

International Workshop

Governance without Government in the MENA region: State and non-state actors in contested spaces during (post-)conflicts

حكمة بدون حكومة في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا: أدوار الجهات الفاعلة الحكومية وغير الحكومية خلال (وما بعد) الصراعات والأزمات

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Conference Rationale

Protracted crises and intra-state conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have created a shift in governance dynamics throughout the past few decades. In the absence of the state, local, and often cross-national, non-state actors have taken active roles in leading and creating governance structures and public policies. During conflicts, the collapse of a formal authority provokes actors to transform governance from the failing state to other players. However, different segments of society are prompted to respond and fill the gap of sovereignty according to their interests and capacities. This includes armed militias, extremist radical groups, tribal leaders, private actors, and economic and industry pioneers operating at international, regional, and local levels.

Various cases in the MENA region such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen have all seen the rise and fall of militias, warlords and rebel groups, undermining the state's monopoly on the exercise of violence, challenging sovereignty, taxing people, and exporting resources to other countries and regions.

In contexts where multi-ethnic-religious society is fragmented, and the ailing state cannot exercise authority, non-state actors often try to administrate public services at different levels. Non-governmental organizations and international donors provide humanitarian aid and, in some cases, take charge of social welfare and empower local actors' bottom-up initiatives.

At the same time, global and regional powers frequently take part in MENA's conflicts, directly or indirectly, with varying economic, social, religious and political interests, supporting segments of affected societies and influencing decision-making processes.

This workshop aims to explore the following critical questions among others:

- How is the public sphere configured and reproduced in representations of the current political authorities in the MENA region in conflict and post-conflict scenarios?
- How is authority constructed, legitimacy established and secured at the local level, and tied to an increasingly characterized world by competing for global and regional powers?
- To what extent is CSOs' and NGOs' bottom-up approach capable of managing public services, and does such policy have the capacity to influence the re-building of sovereignty?
- How is the absence of security and central authority exploited by non-state radical actors to take root in the territory and generate a famous incubator among local communities?

- How should we understand migration trends in historical, spatial and political contexts, including their interaction with political changes in the MENA region?
- Can local actors, who increase their governance in their regions, build decentralized and more democratic structures than the previous state system? What is the impact of those new structures on the long-term democratization process in post-conflict contexts?

This workshop will discuss the abovementioned important questions and contribute to an academic debate that can help foster peace and sound governance in places without government in the Middle East and North Africa region. In the post-war era, states seek to build or rebuild their governmental apparatus while dealing with governmental and non-governmental forces which have interests that may be divergent or even conflicting. Therefore, building a professional bureaucracy and better organization of social structures, as well as legal clarity of social rights are among the guarantees through which these conflicting interests can be dealt with.



The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) is an independent institute for graduate learning and academic research in the fields of the Social Sciences, Humanities, Public Administration and Development Economics in Doha, Qatar. The study programs are offered at the master's degree level in two schools: the [School of Social Sciences and Humanities](#) and the School of Economic, Administration & Public Policy (SEAPP). The DI was founded in 2014, as an autonomous legal entity, by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. It welcomed its first cohort of students in the academic year 2015-2016 and is expected to launch its doctoral programs during Fall 2021. The DI is a not-for-profit, private institution, which operates exclusively for educational, research and public service purposes. For all its non-executive master's degree programs, it provides merit scholarships and stipends to most international students, who are selected on academic grounds.

The International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR)

Founded in 1992, the [International Society for Third Sector Research](#) is a major international network association promoting research and education in the field of civil society, philanthropy, social innovation, and the nonprofit sector. Our mission is to promote the development of high-quality research and education internationally on Third Sector related issues, theories, and policies; and to enhance the dissemination and application of knowledge about the Third Sector as widely as possible throughout the world. ISTR has over 700 members, publishes the respected journal, [Voluntas](#), organizes four regional networks and conferences, PhD seminars, mentoring programs, affinity groups, and hosts a biennial [international conference](#). The next one will take place in Antwerp, Belgium July 16-19, 2024. The call for papers is due October 30, 2023.



About the President & Provost, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI)



Prof. Dr. Abdelwahab El Affendi is the President and Provost of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI). A former diplomat, journalist, and magazine editor in the UK, Professor El Affendi was the founder and coordinator of the Democracy and Islam Program at the University of Westminster (1998-2015), Head of the Politics and International Relations Program (2015-2017) at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, and the Dean of its School of Social Sciences and Humanities (2017-2020).

Professor El-Affendi was visiting fellow/professor at Oxford University (1990), the Christian Michelsen Institute (1995 and 2003), at Northwestern University (2002), at Malaysia's International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (2008), and at Cambridge University (2010-2012). He delivered keynote speeches and lectures at most leading universities in the US, UK, and across the world.

About the Dean of the School of Economic, Administration & Public Policy



Dr. Hamid Ali is an Associate Professor and Dean of the School of Economic, Administration & Public Policy (SEAPP), at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI). Prior to that, he was Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Public Policy and Administration (PPAD) at the American University in Cairo (AUC) (2013-2016) and the former Director of AUC's Masters in Global Affairs.

Dr. Ali is one of the founders of AUC's public policy program where he successfully led the process of NASPAA accreditation for the first postgraduate program in the whole Middle East, and third outside the US. Prior to that, Dr Ali was a researcher at the Texas Workforce Commission, the Center for Transportation Research in Texas, and the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), where he was a major contributor on various reports to US congressional committees on issues related to US army's chemical and biological units readiness, farm subsidy programs and FCC regulation of the digital spectrums.

About the Workshop Chair (Hikama)



Dr. Moosa Elayah is Asst. Professor in International Development, Peacebuilding and Conflict Studies, at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (Qatar), and the Managing Editor of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies' *Hikama* (Governance) Journal. Elayah is the executive director of the Association for Middle Eastern Public Policy and Administration (AMEPPA), which is a nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing an effective partnership within academia and practitioners by fostering collaboration between local, regional, and global networks regarding sound governance in the Middle East. He is well-versed in the broader governance issues in the Arabian Peninsula

context and has also acquired first-hand research and professional experience in the Middle East's developmental challenges and public sector reform issues in the context of countries in times of conflict.

Previously an Asst. Professor at Radboud University Nijmegen, in the Netherlands, he holds a Ph.D. from the School of Governance and International Affairs from the University of Leiden, in the Netherlands. Dr Elayah is widely published in both English and Arabic in the field of international development, peacebuilding, NGO management and state-building in post-conflict settings.

Dr Elayah is a founding member of the Humble Bees Network, a non-governmental, not-for-profit think-tank that supports mediation in peace processes, with interests in areas of conflict transformation, international development, and global education. He is also founder of the Center for Governance and Peacebuilding in the Middle East as a non-governmental organization in the field of research and non-profit policies.

About the Workshop Co-Chair (ISTR)



Dr. Barbara Ibrahim was founding director of the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement (2006-2014) at the American University in Cairo. She holds degrees from DePauw University, American University of Beirut, and a Ph.D. in sociology from Indiana University. She served as Regional Director for West Asia and North Africa of the Population Council from 1990 to 2005 and Program Officer at the Ford Foundation regional office in Cairo (1981-1989). Her publications address philanthropy in the Arab region, challenges to global higher education, youth activism in Egypt, and the closing space for civil society in the Arab transitions. She serves on the Board of

Directors of the Arab Foundations Forum, Soliya, and the International Society for Third Sector Research. In 2003 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Middle East Women's Studies Association.



Dr. Abdel-Fattah Mady is the chair of the state and political systems studies unit at the Doha-based Arab Center for Research and Policies Study and Editor-in-Chief of Hikama (Governance - a Journal of Public Administration & Public Policy). He is also the author of five books, and his research focuses on regime transitions and democratization in the Middle East, Civil-military relations, Islamist movements, civil education, human rights, and academic freedoms. He is associate professor of political science at Egypt's Alexandria University, where he teaches courses on comparative politics, democratization, human rights and contemporary issues in the ME. He was trained in the study of politics at Alexandria University, Egypt (B.A., 1991 and M.A. 1997) and Claremont Graduate University, U.S.A. (M.A. 2004 and Ph.D., 2005).



Megan A. Haddock is Director of Programs for the International Society for Third Sector Research. She manages the planning of international and regional conferences, ISTR's Online Events programming, the Mentoring Program, and PhD Seminars. Megan has 15-years of experience in the sector and is a recognized global expert on measurement of amount and contribution of volunteering efforts. Before coming to ISTR, she managed the international research projects of the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies. She is co-author of *Explaining Civil Society Development: A Social Origins Approach* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017). She earned her master's in policy studies from Johns Hopkins University





Conference Schedule

7 th of May 2023	
9:00 to 9:30	Welcoming and coffee
9:30 to 10:15	Opening Remarks: Dr. Abdulwahhab El-Affendi , President of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Dr. Hamid Ali , Dean of the School of Economics, Administration and Public Policy (SEAPP). Dr. Barbara Ibrahim , Member of the board of directors of the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) Dr. Abdel-Fattah Mady , Editor-in-Chief, Hikama Journal of Public Policy and Administration
10:15 to 12: 45	<p style="text-align: center;">Morning Presentation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Session 1: Theoretical Insights on Non-State Actors in MENA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Moderator: Dr. Barbara Ibrahim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riham Khafagy, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates (Egypt): <i>"Claiming Sovereignty and Cultivating Legitimacy of Non-State Actors in the MENA Region: Theoretical Insights"</i> • Khaldoun AbouAssi, Provost Assoc Professor, Department of Public Administration and Policy, American University, Washington DC, USA: <i>"Intersectoral Relations as Organizational Responses to Institutional Environment Cues: The Donor Effect"</i> • David Mednicoff, Assoc. Prof./Department Chair, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, United States: <i>"Syrian refugee governance at the intersection of non-state and state actors- Lessons for third-sector engagement in contested spaces of the MENA"</i> <p><i>Break</i> <i>Discussion</i></p>
12:45 to 14:00	Lunch
	Afternoon Presentation:
14:00 to 16:30	Session 2: Hybrid Governance and Non-State Actors in Palestine, Iraq and Sudan

	<p style="text-align: center;">Moderator: Mrs. Megan Haddock</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akiko Yoshioka, Senior Analyst, JIME Center-IEEJ, Japan: "Hybrid Governance in Contemporary Iraq: Political Order and Non-State Actors in a Fragile State" • Ali Bakir Hamoudi, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin, Ireland: "Civil society organisations' accountability patterns in Iraq: Why are some CSOs more responsive to the demands of the poor?" <p><i>Break</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rashed Al Jayousi, Tohoku University, Sendai, Miyagi, Japan (Palestine): "The Governance Trap Cycle: Palestinian Civil Society limited governance role in a conflict setting" <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
	Break
TBD	Evening dinner
8th of May 2023	
9: 30 to 12:30	Morning Presentation:
	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 3: Governance and Non-State Actors in West and East</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Moderator: Dr. David Mednicoff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dina Ramadan, Independent Researcher, Syria: "The Role of Emerging Local Think Tanks During Conflict: Syria as a Case Study" • Elie Abouaoun, Visiting Lecturer, Saint Joseph University, Lebanon and Senior Fellow, Religion and Security Council, Italy: "Armed Non-State Actors in Libya and Lebanon: A Comparative Analysis" <p><i>Break</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magdalena El Ghamari, Assistant Professor, Institute of Political Science and International Relations (INPISM), Head of Cultural Security Unit at Collegium Civitas, Poland: "NGOs in Libya. Civil society organizations after the Libyan Uprisings" • Houssine Soussi, Associate Professor, University of Ibn Zohr, Morocco: "Governance without Government in the Polisario-controlled Tindouf camps in Southwestern Algeria" <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
12:30 to 13:30	Lunch
13:30 to 15:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 4: Governance and Non-State Actors in Algeria and Libya (Arabic)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Moderator: Dr. Abdel-Fattah Mady</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faouzia Zeraoulia, Lecturer professor, Department of Political Science, University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahya, Jijel, Algeria: "Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies in North Africa: Case Study of Algeria and Libya" • Nawras Mukhtar, MA in Human Rights from Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, lawyer and a co-founder of No to Children's Execution Campaign: "Versatile Co-

	<p>existence of the Sudanese Civil Society: The Role of the Sudanese Civil Society in Re-building Sovereignty during Post-Conflict Era"</p> <p><i>Discussion</i></p> <p><i>Break</i></p>
	<p>Section 5: Synthesis discussion, substantial wrap up and actionable next steps</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Barbara Ibrahim</p>
15:00 to 16:00	<p>Final Messages:</p> <p>Dr. Hamid Ali, Dean of the School of Public Administration and Development Economics (SPADE)</p> <p>Dr. Barbara Ibrahim, Member of the board of directors of the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR)</p> <p>Megan A. Haddock, ISTR Director of Programs</p>
16:00 to 16:30	Break
	Evening Dinner

Bios and Abstracts



Ms. YOSHIOKA Akiko. After obtaining B.A. degree from Osaka University of Foreign Studies, YOSHIOKA Akiko joined JIME Center in 1999. She was a visiting researcher at the Gulf Research Centre in Dubai in 2007. The fields of her research interests are contemporary Iraqi politics and energy, especially after 2003. Currently she is working on the theme of post-conflict nation building in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. Her publications include “The Cold Relationship between Arab States and Iraq during the Transitional Phase after the Iraq War: From the Perspective of the Transformation in Security Circumstances and Arabism” (2008),

“The shifting balance of power in Iraqi Kurdistan: The Struggle for democracy with Institutionalized governance” (2015).

Hybrid Governance in Contemporary Iraq: Political Order and Non-State Actors in a Fragile State

This study begins with an overview of previous research on state fragility and hybrid governance theory. From these considerations, research questions are posed to clarify the relationship between the state and ANSAs in hybrid governance. Section 2 examines the formation of the official political order and the destabilization of the security situation in Iraq that begin in 2003 and then analyses the conditions of the formation of ANSAs that can assume hybrid governance by clarifying the relationship between the state and multiple ANSAs. Section 3 focuses on the Kurdistan Region, which is sometimes referred to as “a de-facto state”, to analyze its relationship with the Iraqi state from the perspective of hybrid governance. It then examines how the attempts of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to challenge and deny the authority of the central government in managing natural resources and attempts at secession have affected hybrid governance. This section also analyzes the governance structure of the region, focusing on power structures within the region.



Dr. Khaldoun AbouAssi is the Provost Associate Professor of public Administration and Policy in the Department of Public Administration and Policy at American University. He holds a PhD. in public administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. His primary research focuses on public and non-profit management, examining organizational capacity, resources, and inter-organizational relations. He serves as a Director on the Board of Public Management Research Association.

Intersectoral Relations as Organizational Responses to Institutional Environment Cues: The Donor Effect

The institutional environment or context is a moderating or framing variable in the equation of organizational responses to ensure survival and effectiveness. This research looks at how organizations interact in a turbulent institutional setting and ask: what role does funding play in shaping cross-sectoral relations at the local level in developing country context? Using quantitative data from a national survey that targeted local governments and nonprofits in Lebanon, we examine how availability of funding (mainly from the central government or foreign governments) might shape the outcomes of collaboration. The results indicate that moderate dependence on donor funding is associated with perceptions of goal

agreement and effectiveness of the collaborative as well as the likelihood of cost-effectiveness and resource saving; this is particularly the case for nonprofits more than local governments. The fact that high dependence on external funding in collaboration relates only to one outcome—perceived public satisfaction with the organization—and in a negative direction raises the question around the role donors need to play (vs. are playing) in fostering collaboration at the local level in developing countries.



Dr. Houssine SOUSSI is an associate professor at the National School of Business and Management of Dakhla, affiliated with the University of Ibn Zohr, Morocco. He holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Moulay Ismael in Meknes and an M.A. from the University of Cadi Ayyad in Marrakech. With many research interests, Dr. SOUSSI has made significant contributions to his field through his research, publications, and academic achievements. He has been actively involved in teaching and mentoring students at various levels and has served in various administrative and academic positions.

Governance without Government in the Polisario-controlled Tindouf Camps in Southwestern Algeria

During the last decade, the refugee camps around Tindouf in southwestern Algeria have seen the emergence of protest movements and citizen initiatives launched either by youth activists such as the "Sahrawi Revolutionary Youth Movement", "Assomoud" (resistance) and the Forum Forsatin, or by former senior officials of the Polisario front such as "Khat al-Shahid" (Line of the Martyr), the "Sahrawi Initiative for Change", and "the Sahrawi Movement for Peace". These initiatives were launched on the one hand to confront the human rights violations perpetrated by the Polisario Front leaders against the sequestered population for nearly forty eight years, by publicly denouncing the heinous and abominable crimes that have been perpetrated against innocent Sahrawis; and on the other hand to express their opposition to the bad governance of the political-economic system in place involved in "torture, violations of human rights, corruption, clientelism, tribalism, and for bargaining with the sufferings of the Sahrawi people" in relation to many cases of misappropriation of international aid discovered and denounced in 2015 by the European Union's anti-fraud office.

This research paper aims to study this new situation in the Tindouf camps characterized by the burst in the political field of the Sahrawi separatist movement of new organizations at the margins of the official structures of the 'government' of the Polisario Front. This new surge which is certainly a clear response to a situation of political vacuum and desperation will eventually lead to the transformation of governance from a failing illegitimate regime to new emerging actors. This study will particularly analyse how these complementary and/or alternative organizations are imposing themselves as important actors within the Tindouf refugee camps but also in the diaspora. It will also focus on how these new actors respond to the aspirations of citizens who yearn for more freedom on the one hand, but also demand that other options be considered, such as the Moroccan autonomy plan, among other political solutions to end this long-lasting conflict and eventually put an end to their suffering.



Ms. Dina Ramadan is the co-founder and CEO of AISalam Institute for Women's Studies (SWS), the first Syrian think tank founded and led by Syrian female experts. SWS was established in 2022 and is focused on issuing studies & training programs related to Syrian women.

Dina was a CWFL Fellow (Center for women, faith & Leadership) at the Institute of Global Engagement (IGE)-USA 2021-2022 . Prior to that she was a Chevening Visiting Fellow at University of Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies 2019/2020.

Dina holds an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) with distinction. She has more than 10 years' experience in high managerial positions in the Syrian private sector. After 2011, she started her activities in the Syrian humanitarian sector, and served as the Executive Director and then a Board Member of a Syrian NGO.

The Role of Emerging Local Think Tanks During Conflict: Syria As a Case Study

Prior the 2011 Uprising, Syria lacked individual and independent think tanks due to the tight security grip and closure of the public sphere. However, as the Syrian Uprising evolved and a new reality emerged on the ground, as well as the emergence of significant challenges on the political, military, and social fronts, the need for specialised research and studies centres arose, prompting the establishment of numerous Syrian think tanks.

Nonetheless, due to the novelty of the experience, it appears that these centres have been challenged by the emergence of a variety of factors, including funding issues, a scarcity of qualified researchers among others. Finally, there is the complicated relationship with crucial players like military groups, official committees, and even the general public, which has a significant impact on how think tanks affect those actors.

The experience of Syrian think tanks in diaspora will be examined, along with the challenges they encounter and how much of an impact they can have on local conditions including governance. This will be carried out with the intention of promoting an intellectual discussion on the role of think tanks in times of conflict, inviting a few think tanks to discuss their experiences in providing policy guidance to the decision-maker or other key players, and deliberating on the effective methods for think tanks to remain viable during crises for better governance on different levels.

Ali Bakir Hamoudi, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin, Ireland, (Iraq). He graduated from University College of Dublin, Geary Institute, PhD of Public Policy. Dissertation on the role of civil society organisations in providing public services in Iraq" with particular focus on education. He was the Head of Registration Department, Al-Alamain Institute for Higher Studies (Najaf, Iraq): provided organisational support for students' research projects, assisting and processing student applications for admission, and any other activities which the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs might be in need of related to student affairs.

Civil society organisations' accountability patterns in Iraq: Why are some CSOs more responsive to the demands of the poor?

This study examines the relationship between Iraqi CSO attributes and their accountability patterns to understand why some CSOs hold themselves primarily accountable to their service recipients, or downward accountability. CSOs have been positioned within poverty alleviation frameworks as representatives of the poor with more grounded knowledge (Porter, 2003). The reality, however, is that the relationship between CSOs and their recipients within the framework of poverty alleviation is much more complicated (O'Dwyer and Unerman, 2010; Hüg and Jager, 2014; O'Leary, 2017; Chu and Luke, 2020). In this context, CSOs are understood to relate to multiple stakeholders through the process of accountability inevitably prioritising the demands of certain stakeholders over others (Ebrahim, 2016).

A prevalent framework concerning CSO accountability relates to "upwards" and "downwards" forms (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Ebrahim 2003). In this framework, CSOs may be held accountable upwards to patrons usually corresponding to their funders or downwards to clients usually corresponding to their service recipients but also including indirectly affected communities (Ebrahim, 2003). An additional form of CSO accountability can be found in internal accountability to an organisation's own mission and staff (Najam, 1996). In this sense, CSOs may be internally and externally accountable influenced both by "the internal motivations of actors" as well as the "external pressures exerted by principals" (Ebrahim, 2003: p. 199). Likewise, "horizontal accountability" is a form in which CSOs hold each other accountable to one another through "codes of behavior" in networks (Andrews, 2014: p. 101). This form of accountability is also referred to as "informal" (Romzek et al, 2012).

Using a survey of legally registered CSOs involved in the provision of social services, this study determines which stakeholders CSOs prioritise using a novel three-dimensional mapping of their accountability patterns developed by the author. Cluster analysis reveals specific accountability patterns and how those patterns relate to their service mission in relation to poverty alleviation.

Overall, the author finds limited evidence that specific attributes lead to higher levels of accountability to CSOs' service recipients, but that some attributes are associated to lower levels of accountability. These findings offer insights into how CSOs in Iraq are engaging in social service provision and their potential in filling a specific niche in current anti-poverty strategies.



Dr. David Mednicoff is associate professor of Middle Eastern studies and public policy and chair of the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. A lawyer and political scientist, he has a broad background in law, global politics, and Arab societies. His research focuses on connections between legal and political ideas and institutions at the national and transnational levels, particularly as these relate to current policy issues in the Middle East. One of these projects, on the meanings and political implications of the rule of law in Gulf Arab states, was funded by a \$1 million grant from the Qatar National Research Fund.

Mednicoff has been a Fulbright scholar in both Morocco and Qatar and spent the summer of 2014 as a fellow at Bielefeld University's Institute for Advanced Study. He won the College of Social and Behavioral Science's Outstanding Teacher Award and a national teaching prize cosponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and Dickinson College for university teaching related to US and Middle Eastern relations.

Mednicoff has an AB in public policy (Woodrow Wilson School) and Middle Eastern studies from Princeton University and a JD, an MA, and a PhD in political science from Harvard University.

Syrian refugee governance at the intersection of non-state and state actors- Towards lessons for third-sector engagement in contested spaces of the MENA

In some ways, the Syrian refugee crisis embodies hopes for prospects for third-sector involvement in governance. First, the crisis itself has unfolded in zones lacking or in the interstices of strong state institutions, requiring a range of Middle Eastern and external civil society organizations to fill the governance gap. Second, the duration of the crisis, now well over a decade, has necessitated a sustained record of engagement for third-sector organizations. Third, the dearth of effective regional governance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) accentuates further the need for diverse NGO's to step in. And, indeed, a wide range of local and foreign non-government actors has answered the call to provide aid and empowerment for the millions of Syrians in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey who are still unwilling or unable to return to Syria.

Yet, on the whole, the Syrian crisis points to the real limits that third sector groups face in a nationcentric, increasingly authoritarian-leaning global order. Authoritarian governments survive by propagating an image of territorial and population control, focused on claims of effectiveness and unified governance. Moreover, human rights and other anti-authoritarian NGO's in recent years have been unable to hold back declines in civil and political rights in a wide variety of countries globally. For example, Freedom House has noted that 2023 is the 17th straight year of democratic decline.¹ Because global institutions and norms remain state-centric in many ways, the increasing authoritarian skew of world politics yields poor, but not impossible, prospects for alternative governance models to thrive, even when they occur or are needed on the ground.

I proceed in this paper to summarize the governance challenges brought on by Syria's civil war and refugee crisis, consider generally the nature and influence of Third Sector engagements that have emerged to address the crisis, and evaluate the challenges and potential for these arrangements as models of alternative governance to that of centralized nation-states.



Dr. Elie Abouaoun is Visiting Lecturer, Saint Joseph University, Lebanon and Senior Fellow, Religion and Security Council, Italy. He recently served as the director of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) North Africa Programs and of the MENA regional Hub in Tunisia. He was previously the executive director of the Arab Human Rights Fund. Prior to being the acting country director and program manager of the Danish Refugee Council in Iraq, Dr. Abouaoun managed humanitarian, human rights, and development projects in the MENA region.

Dr. Abouaoun serves as a senior trainer and consultant for various international organizations since 1996, including the Council of Europe. He was appointed a member of the Reference Group, established by the Directorate of Education-Council of Europe (2001), to supervise the drafting of COMPASS, a manual for human rights education. He later supervised the manual's adaptation and translation into Arabic to be distributed throughout the MENA region.

Dr. Abouaoun holds a master's in business administration and management and is a doctor of dental surgery.

Armed Non-State Actors in Lebanon and Libya: A Comparative Analysis

The rise of armed non-state actors (NSAs) in Lebanon and Libya in recent decades has posed a major challenge to the stability, security and prosperity of not only these two states themselves but the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. [According to the UN working definition](#), NSAs are “groups that have the potential to employ arms in the use of force to achieve political, ideological, or economic objectives; are not within the formal military structures of States, State-alliances, or intergovernmental organizations; and are not under the control of the State(s) in which they operate”. Often, these groups emerge onto the security landscape successfully during times of fragility, internal conflict and when state institutions are weakened for one reason or another. They are then often legitimized and supported by external forces and contribute to the protraction of conflict. Understanding trends and patterns in the dynamics and conditions that lead first to the creation, then the legitimacy of armed NSAs in these two MENA countries is crucial for policymakers and the international community seeking to promote peace and stability in the region. This paper will explore what led to the rise of NSAs in Lebanon between the 1960s-1990s, and Libya in the wake of the 2011 uprisings, and unpack the conditions that allowed for these groups to thrive. It will then compare the similarities and differences between the two cases of Lebanon and Libya, laying out important historical and contemporary nuances that influenced the fate of each group.



Dr. Zeraoulia Faouzia is a Lecturer at the University of Mohamed Seddik ben Yahia, Jijel, Algeria. Her latest publications are:

National reconciliation in Algeria from a bottom-up approach: analysing victims' narratives

The Memory of the Civil War in Algeria: Lessons from the Past with Reference to the Algerian Hirak

Civil society and peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict societies in North Africa: a case study of Algeria and Libya Associate Professor, Department of Political Sciences

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play an active role in the MENA countries to enhance peacebuilding processes through various activities. This paper examines two cases where grassroots structures demonstrate remarkable efforts in order to cope with authoritarianism and address victimized groups' concerns: Algeria and Libya. Both contexts suffered high levels and violent extremism and large human rights atrocities against civilians. The author tends to discuss the role of CSOs in those contexts to establish peace and discuss past legacies with a focus on local associations.

Rashed Al Jayousi is a doctoral student in Management at the Graduate School of Economics & Management at Tohoku University (Japan). His main research interests are civil society, governance, and donor aid. Al Jayousi earned his BA in Economics and minor in Human rights and International Law from Al-Quds Bard College at Al-Quds University (Palestine), and his MSc in Finance and Economic Development from the Adam Smith Business School at the University of Glasgow, United Kingdom.

Trapped in Governance Dilemmas: Civil Society Organizations in Conflict-Affected Areas-Insights from Palestine

This study presents a nuanced analysis and holistic approach to understanding the governance of civil society organizations (CSOs) in conflict-affected areas, specifically the Israeli occupation of Palestine. In the analysis, internal and external CSO governance processes are examined, including the complex interactions between multiple actors and individuals involved in governance. To emphasize the significance of understanding the power dynamics at local and international levels and the impact of individual and informal actors within CSOs in conflict areas. This study argues that by conceptualizing the interaction of internal and external governance dimensions as well as recognizing the influence of various actors the NGOization of civil society is not limited to external actors and their agendas but also internal actors that engage in network-building and patronage-seeking behaviors to benefit and sustain their operations. This paper has significant implications for CSO governance in conflict areas with key insights based on the findings of the study, mainly emphasizing the need to build stronger networks between CSOs on various levels and the state, the importance of internal governance mechanisms that ensure dynamic leadership, active boards, and inclusive general assemblies.



Dr. Riham Khafagy is Assistant Professor in International Affairs and Social Sciences at Zayed university College of Humanities and Social Sciences in Dubai, UAE. She holds a PhD in political science from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University, Egypt, in 2012 and an MA in political science from the same University in 2006. She holds an MA in Islamic studies with political science concentration from the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences, VA, USA, in 2000, and BS in political science from Cairo University, Egypt, in 1996. Dr. Khafagy's research interests include values and norms of Western Civil

Society; political and academic roles of nongovernmental organizations; gulf philanthropy and foundations; women's contributions in the Arab and Muslim civilization; and the modern history of Arab North Africa.

She published two books, many book chapters and journal articles in Arabic and English and participated in various conferences related to her research interests in Egypt, the United States, Turkey, Kuwait, U.A.E, and Jordan. Due to her intensive research and wide consultation work, Khafagy received an acknowledgement from the Kuwaiti Awqaf Public Foundation in recognition of her contributions to waqf studies in 2009.

Claiming Sovereignty and Cultivating Legitimacy for NSAs in the MENA Region: Theoretical Insights

Building on Ann Stilz's concept of "territorial sovereignty", I present a counterargument claiming sovereignty for the MENA NSAs alongside proposing creative sources for cultivating their legitimacy. I argue that MENA NSAs could meet Stilz's three basic values originally justifying the state-centric system. They firstly enjoy de facto rights of occupancy in certain territories, which were settled by warfare and endorsed by certain regional and international external stakeholders. Achieving basic justice and reflecting collective self-determination could be more challenging but still achievable and promising for developing sources of their local legitimacy. Theoretically, civil society could either replace, interdepend, or reflect a societal balance of power alongside the state and the market in terms of providing public services. Thus, by replacing the state in articulating a social order, achieving security and providing public services, while promoting basic justice and reflecting collective self determination, MENA NSAs could gradually gain appropriate sources of legitimacy.

Nawras Mukhtar, MA in Human Rights from Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, lawyer and a co-founder of No to Children's Execution Campaign

Versatile Co-existence of the Sudanese Civil Society: The Role of the Sudanese Civil Society in Re-building Sovereignty during Post-Conflict Era

This paper seeks to examine the extent to which Sudanese civil society has the capacity to influence the re-building of sovereignty. The paper will illustrate the main stages of the evolutionary role of re-building sovereignty. These stages of evolution will be studied through the lens of state formation and failure theories. The theoretical contribution of the paper stems from providing an explanation for the relationship between state-building and peacemaking and the impact of this relationship on civil society's role of re-building sovereignty during the post-conflict era in the unique Sudanese political context. The paper will begin with studying the role of Sudanese civil society in the statebuilding process. Then, the paper will shed light on the service-providing role played by Sudanese civil society organizations during Al-Basheer's regime challenging the constraints imposed on them by the existing political regime. Moreover, the paper will also highlight the process of the transformation of civil society roles during the 2019 revolution. This is in addition to drawing attention to the Sudanese civil society's role in the transitional council and the consequences of the council's dissolution and attempts to monopolize power by the existing political regime. Ultimately, the paper will discuss the role of the Sudanese civil society after the latest political changes in September 2022.

Thank you

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