



CENTER FOR CONFLICT AND  
HUMANITARIAN STUDIES



DOHA INSTITUTE  
FOR GRADUATE STUDIES



JIMMY AND ROSALYNN  
CARTER SCHOOL FOR PEACE  
AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
George Mason University

**Booklet**

# Conflict and Humanitarian Studies Conference

22-23 January 2025



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## **Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS)**

The Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS) is a research center within the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Established in 2016 and based in Doha, Qatar, the Center's mission is to enhance humanitarian response, resolve conflict, and build peace. CHS engages in multi-track dialogue, capacity building, policy development, and in-depth research.

## **Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action Program (CMHA) - Doha Institute for Graduate Studies**

Based at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action (CMHA) is a post-graduate program established in 2016. It offers students the opportunity to engage with a wide range of subjects including: conflict management and resolution, conflict transformation, humanitarianism, negotiation, mediation, state-building and reconstruction theories and practices from both regional and international perspectives.

## **Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA)**

Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) is an international association of universities that aims to enhance professionalism in humanitarian action through education and training, research and publications and projects. As a network of academic institutions, NOHA brings a university ethos to the existing humanitarian principles that govern humanitarian action.

## **The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution – George Mason University**

The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution is a community of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and partners with a fundamental commitment to building peace. Through the development of cutting-edge theory, research, education, and practical work. It seeks to identify and address the underlying causes of conflict and provide tools for ethical and just peacebuilding on the local, national, and global stages.

# About the Conference

## About the Conference

In its first edition, the 2025 Conflict and Humanitarian Studies Conference is an open platform for the discussion of research papers in the field of conflict and humanitarian studies. The conference aims to provide a convening space for academic and critical discussions around these topics, highlighting the theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, and ethical aspects. It aims to foster dialogue that addresses a wide range of geographical contexts, with a special focus on, but not limited to, the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region.

## Aims and Themes

This conference comes in response to the urgent need to address the radically and rapidly changing dynamics of conflict and humanitarian crises, both in the Arab world and globally.

Geopolitical shifts, technological innovations, and environmental challenges in recent years have led to rapid and fundamental changes in the nature of these conflicts and crises. The complexity and scale of these challenges demand a multidisciplinary and comprehensive dialogue that enhances the exchange of knowledge and experiences and stimulates innovative ideas among various stakeholders.

Within this context, the conference seeks to provide a platform for interdisciplinary discussions and contributions, bringing together academics, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from different regions. It aims to break down barriers between different disciplines and promote a comprehensive and integrated understanding of ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises. This dialogue is expected to contribute to crafting more efficient and appropriate responses to these diverse contexts, helping address the complex challenges faced by conflict-affected communities.

The Conflict and Humanitarian Studies Conference also focuses on the necessity of localizing research on conflict and humanitarian action, ensuring the integration of a wide range of local voices, different perspectives, and indigenous knowledge into mainstream academic and policy discourse. Additionally, it seeks to encourage the participation of emerging researchers from conflict-affected environments, empowering a new generation of specialists in conflict and humanitarian studies. This inaugural conference on conflict and humanitarian studies aspires to be a starting point for innovative, multidisciplinary, and inclusive discussions that pave the way toward more effective policies and practices that align with local contexts.

The proposed research papers will discuss the following four themes:

**Theme 1: Mediation and Peace-making**

This theme will address issues related to conflict mediation and peace-making. This includes but is not limited to the challenges of Track II peace-making, the role of Gulf states in conflict mediation, and the evaluation of peace agreements. This theme particularly seeks to bring together established and novel ideas around Gulf mediation and peace-making to further enrich the discipline.

**Theme 2: Conflict and Recovery in and Beyond the Arab States**

This theme will cover any issues related to conflict, post-conflict recovery, and peacebuilding in and beyond the Arab states. Particular emphasis will be placed on the issue of post-genocide recovery in the Gaza Strip and the wider region following the devastating rise in conflict in 2023 and 2024.

**Theme 3: Current Challenges and Future of Humanitarian Action**

This theme will address the current challenges to, and future of, humanitarian action. It does so in the light of the persistent impediments to humanitarian access and extreme levels of food insecurity, displacement, and violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights with impunity in Afghanistan, the Gaza Strip, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, among other contexts. This theme may cover panels on the role of humanitarian diplomacy, different understandings and non-Western variants of humanitarian action, the politicization and depoliticization of humanitarian action, the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, and the rethinking of the global humanitarian system in a context of shrinking funding and humanitarian space.

**Theme 4: Localizing Conflict and Humanitarian Research**

This theme emphasizes the need for integrating local experiences, perspectives, and knowledge in conflict and humanitarian studies. By exploring methodological and ethical considerations, capacity-building, and the role of local and international partnerships, this theme aims to shift the balance of power and decision-making towards more contextually sensitive and locally driven approaches.

# Timetable

## Day One: Wednesday 22 January 2025

7:45-8:30	Registration
8:30 - 8:40	<p><b>Welcome Remarks</b></p> <p><b>Professor Amal Ghazal</b>, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities - Doha Institute for Graduate Studies</p>
8:40 - 9:30	<p><b>Opening Session: Gaza Today: Reflecting on Contemporary Humanitarian and Conflict-related Challenges</b></p> <p><b>Professor James Sater</b>, Head of Department of International Relations at University of Malta – Director of the NOHA (Network of Humanitarian Action)</p> <p><b>Dr. Ghassan Elkahlout</b>, Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS)</p> <p><b>Dr. Tariq Da'na</b>, Head of Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies</p>
9:30- 11:15	<p><b>Session One: The Frontiers of Humanitarian Diplomacy in Crisis Contexts</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Dr. Tariq Da'na</b></p> <p><b>Pietro Stefanini</b>: The Humanitarianisation of Genocide in Gaza</p> <p><b>Aya Badr</b>: Geopolitical Competition and Politicized Humanitarianism: Revisiting Humanitarian Diplomacy Approaches and their impacts on Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus</p> <p><b>Kawser Ahmed</b>: Let's Talk About Peace: Rethinking Humanitarian Diplomacy for Peace Intervention in Rohingya Crisis</p> <p><b>Mohammed Moqeibel</b>: Humanitarian Diplomacy in Yemen: The Role of Community Groups in Humanitarian Action</p>
11:15-11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 – 13:00	<p><b>Session Two: Mediation and Peacemaking in the Arab Region</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Dr. Mai Abu Moghli</b></p> <p><b>Abdelmageed Yahya and Munzoul Assal</b>: Mediation and Peacemaking Dilemmas in the Sudan Crisis</p> <p><b>Alshafii Abtidon</b>: The Somali Crisis: Background of the Conflict, Prospects for Resolution, and Scenarios for Dialogue</p> <p><b>Mohammed Alsousi and Omar Abdin</b>: An Analytical Study of Peace Initiatives in Libya: Challenges, Successes, and the Way Forward</p>

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:45	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session Three: Global Injustice and the Failure of the Humanitarian System</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Dr. Ibrahim Khatib</b></p> <p><b>Brahim Bendaikha and Habiba Zellagui:</b> Human Rights in Times of Conflict in the Balance of Western Values: Between Universal Principles and Double Standards. A Comparative Study of the War in Ukraine and Gaza</p> <p><b>Azzouzi Abdelmalek:</b> The Role of International Justice in Supporting the Future of Humanitarian Aid in Perpetual Conflict Zones: The Case of Gaza</p> <p><b>Salah Eddine Boudjellal:</b> The Involvement of Private Military and Security Companies in Humanitarian Operations: Can the Specificities of These Companies Be Reconciled with the Principles and Effectiveness of Humanitarian Work? *</p> <p><b>Ahmed Elsayed:</b> Terrorism Framing of the War on Gaza: A Colonial Script for Extermination, Dehumanisation, and Epistemic Deformation? *</p>
15:45 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:45	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session Four: Challenges of Post-Genocide Recovery in the Gaza Strip</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chair: Dr. Sultan Al-Khulaifi</b></p> <p><b>Pascale Khodeir:</b> Post-Genocide Recovery and Peacebuilding in Gaza: Integrating Legal Mechanisms and the HDP Nexus for Long-Term Stability</p> <p><b>Huthaifa Albustanji:</b> Rethinking of the Global Humanitarian System After 7th of October 2023</p> <p><b>Erin McCandless:</b> A Phoenix Rising? Gaza and a Growing Movement to Realize a Principle-based International Order *</p> <p><b>Mohammad Seyam:</b> The Impact of Israel War in Gaza Post Al-Aqsa Flood: Evaluating the Prospects and Risks of Palestinian National Reconciliation</p>

\* Participating Online

## Day Two: Thursday 23 January 2025

9:00 – 10:30	<p><b>Session Five: Are the Humanitarian Principles Fit for Purpose?</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Dr. Lara Khattab</b></p> <p><b>Ümit Seven:</b> Shades of Humanity: Sovereignty and Humanitarian Principles in the Syrian Civil War *</p> <p><b>Zainab Sabra:</b> Suspending Humanity from Humanitarian Crisis: A Case of Discursive Injustice</p> <p><b>Zainab Kettawi:</b> From the Frontlines to Peacebuilding: The Role of International Humanitarian Law and Technological Innovations in Responding to the Syrian Crisis</p>
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:30	<p><b>Session Six: Plural Actors in Conflict Mediation: the Cases of Qatar and China</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Dr. Ibrahim Fraihat</b></p> <p><b>Khalid Al-Khulaifi:</b> Small State Diplomacy in Action: Lessons from Qatar’s Mediation Successes and Challenges</p> <p><b>Oussama Badad:</b> Framing the US-Taliban Qatari Mediation: A Content Analysis of The New York Times, Al Jazeera English, and Deutsche Welle Media Coverage</p> <p><b>Hamid Belrhit and Tawfiq Abdessadek:</b> Determinants and Dimensions of China’s Mediation for Conflict Resolution and Tension Management in the Middle East</p> <p><b>Aamna Khan:</b> China’s Emerging Role in Gulf Conflict Mediation: Strategic Interests, Diplomatic Approaches, and Long-Term Implications</p>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break

13:30 - 15:00	<p align="center"><b>Session Seven: Prospects for Post-Conflict Recovery and Peacebuilding in the Arab World</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Chair: Dr. Ahmed Hussein</b></p> <p><b>Saleh Almogrbe:</b> Post-Conflict Housing Reconstruction in Libya: A Case Study of Benghazi City Post-Conflict 2014-2017</p> <p><b>Kahlan Al-Shugaa:</b> Reconstruction in Yemen: A Developmental Approach to Challenges and Opportunities</p> <p><b>Sohaib Shamsan:</b> Consolidating Peace Building in Yemen: Opportunities and Challenges (2014-2023)</p>
15:00-15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 – 17:00	<p align="center"><b>Session Eight: Impact of Conflict on Humanitarian Responses</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Chair: Dr. Tamer Qarmout</b></p> <p><b>Faryaneh Fadaeiresketi:</b> Uncertainty and Collective Caution: Humanitarian Security Strategies in Afghanistan Post-Taliban Takeover</p> <p><b>Malaz Eltayeb:</b> Barriers to Effectiveness: The Consequences of the Ongoing War in Sudan on Humanitarian Action</p> <p><b>Asem Alnabih and Nour-Alhuda Alnabeh:</b> The Use of Starvation as a Weapon in the Israeli War on Gaza: A Mixed-Methods Study</p> <p><b>Manara Eltayeb and Yusra Abdullah:</b> Challenges of Voluntary Work in Sudan Facing the Consequences of Conflict: Emergency Rooms as a Case Study *</p>
17:00-17:15	Closing Remarks

\* Participating Online

# Speakers



### **Professor James Sater**

James Sater is Professor at the Department of International Relations at the University of Malta, where he is Head of Department and Director of the NOHA (Network of Humanitarian Action) MA in International Humanitarian Action. He previously held full time positions in the International Studies Department at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. He co-edited *The Routledge Handbook of Citizenship in the Middle East and North Africa* (Routledge, 2021). His research interests include sectarianism, citizenship, electoral politics, gender, marginalization and migration with a focus on North Africa and Arab Gulf monarchies.

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### **Dr. Ghassan Elkahlout**

Dr. Ghassan Elkahlout is the Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies and an Associate Professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. With nearly three decades of experience, his expertise covers humanitarian response, post-war recovery, and capacity building. He earned his PhD in Post-War Reconstruction and Development Studies from the University of York, UK. Throughout his career, Dr. Elkahlout has worked with organizations such as the United Nations, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and Islamic Relief Worldwide. His field experience spans conflict zones and disaster-affected areas, including Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. In addition, his scholarly work has made significant contributions to the fields of conflict management and recovery, offering practical insights that bridge theory and humanitarian practice.

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### **Dr. Tariq Da'na**

Dr. Tariq Da'na is an Associate Professor and Head of Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. His area of specialization includes an interdisciplinary approach encompassing critical political economy, colonial and settler-colonial studies, national liberation movements, foreign intervention, and state-building, as well as economic development, with a particular focus on Palestine and the Arab world. His work has been published in various peer-reviewed academic journals, and he has contributed to edited books and refereed chapters. Additionally, he has written numerous opinion articles for a range of Arabic and international newspapers, magazines, and websites.

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**Participants**

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**Abstracts**



**Aamna Khan**

A researcher with a PhD in International Relations from Jilin University, China. Specializing in terrorism, peace, and conflict studies, Dr. Khan has extensively researched the complexities of security dynamics, peace and conflict studies and counter-terrorism strategies. Dr. Khan has a MPhil in Peace and Conflict Studies and a bachelor's degree in politics and international Relations. Throughout her academic career, Dr. Khan has authored various publications on terrorism, foreign policy, and international affairs contributing valuable insights into the theoretical and practical aspects of counterterrorism. She has also been involved with various youth and peace-building organizations globally.

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## **China's Emerging Role in Gulf Conflict Mediation: Strategic Interests, Diplomatic Approaches, and Long-Term Implications**

This paper will examine the growing role of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and China in mediating regional conflicts, focusing on the policy implications for peace and stability in the Middle East. With China's expanding influence, particularly through economic and diplomatic engagements with the GCC, its approach to conflict mediation in the region has garnered attention. In analyzing the cases of the Iran-Saudi rivalry and the Yemen conflict, this paper highlights the contrasting mediation approaches of China and the GCC. The Iran-Saudi rapprochement, facilitated by China, marks a significant shift in regional dynamics, showcasing China's ability to bridge divides through economic diplomacy and neutral positioning. In Yemen, the GCC's direct involvement in mediation efforts, coupled with China's more strategic economic engagements, reveals the complexities of conflict resolution in a war-torn state. Through these case studies, the paper delves into the broader policy implications for energy security, regional stability, and future geopolitical alignments, emphasizing how the GCC and China can collaborate to foster more effective mediation strategies.



## **Alshafii Abtidon**

A writer and researcher, and a journalist at Al-Araby TV, Abtidon holds a master's degree in journalism from the École Supérieure de Journalisme et de Communication in Paris (2023) and a bachelor's degree in political science and journalism from Mogadishu University (2012). He is the author of the book "Federalism in Somalia: Ambitions of Division and Challenges to Unity", published by Al Jazeera Center for Studies in 2018. He has also published several research papers and academic articles through various Arab and international think tanks and platforms.

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### **The Somali Crisis: Background of the Conflict, Prospects for Resolution, and Scenarios for Dialogue**

This article seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the roots of the civil conflict in Somalia, which has persisted for nearly three decades. It examines the trajectory towards a peaceful settlement among Somali factions and assesses the current situation in the country, particularly considering the anticipated withdrawal of the African Union Mission by late 2024. The paper explores various scenarios for achieving comprehensive reconciliation to resolve disputes between the central government and the federal member states. It delves into the internal and regional factors influencing the conflict, maps the stakeholders and adversaries, analyzes the agendas of the conflicting parties, dissects the dynamics of convergence and divergence among these actors, and outlines potential future scenarios for the peaceful resolution of the civil conflict in Somalia.



## Ahmed Elsayed

Ahmed Elsayed is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Intercultural and International Studies (InIIS), University of Bremen. He has held research roles at leading institutions, think tanks, and human rights organizations in Cairo, Berlin, and Washington, D.C. His research focuses on legitimacy, power, armed groups, democratization, human rights, extremism, and conflict transformation in the Middle East. Ahmed Elsayed holds a Dr. rer. pol. in Political Science (awarded with “very good”) from the University of Bremen, a master’s in public policy from the Hertie School in Germany, and a Master’s in Politics from the University of East Anglia, UK.

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### **Terrorism Framing of the War on Gaza: A Colonial Script for Extermination, Dehumanisation, and Epistemic Deformation?**

Mainstream terrorism framing originated and, for the most part, persists as an epistemic distortion. By design, in contexts of self-determination and resistance to oppression, it omits the role of grievances, context, and history in understanding and resolving conflicts. This paper traces the anti-Palestinian origins of contemporary terrorism discourse and highlights its instrumental function in suppressing the human and national rights of Palestinians. It illustrates how the latest iteration of the Israel-Palestine conflict serves as a microcosm, vividly reflecting the deeply entrenched colonial and orientalist postures of leading Global North powers towards Palestine.

What stands out in the recent escalation is not the mental models, discursive strategies, or militaristic policies of some powerful states, but the extreme intensification of these structures of domination, as evidenced by the genocide unfolding in the besieged strip. Through an examination of official and media accounts in these countries, this article exposes the terrorism framing as an imperialist and racist tool to legitimise extermination, perpetuate occupation, silence debate, and distort knowledge. Ultimately, if addressing the root causes of the conflict is key to achieving lasting peace in the Holy Land, the terrorism discourse—which often obscures these causes—must be either radically reformed to incorporate Global South perspectives or abandoned altogether.



**Aya Badr**

Aya Badr is a senior political researcher. She graduated from Cairo University in 2017 with a degree in political science and statistics. She holds an MSc in Critical Security Studies (2022) and is a PhD candidate. Her research focuses on political science, armed conflict, security, and peace studies using advanced research methodologies. She has participated in various international conferences, published in peer-reviewed journals, and completed certifications from institutions such as GCSP, OSCE, and USIP. A certified peacebuilding and conflict resolution trainer, she regularly collaborates with CCCPA and the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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## **Geopolitical Competition and Politicized Humanitarianism: Revisiting Humanitarian Diplomacy Approaches and their Impacts on Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus**

This study critically explores the dynamics of geopolitical competition and the politicization of humanitarian aid, emphasizing their profound implications on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus in fragile and conflict-affected regions. Against the backdrop of escalating armed conflicts and a declining multilateral system, the paper interrogates the contrasting humanitarian approaches of Western actors and the rising Global South, with specific attention to Sudan, Syria, and Gaza. It highlights how humanitarian diplomacy has become a contested domain, functioning both as a soft power tool and a mechanism for influencing global and regional political agendas.

The analysis reveals the growing alignment of humanitarian aid with political and security objectives, resulting in a shift from needs-based assistance to interest-based interventions. Case studies demonstrate how such politicization manifests through the weaponization of aid by state and non-state actors, exacerbating vulnerabilities for affected populations. The paper underscores both the opportunities for a more inclusive humanitarian landscape and the risks posed by continued aid securitization. Concluding with evidence-based policy recommendations, it advocates for reforms to safeguard humanitarian neutrality, enhance multilateral cooperation, and strengthen accountability mechanisms, thus ensuring that humanitarian interventions prioritize peacebuilding and development over political manipulation.



## **Azzouzi Abdelmalek**

A professor of International Humanitarian Law at the University of Jijel, Algeria. He directs the Laboratory of Legal and Political Transformations and serves on the Scientific Council and Faculty Board of Law. He leads research on International Humanitarian Law challenges and constitutional justice and human rights. Dr. Azzouzi is also a reviewer and assistant editor for various academic journals, contributing significantly to advancing research and education in international law.

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### **The Role of International Justice in Supporting the Future of Humanitarian Aid in Perpetual Conflict Zones: The Case of Gaza**

Since 2005, the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip and the five wars fought by Palestinians against the occupation, the latest being the 2023 aggression, serve as vivid examples of the international community's utter failure in ensuring the provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza. This failure is primarily due to the closure of crossings and the obstruction of humanitarian operations in the Gaza Strip by the occupying forces. These actions have found support and sympathy from several states and influential international figures who provide the occupiers with unlimited material, political, and moral resources.

According to international law, preventing humanitarian aid is considered a form of imposing harsh living conditions on civilians, leading to their partial or total destruction. This is regarded by law as a full-fledged act of genocide. Moreover, humanitarian aid is a right for afflicted peoples and an obligation on the international community. However, these legal rules and principles are currently paralyzed due to the intransigence of the occupation and the support of its allies.

In response to this, the traditional question arises regarding the role that the international justice system can play in ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians: can it prevent the delivery of weapons and funds provided to the Israeli occupation, which are directly used in the genocide of Palestinians?

The answer to this issue lies in presenting a legal approach that outlines what international justice can do to stop the genocide of the Palestinian people and secure full rights for the Palestinian state and its people, including access to humanitarian aid, lifting the blockade, and halting this systematic genocide.



**Erin McCandless**

Academic and policy advisor with over 30 years of experience in conflict- and crisis-affected areas in 20+ countries. Her work focuses on peacemaking, peacebuilding, and social change. She holds a PhD and is affiliated with the University of Witwatersrand, the Institute for Development and Sustainability, and the Global Institute for Strategic Research. She has worked extensively with the UN and authored over 100 publications.

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## **A Phoenix Rising? Gaza and a Growing Movement to Realize a Principle-based International Order**

The atrocities in Gaza – which expansive evidence suggest amount to a genocide – is dramatically fuelling a movement for a more principled and just rules-based international order. A rising coalition of actors including states, regional and interest-based blocs of states, and a wide swath of civil society and individuals transnationally are demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire and just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – one that considers the context of Israel’s decades-long, Western state supported, occupation of Palestinian territories and the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination. In the process they are contesting the legitimacy of the existing rules-based order built on colonial foundations and deep power asymmetries at odds with the stated principles of the rules and norms of this very order. The piece examines mounting critiques of hypocrisy and double standards in international affairs, and how the vast, interconnected array of initiatives, providing pressure from above (through political and legal mechanisms) and below (through legal actions, protests and nonviolence strategies), are cohering around perceived needed action on Gaza and wider system change. Finally, it reflects on the implications for the evolution of a more principled- and just-rules based order, in conversation with key scholars and analysts on this topic.



## Faryaneh Fadaeiresketi

Faryaneh Fadaeiresketi is a humanitarian professional with extensive experience in conflict- and disaster-affected contexts in the Middle East and Africa. She specializes in emergency response and access negotiations, particularly with armed groups. Faryaneh is committed to coordinating operations with both state and non-state actors, ensuring genuine engagement with affected communities. Her expertise lies in building trust and facilitating collaboration across diverse stakeholders to uphold humanitarian values in challenging contexts. Faryaneh holds a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Leiden University and is currently pursuing a Master's in Humanitarian Action at SOAS University of London.

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## Uncertainty and Collective Caution: Humanitarian Security Strategies in Afghanistan Post-Taliban Takeover

Afghanistan has long been a challenging environment for humanitarian operations, with aid workers frequently targeted by violence. Following the Taliban's takeover in 2021, attacks on humanitarian personnel dropped significantly, reflecting the cessation of widespread armed insurgency. Despite this reduction, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) continue to experience feelings of insecurity stemming from uncertainty about governance, restrictive decrees, limited reliable information, and the presence of other armed groups.

This article examines how feelings of uncertainty and perceptions of (in)security among INGOs shape operational decisions in Afghanistan. Based on interviews with senior staff and long-term field experience, it explores the persistence of entrenched security measures—such as bunkerized compounds—despite shifts in the threat landscape. It highlights how uncertainty has replaced violence as the dominant form of insecurity, perpetuating institutional inertia and fostering standardization in security practices. The findings offer insights into the enduring sense of uncertainty in a protracted conflict context, as well as entrenchment of security measures and the potential for adaptive change in humanitarian security approaches.



## Huthaifa Albustanji

Huthaifa Albustanji is a student at the University of Miskolc in Hungary, specializing in cybersecurity and cybercrime laws in Jordan and the European Union. He holds an L.L.M. in Intellectual Property Law, with a focused dissertation on domain name protection in Jordan. Since 2019, Huthaifa has also served as a judge with the Judicial Council of Jordan, bringing a wealth of practical legal experience to his research. He has many publications in legal reviews within the Arab and EU regions and plans to return to the judiciary after completing his PhD in 2027.

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### **Rethinking of the Global Humanitarian System After 7th October 2023**

This paper analyzes the global humanitarian system's response to the Gaza conflict following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and Israel's subsequent military actions. It evaluates Israel's actions in light of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) principles and critiques the international community's inability to prevent these alleged violations. By comparing the application of IHL in this conflict to similar conflicts, such as the Iraq-Kuwait and Russia-Ukraine conflicts. The study aims to understand the disparities in IHL enforcement. The main research question investigates the effectiveness of the humanitarian system in reducing civilian suffering in Gaza amidst perceived inconsistencies in IHL application. The paper provides legal and practical recommendations to strengthen IHL adherence, ensuring its principles are upheld irrespective of political influences.



## **Kahlan Al-Shugaa**

Kahlan Abdulaziz Mohammed Abdullah Al-Shugaa is a master's student at the Center for Gender and Development Studies and Research at Sana'a University, completing a master's thesis in the specialization of international development entitled: "The role of non-governmental organizations in social development in Yemen during the period 2015-2022". Al-Shugaa also participated in the First Economic Conference at Taiz University (15-17 October 2024) with a research paper entitled: "The Social Path of Reconstruction in Yemen", and with another research paper entitled: "Social Innovation in Yemen: Opportunities and Challenges" in the First International Scientific Conference at the University of Science and Technology, Aden (18-20 August 2024).

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## **Reconstruction in Yemen: A Developmental Approach to Challenges and Opportunities**

This research aimed to examine the challenges and opportunities associated with the reconstruction process in Yemen from a development perspective. The research adopted a qualitative analytical methodology, based on official documents, academic studies, and interviews with local actors. The research findings concluded that the challenges include the multiplicity of security institutions and their division between the conflicting forces, the political division, the absence of state institutions, the spread of financial and administrative corruption, the absence of civil society and its active institutions, the dependence of the Yemeni sovereign decision on external forces, in addition to the division in monetary institutions, the high rate of inflation and the collapse of the currency, the lack of food security, the lack of funding and the limited resources necessary for the reconstruction of infrastructure. This required the start of rebuilding state institutions on professional and national bases that ensure efficiency and transparency, away from the tribal and sectarian loyalties that have affected the stability of the country for decades.



## Kawser Ahmed

Kawser Ahmed is an educator and researcher in peace and conflict studies with expertise in social conflict and its peaceful transformation. Drawing on experience from UN peacekeeping operations, he specializes in peacebuilding, mediation, and transformative dialogue. His research focuses on social resistance, terrorism, youth extremism, and refugee crises in diverse contexts. A former SSHRC post-doctoral fellow at the University of Winnipeg, he is now an adjunct professor at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba. He leads the Conflict and Resilience Research Institute Canada and serves on boards including MCIC and Winnipeg's Multifaith and Culture Liaison Circle.

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## Let's Talk About Peace: Rethinking Humanitarian Diplomacy for Peace Intervention in Rohingya Crisis

This article proposes a new framework for addressing the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar through humanitarian diplomacy, focusing on Track II diplomacy as an alternative to state-centric methods. The Rohingya crisis, marked by forced displacement, human rights abuses, and political exclusion, has defied conventional peace efforts. Myanmar's military junta (Tatmadaw) complicates diplomacy by resisting international pressure and blocking access to conflict areas.

Drawing insights from the Oslo and Aceh peace processes, the paper promotes Track II diplomacy—informal engagement with non-state actors, such as NGOs and religious leaders—to build trust among stakeholders. It proposes a peace intervention model integrating humanitarian aid, development, and peace-building within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus.

The model emphasizes collaboration among local communities, ethnic groups, ASEAN, Canada, and Qatar, with faith-based mediation fostering reconciliation. By combining diplomacy with grassroots efforts, the framework offers a sustainable pathway to peace, stability, and dignified repatriation for the Rohingya population to their homeland.



## **Khalid Al-Khulaifi**

Khalid Al-Khulaifi is a diplomat and academic specializing in international relations. He serves as a senior expert at the Centre for International Policy Research (CIPR), drawing on both his professional and academic experience to engage with global political issues. Al-Khulaifi earned his PhD in International Relations and Political Science from the Australian National University. He has lectured at Qatar University, where he developed and taught courses on International Relations, Gulf Studies, Security and International Law. His combination of diplomatic practice and academic work offers insights into the dynamics of global politics and the behavior of small states.

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### **Small State Diplomacy in Action: Lessons from Qatar's Mediation Successes and Challenges**

This paper explores Qatar's distinctive approach to international mediation, highlighting its evolution as a pivotal actor in conflict resolution in the Middle East and beyond. Despite its small size, Qatar has leveraged its strategic resources, diplomatic neutrality, and cultural positioning to mediate some of the most complex and prolonged conflicts, including those in Afghanistan and Lebanon. The research assesses how Qatar's mediation efforts have effectively utilised power-based, interest-based, and transformative mediation strategies, supported by financial incentives and soft power, particularly through the influential role of Al Jazeera. Drawing on qualitative methodologies that include primary data from official statements, diplomatic correspondence, and media reports, as well as expert interviews, this study provides a nuanced understanding of Qatar's diplomatic playbook. The findings underscore Qatar's ability to position itself as a trusted intermediary, employing neutrality and cultural sensitivity to build credibility with diverse parties. However, the paper also addresses critiques, such as the sustainability of Qatar's financial incentives and gaps in the institutional capacity for post-settlement implementation. By examining case studies such as the Afghan peace process and the Doha Agreement in Lebanon, the study illustrates the broader implications of Qatar's role for small state diplomacy, showcasing how strategic leveraging of resources and cultural alignment can enable small states to exert an outsized influence on global diplomacy and conflict resolution. This research contributes to understanding the dynamics of small-state mediation and its transformative potential in fostering regional and international peace.



**Malaz Eltayeb**

Malaz Eltayeb holds a higher diploma in International Relations and a bachelor's degree in economics and political science from the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, University of Khartoum. She is interested in research in political science and international relations with a particular focus on conflict studies and humanitarian work.

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## **Barriers to Effectiveness: The Consequences of the Ongoing War in Sudan on Humanitarian Action**

The research aims to focus on the challenges facing humanitarian work in Sudan following the outbreak of war in April 2023 and analyze humanitarian diplomacy and its role in facilitating humanitarian access to affected communities. The study argues that the obstruction of aid access to conflict areas has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. It hypothesizes that humanitarian diplomacy is one of the measures that ensure humanitarian access to conflict areas, making it an effective tool for humanitarian intervention. The research presents the concept of humanitarian action, its principles, and the challenges it faces in Sudan, then highlights humanitarian diplomacy as one of the modern concepts, and highlights the diplomatic efforts made in the framework of reducing the severity of the crisis on humanitarian action, most notably the Jeddah negotiations platform and the challenges it faced, while emphasizing that the continued intensity of the conflict and the lack of attention to human suffering exacerbates human crisis.



## Mohammed Moqeibel

Mohammed Moqeibel is a political researcher specializing in humanitarian diplomacy and Global South issues. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals, including works such as *Humanitarian Diplomacy: Reality and Challenges – The Case of Yemen* and *An Analytical Survey on UNICEF's Alignment with Community Norms and Its Impact on Child Protection in Yemen*. His research focuses on advancing humanitarian diplomacy concepts and exploring the role of local communities in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Mohammed is committed to creating positive and sustainable impacts in humanitarian and political affairs at local and international levels, contributing to peace and development through innovative research and solutions.

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## Humanitarian Diplomacy in Yemen: The Role of Community Groups in Humanitarian Action

This study examines the role of community groups, represented by Yemeni tribes, as key actors in humanitarian diplomacy in Yemen amidst the complex humanitarian crisis since 2015. These groups have emerged as pivotal in mediation, conflict resolution, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, and fostering local stability, leveraging their deep understanding of local culture. The research highlights the contrast between the strategies employed by community groups and international organizations in addressing humanitarian conflicts. Community groups exhibit greater flexibility due to their social ties and tribal traditions, enabling them to mediate and resolve crises more swiftly and effectively. The study also underscores the significant role of women in these processes. The research adopts several methodologies: the descriptive approach to outline the tribes' roles in mediation and humanitarian assistance, the analytical approach to compare the methods of community groups and international organizations, and the deductive approach to derive general patterns from specific mediation cases. The recommendations emphasize the need to recognize community groups as active participants in humanitarian diplomacy, support local mediation efforts, and enhance collaboration between international organizations and local groups for a more effective humanitarian response.



## Mohammad Seyam

He is an experienced researcher in conflict and security studies research. He holds a master's degree in Conflict and Humanitarian Studies from Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in 2018 and a PhD in Political Science from Beirut Arab University in 2023. His research focuses primarily on the Palestinian case, exploring the dimensions of conflict, security, and humanitarian issues. He has published several research studies, including works on food security in Qatar, Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip, and other issues. He also worked as an assistant professor at Ahmed bin Mohammed Military College in Doha.

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### **The Impact of Israel War in Gaza Post Al-Aqsa Flood: Evaluating the Prospects and Risks on the Palestinian National Reconciliation**

This study examines the impact of the Israeli war on Gaza, following the “Al-Aqsa Flood” operation, on Palestinian national reconciliation. Despite the unparalleled destruction and immense sacrifices, the longstanding division between Fatah and Hamas remains unresolved, underscoring entrenched political, ideological, and external pressures. The research employs a qualitative methodology, combining historical analysis and process tracing, to identify the barriers preventing unity. It critiques the role of the Palestinian Authority (PA), highlighting its security coordination with Israel, dependency on international aid, and resistance to collaboration with Hamas as significant impediments. Concurrently, Hamas's responses to reconciliation efforts, characterized by political pragmatism, are explored. External influences, including U.S. and Israeli opposition to Hamas, further exacerbate the divide.

The findings suggest that reconciliation efforts consistently fail due to mutual distrust, conflicting political agendas, and external constraints. The study argues for the necessity of collective leadership, a restructured Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and mutual concessions to achieve unity. It emphasizes that external mediation alone is insufficient; genuine dialogue and commitment to national priorities are essential. The study concludes that overcoming the division requires both sides to prioritize the collective Palestinian cause over partisan interests, fostering resilience against external manipulation. This research contributes to understanding the complexities of Palestinian reconciliation, proposing actionable strategies for sustainable unity amidst ongoing challenges.



## Oussama Badad

Oussama Badad is a media researcher with a master's degree in media studies from the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. His research focuses on global media, audience studies, and political communication, with a particular interest in the MENA region. Oussama is dedicated to studying the role of media narratives in shaping political perceptions and public discourse, as well as the relationship between media and international relations..

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### **Framing the US-Taliban Qatari Mediation: A Content Analysis of The New York Times, Al Jazeera English, and Deutsche Welle Media Coverage**

This study analyzes the media framing of the US-Taliban negotiations as represented by three major news organizations: Al Jazeera English, Deutsche Welle, and The New York Times. Using qualitative content analysis, 120 articles were systematically sampled from a total of 915 archival pieces. The paper emphasizes the dynamic characteristics of media framing in relation to political contexts. The analysis indicates that Al Jazeera English highlights Qatar's role as a mediator and Taliban legitimacy. Meanwhile, Deutsche Welle and The New York Times emphasize humanitarian implications and security concerns. These differing frames shape public perception of diplomatic efforts and highlight the impact of geopolitical stances on media narratives. This study enhances the existing literature on media framing and conflict resolution by illustrating the critical role of media in shaping public understanding of diplomatic initiatives.



## Pascal Khodeir

Pascal Khodeir is a seasoned legal consultant, researcher, and mediator specializing in international humanitarian law, international criminal law, human rights, and global diplomacy. She holds a master's degree in International Law from Beirut Arab University and certifications in International Criminal Law (T.M.C. Asser Institute, The Hague), Global Diplomacy (University of London), and Negotiation, Mediation, and Conflict Resolution (ESSEC Business School, France). With extensive experience collaborating with UN agencies and international organizations, she has contributed to human rights initiatives, policy development, compliance advisory, and capacity building. Khodeir has also authored several publications on legal and human rights issues, furthering her impact in the field.

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### Post-Genocide Recovery and Peacebuilding in Gaza: Integrating Legal Mechanisms and the HDP Nexus for Long-Term Stability

This paper examines the catastrophic humanitarian and legal consequences of Israel's siege and attacks on Gaza, which many consider as amounting to genocide. The blockade, including in terms of prevention of humanitarian assistance into Gaza has led to severe humanitarian crisis, including in terms of access to food, water, and health, resulting in a major health crisis, including disease outbreaks due to the collapse of the healthcare system and Israeli stringent restrictions on aid. Even if aid resumes, the deep socio-economic impacts of widespread poverty and destruction of the civilian infrastructure in Gaza are likely to persist for years. The study argues for a holistic approach that combines justice, humanitarian relief, development, and peacebuilding to address both immediate needs and root causes. Using the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus, this research underscores the need for legal frameworks that promote accountability, rights restoration, and social cohesion to ensure lasting peace and resilience. An integrated response encompassing justice initiatives and structural reforms is essential for effective recovery and conflict prevention in Gaza.



## Pietro Stefanini

Stefanini holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Edinburgh. Stefanini's primary research interests are in critical humanitarian studies, empire and settler colonialism, and anti-colonial resistance. Some of his work has been published in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *Participation and Conflict*, and the American University in Cairo Press. Since 2022, he has served as research assistant to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Previously, he worked for five years as a researcher at the Palestinian Return Centre. Before moving to the UK to begin his studies, he grew up between Bologna, Damascus and Occupied Jerusalem.

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## The Humanitarianisation of Genocide in Gaza

The destruction of Gaza's society has been perpetrated through the deployment of extreme violence on an unprecedented scale, primarily in the form of military air power, and dovetailed with attendant overt genocidal rhetoric against Palestinians. Alongside a racialised register of genocidal rhetoric, Israel has mobilised a particularly unusual form of humanitarianism. While there has been recent attention to the role of international law as a tool to justify military violence in Gaza, this article builds on and adds to recent scholarship an examination of the function of humanitarianism in enabling one of the most intense genocidal wars in recent global history. The article examines a typology of strategies Israel has adopted and which is experimenting for the subsequent post-war phase. First, Israeli government ministers have explicitly advocated for a 'humanitarian solution' to denote the mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians into Egypt. Second, the Israeli-designated 'humanitarian zone' of al-Mawasi on the southwest coast of Gaza became an operational instrument to legitimise genocidal violence through the internment of Palestinians. A third strategy has been the establishment of new maritime and aerial routes for the administration of aid flows, and the testing of 'humanitarian bubbles' for the provision of aid in a postwar setting. Drawing on this typology of tactics, Israel has sought to adopt an assemblage of counter-insurgency strategies that separate combatants from non-combatants and eliminationist practices of annihilation – killings, displacement, and starvation – within a humanitarian ethos of protecting civilians in wartime.



## Salah Eddine Boudjellal

Salah Eddine Boudjellal is a professor at the Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Setif 2, Algeria. He earned his doctorate in public law in 2013 and his expertise spans human rights law, international responsibility, international humanitarian law, and comparative law. He has authored pedagogical books, published numerous scientific articles, and participated in both national and international conferences. Dr. Boudjellal has chaired and contributed to several research projects, including membership in the International Criminal Justice research team and leading a project on Legal Studies on Issues of Cultural Rights and Cultural Security. His work reflects a commitment to advancing legal scholarship and education.

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### **The Involvement of Private Military and Security Companies in Humanitarian Operations: Can the Specificities of These Companies be Reconciled with the Principles and Effectiveness of Humanitarian Work?**

Private military and security companies have made significant efforts to form a multidimensional identity that combines the worlds of military, business and humanitarian institutions. This study attempted to highlight the appropriateness of the intervention of these companies in humanitarian operations, especially with the many accusations that have been leveled at them regarding their undeclared political agendas, or their involvement in violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The study concluded that the participation of private military and security companies in humanitarian operations has become a reality imposed by a set of objective circumstances, but this participation has heavy consequences for the principles of humanitarian work and the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian work. All of this requires the adoption of a cautious approach by humanitarian actors in any decision they make for the use of the services of these companies.



## Saleh Almogrbe

Saleh Almogrbe is a doctoral researcher at the University of Strathclyde and a Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), UK. He holds an MSc in Civil Engineering and Environmental Management from the University of South Wales (2017) and worked as a consulting engineer in Benghazi, Libya (2008–2013). His research focuses on post-conflict urban reconstruction, particularly in Benghazi. He co-authored a chapter in the forthcoming book *City Re-construction* (2025) and earned Fellowship status with the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) in the UK, reflecting his dedication to teaching and learning in higher education.

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## Post-Conflict Housing Reconstruction in Libya: A Case Study of Benghazi City Post-Conflict 2014-2017

This study explores the challenges of post-conflict housing reconstruction in Benghazi, Libya, following the 2014-2017 conflict, focusing on restoring housing for internally displaced persons (IDPs). It investigates the effectiveness of various housing reconstruction strategies through qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and secondary data analysis. The research employs Barakat's (2003) analytical framework, examining the context, actors, and sectoral factors influencing reconstruction efforts. Findings highlight significant challenges in Benghazi's reconstruction process, such as political instability, lack of transparency, and limited community participation. The study specifically addresses the slow progress of housing projects, including the delayed completion of 5,000 promised units for displaced persons and the revival of projects initiated before 2011. Interviews with stakeholders reveal a tension between immediate recovery needs and the requirements for long-term urban planning. While owner-driven reconstruction promotes individual empowerment, its effectiveness is constrained by resource limitations. Community-driven approaches encourage local involvement but require strong social cohesion, while agency-driven strategies offer structured support, though often at the expense of flexibility and local input. The research proposes a comprehensive housing reconstruction strategy integrating digital governance, sustainability, and greater community engagement. Key recommendations include implementing blockchain-based property registries, establishing housing microfinance programs, and developing climate-resilient infrastructure. These insights aim to inform policymakers and urban planners in post-conflict settings, highlighting the need to balance immediate recovery efforts with sustainable long-term urban planning solutions.



## **Sohaib Shamsan**

Sohaib Shamsan has an experience in leadership, student support, and community organization in multicultural environments. With experience in international relations and diplomacy, he worked at the Yemen Embassy in Türkiye (2016–2020), addressing citizen issues, honing negotiation skills, and drafting diplomatic content. Shamsan's academic focus includes Yemen's political crises, conflict, and peacebuilding. He holds a bachelor's degree from the Islamic University in Malaysia, a master's from Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, and is pursuing a Ph.D. in peacebuilding in Yemen, contributing to sustainable conflict resolution.

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### **Consolidating Peacebuilding in Yemen: Opportunities and Challenges (2014 - 2023)**

This study explores the complex dynamics of the Yemeni conflict, its core causes, major actors, and sociopolitical elements that have contributed to instability. The article discusses the construction of eternal peace in Yemen, arguing that long-standing historical grievances, power conflicts, and enormous foreign pressures are all challenges that must be addressed. It investigates how these factors interact and how they have evolved into the vast variety of problems that we witness today. Additionally, the paper analyzes the recent ceasefire attempts that serve as an optimistic glimpse of reconciliation and stability. However, challenges such as strong ideological rift, sectarian warfare, and regional competitiveness still exist. As a result, the paper analyzes these characteristics in order to gain a better understanding of the Yemen war and to provide a plan for achieving long-term peace while emphasizing the need for inclusion, justice, and regional collaboration as major conflict resolution components. This approach contributes to the larger debate in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, making it relevant not only to Yemen but also to other conflict-affected places throughout the world.



## Ümit Seven

Dr. Seven holds a Ph.D. in Area Studies specializing in the Middle East region from Middle East Technical University, Ankara. His peer-reviewed work addresses security and humanitarian issues, including foreign interventions, aid politics, and mediation. His research explores the nexus between climate change and conflict, focusing on forced migration in Syria and the digitalization of humanitarian aid. He has held research positions at ETH Zürich and Sciences Po, studying digitalization's impact on aid relationships. With over a decade of experience, he has worked with UNDP, WFP, and ISAF, contributing to strategic operations and decision-making in international security and humanitarian fields.

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### Shades of Humanity: Sovereignty and Humanitarian Principles in the Syrian Civil War

In the Syrian civil war, the Syrian government has imposed numerous restrictions and employed violence to assert its sovereignty in humanitarian action, creating significant challenges for humanitarian aid organizations. These organizations, in turn, have had to navigate a complex landscape, contending with political realities that often subordinate humanitarian principles to the primacy of state sovereignty. This research examines this interaction between the state and aid organizations in the provision of humanitarian assistance, focusing on how aid organizations interpret and experience state sovereignty in their work.

Based on a survey conducted with aid professionals, I first identify the ways state sovereignty is articulated in humanitarian action and then explore aid workers' perceptions of state sovereignty in relation to humanitarian norms and principles. I demonstrate that the global governance aimed at preserving human lives and mitigating suffering, far from being singular and cohesive, is marked by diversity and shaped by the influence of state sovereignty. While the overarching objective remains consistent—to alleviate human suffering—the very bedrock of international humanitarian norms and principles amidst the conflict constantly undergo negotiation and divergence across humanitarian aid organizations.



## Zainab Kittawi

Zainab Kittawi is a specialized lawyer in international humanitarian law, experience in humanitarian and development work since 2013. She held the position of the elected National President of the Youth Peer Network in Syria, leading the first aid and emergency response teams at the Syrian Arab Red Crescent branch in Latakia. She is also a field paramedic and a field sector lead on the front lines of humanitarian emergency response efforts. She has experience in field supervision and project evaluation as a third-party evaluator for UNICEF. Additionally, she is a certified judge in youth community initiatives and projects, a speaker on the role of women in humanitarian work, and the recipient of the Best Community Project award in Latakia. She is a representative for youth and scientific research in sustainable development and youth activities. She was also a former board member of the International Youth Chamber in Latakia and a regional manager for the Peace Possible campaign in Syria in 2018.

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## From the Frontlines to Peacebuilding: The Role of International Humanitarian Law and Technological Innovations in Responding to the Syrian Crisis

The Syrian conflict is a profound humanitarian crisis affecting millions of civilians, especially the youth. This research highlights the vital role of local organizations and women in providing humanitarian aid despite facing challenges like funding shortages and movement restrictions.

The study emphasizes the significance of international humanitarian law in safeguarding civilians and organizing humanitarian efforts. However, implementation hurdles arise due to continual violations and accountability mechanisms' weaknesses. Technology plays a crucial role in enhancing humanitarian response, with digital solutions improving needs assessment and resource allocation, enhancing aid effectiveness.

To bolster future humanitarian responses, the research suggests reinforcing the international legal framework, providing institutional support for national courts and the International Criminal Court. Empowering youth and non-governmental organizations for active engagement in peace and relief operations is crucial. Additionally, investing in technology and developing innovative digital solutions is essential to address complex humanitarian challenges.



**Zainab Sabra**

Zainab Sabra is a philosophy instructor at the American University of Beirut from which she had graduated from with a BA and MA. She is currently a PhD candidate in philosophy at Erasmus University of Rotterdam. Her work is focused on philosophy of language and oral history. Her dissertation is about the historical, discursive and ethical character of oral testimonies in the oral history of indigenous communities.

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## **Suspending Humanity from Humanitarian Crisis: A Case of Discursive Injustice**

In conditions of humanitarian crises, self-recorded testimonies are recognized as valid narratives, empowering the voice of the colonized. The paper argues that these testimonies can be taken as speech acts that form a narrative in oral history. These testimonies aim at inducing an obligation of solidarity and change on the end of the hearer. Oral history in crises holds a unique ethical value, serving as a form of epistemic and discursive salvation for individuals and their communities. This paper examines the epistemic and discursive aspect of oral testimonies, in order to denote two different ethical challenges that give priority to the narrative of the colonizer over that of the colonized. These ethical challenges are based on the authoritative discourse's dehumanizing terminology that reduces the native's ethical subjectivity on the one hand and the distortion of narrator's uptake that gives power to the colonizer's narrative on the other hand. The analysis in this paper employs conceptual critique and argumentation grounded in speech act theory, focusing on how illocutionary forces are shaped and distorted by ethical, discursive, and historical factors.



## Abdelmageed Yahya and Munzoul Assal

**Abdelmageed Yahya** holds a PhD in Geography and is an associate professor in Sudan. He serves as the managing director of the Peace and Human Rights Center at the Open University of Sudan. Yahya has experience in social studies, peacebuilding, and academic research, having collaborated with the Peace Research Institute at Khartoum University on several projects related to war-affected areas in Sudan. Since 2017, he has been selected as a member of the IGAD Roster of Mediators and has served as a peacebuilding consultant for various institutions, including various UN agencies in Sudan. Yahya has also been part of the Norwegian-Sudan academic collaboration since 2010 and is currently involved in the Sudan-Norway Academic Cooperation (SNAC) project.

**Munzoul Assal** is a renowned social anthropologist affiliated with universities in Sudan and Norway, and a Senior Researcher at the Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI). He was the Director of the Mamoun Beheiry Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Africa, Director of the Peace Research Institute at Khartoum, and the Dean of Scientific Research. Having also worked as a visiting professor at Paris 8 and the University of Sharjah, his research spans migration, refugees, internally displaced persons, and peacebuilding, with several published books and articles. He served on the Arab Council for Social Sciences Board and was honored as a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, recognizing his contributions to the field.

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## Mediation and Peacemaking Dilemmas to Sudan Crisis

This paper examines the viability of internal and external mediation efforts for peacemaking to solve the crisis that resulted from the ongoing war in Sudan, which started in April 2023. The ferocity of the war and its spread beyond the initial theatre of war threatens the existence of Sudan, but peace-making and mediation efforts have not reflected the gravity of the situation. The depth of conflict lines in Sudan, along with a real fear of a complete splintering of the country, is emerging as a seemingly unsolvable dilemma, making mediation extremely difficult but also increasingly urgent. Unlike previous wars, the April 2023 war has centered on the capital Khartoum, and the urban areas in Darfur, Kordofan, and central Sudan as

the main theater of hostilities. The paper tackles, through a comprehensive analysis, the complexities of peacemaking dilemmas in Sudan.

The paper adopts a qualitative approach, relies on an actor-focused analysis and is based on the authors' experience with mediation work, desk review of mediation literature and initiatives, stakeholder interviews with academics, civil society activists, politicians, and experts, and events analysis. The Sudanese war is proving difficult for mediators and peacemakers due to the entanglements of socio-political, geographical, and economic factors. The April 2023 war between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is not simply a war between two enemies, but rather a political and social conflict, with regional and international dimensions. Several internal and external mediations emerged to bring a peaceful solution to the war. Internal initiatives failed due to the absence of clear and articulate vision, deep societal divisions, weak mediation capacity, the complexity of the crisis, short-term interests, and lack of genuine commitment to inclusive peace. While internal actors are in disarray, external actors often simplify complex crises by supporting one side without fully acknowledging the diversity of political forces at play.

This approach tends to overlook the nuanced, multifaceted nature of the situation, which involves various stakeholders with different interests, ideologies, and goals. As a result, the complexity of the conflict is ignored, and a one-dimensional perspective can lead to ineffective or misguided interventions.



## Asem Alnabih and Nour-Alhuda Alnabeh

**Asem Alnabih** is an engineer and a PhD researcher. He serves as the spokesperson for and a member of the Emergency Committee and the Director of Public Relations and Media at Gaza Municipality, Gaza, Palestine. He has many published papers and has written for many platforms in both Arabic and English.

**Nour-Alhuda Alnabeh** is a teacher and PhD researcher, currently based in Gaza City. She is volunteering as a director and supervisor of extracurricular activities in several educational tents located in northern Gaza. She has previously worked as an educational supervisor for student field training and has published numerous research papers in both Arabic and English.

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## The Use of Starvation as a Weapon in the Israeli War on Gaza: A Mixed-Methods Study

The ongoing war on Gaza since October 2023 has seen Israel heavily deploying starvation as a weapon of war, stoking a man-made humanitarian crisis, especially in northern Gaza (in the northern Gaza valley). This study narrates how starvation was induced in northern Gaza and, focusing on March and April 2023, examines how it impacted the population. Using a mixed-method survey of 95 residents from Gaza's northern region, the study documents the starvation's diverse health and psychological impacts on the population and the alternative diets consumed. 98% ate animal feed, 85% bird seeds, and 70% barley as flour substitutes. Additionally, interviews with 55 individuals who witnessed what came to be known as the "Flour Massacre" in February 2024 reveal how hungry civilians were entrapped and attacked as they sought to obtain food aid, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties. The study concludes that starving northern Gaza was systematic and intentional as part of an overall campaign to subjugate and perhaps erase the people of Gaza.



## **Brahim Bendaikha and Habiba Zellagui**

**Brahim Bendaikha** is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Constantine 3. He earned his PhD in International Relations in 2019 and University Habilitation in 2021. His research spans Middle Eastern, African, and Security Studies. He contributes to the University's Development and Conflicts in Africa program and the Laboratory for State Public Policies. His publications address topics like digital diplomacy, Algeria's security doctrine, and Israeli influence in Africa.

**Habiba Zellagui** is an Associate Professor in Political Science and International Relations at the Constantine University 3, Algeria. She holds a PhD in International Relations from Constantine University. She is interested in the field of Arab Studies, Iranian Studies, and Joint Arab Work Institutions. Additionally, Habiba Zellagui contributed to collective books, most recently on regional integration experiences, with a contribution on New Regionalism. She also published several studies in peer-reviewed national journals.

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### **Human Rights in Times of Conflict in the Balance of Western Values: Between Universal Principles and Double Standards. A Comparative Study of the War in Ukraine and Gaza**

This contribution attempts to examine the status of humanitarian values among international actors, particularly when it comes to the varying positions of many countries between different conflicts in terms of the seriousness and strength of positions. In every international conflict event, voices defending humanitarian dimensions clearly emerge due to the suffering that affects humanity during conflicts, bringing humanitarian values to the forefront in an attempt to remind various warring parties of humanitarian values and protecting individuals from the consequences and repercussions of war. This leads us to discuss liberal ideas' adherence to individuals' right to protection during conflicts and their sanctity of humanitarian meanings.

In contrast, the events in Ukraine and Gaza present us with a complex paradox, lying in how the war events in both cases are handled. What was notably striking was the duality of these international standards, particularly Western ones, through explicit sympathy with Ukraine during the Russian war, while in contrast affirming Israel's right to self-defense in its war on Gaza; as they declared their absolute support for the Zionist entity by providing it with significant military and economic assistance. Many Western capitals described the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war as war crimes against humanity, although - from an objective perspective - it represents a war between two states and regular armies, while they described resistance activity in Palestine as terrorism, and did not condemn the killing of civilians and the destruction of homes over their inhabitants' heads, and did not utter terms and vocabulary of brutality, barbarism, genocide, and war crimes.

Faced with this paradox and dissociation in adopting positions towards what is happening in two different regions, within a humanitarian context that seems unified and agreed upon among all languages, civilizations, and religions, we find ourselves compelled to investigate the truth of these principles and slogans that defend humans on this earth, and whether they are meant for the human of Western civilization or humanity itself, and whether these concepts are unified and agreed upon or if the meanings of humanity differ according to time and place and the distinction of humans themselves.



## Manara Eltayeb and Yusra Abdullallah

**Manara Eltayeb** is a researcher specialized in international relations and human rights. She holds a master's degree in international relations and two diplomas in International Relations and International Human Rights Law from the University of Khartoum. Her research focuses on critical issues such as human trafficking, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges faced by single mothers. Manara also serves as a Public Relations Officer at Aseer Organization, where her work is focused on developing awareness strategies concerning illegal migration and the risks of human trafficking. She has participated in several academic conferences.

**Yusra Abdullallah** holds a Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations from the University of Khartoum and is currently pursuing a master's degree in the same field. From 2019 to 2022, she worked with Aseer Organization for raising awareness about the risks of irregular migration and human trafficking. In this role, I contributed to designing and implementing strategies and initiatives to combat these critical issues and enhance community awareness. In addition, I participated in projects supporting the establishment of the Transitional Legislative Council in Sudan. Between 2014 and 2019, I also contributed to the implementation of several medical projects aimed at localizing treatment within Sudan.

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## Challenges of Voluntary Work in Sudan Facing the Consequences of Conflict: Emergency Rooms as a Case Study

The paper examines the humanitarian crisis in Sudan caused by ongoing conflict, emphasizing the role of emergency rooms as innovative community mechanisms to address critical challenges and enhance volunteer efforts. It highlights the sustainability of these emergency rooms, focusing on their ability to adapt and provide effective assistance to individuals affected by the conflict. Founding volunteer groups have played a pivotal role, expanding their activities and diversifying tasks to meet the evolving and complex needs in conflict zones. The study also assessed the impact of conflict on local communities and the emergency rooms' responses to urgent humanitarian needs.

The study hypothesizes that despite the severity of Sudan's humanitarian crises, they have fostered positive developments in volunteer work mechanisms. It argues that emergency rooms can serve as a sustainable model for community-led humanitarian efforts rooted in the dedication of Sudanese volunteers.

Using a descriptive case study method and process tracing, the research relied on interviews with emergency room officials and representatives from national and international humanitarian organizations. The interviews explored motivations behind the establishment of emergency rooms, their working mechanisms, organizational structures, challenges faced, and methods of self-coordination and collective management.

The findings relatively confirmed the hypothesis that conflict-driven crises have advanced volunteer tools and practices. Emergency rooms demonstrated flexibility, innovation, and resilience, qualifying them as a sustainable model for addressing humanitarian challenges. The study underscores the importance of fostering local-international collaboration, ensuring transparent funding, adopting volunteer protection policies, and improving Sudan's humanitarian conditions.



## Hamid Belrhit and Tawfiq Abdessadek

**Hamid Belrhit** is a Professor of International Relations and International Law at Mohammed V University in Rabat. He earned his PhD in Public Law from Mohammed I University in Oujda in 2017. His research focuses on International Relations Theories and New Regionalism.

**Tawfiq Abdessadek** is a Professor of International Relations and International Economic Law at the University of Mohamed V in Rabat. He earned his Ph.D. in Public Law and Political Science from Mohammed V University. He focuses on international relations and topics related to democratic transition in the Middle East and North Africa region.

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## Determinants and Dimensions of China's Mediation for Conflict Resolution and Tension Management in the Middle East

This paper discusses China's presence in the Middle East and the roles it can play as a major international power in addressing certain global issues and crises. It primarily focuses on China's foreign policy perspective and its methods for managing these issues, highlighting its experience in facilitating mediation negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as hosting subsequent discussions aimed at resolving divisions among Palestinian factions and organizations. The paper combines theoretical interpretations of mediation efforts and conflict resolution with an analysis of China's policy documents, which explains the foundations of its foreign policy and strategy in the Middle East. The study aims to address the determinants, dimensions, and motivations of China's mediation in conflict resolution and tension management in the Middle East. It highlights the limitations and actual impact of such mediation efforts in finding solutions to the region's crises. The paper concludes by suggesting that the outcomes of China's mediation are relatively limited in comparison to its growing presence in the Middle East.



## Mohammed Alsousi and Omar Abdin

**Mohammed Alsousi** is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies, overseeing dialogue and capacity-building activities and managing the center's conferences. He also serves as Associate Editor of the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, coordinating analyses, concept notes, and workshops. With 18 years of experience in development, humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding, he has held senior roles, including Regional Director for the Middle East, North Africa, and Eastern Europe. He holds a PhD in Sustainable Environment and a Master's in Renewable Energy from the University of Nottingham, and training in Conflict, Crisis, and Transitions.

**Omar Abdin** is a Research Assistant at the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies in Doha, specializing in Libyan affairs since July 2024. As a holder of a double master's degree in international relations from the University of Bologna and international affairs from Johns Hopkins University (Europe), Omar specialized in international economics and strategic studies, in addition to holding a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Glasgow.

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### An Analytical Study on Peace Initiatives in Libya: Challenges, Successes, and the Way Forward

Libya is facing significant challenges at this sensitive stage of its national history, stemming from over a decade of political conflicts and external interventions that have exacerbated political discord and disrupted many state frameworks and institutions. Since 2012, the country has been at a crossroads, struggling with political deadlock despite intensive efforts by international partners to address the crisis. The crucial step of state-building, including parliamentary and presidential elections and other agreed-upon measures from previous agreements, notably the Skhirat Agreement in Morocco in December 2015, remains unachieved.

As various parties continue to vie for control over key areas and resources in Libya, the ongoing conflict has created a fertile ground for endless cycles of violence, economic crises, and struggles, driven by the different groups' desire to shift the balance of power in their favor. International interventions and peace negotiation attempts have had limited success, often hampered by deep-seated divisions and competing interests among the involved parties.

A key aspect of the conflict involves powerful external actors competing for influence in Libya. In this regard, the Libyan National Army (LNA) in Eastern Libya is notably allied with the UAE, Russia, Egypt, and to some extent, the United States, receiving substantial military and logistical support to protect their interests. Meanwhile, in the West, the Government of National Unity (GNU) is primarily supported by Turkey, which has provided significant military assistance to the GNU and helped shift the conflict in favor of its allies on the ground as it expanded its influence in the western region in Libya.

This research will discuss the different phases of the Libyan peace process and the actors involved in each phase. We will consider the inherent differences among the various Libyan factions, as well as how foreign influence worsens the conflict by drawing in powerful international actors. The study will also examine the ways in which peace efforts have failed to deliver a lasting resolution to the conflict and provide recommendations for different approaches to be considered.

# Chairs



### **Dr. Ahmed Hussein**

Dr. Ahmed Hussein is a Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies and managing editor of *Siyasaat Arabiya* journal. Previously served as assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Damascus. He obtained a PhD in International Relations from the University of Florence, Italy. His research interests focus on theories of international relations. He edited *The Boycott of Israel as a Strategy: Reality and Ambitions* and *The June 1967 War: Paths and Implications*, published by the ACRPS.

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### **Dr. Ibrahim Fraihat**

Dr. Ibrahim Fraihat is an Associate Professor of international conflict resolution at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and a non-resident fellow at Deakin University's Middle East Studies Forum in Australia. He previously served as a senior foreign policy fellow at the Brookings Institution, and taught conflict resolution at Georgetown University and George Washington University. Dr. Fraihat has published extensively on Middle East politics, with articles appearing in *The New York Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Huffington Post*, *Al Jazeera* websites, and elsewhere. Fraihat earned his PH.D. in conflict analysis and resolution from George Mason University in 2006. He is the recipient of George Mason University's Distinguished Alumni Award (2014) for his achievements in the field of conflict resolution.

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### **Dr. Ibrahim Khatib**

Dr. Ibrahim Khatib, Assistant Professor of Conflict Management at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, uses a quantitative and qualitative methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches. His research deals with conflict resolution, conflict transformation, the politics of the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and conflicts in the Arab world. Dr. Khatib completed his Ph.D., in political science, in 2018 at Humboldt University of Berlin. In 2018-19 he did his postdoctoral research with Middle East studies at the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, University of Oxford. From 2019 to 2020, Dr. Khatib was a fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. Dr. Khatib has founded at Harvard, a research group on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He also published various articles in different journals like the *Journal of Peace Research*, *Democratization*, *International Journal of Conflict Management*, *Citizenship Studies*, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*.

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### **Dr. Lara Khattab**

Dr. Lara Khattab is an Assistant Professor at the Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action Program. Her main research interest revolves around issues of development and underdevelopment at the national and sub-national levels in post-transition and post-conflict societies as well as labor processes both formal and informal, and labor organizing within and outside formal unionism in such contexts. Her research explores the communities in the Arab world and Latin America living at the intersection of precarity and violence. Her past and current research explores the political economy of the everyday as experienced by workers in the formal and informal sectors. Khattab was previously an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick Canada. She was also a Lecturer at Carleton University and a course lecturer at McGill and Concordia universities in Montreal, Canada.

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### **Dr. Mai Abu Moghli**

Dr. Mai Abu Moghli is an Assistant Professor at the Human Rights Program of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities. Her main fields of specialization include critical human rights and critical development studies, comparative and international education and education in emergencies and refugee studies with a focus on the Arabic speaking countries. Her current research focuses on Academic freedoms in higher education institutions globally, decolonizing higher education, and critical research ethics. Dr. Abu Moghli has published numerous op-eds in policy journals, media outlets, and academic blogs targeting a broader audience, including in the Nation, NORRAG and INEE, MERIP, Al Shabaka, and the New Arab . She is featured in a number of podcasts: FreshEd and Taqarob.

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### **Dr. Sultan Al-Khulaifi**

Dr. Sultan Al-Khulaifi is a visiting fellow at the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies, where he focuses on issues of conflict mediation and resolution. He holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Glasgow. Dr. Al-Khulaifi's research primarily examines Qatari foreign policy, with a particular emphasis on its role in conflict mediation and peacebuilding. His work seeks to deepen understanding of Qatar's diplomatic strategies and its contributions to resolving regional and international disputes.

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### **Dr. Tamer Qarmout**

Dr. Tamer Qarmout is an Associate Professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He holds a Ph.D. degree in Public Policy from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan. He has expertise in the areas of policy development, governance reforms, strategic planning, management, leadership, institutional reform and capacity development. He has significant program management experience dealing with stakeholders in planning and implementing large programs aimed at building institutional and governance capacities of public and nonprofit organizations.

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### **Dr. Tariq Da'na**

Dr. Tariq Da'na is an Associate Professor and Head of Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. His area of specialization includes an interdisciplinary approach encompassing critical political economy, colonial and settler-colonial studies, national liberation movements, foreign intervention, and state-building, as well as economic development, with a particular focus on Palestine and the Arab world. His work has been published in various peer-reviewed academic journals, and he has contributed to edited books and refereed chapters. Additionally, he has written numerous opinion articles for a range of Arabic and international newspapers, magazines, and websites.

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