instability in Iraq's Sinjar district, highlighting the intense competition among local, national, and regional actors that has hindered the implementation of the 2020 Sinjar Agreement and the district's stabilisation.

Principal Investigator

Zmkan Ali Saleem, LSE Middle East Centre

Towards Hydro-transparency on the Euphrates-Tigris Basin: Mapping Surface Water Changes in Iraq, 1984–2015

Examines surface water changes in Iraq within the Euphrates-Tigris Basin from 1984 to 2015, highlighting a one-third decline in permanent water areas, with the most significant losses in the south, including an 86% reduction in the Mesopotamian Marshes. The study underscores the importance of hydro-transparency—the open availability of water management information—to build trust among riparian states and promote sustainable and equitable use of basin resources..

Principal Investigators

Michael Mason, Zeynep Sila Akinci, Arda Bilgen, Noori Nasir, and Azhar Al-Rubaie, LSE Middle East Centre





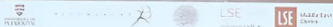
Ruptured Domesticity

Dr. Sana Murrani
Assistant Professor in Spatial Planning & Architecture
University of Plymouth



“An abandoned house in the Old Town of Mosul. The place is still there, but it is no longer a home. The walls are crumbling, the roof is leaking, and the doors are broken. The house is a shell of its former self, a silent witness to the violence that has shaped the city. The house is a symbol of the loss of home, of the loss of the life that once lived within its walls. The house is a reminder of the human cost of war, of the lives that have been lost and the lives that are still being lost. The house is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, to the ability to survive in the face of adversity. The house is a symbol of hope, of the possibility of a better future. The house is a reminder that we are all human, and we all deserve a place to call home.”

Quote and photograph by Ali Alwan, 2013



Opening of the exhibition 'Ruptured Domesticity: Mapping Spaces of Refuge in Iraq' by Sana Murrani

ACADEMIC COLLABORATION WITH ARAB UNIVERSITIES PROGRAMME

Supported by the Emirates Foundation, the Academic Collaboration Programme strengthens the Centre's role as the principal hub for Middle East Studies within the School as well as a key partner to institutions in the region. Since launching in 2010, the Programme has funded 42 projects working with 24 different partners across the Arab states. The programme supports collaboration and knowledge exchange between LSE and Arab universities through research and academic capacity building.



Neoliberal Visions: Exploring Gendered Adverts and Identities in the Palestinian West Bank

Studies the production and consumption of gendered advertisements in Ramallah, as a way of exploring how neoliberal culture constructs gendered subjectivity.

Principal Investigators

Dr Polly Withers, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Rema Hammami, Birzeit University

Can Social Protection Empower Women? Patriarchy, Economic Agency and Redistribution Policies in Egypt

Explores the impacts of Egypt's poverty alleviation programmes and cash transfers on gendered identities, as well as on the relationships that shape citizenship for women and families.

Principal Investigators

Dr Naila Kabeer, LSE Gender
Dr Hania Mohamed Sholkamy, American University in Cairo

Roads as Tools for (Dis)connecting Cities and Neighbourhoods: A Socio-Spatial Study of Abu Dhabi

Looks at existing and alternative design approaches that could help with the possible integration of new mobility services in Abu Dhabi, and aims to engage with international and local initiatives to understand local perspectives and draft recommendations for policymakers and relevant institutions.

Principal Investigators

Dr Alexandra Gomes, LSE Cities
Dr Apostolos Kyriazis, Abu Dhabi University

Incentivising Acceptability of Climate Change Mitigation Measures in the GCC

Aims to estimate the willingness to pay for emissions reduction policies, as well as the associated willingness to adopt low-carbon lifestyles in GCC countries. It investigates how effective different behavioural mechanisms are in enhancing the acceptability of climate change policies and the willingness to adopt and pay for low carbon lifestyles.

Principal Investigators

Professor Susana Mourato, LSE Geography & Environment; Dr Davide Contu, Canadian University Dubai; Dr Ganga Shreedhar, LSE Psychological & Behavioural Science

Global Identity in an Uncertain World: A Study of Social Attitudes at an International UAE University

Considers how social psychological processes are developing in the next generation of young leaders worldwide, and what kinds of environments might foster a liberal, globalist outlook, just as it shows signs of being in retreat. It focuses on high achievers from several countries studying at New York University Abu Dhabi.

Principal Investigators

Dr Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington, LSE Psychological & Behavioural Science
Dr Christian Haerpfer, UAE University
Dr PJ Henry, NYU Abu Dhabi

Explaining the Middle Eastern Health Inequality Paradox

Attempts to understand and explain the existence of this 'Middle Eastern Health Inequality Paradox'. In particular, it aims to identify any gaps that might exist across countries and investigate whether/how such gaps depend on a number of determinants including but not restricted to; social norms, socioeconomic factors, lifestyle and environmental characteristics, as well as food prices.

Principal Investigators

Dr Joan Costa-i-Font, LSE European Institute
Dr Aristeidis Samitas, Zayed University

Arab News Futures

Through interviews and focus groups with students and journalists in London and Dubai, this project seeks to examine how Arab journalists conceive of their audience, how they reach out to young people and how Arab students engage with news media.

Principal Investigators

Dr Omar Al-Ghazzi, LSE Media & Communications
Dr Abeer Al-Najjar, American University of Sharjah



Palestinian Attitude Change in Response to Conflict in the Palestinian Territories

Looks at the impact of exposure to violence on individual expectations about the future and the inclination to cooperate with others. It combines quantitative survey evidence and state-of-the-art experimental games with Palestinians to study how early life experiences of conflict shape expectations and attitudes towards cooperation across age cohorts and over time.

Principal Investigators

Dr Ben Groom, LSE Geography & Environment
Dr Guy Burton, MBRSG, Dubai
Dr Elisa Cavatorta, King's College London

Urbanity in the Time of Pandemic: A Study of Infrastructures of Care in Palestine during the Covid-19 Crisis

Seeks to explore how systems and practices of crisis and care unfold in urban life and engages with how notions of emergency and citizenship are shaped by the everyday networks of mutual aid within the brutality of the permanent crisis in Palestine in general, and during the Covid-19 pandemic in particular.

Principal Investigators

Dr Haneen Naamneh, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Suzi Hall, LSE Sociology
Dr Abaher El-Sakka, Birzeit University

Consociationalism and Civil Resistance in Lebanon

Examines the reactions of the Lebanese regime towards protest movements and the resilience of the country's political system. It focuses on activists' strategies and narratives as well as the tactics deployed to thwart these mass protests and threaten collective action.

Principal Investigators

Dr Jinan Al-Habbal, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Carmen Geha, American University of Beirut

Researching the Quality of Employment in the Middle East

Seeks to identify potential informational gaps in the UAE, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia and to develop a multidimensional index of the quality of employment to examine how the quality of employment has developed in the MENA region in recent years and to illustrate how policymakers can target resources and policies to the most vulnerable workers.

Principal Investigators

Professor Kirsten Sehnbruch, LSE International Inequalities Institute
Dr Samer Atallah, American University of Cairo
Dr M. Azhar Hussain, University of Sharjah

KUWAIT PROGRAMME

Established in 2007, the Kuwait Programme is a world-leading hub for research and expertise on Kuwait. The Programme is funded by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and directed by Toby Dodge, Kuwait Professor. Kuwait Programme Research Grants support LSE colleagues to conduct policy-relevant research on contemporary Kuwait. LSE–Kuwait Academic Collaboration projects enable Kuwait and LSE academics to run collaborative research.



Shaping an Eco-Kuwait: A Policy Framework for Sustainable Living

Seeks to provide evidence-based data and policy recommendations to foster a more sustainable and resilient future for Kuwait by assessing governance policies and structures, understand behaviour drivers, and propose innovative public engagement strategies.

Principal Investigators

Dr Alexandra Gomes, LSE Cities
Dr Asseel AlRagam, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research

Sovereign Wealth Funds, Diversification, and Economic Development: A Global Survey with Application to Kuwait

Seeks to address the role of Sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) in economic development by mapping the landscape of the economic development efforts of SWFs worldwide. In doing so, it aims to provide evidence-based recommendations related to the activities of the Kuwait Investment Authority.

Principal Investigator

Professor Neil Lee, LSE Department of Economic Geography
Dr Husam Arman, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research

Sustainable Climate Adaptation Strategies for Kuwait: A Multi-Hazard Approach Integrating Extreme Heat and Flood Adaptation Solutions

The changing climate and socio-economic landscape in Kuwait is giving rise to new multi-hazard risks for which the country is ill-prepared. This project aims to identify adaptation solutions in Kuwait that can effectively mitigate the impacts of floods and extreme heat, thereby providing co-benefits for multi-hazard scenarios. 8.

Principal Investigators

Dr Sara Mehryrar, LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment
Mohammad Alsahli, Kuwait University



Promotional lecture of the Kuwait Programme at the Arab Open University, Kuwait

PUBLICATIONS

The Centre's research is published as part of our flagship, peer-reviewed Paper Series, which disseminates substantive, original research in an accessible and policy-relevant format. Many of our papers are now translated into Arabic, with all executive summaries rendered in both English and Arabic.

A Greener Kuwait: How Electric Vehicles Can Lower CO₂ Emissions
[Andri Ottesen, Sumayya Banna, Basil Alzougool and Sadeq Damrah, August 2023](#)

Art and Activism in Iraqi Kurdistan: Feminist Fault Lines, Body Politics and the Struggle for Spaces
[Isabel Käser & Houzan Mahmoud, September 2023](#)

The Yazidi Genocide: A Demographic Documentation of ISIL's Attack on Tel Qasab and Tel Banat
[Valeria Cetorelli and Sareta Ashraph, September 2023](#)

Youth Citizenship Identities in Kuwait: The Role of Citizenship Education and the Kuwaiti Diwanis
[Sam Mejias, Rania Al-Nakib, Abdullah al-Khonaini and Rana Khazbak, September 2023](#)

A New Diaspora of Saudi Exiles: Challenging Repression from Abroad
[Madawi Al-Rasheed, September 2023](#)

Lebanon Unsettled: The Spatialities of the October 2019 Uprising
[Deen Sharp, October 2023](#)

Towards Hydro-Transparency on the Euphrates-Tigris Basin: Mapping Surface Water Changes in Iraq, 1984–2015
[Michael Mason, Zeynep Akıncı, Arda Bilgen, Noori Nasir and Azhar Al-Rubaie, October 2023](#)

Higher Education in Iraq After 2003: Ongoing Challenges
[Ilham Makki, October 2023](#)

The Trouble with Halbousi: The Rise of, and Resistance to, Iraq's Sunni Strongman
[Simona Foltyn, October 2023](#)

Digital Accessibility Across Kuwait's Software Development Landscape
[Zainab AlMeraj, October 2023](#)

Ecologies of Belonging and Exclusion in Urban Kuwait: Towards An Urban Co-Designed Approach
[Nazanin Shahrokni and Spyros A. Sofos, October 2023](#)

Corruption is the Lifeblood of Politics in Iraq
[Sajad Jiyad, November 2023](#)

Kuwait's Readiness for the Knowledge-Based Economy: An Exploratory Study
[Bibi M. Alajmi, November 2023](#)

Behavioural Explanations for Gender Gaps in Obesity and Overweight in Egypt
[Joan Costa-Font and Anton Grahed, December 2023](#)

Neoliberal Visions? Exploring Gendered Media and Popular Culture in the Palestinian West Bank
[Polly Withers, Rema Hammami, Rania Jawad and Amirah Silmi, December 2023](#)

Roads (Dis)connecting Cities and Neighbourhoods: A Socio-Spatial Study of Abu Dhabi
[Alexandra Gomes, Apostolos Kyriazis, Peter Schwinger, Clémence Montagne and Sepehr Zhand, December 2023](#)

Mapping the Unseen: Harnessing Indigenous Knowledge through Participatory Mapping to Address Displacement and Housing Challenges in Post-Invasion Iraq

Sana Murrani, December 2023

Kuwait's Enduring Digital Divide: Socio-Demographic Characteristics Relative to ICT Access, Skills, and Outcomes

Fahed Al-Sumait and Cristina Navarro, December 2023

The Competition for Control in Sinjar: How External Actors and Local Interests Inhibit the Sinjar Agreement

Zmkan Ali Saleem, January 2024

An Analysis of Changing Israeli and Palestinian Attitudes Towards Peace

Elisa Cavatorta & Ben Groom, February 2024

Greening Systems by Greening Religion: Eco-Islamic Values and Water-Energy-Nature Nexus Policies in Kuwait

Ganga Shreedhar, Davide Contu, Patricia Freitag, Aseel Takshe and Susana Mourato, March 2024

Surviving Together: Infrastructures of Care in Palestine During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Anmar Rafeedie, Haneen Naamneh, Suzi Hall & Abaher El-Sakka, March 2024

Spatial Patterns and Urban Governance in Kuwait: Exploring the Links Between the Physical, the Socio-Economic and the Political

F. da Cruz, Dhari S. Alrasheed, Muneerah Alrabe and Abdullah al-Khonaini, April 2024

A Fistful of Dinars: Demystifying Iraq's Dollar Auction

Ahmed Tabaqchali, April 2024

The Climate Change Risk Reduction Trap: Low Carbon Spatial Economic Restructuring and Disaster Risk in Kuwait
Viktor Rözer, Sara Mehryar and Mohammad M. Alsahli, May 2024

The Problem of Top-Down Techno-Centrism in Pan-Arab News Media

Omar Al-Ghazzi & Abeer Al-Najjar, May 2024

The UN's Humanitarian Transition from Emergency Assistance to Development Funding in Iraq: The Politics of Delivering Aid in a Country of Protracted Post-Conflict Displacement

Alannah Travers, May 2024

Worldviews and Attitudes to Science in Kuwait: The Engagement Threshold Hypothesis

Martin W. Bauer, Mohammad Sartawi and Gordon Sammut, June 2024

Protesting Sectarianism: Lebanese Regime Resilience and Thawrat Tishreen

Ahmed Tabaqchali, April 2024

The United Arab Emirates' Labour Market: An Overview
Mona Elsayed, July 2024



فخ الحد من مخاطر تغيّر
إعادة الهيكلة الاقتصادية المكانية
منخفضة الكربون و مخاطر الكوارث
في الكويت

هويات المواطنة الشبابية في الكويت

ور التربية الوطنية
و الديوانيات

سام ميهياس
رانية النقيب
عبدالله الخنيني
رنا خزبك

ARABIC PUBLICATIONS

This year, led by Dr Nesrin Alrefaai, our Arabic Content Project – seeking to translate our publications, blogs and website – took great strides forward. A notable achievement is the translation of 15 papers from our various paper series into Arabic.

شهد هذا العام تقدماً ملحوظاً في مشروع المحتوى العربي تحت إشراف الدكتورة نسرين الرفاعي، حيث يهدف المشروع إلى ترجمة منشوراتنا ومدوناتنا ومحتوى موقعنا الإلكتروني. ومن أبرز إنجازاتنا ترجمة ١٥ ورقة بحثية إلى اللغة العربية.



Deen Sharp's 'Lebanon Unsettled: The Spatialities of the October 2019 Uprising'.



Bibi M. Alajmi's 'Kuwait's Readiness for the Knowledge-Based Economy: An Exploratory Study'.



Sajad Jiyad's 'Corruption is the Lifeblood of Politics in Iraq'.

PODCASTS

CONVERSATIONS ON POSITIONALITY

How does 'who we are' as researchers shape our work? What is the role of positionality in research? How do researchers navigate their nationality, gender, age and personality while being in the field? In this podcast series, Visiting Fellow Dr Anne Kirstine Rønn invites a set of colleague to discuss the concept of researcher positionality.



Dana El Kurd on Researching Palesine
as a Palestinian Scholar

[Episode 1](#)



Nadim El Kak on Intersectionality,
Trauma and Being an Insider

[Episode 4](#)



Lucia Ardovalini on Gender, Emotions and
Interviewing People in Exile

[Episode 5](#)



Serhun Al on Kurdish Movements, Peace
and the Role of Researchers in Society

[Episode 6](#)

INSTANT COFFEE

This year saw the release of the third season of our Instant Coffee Podcast on the theme of technology. From fintech to drones, Abbasid-era paper production to the Anglo-Iranian oil company, this season explored technology is being applied, adapted and re-imagined in the region.



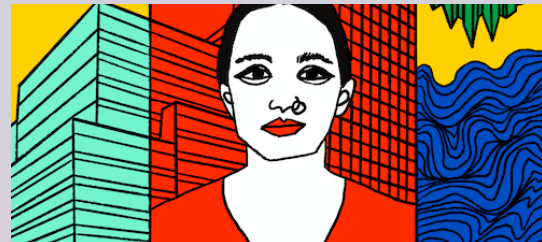
Digital Rights and Big Tech in MENA
Season 3 Episode 1



Re-Appropriating Technologies
Season 3 Episode 3



Archiving and Mapping Technologies in
Palestine and Syria
Season 3 Episode 5



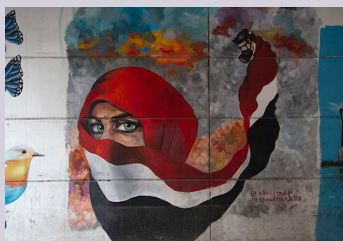
Living in the Future
Season 3 Episode 7

BLOG

The MEC Blog delivers accessible analysis of the Middle East and North Africa to a wide readership, drawing primarily on the community of academics and researchers at LSE, but also including outside contributors. In the past year we have published 89 pieces, attracting over 194,000 views. Below are some highlights.



Reclaiming the *Diwaniya*: How Kuwaiti Women Have Carved Out Space in Male-Dominated Arenas
[Dalal A. Marafie, September 2023](#)



As Iraq Backslides on Gender Equality, Where Are Its Women MPs?
[Taif Alkhudary, September 2023](#)



Israel–Lebanon Border Clashes: The Long-Term Consequences for South Lebanon?
[Anne Kirstine Rønn, November 2023](#)



Kurdish Prison Writings After 25 Years of Extreme Isolation on İmralı Island
[Alex Creamer, February 2024](#)



Book Review – ‘The Labor of Hope: Meritocracy and Precarity in Egypt’ by Harry Pettit
[Andrew Delatolla, April 2024](#)



Temporary Camps, Lasting Change: Pro-Palestine University Activism
[Dana AlOrainan, June 2024](#)

KURDISH STUDIES CONFERENCE

Our second Kurdish Studies Conference, hosted at the University of Sheffield, builds on the inaugural conference at LSE in 2023 and is organised by the Kurdish Studies Series at the LSE Middle East Centre and the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Sheffield. This year, this interdisciplinary event was pleased to host HOME – a photo exhibition by London-based filmmaker and photographer Yad Deen dedicated to raising awareness about the Yazidi Genocide.

The Conference attracted 142 delegates and 80 presenters.





'The Revolution of 1936-1939 in Palestine', hosted by the Centre in November 2023

EVENTS

In the academic year 2023–24, the MEC hosted 28 public events with 1400 attendees both in person and online. Six events were co-organised with LSE departments, and one was part of LSE's annual summer festival on power and politics. The MEC held two conferences, one taking place in the UK and the other in Doha, Qatar in collaboration with Hamad Bin Khalifa University. The Centre also organised workshops led by visiting fellows as well as research and student focused seminars.

October 2023

Art and Activism in Iraqi Kurdistan: Feminist Fault Lines, Body Politics and the Struggle for Space

Isabel Käser, LSE Middle East Centre; Houzan Mahmoud, Culture Project; Mijge Küçükkeleş, SOAS

Student Careers Panel & Reception

Arda Bilgen, LSE Middle East Centre; Marwa Baabbad, Yemen Policy Centre; Jack Sproson, Guernica 37 Chambers

A New Diaspora of Saudi Exiles: Challenging Repression from Abroad

Madawi Al-Rasheed, LSE Middle East Centre

***Broken Bonds: The Existential Crisis of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, 2013–22* (Book Launch)**

Abdelrahman Ayyash, Century International; Amr ElAfifi, Freedom Initiative

November 2023

***The Revolution of 1936–1939 in Palestine* (Book Launch)**

Hazem Jamjoum, New York University; Bashir Abu-Manneh, University of Kent

The Soil and The Sea (Film Screening and Q&A)

Daniele Rugo, Director & Carmen Hassoun Abou Jaoudé, Producer

***Dismantling Green Colonialism: Energy and Climate Justice in the Arab Region* (Book Launch)**

Hamza Hamouchene & Katie Sandwell, Transnational Institute

***Voices That Matter: Kurdish Women at the Limits of Representation in Contemporary Turkey* (Book Launch)**

Marlene Schäfers, Utrecht University

February 2024

Artificial Intelligence and Development in MENA: Inclusion or Inequality? (Webinar)

Nagla Rizk, American University in Cairo

***The Labor of Hope: Meritocracy and Precarity in Egypt* (Book Launch)**

Harry Pettit, Radboud University Nijmegen; Salwa Ismail, SOAS; Jo Littler, Goldsmiths, University of London; Tatiana Thieme, UCL

***Translating the Language of the Syrian Revolution* (Book Launch)**

Eylaf Bader Eddin, Forum Transregionale Studien

Gender, Technology, and Digital Cultures in the Middle East (Conference)

In partnership with Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)

Women in Academia & Research: Perspectives from Iran, Saudi Arabia & Kuwait (Webinar)

Bibi Alajmi, Kuwait University; Hanaa Almoaibed, LSE Middle East Centre; Anahita Motazed Rad, Department of International Relations, LSE

Social Media Influencing in the City of Likes: Dubai and the Postdigital Condition (Book Launch)

Zoe Hurley, Zayed University; Tariq Elyas, King Abdulaziz University; Sarah Hopkyns, University of St Andrews

March 2024

Political Elites, Civil Society and the Future of Sudan

Mai Hassan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Kholood Khair, Confluence Advisory

Iranian Kurdistan Since 1979 (Workshop)

Led by Visiting Fellow Dr Marouf Cabi

The Civil War in Syria: Prospects for Peace and the Role of External Actors

Soli Özel, Istanbul Kadir Has University; Selin Nasi & Rim Turkmani, LSE

Conquests and Rents: A Political Economy of Dictatorship and Violence in Muslim Societies (Webinar)

Faisal Z. Ahmed, Wellesley College

Navigating the Crisis: Yemen 10 Years On

Ahmed Al Khameri, Chemonics; Marwa Baabbad, Yemen Policy Centre; Andreas Krieg, KCL

13 Years After the Arab Spring: What are the Chances for Legitimate Constitutions in the Arab World?

Nathan J. Brown, Georgetown University; Tamara Khoury, IE University; Azza Kamel Maghur, Lawyer and Human Rights Activist

Industrial Policy in Turkey: Rise, Retreat and Return (Book Launch)

William Hale, SOAS; Mustafa Kutlay, City, University of London; Mina Toksoz, Author and International Economist

May 2024

Kurdish Studies Conference

In partnership with the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Sheffield

The Palestinian University and Scholasticide

Ahmed Abu Shaban, Al-Azhar University — Gaza; Esmat Elhalaby, University of Toronto

June 2024

Battleground: 10 Conflicts that Explain the New Middle East (Book Launch)

Christopher Phillips, Queen Mary, University of London; Faisal Al Yafai, New Lines Magazine

Women Fighters in the Kurdish National Movement: Transforming Gender Politics and the PKK (Book Launch)

Mustafa Kemal Topal, Roskilde University in Denmark

Revolution of Things: Islamism and post-Islamism of objects in Iran (Book Launch)

Kusha Sefat, University of Tehran; James Caron, SOAS

The Drama of Displacement: The Journey of a Syrian Refugee through Theatre

Nesrin Alrefaai, LSE Middle East Centre; Matthew Spangler, San José State University in California

Strategy and Domestic Politics in Israeli Foreign Policy: From the End of the Cold War to the 2023-2024 Israel-Hamas War

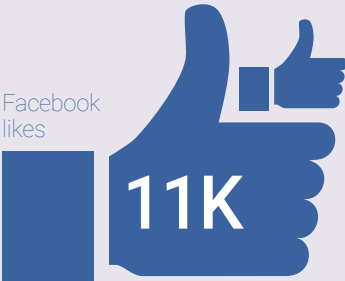
Amnon Aran, City University

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Skyline of Kuwait City.

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