

Speakers' bios

KHADER ABUALHAYJAA

Khader holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Florida, USA, and an MA in Global Diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, UK. He resides in Amman, Jordan, where he runs a freelance office providing Arabic lessons, translation, interpretation and assistance for employees in government institutions, NGOs and in journalism and academic research. He has worked in Saudi Arabia and as a research assistant at the University of Florida's College of Journalism. He also completed internships at political institutions and organizations in Jordan and the United States.



Khader's MA dissertation provided recommendations aimed at promoting peaceful negotiations in Iraq to reduce and seek an end to the conflict there, with a particular focus on the impact of the war on local inhabitants and research drawn mainly from local and tribal sources. During his bachelor's degree he was a columnist at the Shpiel, a Jewish student newspaper in the United States, where he wrote columns on political, social and religious issues relating to Jewish and Muslim communities in the US. He is interested in building bridges and international understanding between different cultures and communities at the local, regional and global levels, believing it an important means to promote prosperity and peace over violence and war.

A MORE DIPLOMATIC APPROACH TO COUNTERING ISIS?

Abstract

Much of the youth in Iraq is caught between the hammer of the Iraqi government and the anvil of ISIS. The youth is also faced with extremely high unemployment rates while simultaneously suffering from war and harassment, rising ethnic and confessional tensions and socio-economic exclusion. Different factions in Iraq, such as the Popular Mobilization Forces (Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi) and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are seeking to win over the youth by arming them, providing employment to win hearts and minds.

The paper will analyse the ongoing conflict between ISIS and the Iraqi government, by drawing on narratives, TV interviews and statements by clan leaders and comparing and contrasting these with viewpoints from society and militia leaders, parliament members and other officials in the Iraqi government. The analysis will remain within the context of pivotal local events in Iraq and analyse inter-clan and tribal relations. Some policy recommendations will be provided to both reduce the violence through peaceful means or, if necessary, armed solutions, while trying to encourage the youth to abandon ISIS by providing alternative sources of employment and sustenance.

HAMID AIT EL CAID

Hamid is 24 years old and from Morocco. He holds a MA in Political Analysis and Public Policy from the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia. Prior to his graduate studies, he earned his BA in English and Linguistics from the School of Arts and Humanities at Moulay Ismail University in Meknes, Morocco. During his graduate studies in Russia, he took part in several research and academic activities in the fields of democratisation, public policy and global security.



While in Moscow, Hamid worked as a teaching assistant in Theory and Methodology of Political Research. His final MA thesis, *Protest Publics in Hybrid Regimes: Defining the triggers of democratic development in Morocco and Tunisia (2010-2015)*, will soon be published and he has contributed to the recent book; *Policy Impact of civil society in BRICS countries: Best practices influencing policymaking*. Twice, in 2015 and 2016, Hamid participated in the International Model UN organised by the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, where he represented Tunisia and Malaysia while discussing aspects tied to the rise of ISIS and measures aimed at combating transnational terrorism. He has also chaired the organisational committee of academic and cultural events held on campus such as the Human Rights day, Africa day and others.

Hamid is currently applying for PhD programmes abroad with the hope of becoming a professor, policy expert or advisor. He aspires for a world of sustainable peace, tolerance and prosperity.

RADICALIZATION AND THE ISIS THREAT

Abstract

The ongoing violence perpetrated by the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has caused devastating suffering to civilians, who often had two main choices: to leave their homes for uncertain destinations, or to live under constant threat. Since its founding, ISIS has succeeded in gaining control of large oil-rich territories in Syria and Iraq; inspiring other terrorist groups in Africa and the Middle East proclaim their allegiance to Al Baghdadi's 'State'. Since then, acts of terror went beyond the Middle East and targeted other parts of the world including, Europe, the US and Africa. Existing counter-terrorism policies have so far failed because of poor planning and lack of multi-dimensional policy approaches that seek to eradicate the root causes of radicalization which leads to brutal acts of unjustified killing. As a result, the wider Mediterranean space witnessed a real geo-political crisis notably after the intervention and failure of state building efforts in Libya and on-going migration catastrophes of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and turmoil. Under these circumstances, the biggest mistake that national governments and transnational organizations can do while countering terrorism is an excessive focus on coercive power. Instead, a better approach should adopt comprehensive strategies that take into account six key dimensions: Education, Security, Migration policy, Socio-economic opportunities, global governance and the good management of former ISIS militants. This paper will analyse these dimensions and propose policy recommendations for each in an effort to improve global counter-terror policies.

ABDELRAHMAN ALDAQQAH

Abdelrahman is a Board Member of Horizons International, the Netherlands, and a Doctor at the Palestinian Ministry of Health. A young, motivated individual and social activist, Abdelrahman is based in the West Bank, Palestine. He has worked on many extracurricular projects and activities and believes in the power of youth to change and improve their communities. Recently, he was selected as a World Leader of Hope due to his achievements and over six years of experience in working on creative activities and projects in health, youth empowerment, leadership and social activities in Palestine.



Some examples include, his participation, as Palestinian Board Member, in the Horizons International organisation, which seeks to promote peace and justice in Palestine and tries to raise awareness about the conflict through international conferences, study trips and dialogue between West and East youth through video conferences and shared projects. He also founded a national campaign to raise awareness about Internet safety and pornography with the participation of 200+ volunteers. Abdelrahman is a Board Member of the International Committee at the Ministry of Education, Palestine. He acts as a university representative and participated in the organisation of many study trips and exchange projects. He has received several awards such as Best Palestinian debater and was the official representative of An-Najah National University at many international events in Norway and the Netherlands concerning youth, politics and education.

Abdelrahman has a diploma from the Global Business Institute at Indiana University, USA during which time he represented Palestine at the US Chamber of commerce in Washington. He holds a Doctor of Medicine degree from An-Najah National University, Palestine.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AS A CORNERSTONE FOR STABILITY IN THE MENA REGION

Abstract

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a heterogeneous region, extending from Morocco to Iran. It includes countries at various stages of economic development and with a diverse set of challenges. Despite some success in achieving stability in certain countries through a focus on security policies, the MENA region still faces economic and political problems such as terrorism and violence. Besides, the area's unemployment and depression rates remain the highest in the world. The purpose of this paper is to propose some potential solutions for the MENA region's problems based on youth perspectives and a scientific review of facts. A sample of 673 youth between the ages of 18-31 participated in an online-based questionnaire. An analysis of the data showed a gap between youth needs and government strategies. Despite the expensive and time-consuming security and defence approaches, government policies still lack sustainable economic and social models addressing youth empowerment as a top priority. Solving the region's challenges must be a collective effort where youth are given empowerment, encouragement and the infrastructure they need to become the next generation of leaders who will build a promising future for the MENA.

HAÏFA BEN CHEIKHA

Haïfa Ben Cheikha is a Doctoral Candidate in Political Science at the Faculty of Legal, Political and Social Sciences in Tunis, University of Carthage, Tunisia. She holds a bachelor degree in law, and a master's degree in Environmental Law from the University of Carthage in Tunis. She is the president of the Mediterranean Association for the Promotion of Peace and Humanitarian Rights created in 2013 and is interested in topics ranging from democratic transition to national dialogues. In 2014, she was appointed 'Youth ambassador for peace and dialogue among cultures' following her participation in a summer School at the Freie Universität in Berlin, Germany. She co-authored a research paper on *The Role of Women during the Arab Spring in North Africa* and *Women's Rights: Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco* the same year.



In 2015, she was a member of a research group belonging to the Tunisian Association of Political Studies, with whom she actively participated in drafting the report about the national dialogue in Tunisia, which was published in September 2015. She has presented various papers on civil society and national dialogue in Tunisia and similar topics at university conferences abroad. Haïfa has teaching experience at the Institute of Fine Art in Tunis, and taught human rights for young students during the 2015-2016 academic year. Presently, she is a Researcher at the Arab Institute of Human Rights of Tunis.

ACTIVATING THE POTENTIAL OF MAGHREB COUNTRIES IN REDUCING CURRENT REFUGEE FLOWS TO EUROPE: REDIRECTING THE WAVES

Abstract

Europe has witnessed increasing waves of mass refugees coming from the southern Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa. Many have perished in this journey; while in Europe many voices have arisen against the acceptance of these refugees. The difference between European and refugee cultures', is the biggest challenge to welcoming these numbers, added to that the immediate economic cost of receiving and installing refugees, especially in a time of a global economic crisis and rescission. The question this paper seeks to answer, is how can a typical north African country, namely Tunisia, be part of the solution to this challenge, receiving, installing and protect refugees instead of begin an emigration territory or a transit country? Many relevant assets enjoyed by North African countries can lead them to attract migrants, while preserving their dignity. These assets cover multiple

dimensions: cultural similarities, general social acceptance of refugees, low cost of living and a number of other factors.

SIBELLE EL LABBAN

Sibelle is an Associate Researcher and Administrator at the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon. She holds a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics (2008) and an MS in Food Technology (2012) from AUB, and is a Licensed Dietician in Lebanon. Her work consists of conducting reviews of literature, preparing editorials and technical reports to be disseminated at national, regional and international conferences and executing data analysis on topics related to public health nutrition, namely: the risk, prevalence and management of obesity and non-communicable diseases, under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies and the impact of early life nutrition on health and disease.



She worked with a team of experts on two national projects supported by the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research: the development of *Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for the Lebanese Paediatric Population*, and *Early Life Nutrition and Health in Lebanon*, which examined the correlation between early life nutrition of mother and child and later risks of obesity and nutritional status of the new-born in Lebanon. Apart from attending regional workshops by international organisations, Sibelle earned a Research Fellowship in the Department of Public Health and Policy at the University of Liverpool in 2014. There she embarked on the research project *Modelling the impact of specific food policy options on cardiovascular diseases deaths in Lebanon*, the first of its kind in Lebanon and the region, with a publication underway.

Recently, Sibelle has focused her research on food and nutrition security, sustainable diets and sustainable food consumption in the MENA. She has a total of six publications (three original articles, one report chapter, one editorial and one blog article) and four posters presented at international conferences. Sibelle has recently developed an interest in food and nutrition policy, and aspires to pursue her career in research on policies for sustainable food consumption.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN THE MENA REGION

Abstract

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region suffers from food and nutrition insecurity as a result of political, economic, environmental, health and nutritional challenges that are ailing both populations and environmental resources alike, making the current food system unsustainable. Transition towards sustainable food consumption in the MENA is crucial to alleviate these challenges, achieve long-term food and nutrition security and respond to current global needs. To achieve this, a set of coherent and evidence-based policy recommendations are proposed from a consumer end-point, with a focus on nutrition as a key component of knowledge dissemination, education and extension, and as a driver of agricultural production as well as access and utilization of food. Policy recommendations for sustainable food consumption in the MENA include: Promoting the “Mediterranean Diet”, entrenched in the region, as a model for developing sustainable food-based dietary guidelines; Reduce red meat consumption for a lower environmental footprint; Adopt nutrition interventions to increase availability and accessibility of nutritious, safe and sustainable foods; and Develop a sustainability index to assess the sustainability of current food consumption patterns. To effectively address these policies, a context-specific and twin track approach is needed, taking into account current pressing needs and long term capacity building through collaborations with international and European organizations. Political leadership and cohesive multilevel, multisectoral partnerships between key stakeholders are also a prerequisite, despite ongoing political instability in the region.

HUSSAM HUSSEIN

Hussam has completed his PhD at the School of International Development at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in Norwich, UK. His PhD thesis was titled *An analysis of the discourse of water scarcity and hydropolitical dynamics in the case of Jordan* and investigates the discourse of water scarcity, mapping the actors constructing and reproducing the discourse of water scarcity, their interests and investigating the power struggle within and around the discourse.



Before his PhD, Hussam studied International Relations and Diplomacy in Gorizia at the University of Trieste, Italy, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London and the College of Europe, Natolin Campus. Hussam has work experience at the European Parliament, where he supported the work on transboundary water governance in the Middle East; at the Italian Embassy in Amman within the MAE-CRUI programme; the Jordanian-Israeli-Palestinian NGO friends of the Earth Middle East - Eco Peace; the London Middle East Institute and the World Bank, Washington DC. At the World Bank, Hussam was responsible for a set of countries for the 'Starting a Business' indicator of the Doing Business Report, leading to the Doing Business in the Arab World Reports of 2012 and 2013. Hussam is currently an Associate Tutor and Research Associate at the University of East Anglia, a member of the Water Security Research Centre at the London Water Research Group and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

WATER SCARCITY IN JORDAN: ROOTS OF THE ISSUE AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Abstract

Transboundary water governance in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region is a complex issue as it is not a mere technical problem, it is political: it has to be contextualized into the broader geopolitical context, considering national security, regional geopolitics, inter-sectorial interests and power asymmetries. This is particularly true when considering that most of the surface water in Arab countries originates from outside the region, and transboundary waters represent over two thirds of its overall water resources. This policy paper focuses on the issue of water scarcity in Jordan, examining the roots of the problem and providing innovative policy recommendations.

ZIED TOUZANI

In the flow of the Yasmin revolution, Zied Touzani founded and chaired Tun'Act, an NGO working on youth citizenship awareness and inclusion in the decision process in Tunisia.

He was the organiser of the first and second Tunisian Youth Parliament, the flagship event of Tun'Act. In 2011, he was invited to meet Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg in London to share his views on the Arab Spring as a young Tunisian. After graduating as an IT engineer in Tunisia, he obtained a scholarship to study Political Science at Science Po University in Paris. During the Tunisian election of 2011 and 2014, he worked as an assistant political analyst at the EU observer mission to the elections. In 2015, he worked as a fellow at The Foreign Policy Initiative, a Washington DC based think tank.



During 2016, Zied was the executive director of the Maghreb Youth Leaders Organisation (MYLO) an NGO working to strengthen Maghreb-EU relations by adopting a non-Eurocentric approach.

CAN RECURRENT REGIONAL MIGRATION CRISES BE TRANSFORMED FROM A CHALLENGE INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MENA REGION?

Abstract

The 2015 Refugee crisis and its political consequences on the EU revealed the need to implement an immigration policy. Can regional recurrent migration crises be transformed from a challenge into an opportunity for the region? This paper argues that recurrent migration crisis weaken EU integration. It analyses current Eurocentric and short-term policies and proposes a new immigration framework taking into consideration MENA and EU interests to find a win-win, multilateral and long term solution. The paper concludes with recommendations based on the deepening of existing mechanisms and proposes new models for EU and MENA countries' in the immigration sphere.

MARWA WASFY

Marwa is currently working as an assistant lecturer in Political Science at Cairo University where she is a PhD candidate in International Relations, while also studying Middle East Politics at the American University in Cairo. She received her BSc in Political Science in 2006 and holds her MA degree since 2012.



Her MA dissertation investigated the issue of Political Islam from the American perspective, where she focused on how Islamists might represent a challenge for democratic governance; especially when it comes to the values of equality and citizenship. Her research interests range widely from Middle East politics, political Islam, American and European foreign policy, to gender equality and education in the Arab world. Recently, her policy paper on the stereotypes of women in the Egyptian cinema and education was awarded by the Arab research Centre as one out of three best policy papers presented during Ibn Roshd academy for supporting freedom and democracy in the Arab world.

As a young academic, Marwa has travelled to many countries such as the US, Jordan, France, Morocco, Germany and Greece. She adores travelling to discover new places, meet new people and learn about different cultures and traditions. In 2010, she won a scholarship to stay for one semester in Germany, where she had the chance to participate in many student activities while also presenting at a number of workshops on the status of Political Islam and women in the Arab world.

THE CRISIS OF CITIZENSHIP IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY EGYPT
CASE STUDY OF "THE SQUARE'S SPATIALITY AND WOMEN ACCESS TO THE PUBLIC SPACE"

Abstract

This paper focuses on the relationship between gender and space during the 18 days of protests in Tahrir Square, Cairo. According to Lefebvre space is produced and representational. Thus, the paper looks at spatiality and what place women have occupied and are expected to occupy after the revolution. Space is a crucial fact for producing social relations in society. Spaces create relation as much as social relations between men and women create and reshape spaces too. However, space for women in Egypt is formed and determined mainly by men. Thus the question is if women were able to create their own space after the revolution and how the spatial dimension of women experiences changed? The space here is where women live, where they experience their gender roles, whether in the private sphere (home) or the public sphere (the street, the work place, politics, etc.) Despite the critical roles played by women during the 18 days of Tahrir and afterwards, women are still excluded from the structure of power that followed the revolution. This paper analyses how and proposes policy recommendations addressing women issues in Egypt.