



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات  
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies



# From Peoples' Revolutions to an Arena of Regional and International Conflict: The Rise of ISIL and Renewed American Involvement

October 18-19, 2014

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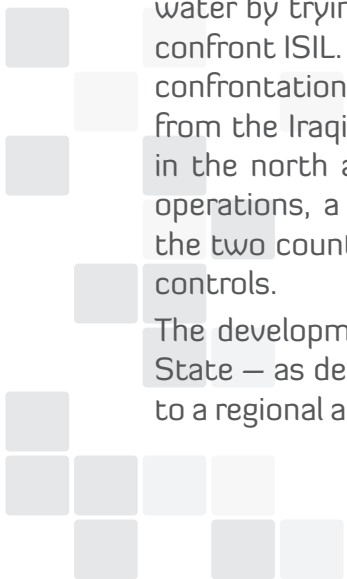


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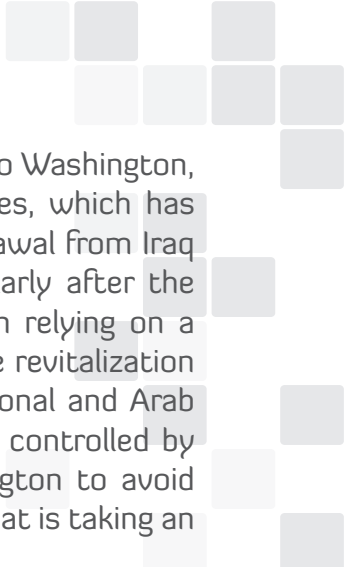
# From Peoples' Revolutions to an Arena of Regional and International Conflict: The Rise of ISIL and Renewed American Involvement

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The rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its conquest of large swathes of territories in Iraq and Syria sent shockwaves throughout the region and beyond, forcing the local, regional, and international actors into reconsidering their political calculations. In Iraq, the fall of Mosul to the Islamic State contributed to the downfall of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, in large part a result of the widely held belief that the exclusivist policies that came to characterize his eight year tenure led to Iraq's Sunnis allying with the Islamic State. In Syria, the regime of President Bashar al-Assad has tried to keep its head above water by trying to jump aboard the international coalition created by the United States to confront ISIL. Meanwhile, the armed Syrian opposition groups found themselves in a critical confrontation with the Islamic State following its seizure of large quantities of weapons from the Iraqi army stockpiles. ISIL was henceforth able to take control of extensive areas in the north and east of Syria. Iraq and Syria have therefore become a single theater of operations, a situation reinforced by ISIL's declaration that the political borders between the two countries no longer exist, and that a Caliphate has been established in the areas it controls.

The developments on the ground, and the failure of local actors in combating the Islamic State – as demonstrated by the collapse of the Iraqi Army in Nineveh and Anbar – have led to a regional and international consensus on the need to contain and eventually eliminate the



Islamic State. Most regional players, including those that claim to be hostile to Washington, have expressed their desire to join the US-led coalition. The United States, which has shunned direct intervention in the crises of the Arab Levant since its withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, found itself – yet again – obliged to intervene militarily, particularly after the gruesome beheadings of two American journalists. In doing so, rather than relying on a powerful regional power such as Iran, whose policies have contributed to the revitalization of extremist groups, the Americans opted for the formation of an international and Arab coalition; one which would be acceptable to the communities in the region controlled by the Islamic State (i.e. the Sunnis). This approach has also allowed Washington to avoid appearing as if it was backing one side against another, in a regional conflict that is taking an increasingly sectarian form.

In view of the above, and the pressing developments resulting from the rise of the Islamic State, the ACRPS is holding an academic conference to investigate these developments and to consider the implications arising from the US return to military intervention in the region. The conference will also discuss Arab, regional, and international stances on the crisis, analyze their trends, and predict the possible alliances that could be formed between the parties, as well as reflect on the effect of all this upon the regional and international order.



# Time Table

# Day One: October 18, 2014

**Opening Address by Azmi Bishara (10:00-10:30 am)**

**Session One: The Domestic Political Circumstances of the Countries in the Fertile Crescent (10:30-12:00 am)**

**Chair: Elnour Hamad**

Faleh A. Jabar: The Political Crisis in the Wake of the Iraqi Elections

Burhan Ghalioun: The Syrian Scene in Light of the American Intervention

Marwan Kaban: The Fertile Crescent: Domestic Conflict or Regional and International Competition

Coffee Break (12:00 am – 12:30 pm)

**Session Two: The Collapse of the Nation-State and the Rise of Non-State Actors in the Fertile Crescent (12:30 pm - 2:00 pm)**

**Chair: Mohammad Almasri**

Haidar Said: The Rising Role of Shi'ite Groups in Light of the State's Retreat

Mohammed Abu Rumman: The Islamic State as a Regional Actor

Othman Al Mukhtar: The Rise of ISIL after the Anbar Protests

Lunch Break (2:00-4:00 pm)

**Session Three: Regional Actors and Positions Towards Developments in the Fertile Crescent (4:00-5:30 pm)**

**Chair: Suhaim Al-Thani**

Fatima Al Smadi: The Arab Region as a Contested Space: Iran and the Utilization of Chaos

Bülent Aras: Post-Arab Spring Geopolitics, Islamic State and Turkey

Abdulkhaki Khasro: Iraqi Kurdistan's Role in the International Coalition Against the Islamic State

# Day Two: October 19, 2014

## Session Four: The Policies of Arab Gulf States towards Political Changes in the Fertile Crescent (9:30-11:00 am)

Chair: Zoheir Hamedi

Mohammed Al Misfer: An Analysis of the Positions of the Arab Gulf States  
towards the International Coalition against the Islamic State

Abdullah Baabood: The Repercussions of Intra-Gulf Conflicts on Regional Security,  
in Light of the Waning of the Arab Revolutions and the Rise of the Islamic State

Alain Gresh: Saudi Policy, Al Qaeda and the Islamic State

Coffee Break (11:00-11:30 am)

## Session Five: Repercussions of Renewed US Intervention in the Arab Region (11:30 am – 1:00 pm)

Chair: Abdou Moussa

Abdulwahab Al Qassab: Risks and Transformations in the Arab Geostrategic Environment

Andreas Krieg: Cooperation against ISIL: A Mere Façade of Negative Integration

James Denselow: ISIL and the Future of International Borders in the Middle East

Lunch Break (1:00-3:00 pm)

**Roundtable Discussion (3:00-5:00 pm)**





# Participants

Participant	Biography
Abdou Moussa	<p>is a researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, focusing on political development, democratic reform and preserving human rights in Egypt and the Arab Region. Over the last two decades he has been a consultant for international assistance organizations, including UNDP and the Canadian International Development Agency, assisting in projects involving public policy reform and sustainable development. Moussa obtained his MA in Political Science from Cairo University in 2005, where his thesis focused on the impact of European identity politics on Euro-Mediterranean relations.</p>
Abdulahakim Khasro	<p>is an Iraqi researcher and the Head of the Political Science Department at Salahaddin University in Erbil, Iraq. He is also a researcher at the SARENJ Center for Research and Opinion Polling, and at the Kurdish Institute for Strategic Studies. Khasro earned a PhD in Political Science from the Faculty of Law and Politics from Salahaddin University in 2011.</p>
Abdullah Baabood	<p>is the Director of the Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University's College of Arts and Sciences. Baabood completed MA degrees in Business Administration and International Relations in the UK, before also completing a PhD in Political Economy in Britain.</p>
Abdulwahab Al Qassab	<p>is an Associate Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Al Qassab was a member of the Iraqi Armed Forces from 1966 to 1991, and retired with the rank of Rear Admiral. He later worked as a Researcher at Baghdad University's Al-Mustansiriya Center for Arab and International Studies. He earned his PhD in Strategic Studies from Campbell University in North Carolina, USA. He has authored and translated a number of books in his fields of interest.</p>
Alain Gresh	<p>is a journalist and an international rights activist. He is a member of the editorial board of France's Maghreb-Levant newspaper, and Secretary General of the French Association of Journalists of the Maghreb. Since 2005, Gresh has been the Editor of Le Monde Diplomatique. His work on the Middle East has been translated into numerous languages, including an Arabic translation of Defining Palestine which was published by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.</p>

Participant	Biography
Andreas Krieg	is an Assistant Professor at the Defence Studies Department of King's College London currently working with the Qatari Armed Forces in Doha. His research focuses on changing security paradigms in the Middle East with a particular focus on transnationally operating non-state actors as security providers.
Bülent Aras	is a Global Fellow at the Wilson Center, Senior Scholar and Coordinator of the Conflict Resolution and mediation stream at Istanbul Policy Center and Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Sabancı University. He previously worked as Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Center for Strategic Research (SAM). Aras received his PhD in Political Science and International relations from Boğaziçi University.
Burhan Ghalioun	is the Director of the Centre d'Etudes sur l'Orient Contemporain (CEOC, "the Center for the Study of the Contemporary East"). He is professor of Political Sociology at the Université de Paris III (Sorbonne Nouvelle). In March of 2011, Ghalioun became the first President of the Syrian National Council, the body which brought together all factions of the Syrian opposition under one umbrella. He is widely published in both Arabic and French, and holds two PhD's from France's Sorbonne University: one in Humanities and a second in Political Sociology.
Elnour Hamad	is a Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, where he is the Academic Supervisor of the Center's website and is in charge of the Arabic Editing Department. In addition, Hamad is the Managing Editor of Siyasat Arabia. He taught at a number of universities in the United States before moving to Qatar where he was the Head of the Department of Art Education at Qatar University. He holds a PhD in Art Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and an MA from the University of Miami. His first degree was from Sudan's College of Fine and Applied Arts.

Participant	Biography
Faleh A. Jabar	holds a PhD in political sociology and is a Visiting Fellow at the School of Politics and Sociology at Birkbeck College, London University. He has written extensively on Iraq and the Middle East. His research interests cover various fields such as the sociology of religion; sociology of nation building and state formation; tribes and modern socio-economic formation; and cultural discourses in Iraq and the wider Middle East. Jabar earned his PhD from the University of London in 1996.
Fatima Al Smadi	is a Jordanian researcher specializing in media affairs. She earned a Master's degree in Gender and Feminist Studies and completed a doctorate from Al 'allama al Tabataba'i University in Tehran Iran in 2010, with a thesis that focused on the feminist content of Iranian films. Al Smadi works as a correspondent for a number of print newspapers and has published widely on issues of women's participation in Islamist political movements and civil society institutions.
Haidar Said	is an Iraqi researcher who is also a consultant for the Iraqi Center for Strategic Studies in Amman, Jordan. His book on the politics of symbols was published in 2009. He is widely published on Iraqi affairs. Said earned a PhD in Linguistics from Iraq's Al Mustansariyah University in 2001.
James Denselow	is a writer on Middle East politics and security issues and a Director of the 'New Diplomacy Platform' (NDP). He has conducted research for foreign policy think tank Chatham House and advised the British Government on its policy towards the Arab Spring. He is a Research Associate at the 'Foreign Policy Centre' (FPC) and a Fellow at the 'Centre for Syrian Studies'.
Marwan Kabalan	is an Associate Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He was previously Dean of the Faculty of International Relations and Diplomacy at Syria's al-Kalamoon University. Kabalan is the author of several books and essays in politics and international relations. He earned his PhD at Manchester University, UK.
Mohammad Almasri	is a Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, where he is also the Coordinator of the Arab Opinion Index Project. Almasri holds an MA and a PhD from Durham University in the UK.

Participant	Biography
Mohammed Abu Rumman	is a Researcher at Jordan University's Center for Strategic Studies, where his interests are focused on Islamist political thought and Islamist movements. He also contributes to Jordan's daily Al Ghad newspaper, as well as a number of other periodicals across the Arab world. Other works of his have also been published in book form. Abu Ruman earned his PhD in Political Science from Cairo University in 2009.
Mohammed Al Misfer	is a Professor of Political Science at Qatar University. He is a regular columnist for both Doha-based and pan-Arab newspapers, and writes widely on Arab nationalism and related issues. Al Misfer earned his PhD while studying in New York.
Othman Al Mukhtar	is the Baghdad Bureau Chief for Al Araby Al Jadeed and a member of the Baghdad Center for Democracy Studies. Between 2003 and 2014, Al Mukhtar was the Washington Post Senior Correspondent in Iraq. He is a Visiting Lecturer at the College of Journalism in Iraq's Al Anbar University, and a trainer at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting in Baghdad. Al Mukhtar has authored a number of field studies chronicling the impacts of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, and was the recipient of the Arab Journalism medal from the United Nations in 2009. Al Mukhtar holds an MA in War Journalism from Baghdad University.
Suhaim Al-Thani	is a Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, Qatar. A number of his research papers have been published in peer-reviewed journals since he gained his MA from Royal Holloway, University of London.
Zoheir Hamed	is a Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He holds a professional energy background and has worked for the Algerian National Oil Company, SONATRACH, in the Planning, Strategy and Economics Department and with the British Embassy in Algiers as an energy and climate change consultant. He graduated with a BA in Political Science and Economics from the American University in Cairo and an MA in International Relations from Nantes University. He has recently obtained a PhD in Economics at Durham University in the UK.







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