



CONFLICT, CLIMATE, AND CIVIL SOCIETY: TRACING (IN)STABILITY, CHALLENGES AND CHANGE FROM IRAN TO THE GULF

KING'S
College
LONDON

**INSTITUTE OF MIDDLE
EASTERN STUDIES**

7 October 2021 | 10am

Second Annual Conference



Programme

09.45 Logins

10:00 Welcomes

10.15-10.30 **Keynote Address** - Mrs Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

10.30-12.00 **Panel 1: Environmental and Economic (In)Stability: Can the Gulf Go Green?**

Chair: Dr Ferdinand Eibl, Lecturer in Political Economy, King's College London

1.1 Climate Change Challenges and Climate Action in the Persian Gulf - Karim Elgendy, Founder and Coordinator Caroun & Associate Fellow, Chatham House

1.2 Environmental and Economic Challenges facing the Persian Gulf region - Zeina Khalil Hajj, Global Programme Leader, 350.org

1.3 The Impact of Economic Sanctions on the Environment: The Iranian Example - Shirin Hakim, Post-Graduate Researcher, Imperial College London, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Centre for Environmental Policy



Programme

12.00-13.00 LUNCH

13.00-1430: Panel 2: Civil Society and Human Rights: 10 years on from the Arab Spring Uprisings, What Has Changed?

Chair: Golnaz Esfandiari, Senior Correspondent RFE/RL

2.1 Charting the Evolution of Different Forms of Digital Repression Across the Region - Dr Marc Owen Jones, Assistant Professor, Hamad bin Khalifa University

2.2 Propaganda Chimera: Unpacking the Iranian Perception Information Operations in the Arab World - Mahsa Alimardani, Post-Graduate Researcher, University of Oxford

2.3 Collective Action and the Lure of Celebrity: Organizing in Times of Repression - Sussan Tahmasebi, Executive Director, FEMENA

2.4 Banal Anti-Nationalism in Oman since the Arab Spring - Keye Tersmette, PhD Candidate, Harvard University



Programme

14.30-15.00 AFTERNOON COFFEE BREAK

15.00-16.30 PANEL 3 Lasting Conflicts and Regional Threats: What Are the Prospects and Challenges for a Collaborative Approach to Security?

CHAIR - Professor Jonathan Hill, Director IMES, KCL

3.1 Israel and the Gulf monarchies: A new Regional Security Complex or just Complex Regional security? - Professor Clive Jones, Professor of Regional Security (Middle East), Durham University & Visiting Research Professor, Department of Historical and Classical Studies, NTNU, Trondheim, Norway

3.2 Gulf Security and the Biden administration – restoring deterrence? - Dr Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Middle East Fellow, Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy & Associate Fellow Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

3.3 Rentierism and Religion in an Era of Low Oil Prices: Prospects for Political Islam in the Gulf - Dr Courtney Freer, Assistant Professorial Research Fellow, Middle East Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science

3.4 Examining the Evolving Relationship Between the Iraqi State and the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) as a State-Sanctioned Parliamentary Umbrella - Inna Rudolf, PhD Candidate, Department of War Studies, King's College London

16.30 CLOSING REMARKS & CONFERENCE ADJOURNS



Institute of Middle Eastern Studies

Established in September 2018, the **Institute of Middle Eastern Studies** draws together staff and students from across King's College London working on the Middle East and North Africa.

Based in a dozen departments, its over 30 faculty members produce world-class research on every country in the region. They are routinely asked by policy makers, civil society groups and media outlets both in the UK and elsewhere to provide expert analysis on events and developments in this important part of the world.

In addition to offering its members research support, the Institute organises a range of activities and events on the region each year. These include conferences, workshops, keynote addresses, seminars and book launches. Many of these events are open to the public and details about them can be found [here](#). For regular updates on what this community of scholars and students is doing, please check the Institute's twitter account @KingsMiddleEast

Strife is a biannual, peer-reviewed academic periodical publication created and managed by young researchers from the Department of War Studies, King's College London. It is a core part of a wider initiative, and as such is closely linked to the homonymous academic blog.

Strife's thematic focus is conflict, a broad field of research and enquiry which includes not only classical historical narratives and analyses of military conflicts and their significance, but also strategy, diplomacy, international relations, peace studies, conflict resolution, as well as related social and cultural issues.

Strife is published online and comprises scholarly Articles, Feature Debates/ Series and Book Reviews of recent academic titles in conflict studies and related fields. Provisions also exist for wider summaries of recent scholarly literature, as well as Special Issues dedicated to relevant conferences or symposiums organised by Strife or its partners.

FOR THE 2020 SPECIAL EDITION OF THE IMES CONFERENCE
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MAHSA ALIMARDANI is an Internet researcher focusing on Internet controls and social movements in the MENA region, with a focus on Iran. She's been working on human rights-oriented questions of access to the Internet with civil society for almost 10 years and is currently working on her PhD studying political communication online in Iran at the University of Oxford's Oxford Internet Institute.



FERDINAND EIBL is programme director of the MA Politics and Economics of the Middle East. He completed his PhD in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. He also holds an MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Oxford and a BA in Political Science from the University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and the IEP Rennes. Before joining King's College London, he was a research officer at the London School of Economics Middle East Centre.



KARIM ELGENDY is an urban sustainability consultant and an architect based in London, with extensive experience practicing sustainability and design in the United Kingdom, the Middle East, and the United States. Over the past two decades he has helped create sustainable buildings and urban environments across four continents. Karim is an Associate at Dar and an Associate Fellow at Chatham House. His professional and research interests include developing sustainable and resilient cities, and assessing the role of policy, economics, urban planning, urban mobility, and building design in reducing the impact of cities on resources and the environment. As a public advocate for urban sustainability, Karim is the Founder and Coordinator of Carboun, an advocacy initiative promoting sustainability in the cities of the Middle East and North Africa. He is also a regular speaker and writer and is regularly cited and interviewed by mainstream media and academic publications. Karim is the recipient of the 2013 Global Green Building Entrepreneurship Award by the World Green Building Council and a chartered member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).



GOLNAZ ESFANDIARI is a senior correspondent in RFE/RL's Central Newsroom where she covers Iran and the region. Esfandiari has reported from Afghanistan and Haiti. Her reporting and analysis on Iran have been cited by The New York Times, The New Yorker, The Atlantic, The Wall Street Journal, Foreign Policy, and The Los Angeles Times. Esfandiari has worked as a consultant on Iran with Freedom House, authoring several of their reports on human rights and press freedom in Iran. In 2013, she was tagged for the third year in a row in Foreign Policy's Top 100 Twitterati list (@GESfandiari)

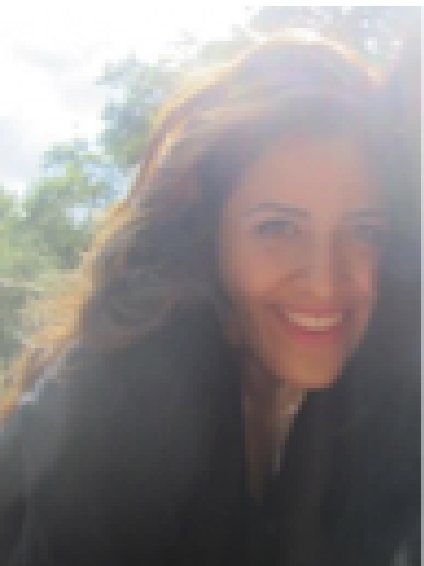


COURTNEY FREER is an Assistant Professorial Research Fellow at the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her academic work focuses on the domestic politics of the Arab Gulf states, with a particular concentration on Islamism. She received her DPhil in Politics from the University of Oxford in 2015, having written a thesis revising rentier state theory by examining the socio-political role played by Muslim Brotherhood groups in Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The findings of this work were published by Oxford University Press in May 2018 as *Rentier Islamism: The Influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gulf Monarchies*. She previously worked at the Brookings Doha Center in Qatar and the U.S.-Saudi Arabian Business Council in Washington, D.C.



ZEINA KHALIL HAJJ is currently the head of global “Campaigning and Organising” at 350. A global climate campaigning organisation that works with thousands of partners and allies around the globe seeking to expand the Climate movement, by building alliances across issues and social movements. Zeina has more than 25 years of experience in creative campaigning, communications, political and policy development, organising and mobilising on a global level. She is an activist by heart and has worked on social issues ranging from electoral laws and global environmental policies to dealing with war aftermath. She has helped set-up organisations and worked on organisational structures and campaigns around the world. For more than 15 years, she shaped Greenpeace’s global strategies and led many of its creative campaigns challenging global corporations within the electronics and textile industries, as well as the global food companies. Between 2018-2020, she founded and established the latest Greenpeace office operating in Arabic speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. She is also an active member of the board of SumofUs, a global organisation working to curb the power of corporations. Zeina has a notorious laugh that can raise a smile on a rainy day in Amsterdam, where she currently lives.

SPEAKER INFO & BIOS



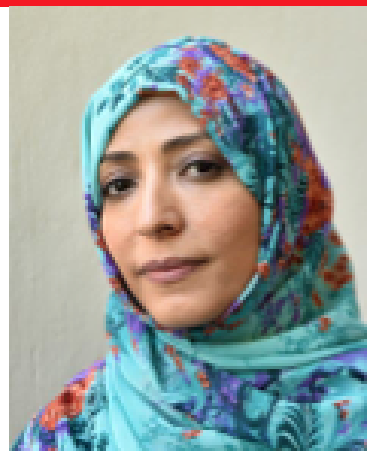
SHIRIN HAKIM holds a BSc degree in Public Health from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has years of research experience working at Harvard University as a visiting scholar, Cornell Medical Center, and Tehran University of Medical Sciences as a research assistant on topics ranging from HIV, radiation oncology, water scarcity and disaster risk management. She is currently working as a Doctoral Researcher at the Centre for Environmental Policy (CEP) at Imperial College London, examining the impact of economic sanctions on the environment in Iran. Her core research interests include sustainable development in the MENA region, water resource management, and environmental diplomacy.



PROFESSOR JONATHAN HILL is a Director of the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies at King's College London. He has published widely on the Maghreb and his latest project focuses on sport and the Tunisian national movement before and after independence. He has held visiting positions at the LSE and St. Anthony's College, Oxford, and is a member of the editorial advisory boards of *The Middle East Journal*, *The Journal of North African Studies* and *Libyan Studies*



PROFESSOR CLIVE JONES is Professor of Regional Security (Middle East) at the Durham University and Visiting Research Professor in the Department of Historical and Classical Studies, NTNU in Trondheim Norway. His more recent publications include (with Yoel Guzansky) *Fraternal Enemies: Israel and the Gulf Monarchies* (Oxford University Press, 2020); *The Clandestine Lives of Colonel David Smiley: Code Name Grin* (Edinburgh 2019) with Noel Brehony *Britain's Departure from Aden and South Arabia: Without Glory but Without Disaster* (Gerlach Press, 2020), and with Tore T. Petersen, *Israel's Clandestine Diplomacies* (Oxford University Press, 2013).



TAWAKKOL KARMAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, in recognition for her non-violent struggle for democracy and her advocacy for women's rights in Yemen.

Karman has been imprisoned on a number of occasions for her pro-democracy, pro-human rights protests. Amongst Yemen's Youth movement, she is known as "mother of the revolution", "the iron woman", and the Lady of the Arab Spring.

She is a human rights activist, journalist, politician, the Founder of Peaceful Youth Revolution Council, and the Founder of Tawakkol Karman International Foundation.

TIME Magazine described her as a 'Torchbearer of the Arab Spring' and named her both one of the 100 most influential women defining the last century and one of the Most Rebellious Women in History. She was a member of the High-Level Panel of eminent persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

She is now a board member of the Facebook oversight board, and Nobel Women initiative.

SPEAKER INFO & BIOS



AHOU KOUTCHESFAHANI is a PhD candidate at the Department of War Studies at KCL. Her research is concerned with feminist politics and social movements, with a focus on Iran. Her thesis traces the trajectory of feminist activism in Iran in the twentieth century to today, with an emphasis on the role of social media in shaping modern feminist discourse. She has previously held roles in digital communications in government and in the third sector. She is a co-organiser of the 2021 IMES conference.



DR MARC OWEN JONES is an Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies at Hamad bin Khalifa University in Qatar. He is the author of *Political Repression in Bahrain* by Cambridge University Press, and the upcoming *Digital Authoritarianism in the Middle East* published by Hurst/OUP. Jones's work focuses on the nexus of repression and technology. In addition to his academic work, his research has featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and on the BBC, among others.

SPEAKER INFO & BIOS



SOFIA PATEL is a PhD candidate at KCL's Department of War Studies, focusing on representations of women, and gender in counterterrorism. Sofia is currently working as a researcher on the DARE project at the University of Manchester and is a Research Fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra., where she was formerly an analyst at their counter-terrorism policy centre. She is a co-organiser of the 2021 IMES conference.



INNA RUDOLF is a Research Fellow at ICSR, pursuing her PhD at King's College London's Department of War Studies. She completed her master's degree in political science and Islamic studies in 2012 at the University of Heidelberg, specialising in Conflict Resolution, Peace Building and Political Islam. During her studies, she headed the regional group on "Conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb" at the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research. In addition to her field work in Iraq, she has lived in Libya, Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia and Palestine.



SUSSAN TAHMASEBI has been working to strengthen civil society and advocate women's rights in Iran and in the MENA region for over 20 years. Currently she serves as the Executive Director of FEMENA, an organization that supports women human rights defenders, their organizations and movements with a particular focus on transitioning contexts or contexts of limited or constrained civil society space in the MENA and Asia regions. From 2011-2017, Tahmasebi was the Director of MENA/Asia at ICAN Network, which she co-founded. Between 1999-2010 Tahmasebi co-founded the Iran Civil Society Training and Research Center. Tahmasebi is also a founding member of the One Million Signatures Campaign,. Tahmasebi's expertise includes movement building in contexts of shrinking civic space, reform of women's rights in Muslim societies, civil society capacity building and women's peace and security in MENA and Asia region, among other issues.

Tahmasebi regularly writes and speaks about developments in Iran and the region.

Tahmasebi is Iranian and American by birth and is a native speaker of English and Farsi. She resides in Washington DC. Follow her on Twitter: @sussantweets

SPEAKER INFO & BIOS



KEYE TERSMETTE is a Ph.D. candidate in Harvard University's joint programme of social anthropology and Middle Eastern studies. He is currently an affiliate of the Weatherhead Center's cluster on comparative inequality and inclusion. His doctoral research focuses on citizenship in Oman, and the formation and evolution of borders on the Arabian Peninsula. He received his MA in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from Leiden University, and his BA in Middle Eastern Studies from King's College, Cambridge.



DR KRISTIAN COATES ULRICHSEN is a Fellow for the Middle East at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy in Houston and an Associate Fellow in the Middle East North Africa Programme at Chatham House in London. His research focuses on the political economy and international relations of Arab Gulf states, and he is the author of five books about the region, including *Insecure Gulf: The End of Certainty and the Transition to the Post-Oil Era* (Hurst, 2011), *The Gulf States in International Political Economy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and, most recently, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Thank you for joining us.

If you have any questions about the 2021 conference or if you would like any further information about IMES or Strife Journal please contact:

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