

Iraq on the Eve of Elections: A new era or return to the *status quo*?

LSE Middle East Centre | Zoom | 28 -29 September

Speaker bios:

Ahmed Tabaqchali is an experienced capital markets professional with over 25 years' experience in US and MENA markets and is the Chief Strategist of AFC Iraq Fund. He is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani (AUIS), a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS) at AUIS, and non-resident Senior Fellow with the Atlantic Council - Iraq Initiative. He is a board member of Capital Investments, the investment banking arm of Capital Bank-Jordan. Ahmed holds an M.Sc. in Mathematics from the University of Oxford in the UK, a B.Sc. in Mathematics from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand and a B.Sc. in Mathematics from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. He tweets @AMTabaqchali.

Ali Al-Mawlawi is an independent consultant who specialises in institutional reform and Iraq's political economy. He was formerly the head of research at the Bayan Center in Baghdad and has written extensively on the challenges of reform including on the public payroll. He tweets @aalmawlawi.

Alia Moubayed is Managing Director at Jefferies International, in charge of economic research and credit strategy for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Pakistan. Prior to that, she was the director of geo-economics and strategy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and worked as Chief Economist for the MENA region at Barclays Bank in London. She also worked at the World Bank as a senior economist responsible for research and policy dialogue covering several countries in Europe and Central Asia and held policy responsibilities in various economic institutions of the Government of Lebanon. Alia holds a BA in Economics and an MBA from the American University of Beirut, as well as a Master equivalent in Public Policy and Public Administration from the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) in France. She is also the founder of AWEA MENA – the Association of Women in Economics Across the Middle East and North Africa aimed at promoting the role of women in economic policy in the region. She tweets @aliamoub.

Azzam Alwash is the founder and CEO of Nature Iraq, a non-governmental organisation focusing on the preservation of Iraq's environment and its cultural heritage. Previously he started the initiative "Eden Again", spotlighting the drying of the marshes in Southern Iraq under the auspices of the Free Iraq Foundation, where he is a member of the board of directors. Azzam has won numerous awards for his work, including the Takreem Award in 2011 and the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2013. In 2006, he also became a founding member of the board of trustees of the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. Azzam holds a PhD in Civil Engineering from the University of Southern California.

Basima Abdulrahman is a green building entrepreneur with over twelve years of diverse experience focused on sustainable development. She is the Founder and Chief Executive

Officer of the first company established to introduce green design and construction to Iraq called KESK. Basima is a World Economic Forum Foundation Board Member and Cultural Leader, TEDx speaker, and Cartier Women's Initiative laureate on the MENA Region. She was selected to co-chair the 2019 WEF Annual Meeting in Davos alongside the CEO of Microsoft and the President of the World Bank. She has also been featured in TIME magazine, Inhabitat, Forbes, WEF Agenda, and the National for leading the green building work in Iraq. Basima holds a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering and a master's degree in Structural Engineering. She tweets @BasimaAbd.

Belkis Wille is a senior researcher with the Conflict and Crisis division at Human Rights Watch. Before taking up the role, Wille worked for three and a half years as Human Rights Watch's senior Iraq researcher, and before that was the Kuwait, Qatar and Yemen researcher, based in Sanaa, for three and a half years. Previously, Wille worked at the Geneva-based World Organisation Against Torture, carrying out advocacy and trainings on torture prevention in Libya. Wille received her bachelor's degree from Harvard University, her graduate diploma in law from City University London, and her LLM in human rights and humanitarian law from the University of Essex. She speaks English, German, French, and Arabic. She tweets @belkiswille.

Chloe Cornish is the Financial Times' Middle East correspondent, based in Beirut and covering Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Before joining the FT in 2016, Chloe worked for the UN's World Food Programme in Iraq from 2014-15. She tweets @ChloeNCornish.

Güley Bor is a lawyer, researcher, and consultant with a focus on transitional justice, human rights, gender and sexuality in Iraq and Turkey. She previously managed the Genocide Documentation Project of Yazda in Duhok, Kurdistan Region of Iraq as a Harvard Law School Satter Fellow and conducted research on reparations for survivors of the IS conflict in Iraq at the LSE Middle East Centre's Conflict Research Programme-Iraq, the University of Duhok, and the International Organization for Migration. Güley is currently working with civil society and international organizations on the Yazidi Survivors Law, particularly on survivor participation. She holds a B.A. in Law from Bilkent University and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School and is licensed to practice law in Istanbul and New York. She tweets @BorGuley.

Hanaa Edwar has been a human rights, women's rights and democracy activist for more than 50 years. She is the co-founder and chairperson of Iraqi Al-Amal Association, a local NGO established in 1992. She is also the co-founder of the Iraqi Women Network, which was established in 2004 and consists of more than 100 women's organizations and groups all over the country. Hanaa has led countless campaign for women's and gender equality, enhancing women's role in decision-making positions and in the constitutional process. Since 2010 she has served within the expert team drafting the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Iraq. She is leading the advocacy campaign and lobbying in Parliament to enact the law. Hanaa also supervises IRAQIYAT web magazine in Arabic which focuses on women's issues.

Inas Jabbar is a women's rights activist and member of the Iraqi Women Network.

Inna Rudolf is a research fellow at the King's College London International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, where she is currently completing her PhD at the War Studies Department, focusing on the evolving relationship between the Iraqi state and the PMF as a

state-sanctioned paramilitary umbrella group. Rudolf is also a partner at the Candid Foundation in Berlin, and an associate fellow with the Middle East and North Africa programme of the German Council on Foreign Relations. She tweets @inna_veleva.

Jessica Watkins is as an analyst at the International Impartial Independent Mechanism, assisting with establishing accountability frameworks for crimes committed in Syria. She is a Visiting Fellow at the LSE Middle East Centre, and a Research Associate at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA). Between 2017 and 2021 she worked as a researcher on the Conflict Research Programme at LSE. She tweets @Jesterwatkins.

Lahib Higel has worked in Iraq and the Kurdistan region in various capacities since 2013. Most recently she worked on mediation efforts in Iraq, Libya and Syria for the Dialogue Advisory Group (DAG). She has worked as a security adviser for the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) and conducted research for a wide range of organisations and institutions, including the EU, UNDP and Minority Rights Group (MRG), on topics such as displacement, security and politics in Iraq. She holds an MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and an MA in International Security from Sciences Po, Paris. She tweets @LahibHigel.

Maha Yassin is a junior researcher at the Planetary Security Initiative (PSI), a project run by Clingendael Institute. Her work focuses on raising awareness and catalyzing action on climate change-related security risks. The Planetary Security Initiative (PSI) serves as a knowledge hub where Maha contributes to its outreach activities. She tweets @MahaalGhareeb.

Marsin Alshamary is a Baghdad-based political scientist and a non-resident fellow with the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School and with the Institute of Regional and International Studies at the American University of Iraq in Sulaimaniyah. She holds a PhD in Political Science from MIT, where she studied the role of Shi'a clerics in anti-government protest. Her research interests include religion and politics, protest and civil society in Iraq. She tweets @MarsinRA.

Marwa Abdel Ridah is a lawyer and founder of Baghdad-based women's legal advocacy NGO "For Her". She was also a researcher on the Middle East Centre Conflict Research Programme project Patriarchal Norms and Legal Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq.

Michael Mason is Director of the LSE Middle East Centre. He is also Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Environment and Associate of the Grantham Research Institute for Climate Change and the Environment at LSE. He is interested in ecological politics and governance as applied to questions of accountability, transparency, security and sovereignty. This research addresses both global environmental politics and regional environmental change in Western Asia/the Middle East. His next book (co-edited with Muna Dajani and Munir Fakher Eldin) is the *The Untold Story of the Golan Heights* (Bloomsbury, 2022).

Omar Al-Jaffal is an Iraqi journalist, researcher and poet. His writings have appeared in *Al-Monitor*, *Asia Times* and *Assafir Al-Arabi*, and he has published two poetry collections. In 2017, he was awarded the Mostafa Al-Hosseiny Prize for the best article by a young Arab journalist. He tweets @omaraljaffal.

Renad Mansour is a senior research fellow and project director of the Iraq Initiative at Chatham House. He is also a senior research fellow at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, and a research fellow at the Cambridge Security Initiative based at Cambridge University. Renad was previously a lecturer at the LSE, where he taught the international relations of the Middle East and, from 2013, he held positions as lecturer of international studies and supervisor at the Faculty of Politics, also at Cambridge University. He tweets @renadmansour.

Sajad Jiyad is an Iraqi political analyst based in Baghdad. He is a fellow at The Century Foundation. His main focus is on public policy and governance in Iraq, currently overseeing and consulting for projects on capacity building of public institutions and civil society organisations. He has an educational background in economics, politics and Islamic studies. He tweets @SajadJiyad.

Taif Alkhudary is an Iraq-focused research officer at the LSE Middle East Centre. She previously worked for a number of non-governmental organisations, where she conducted research on women's and girls' rights and strategic litigation on cases of enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killings in the Gulf and Iraq. She holds a BA in History of Art from UCL and an MSc in Human Rights from the LSE. She tweets @AlkTaif.

Toby Dodge is a professor in the Department of International Relations at the LSE, where he is Deputy Head of the Department (Research and PhD). He is also Kuwait Professor and Director of the Kuwait Programme at the LSE Middle East Centre. Toby served as Iraq Research Director for the FCDO-funded Conflict Research Programme (CRP). From 2013-2018, Toby was Director of the LSE Middle East Centre. Toby's research concentrates on the evolution of the post-colonial state in the international system. The main focus of his work on the global south is the state in the Middle East, specifically Iraq. He tweets @ProfTobyDodge.

Zahra Ali is a sociologist and Assistant Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University, her research explores dynamics of women and gender, social and political movements in relation to Islam(s) and the Middle East and contexts of war and conflicts with a focus on contemporary Iraq. She is the author of *Women and Gender in Iraq: between Nation-building and Fragmentation* published by Cambridge University Press in 2018. She tweets @ZahraSociology.

Zeynep Kaya is a Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sheffield. Her main research areas involve borderlands, territoriality, conflict, peace, political legitimacy and gender in the Middle East. She has recently published a monograph entitled *Mapping Kurdistan: Territory, Self-Determination and Nationalism* with Cambridge University Press. Zeynep is co-editor of I.B. Tauris-Bloomsbury's Kurdish Studies Series and is also a Visiting Fellow at the LSE Middle East Centre and an Academic Associate at Pembroke College, University of Cambridge. She tweets @zeynepn_kaya.