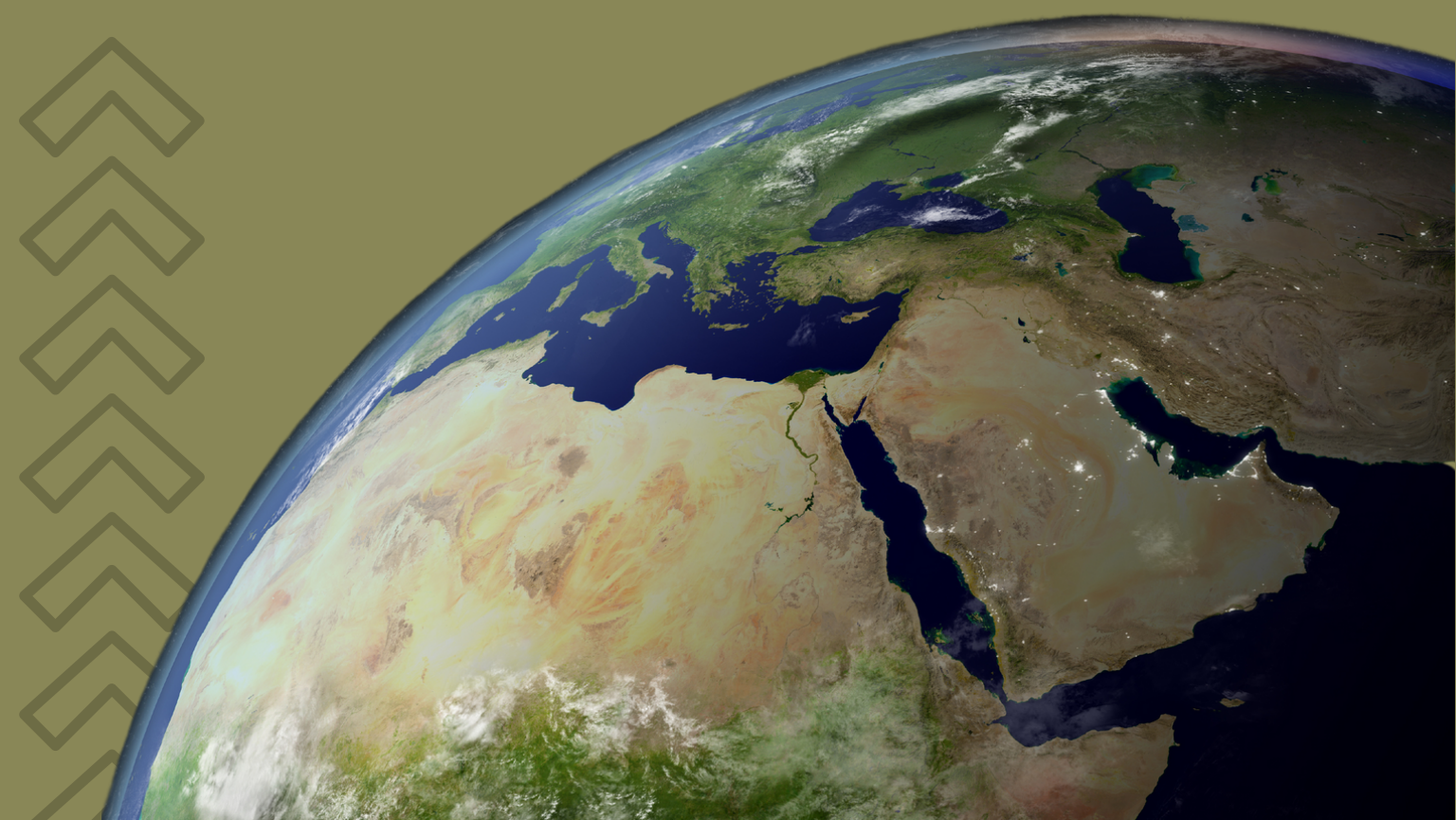


The Levant in 2023:

The Ukraine war and
shifting regional politics



**Institute of Middle
Eastern Studies**

23 October 2023

Programme

08.00 - 09.00: Check-in and breakfast

09.00-09.15: Opening remarks and welcome

09.30-10.00: **Keynote speech:** Professor Jean-Pierre Filiu (Sciences Po, Paris)

10.00 – 11.30: **Panel 1 - (Radical) Islamists at the Crossroads?**

Chair: Dr Inga Trauthig (Propaganda Research Lab, University of Texas at Austin).

1.1 - Can HTS Navigate Syria's Shifting Geopolitical Landscape? - Dr Haid Haid (senior consulting research fellow, Chatham House Middle East and North Africa programme)

1.2 - Re-thinking "radical" Islam: old movements and changing regimes - Dr Lucia Ardovini (lecturer in international relations, Lancaster University)

1.3 - From the Fringe: The Hezbollah Predicament in Lebanon - Anthony Elghossain (senior analyst, New Lines Institute)

1.4 - How does the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) narrate the Russian invasion of Ukraine? - Dr Amjed Rasheed (lecturer of defence studies, King's College London)

11.30 – 13.00: Panel 2 - A Dire Future? Energy and other Natural Resources

Chair: Amine Ghoulidi (doctoral researcher, Defence Studies Department, King's College London)

2.1 - The Israel-Lebanon Maritime Agreement: Examining the Challenges and Prospects of Establishing a Gas Regime in the Eastern Mediterranean - Professor Sujata Ashwarya (Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, India)

2.2 - Energy politics in the Middle East - Laury Haytayan (Middle East and North Africa director, Natural Resource Governance Institute)

2.3 - Creating a Levant Natural Gas Market under the Auspices of the EU - Dr Helyette Geman (Ralph O'Connors Sustainable Energy Institute, Johns Hopkins University)

13.00 – 14.00: **Lunch**

14.00 – 15.30: **Panel 3 - Is the Ukraine Conflict of Relevance in the Levant? And if so, how?**

Chair - Professor Jonathan Hill (director of the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, King's College London)

3.1 - The Effect of Shifting Post-Ukraine Invasion: Eastern Hemisphere Alliances on Assad's Regional Relationships - Amanda B Kadlec (School of Security Studies, King's College London)

3.2 - Shifting Sands: How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine is reshaping the Gulf Politics - Dr Ali Bakir (Ibn Khaldon Centre, Qatar University)

3.3 - What about Neither East, Nor West? Dr Marzieh Kouhi Esfahani (School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University)

3.4 - Turkey's Balancing Act in the Ukraine Crisis: Is it Sustainable? - Professor Hasan Kösebalaban (FSM Vakif University, Turkey)

15.30 – 17.00: Panel 4 - Sectarianism Up-, or Outdated?

Chair - Professor Jonathan Hill (director of the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, King's College London)

4.1 - Targeting the “Pipeline”: The new transnational activism in Iraq, 2015-2019. Taif Alkhudary (Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge)

4.2 - Russia and Sectarianism in Syria - Kasia A Houghton (doctoral researcher, University of St Andrews)

4.3 Situating the Lebanese and Iraqi 2019 uprisings: Between (anti-)sectarian exceptionalism and Arab Spring 2.0. Dr Anne Kirstine Rønn (Carlsberg Visiting Fellow, LSE Middle East Centre)

4.4 - Libya's Madkhalis and Yemen's Houthis: Sectarianism & Political Rivalry in post-2011

MENA. Dr Emmanuel Karagiannis (Defence Studies Department, King's College London) and Dr Ebtisam Hussein (associate professor of political science, Cairo University)

17.00-17.15: **Closing remarks** and symposium adjourns

From 17.30: Reception

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 more than 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 on the institute website.

For regular updates on what this community of scholars and students is doing, please check the institute's twitter account @KingsMiddleEast.

Meet our speakers...



Professor Jean-Pierre Filiu is Professor of Middle East Studies at Sciences Po, Paris. A historian and an Arabist, he has also held visiting professorships at the universities of Columbia and Georgetown. Hurst and Oxford University Press published his *Arab Revolution* in 2011, *Gaza, a History* in 2014 (MEMO Book Award) and *From Deep State to Islamic State* in 2015, after University of California Press had published in 2011 his award-winning *Apocalypse in Islam*. His *Middle East, a political history, from 395 to the present* has recently been published by Polity. His books have been translated in more than 15 languages.



Dr Inga Kristina Trauthig is head of research at the University of Texas at Austin's Propaganda Research Lab and an affiliate fellow with King's College London's Institute of Middle Eastern Studies. She holds a PhD from the Department of War Studies at King's and also has an MLitt from the University of St Andrews in Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asian Security Studies. Previously, she was a research fellow with the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation. She has conducted work with UN organisations, NGOs and private companies, has published in *International Sociology*, *Lawfare*, and *Political Research Quarterly*, and regularly speaks to the media, having been featured on Al Jazeera, the BBC and CNN.



Dr Haid Haid is a senior consulting research fellow at the Chatham House Middle East and North Africa Programme. Previously, Dr Haid held the position of research fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation. He has also served as a programme manager focusing on Syria and Iraq at the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Middle East Office in Beirut. He has also worked as a senior protection assistant at UNHCR's Damascus office. Dr Haid's academic background includes a bachelor's degree in sociology, a postgraduate diploma in counseling, as well as a master's degree in social development and a second in conflict resolution. He also holds a PhD in war studies. His research interests encompass conflict, political economy, governance, non-state actors, as well as the prevention and countering of violent extremism.



Dr Lucia Ardovini is a lecturer in international relations at Lancaster University. She is the author of *Surviving Repression: the Muslim Brotherhood after the 2013 coup*. Lucia's research focuses on the intersection of transnational activism and ideology. Through the study of social movements such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, she investigates the role that identity, religion, ideology and forced displacement play in bringing about social change. Lucia is the director of the Richardson Institute and a Fellow at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and at the Sectarianism, Proxies and De-sectarianization project.



Anthony Elghossain is a lawyer and writer. He's a senior analyst at the New Lines Institute. Despite political revolts in Beirut, the global pandemic, and a meandering mind, Anthony's still working on his long-promised first book: *They Came in Peace*.



Dr Amjed Rasheed is a lecturer of defence studies in the Defence Studies Department, King's College London. Before joining King's, he held academic posts at the Institute of Political Science, Tübingen University (2020-2021), and at the Department of Politics Philosophy, and Religion, Lancaster University (2022-2023-1992). He was also the Hillary Rodham Clinton Fellow at the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, Queen's University Belfast (2022-2023).



Amine Ghouli is a PhD student at the Defence Studies Department researching the geopolitics of critical raw materials. A career political risk professional, Amine has advised companies on operational risks and security threats particularly linked to their operations in Africa and the Middle East. He is currently working on promoting regional economic integration. Amine previously served as a senior consultant with a global forensics practice specializing in risk and threat management. He also advised leading international organizations in preventing and countering violent extremism in North Africa. Amine was a Fulbright Scholar and holds postgraduate degrees from King's College London and American University in Washington, DC.



Dr Sujata Ashwarya is professor at the Centre for West Asian [Middle Eastern] Studies in Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India. She received her MPhil and PhD degrees in West Asian Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her research interests include international relations theory, international relations of the West Asian region, political economy of energy, and India-West Asia relations. Her research has appeared in top peer-reviewed journals including *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *Global Discourse*, *Strategic Analysis*, *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, *India Quarterly*, *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, and *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*.



Laury Haytayan is an energy policy and geopolitics expert. She is the Middle East and North Africa director at the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)- an independent, international non-profit organization that provides policy advice and research and works on advocating for better managed resources and energy transition in oil rich countries. She has several publications, and she is a regular commentator on issues related to oil and gas and energy in Lebanon and the East Med. She is the host of the *Energy Espresso* podcast that deals with everything related to the future of energy and energy transition in Lebanon and currently, she is hosting a monthly webinar on energy transition in MENA ahead of COP28. She teaches a course on the geopolitics of energy in the Eastern Mediterranean.



Dr Helyette Geman is Senior Fellow at the Policy Centre for the New South, director of the Commodity Finance Center at Birkbeck, University of London, and a Research Professor at the Johns Hopkins University, who focuses on probability, commodities and finance. She was chairman of the Finance Department at ESSEC Business School from 1988 to 1995, and the director of Dauphine Master 203 at the University of Paris Dauphine from 1995 to 2005. Helyette is a graduate from Ecole Normale Supérieure in mathematics and holds a PhD in probability and a PhD in finance. Her book, *Commodities and Commodity Derivatives*, published in 2005 has become the reference in the field.



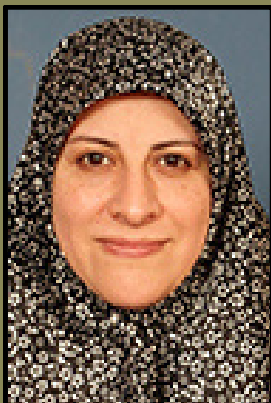
Professor Jon Hill is director of the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies at King's College London. He has published widely on the Maghreb and his latest project focuses on sport and the Tunisian national movement before independence. He has held visiting positions at the LSE and St Antony's College, Oxford, and is a member of the editorial advisory boards of *the Middle East Journal*, *The Journal of North African Studies*, and *Libyan Studies*. He is fluent in French (DALF C2).



Amanda B Kadlec is a consultant and doctoral candidate in Security Studies at King's College London investigating the impact of multi-polar competition on governance outcomes in competition spaces. She has more than 14 years of research and policy analysis experience in the Middle East and Africa, with half of that time spent in Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Tunisia, Turkey, and other regional locations. As a RAND analyst in Washington, D.C., Amanda assessed US and European security partnerships and political-security dynamics in North Africa, and later investigated human rights violations as United Nations Security Council sanctions investigator in Libya throughout its 2019-2020 conflict. She holds a BSc from Saint Louis University and an MA in international affairs from the George Washington University.



Dr Ali Bakir is a research assistant professor at Qatar University's Ibn Khaldon Center. He is also a non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative and the Middle East Programmes. Before joining QU, Dr Bakir served as a senior advisor at Qatar's embassy in Ankara. He also worked as the head of the Gulf Studies unit at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies; a senior researcher in the Center for Middle East and Africa Studies at the International Strategic Research Organisation, and a senior researcher at AIWA Group for defense and economy. Dr Bakir writes extensively in English, Arabic, and Turkish platforms on topics related to geopolitics and security in the MENA region with a special focus on Turkey's foreign and defense policies, GCC countries' foreign and defense policies, and the Gulf security. Dr Bakir's most recent scholarly work is *Turkey's security role in the Gulf Region: Exploring the case of a newcomer*.



Dr Marzieh Kouhi Esfahani is assistant professor in politics and international relations of the Middle East at Durham University's School of Government and International Affairs. She is the author of *Iran's Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus: Relations with Azerbaijan and Armenia* published by Routledge in 2019 and the editor of the 2017 *Nuclear Politics in Asia* by the same publisher.



Professor Hasan Kösebalaban is a faculty member at FSM Vakif University in İstanbul, Turkey. He received his BA in political science from the International Islamic University in Malaysia, his MA in international relations from the International University of Japan, and his PhD in political science from the University of Utah. Prof Kösebalaban has previously taught at various universities, including the University of Utah, Michigan State University, Lake Forest College, Mount Holyoke College, and İstanbul Şehir University. He is the author of *Turkish Foreign Policy: Islam, Nationalism, and Globalization*, and the co-editor (with Mohammed Ayoob) of *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism and the State*. His research interests cover Middle Eastern politics, and Turkish foreign policy, especially as it relates to the Middle East.



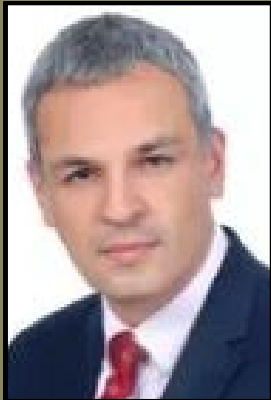
Taif Alkhudary is a PhD student at the Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge. Prior to this she was a research officer at the LSE Middle East Centre. She has also worked for several human rights NGOs conducting strategic litigation on cases of human rights violations in the MENA region.



Kasia A Houghton is an ESRC-funded doctoral researcher at the University of St Andrews. Her doctoral research focuses on Russia's intervention in the Syrian conflict. She is the editor of a forthcoming volume titled *China, Russia, and the USA in the Middle East: The Contest for Supremacy* and has also published on Chinese and Russian engagement in the Syrian conflict for Al-Monitor, SEPAD and the edited volume, *China Moves West: The Evolving Strategies of the Belt and Road Initiative*. Kasia is also a researcher with the PeaceRep consortium, researching non-Western approaches to peacebuilding in conflicts across the globe. She has also consulted on the Syrian conflict and tutored international relations modules at Durham University.

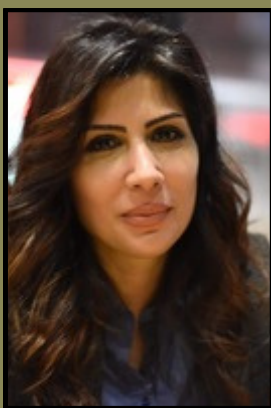


Dr Anne Kirstine Rønn is a Carlsberg visiting fellow at the LSE Middle East Centre. Her research explores protests and social movements in ethno-religiously divided societies with a particular focus on Lebanon and Iraq. Anne Kirstine holds a PhD in Political Science from Aarhus University, an MA in International Studies from Aarhus University and a BA in Political Science from University of Copenhagen.



Dr Emmanuel Karagiannis is a reader in international security at King's College London's Department of Defence Studies.

He received a PhD in Theology and Religious Studies (Islamic Studies) from King's and a PhD in post-Soviet Politics from the University of Hull. He also obtained an MA in International Security Studies from the University of Reading and a BA in European Studies from London South Bank University. He held research positions in Oxford University (2019), the US Military Academy at West Point (2016-2017), London School of Economics (2016-2017), Princeton University (2010), Yale University (2008), Columbia University (2008), and the University of Pennsylvania (2005-2006). His new book, *Why Islamists Go Green: Politics, Religion and the Environment*, has just been published by Edinburgh University Press.



Dr Ebtisam Hussein is an European Neighborhood Council academic council member and associate professor of political science at Cairo University. She served as associate professor of Middle Eastern studies at Sun Yat-sen University, in China. She is currently associate professor at New Giza University. She earned her PhD in 2014 from the Free University of Berlin. Her research focuses comprise Middle Eastern studies, Islamism, repressive practices in the public sphere, and post-2011 MENA regime survival. During her career, she has been awarded several international scholarships including a Fulbright grant to study US politics and thought in 2006.

