



# Arab Uprisings Symposium Summary

**Critically Assessing the Changing  
Landscape of Power and Players**

**31 MAY AND 1 JUNE, 2012 | AUDITORIUM A, WEST HALL, AUB**



**Launched and supported by AUB Office of the Provost and managed by the  
Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, AUB**

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## About AUB Arab Uprisings Symposium

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This symposium is part of the AUB-wide *Arab Uprisings Research Initiative*, which was launched and is supported by the Office of the Provost and managed by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. AUB has invited over twenty scholars from the Arab world and abroad to this Symposium to discuss critical themes that have emerged to date, and to help shape our future research agenda. The symposium will highlight shifting power, new players, and other critical themes, to allow for a better understanding of this historic period.

The Arab uprisings, which started in December 2010, will undoubtedly be one of the most studied episodes of recent history. Accordingly, AUB's Office of the Provost has launched a long-term, multi-sectoral research initiative on the Arab uprisings, aiming to harness the university's many resources and assets to engage constructively with the historic changes taking place across the Arab world. The revolutionary and transformational processes underway are dynamic in one of the most complex geopolitical regions in the world. The challenges of researching and understanding this pivotal moment in Arab history – its causes, main actors, changed power relations, and likely consequences – demand that judicious research in multiple fields be defined by perspectives from across the region, and continue for years ahead rather than merely comprise the occasional conference or publication.

The knowledge AUB generates from activities like this Symposium will also provide useful inputs into policy-making by governments, the private sector, NGOs and international parties who are all trying to make sense of the historic changes underway.

# Symposium Agenda

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## **Day 1: Thursday, May 31, 2012**

**09:00 - 09:30**

### **Opening Keynote:**

- Ahmad Dallal, Provost, AUB

**09:30 - 11:00**

### **Motivations Behind the Uprisings**

An opening panel will give a broad overview of the concerns of Arab citizens to highlight what initiated the uprisings and the role of critical players such as workers, youth or women. The panel will also investigate the most recent polls from the region to gauge public opinion in the second year of the Arab uprisings.

- Rami G. Khouri - IFI / AUB
- Nada Al-Nashif - International Labour Organization
- Jean Said Makdisi - Independent Writer / Researcher

**11:00 - 11:15**

### **Coffee Break**

**11:15 - 13:15**

### **Islamists, Coalitions and Governance**

Islamists groups have made successful gains at the recent elections in Egypt and Tunisia, but their ability to govern remains uncertain. The relationship between Islamists, secular groups and the military is tenuous, and their priorities diverge on many issues, ranging from social policy to the nature of the new state.

- Ahmad Moussalli - AUB
- Hesham Sallam - Georgetown University
- Ziad Abu-Rish - UCLA

**13:15 - 14:15**

### **Lunch**

**14:15 - 16:00**

### **The Evolving GCC**

Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the GCC countries have coordinated their response to the uprisings in the hopes of managing the repercussions in their own countries and protecting their strategic interests, especially in Bahrain and Yemen. This unprecedented regional political cooperation, coupled with billions of dollars geared towards elections and intervention beyond the GCC, will have significant impact on the outcomes of the revolts.

- Mehran Kamrava - Georgetown University, Qatar
- Toby Jones - Rutgers University
- Ala'a Shehabi - Writer / Economist

# Symposium Agenda

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## **Day 2: Friday, June 1, 2012**

### **09:00 - 11:00      Regional Shifts and International Institutions**

The political landscape of the region has shifted as new players and configurations have emerged challenging the decades-old regional status quo. This system-wide reconfiguration, caused by domestic uprisings, has made the region more unstable as powerful states, established alliances, and international institutions jostle to retain influence. This panel will look at the regional shift that has happened in the wake of the Arab uprisings and explore its consequences on the role of the United Nations, key states, established alliances, and non-state players.

- Karim Makdisi - IFI / AUB
- Waleed Hazbun - AUB
- Bahgat Korany - American University in Cairo
- Bashir Saade - AUB

### **11:00 - 11:15      Coffee Break**

### **11:15 - 13:15      The Uprisings Now: Resilience in Authoritarianism or Revolution?**

The Arab uprisings have entered a complex protracted period with many factors at play. The initial clarity and authenticity of a contagious citizens revolt against dictatorial regimes has been clouded with multiple factors from western intervention to regional competition amongst new players. The deep-rooted authoritarian regimes in some states have shown resilience and others will wither away. Critical issues like the question of Palestine and the new configuration of the region are yet to be determined.

- Ahmad Dallal - Provost, AUB
- Bassam Haddad - George Mason University
- Joshua Stacher - Kent State University
- Rami Zurayk - AUB

### **13:15 - 14:15      Lunch**

### **14:15 - 16:00      Palestine and the Uprisings: Reconciliation, Reform and Representation**

The issue of Palestine within the context of the revolutions is a complex one. Although it is still early to forecast the impact of the revolutions on the question of Palestine, regional changes have played a significant role in setting in motion the Fateh-Hamas reconciliation process. There have also been promises to reform and reconstruct the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and to take meaningful steps towards enhancing representation and holding elections for the Palestinian Diaspora.

- Anis F. Kassim - Attorney and Legal Consultant
- Mohsen Saleh - Al-Zaytouna Centre, Beirut
- Rami G. Khouri - IFI / AUB

# AUB Arab Uprisings Symposium Summary

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The two-day **AUB Arab Uprisings Symposium** – “Critically assessing the changing landscape of power and players” - pitched optimists against pessimists, social scientists against historians and involved all participants and observers in an intensely thought-provoking examination of the reasons behind, and the potential for, the Arab Uprisings.

In his opening remarks, AUB Provost Ahmad Dallal characterized the aim of the seminar as being a truth-seeking undertaking, both academic and pedagogical. He recapitulated aspects of the extraordinary events that have characterized the Arab Uprisings to date and he enumerated some of the many challenges that lie ahead including:

- The need to establish rule of law as a principal of governance, justice, equality and accountability.
- The danger of sectarianism and tribalism.
- The threat posed by the security apparatus of past and present regimes.
- The challenge of achieving economic justice after decades of corruption and unemployment.
- The imperative to consider the dialectic between internal and outside agendas.

Dallal enjoined the academics to work together to generate research and analysis to shape the global narrative about the Uprisings, and to reshape previous analysis that has too long been the domain of others.

## **Session One – Motivations Behind the Uprisings**

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**Nada Al-Nashif** provided a brief overview of the drivers of the Uprisings and of the failure of the governing class to respond to these phenomena in a meaningful manner. It was, she explained, a revolt against entrenched patterns of exclusion, discrimination and pervasive inequality especially in the skewed distribution of national income and access to opportunity. Whilst economic indicators of growth were going up at the macro level, opportunities were not expanding as fast as expectations. This further supports the point about the economic inequality within the country; perceptions of injustice were key. When the governments first responded by releasing significant sums of money, thus implicitly acknowledging needs and gaps in social services, this failed to impact on protestors who regarded these efforts as too little too late. Though wealth trickle-down had reached some individuals and families, the overall perception was that the wealth was accruing to presidents, their families and establishment insiders. Fiscal consolidation and budget cuts accompanying austerity measures; rising food prices, and a shortage of jobs for an increasingly well-educated population all coalesced to produce an atmosphere of humiliation and injustice. Lack of social dialogues was also articulated as a problem in the lead up to the uprisings. Al-Nashif’s call for a “social protection floor” rather than a social safety net had a perceptible impact on the audience. In this context, she outlined a development paradigm to nurture employment and equality so that:

- The private sector becomes transparent, competitive and sustainable.
- Social protection becomes universal, effective and equitable.
- Reforms are negotiated between, and deemed acceptable by, the social partners, not dictated from the top.
- Trade unions and employers organizations become more active with more internal democracy and specific know-how, and with increasingly complex skills to be able to think and act in terms of strategies, medium and long term.
- Freedoms become enshrined in systems and legal frameworks that are fully compatible with sustainable growth.

**Jean Said Makdisi** remarked on the strange phenomenon, since the beginning of the Uprisings, of endless commentaries about women's participation in Tahrir Square. She asked why this should be when there is nothing new about women in the Middle East contributing to revolution. By way of example, Makdisi mentioned that women participated in the 1810 demonstration in Damascus, in Palestine in 1948 and in the first Infitada. Specifically she examined the 'myths' surrounding the iconic 1920s female activist Huda Sharawi and asked: "Why is women's political visibility only during participation in revolutions and national emergencies and totally absent in more normal times? Why has their contribution been undermined and exploited?" One reason, she suggests, is that Middle Eastern women [and men] are ignorant of their own history and of the trajectory that brings women to where they are today. Nobody, she says, is as stereotyped as Arab women and if we ourselves cannot understand how our society works we cannot understand the rest. She emphasized the need for more and better Arab Women's Study Programs and for a more measured assessment of the way women are portrayed in today's Middle East, both in the context of the Uprisings and otherwise. She suggested research into whether the emergence of the nation-state in the Arab world had been "destructive" to women.

By way of examining possible social and economic triggers to revolution, **Rami Khouri** considered data analysis from a recent Gallup Poll conducted by the Doha-based Arab Center for Research and Policies on grievances and diversity of views among older and younger population samples in several countries across the region. The differences in response between young and old were insignificant except in the desire to migrate. There were huge differences about the perceptions of well-being in high and low income countries across the region. The data also showed that citizens of the Arab world had great confidence in the armed forces and low confidence in the intelligence services. Khouri focused on findings of significance to the Uprisings. One was that people in the Arab world have a "nuanced" understanding of democracy; it includes elements of freedom, justice, equality, improving the economic situation and issues of security. The other was their willingness to search for mechanisms to address them. He believes that "The young people who were first on the streets quite accurately reflect the sentiments of the population." The value of such polls, Khouri points out, is that they guide researchers towards the questions they should be asking.

As evidenced by the Uprisings which took place eighteen months after the poll, key demands were interpreted around the desire for respect, trust, dignity, human and political rights and economic fairness.



## **Session Two – Islamists, Coalitions and Governance**

**Ahmad Moussali** said we are witnessing uprisings, not revolutions; a change in the balance of power, but nothing new in terms of ideologies or ideas. The conflict will play out mainly between the regimes and the Islamist movements such as in Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood is vying with the army and Salafists -- both of which reject democracy, pluralism, and human rights. When the Muslim Brotherhood adopted this discourse and practice, Moussali points out, it was banned. He adds that the conflict between the Muslim Brotherhood (representing the rise of moderate Islam), and Wahhabism/Salafism (funded by Saudi Arabia and Qatar) is underestimated: it is a battle for the soul of Islam and an assertion of kingdoms over republics. The kingdoms, protected by their traditional backers, show no tendencies towards democracy. He points to the fact that in Egypt the Salafists have gained a significant number of parliamentary seats and in Libya, where he perceives Al-Qaida influence, there is a push towards more conservative discourse. The economic situation is also a factor. When financial grievances triggered protest, Moussali said, the kingdoms bought time and loyalty by releasing large sums of money, which failed to prevent discontent from spreading, even in the Gulf where the Muslim Brotherhood was ousted. He sees the Sunni-Shia divide as a dangerous dynamic in redrawing the map – to create a new regional order/disorder. These upheavals are not about freedom, he concludes, but about who is going to control what.

**Hesham Sallam** says people have looked at political gains by Islamist groups in Egypt, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, and have asked how will they govern? But Sallam wonders whether they will they govern in the first place? The narrative of the changing Egypt is attractive: with Mubarak out, the old regime out, the Presidential vote, and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) scheduled to hand over power to an elected civil society, to a transformist Islamist regime. But, Sallam says, this narrative is flawed, and revolution in the context of Egypt is tenuous. It could be said that February 2011 was a revolutionary moment. By April, what was happening looked more like a transition from above, and by Fall it was clear that there was neither a revolution nor a transition period. There is a military dictatorship, he says, possibly liberalizing, but a military dictatorship nonetheless. The political reality is that SCAF controls the situation and has the ability to manipulate it in order to safeguard its political and economic holds. Clampdowns, persecutions, deadly force, arrests, and trials are pervasive. The belief was that once parliament was elected there would be real change. In reality, Sallam says, parliament functions in a polarized political environment across an Islamist divide manipulated by SCAF. Some insist that the elected President and the new constitution are the real game changers; it is all a veneer, Sallam insists. The reality is SCAF fighting to maintain control over the Ministries of Defense, Interior and Foreign Affairs, reinforced by its hold over Mubarak's Ministry of Information and state-owned media. These are the key considerations going forward, and in contemplating potential civic participation, Islamic or otherwise.

**Ziad Abu-Rish** examined the lack of political development in Jordan where, he says, the same reform game has been played since the 90s. Most people are still invested in the status quo - not because they believe in it - but because they cannot visualize the 'day after' scenario. Whatever 'uprisings', protests or demands have erupted have been small scale. Calls for the end of the regime are not voiced in a meaningful way nor is this a major demand of the mobilized parties. It is, he says, a misnomer to call Jordan moderate. Rather, it is an authoritarian regime which plays on domestic and foreign threats and is supported by institutional arrangements and economic and social agreements maintained through shifting alliances. The other myth is that Palestinians are marginalized in favor of the Trans-Jordan Jordanians is not true; the Palestinians have been incorporated. State funds and overseas aid are dispersed to benefit (placate) leaders of potential forces of mobilization. Jordan's powerful and often disgruntled tribal formations stick by the monarch, not out of loyalty, but because the king provides a balance between them; without him they fear a transformation in the balance of power. Thus the regime cannot be credited with keeping the peace, when in reality other parties toe the line simply because they are not confident they can function without the monarchy. Hence the opposition works within the system by defending the King against calls for him to go. They too are afraid that were he to go, the system would collapse, or Jordan would face Syrian-type civil strife. Overseas interests invested in maintaining the status quo in Jordan - a bastion of international intelligence agencies - also give the monarch the upper hand. Thus, it is not a question about why there has been no meaningful uprising in Jordan; it is more a case that authoritarian functions and structural relationships encourage groups with the potential for revolution to continue to invest in the status quo.

### **Session Three – The Evolving GCC**

Classifying the GCC countries as rentier states, **Mehran Kemrava** compared them to 'corporations' whose main objective is survival. Their response to the Arab Uprisings, he explains, was to tighten the political space while seeking to cement the social pact by pumping money into the economy, aided and abetted by the business community whose survival is linked to that of the regimes. Kemrava analyzed the new cooperation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia; former rivals vying for influence through their powerful media outlets. He considered the 'marriage of convenience' between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and the investment opportunities pursued by 'Qatar Inc' in the wake of the Arab Spring. The omnipresence of Iran and its potential to upset the status quo in the GCC, and between the GCC and the US, is, Kemrava suggests, another key challenge confronting the GCC.

**Toby Jones** initiated his talk by explaining that he had switched focus in order to concentrate on Saudi Arabia, its machinations over Bahrain and its manipulation of the media. One narrative, he suggested, is to say that Saudi Arabia has come out the winner in the context of the Uprisings but he prefers to argue the opposite: that while Saudi Arabia has created short-term stable structures, longer term problems will put pressure on a system already threatened by significant challenges: “We now have the conceptual framework to imagine alternative political outcomes,” he said. This is an era of mass politics, and the revolutionaries are not going anywhere. They are increasingly mobilized and interconnected, and even Saudi citizens have globalized and are verbalizing their grievances with the State. It is only a question of when they will become more demanding. He went on to say that in a rapidly shifting global energy regime resources need to be reassessed. The way the regimes are using their energy will drain existing resources. While hardline crisis management designed to ramp up the pressure and introduce the fear factor can be justified in the short-term by appealing to national identity cannot be sustained. It may give the appearance of stability but it is really a short-term fix, as is the Saudi game of pitting communities against each other for political gain.

For context, **Ala’a Shehabi** gave a sobering account of the Bahraini uprising in which she was a participant and which she insists is largely subjected to media blackout by the GCC countries. Sectarian persecution is active in essence and spirit, manipulated by Saudi Arabia with tactical support from the United States. Despite Saudi Arabia’s best efforts to suppress dissent, even to the point of proposed union with Bahrain, there is no going back in Ala’a’s opinion. She describes the current unrest as a 90-year historic struggle for self-determination that has crossed class and sexual boundaries. The Bahrainis are an estranged people driven by a desire for economic justice, to confront corruption and address their deteriorating social conditions compounded by the failure of neo-liberalism in the GCC. The United States meanwhile has no clear strategy on the way forward. The proposed formal political union with Saudi Arabia is a tactic to justify GCC troops in Bahrain. Another one is to avoid international scrutiny by creating domestic human rights organizations – ‘soft power’ – to better quell unrest. With US support, police, and other ‘reforms’, are underway, opening the door for Western consultants to step in, allowing the government to buy time. Ala’a predicts the mobilization of the Sunni sectarian constituency will come back to haunt the government, and while it looks like a stalemate, time is not on the government’s side.

## **Session Four – Regional Shifts and International Institutions**

In considering regional shifts **Bahgat Korany** pinpoints the onset of GCC influence as taking place following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. At this time, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait agreed to provide aid to Egypt, Syria and Jordan. This was followed by the Arab Oil embargo in 1973. The latest iteration lies in the decisions by the Arab states concerning Libya and Syria which, Korany says, were in essence GCC decisions since the GCC now dominates the Arab League. GCC financial power, he believes, will be crucial in the post uprising landscape. There could be a scenario whereby the GCC might lead or contribute to a potential Marshall plan. Whatever happens, GCC influence will be there. Korany's second consideration was Camp David which, he says, was more than a Peace Treaty; it was designed to shift the balance of power, disengaging Egypt from the Soviet Union and attempting to integrate Israel into the region through the Oslo accords and the Jordan Peace Treaty. It did not work but the option of interstate wars was eliminated. He does not believe Egypt will succumb to the pressure to cancel Camp David. The third regional shift involves Syria. Whatever else that struggle is about, Korany believes it is mainly aimed at eliminating Iran from the picture. When the solution is finally hammered out, the end result will be to detach Iran from Syria and Hizbollah, thereby creating another regional shift.

**Waleed Hazbun** considered the historic and the current role of the US, in particular its failed policy of supporting regimes alienated from their own people. He feels the US was slow to acknowledge the push for change, both in the context of the Bush administration and the current one. Obama ignored it in the Cairo speech then acknowledged it in 2011 after Tunisia. The changes have put the US in the awkward position of having to recognize the people's demands for governance and accountability whilst trying to maintain its own oil and strategic interests. Once again, the US is hoping to align compliant states with Israel by encouraging new centers of power like Qatar and Turkey.

The new demands in the Arab world are far removed from US interests in the region. As a result, the US is left with a dilemma: whether to exert influence through diplomacy or try to impose control through counter revolutionary forces. The game is currently being played out in Syria, where Russia has reasserted its influence and the US is backing powers like Saudi Arabia and Qatar; their agenda is not fully aligned with the US paradigm, thus impairing US ability to shape events to its liking.

**Bachir Saadeh** addressed the changing role of non-state actors like Hamas and Hizbollah, which are essentially non-democratic actors; even though both have played a certain role in the democratic process. In the security pact that groups Iran, Syria, Hizbollah and Hamas, there is no place for democratic discussion. This is not unique; many states keep the issue of security outside of the rest of the political arena. The tribal structure of Hizbollah and Hamas and consequently its status in the community, gives these organizations the latitude required when taking key decisions (as evidenced by Hamas's decision to declare its support for the Syrian people). Whatever type of government eventually comes to Syria it is bound to weaken the security pact because the new administration will have more pressing concerns to address.

**Karim Makdisi** asked how we should interpret the role of the UN in the Uprisings? On the official website of the UN, the Arab world is front and center in terms of UN concerns, including the uprisings described as “the winds of change in the Arab World.” Surprisingly, the UN has excluded Syria as well as Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, including Lebanon from these winds. During a speech to the UN in reference to Libya, the Ambassador of France to the UN declared that the UN should send a warning to leaders attempting to suppress the “wind of liberty”. Makdisi suggested the need to contextualize and historicize the shifts in UN policy before referring to the current context whereby the UN intervened in Libya but not in Bahrain, Yemen and Egypt; it is still ambiguous over Syria. He asked why is UN intervention in the Arab-Israeli conflict missing? He analyzed key milestones in shifting UN policies, including its peacekeeping operations and its system of grading states, particularly failed states. In historical moments, he asked, when is the UN allowed to express itself and when is it not?

Furthermore, he underlined that a continuous interplay between national and international political structures exists. On the one hand, UN resolutions are regularly decided upon in the Security Council, which in the past has been often dominated by the US trying to impose a certain structure. On the other hand, he argues that there are certain struggles within the UN as well as with actors and recipients of aid. This can be seen in resolution 1701, for example, that was initially imposed by the US under Chapter VII. By the time it was implemented on the ground it was operating under Chapter VI (and a half, describing a more robust force than strictly under Chapter VI). Finally, he argued that the humanitarian idea of missions and interventions is good in thought but that it is implemented unevenly and often does not consider the reaction from the recipients of aid.

## **Session Five – The Uprisings Now: Resilience in Authoritarianism or Revolution?**

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**Bassam Haddad** warned that the economic considerations that were among the drivers of the Uprisings will still be in place once the dust settles. We are, he predicted, going to see the return of certain neo-liberal prescriptions through the back door. The same structures prevail and we cannot just wish them away. The assumption that neo-liberalism is imposed from above, as a package, does not take into account vested local and global interests. Neo-liberalism, he says, has served two functions: to buttress authoritarian regimes and to prolong their shelf life. Little has changed in spite of the Uprisings, and scant systematic attention has been given to political and economic variables. He recognizes that the Arab world is not a single unit of analysis and that there are limits to commonality. In this context, he examined the impact of Syria’s neo-liberal policies, whereby the elite and the business sector thrived to the detriment of the rest of the population and most especially the rural poor and the former productive sectors. This, compounded by drought, rural migration, and the inability of smaller towns like Homs and Hama to absorb this human influx, he says, explains a lot of what we are seeing in Syria today. The most egregious problems, he

believes, stem from this economic disempowerment and alienation. However, he warns that social justice cannot supersede capital interests and these are guaranteed to creep back, repackaged, into the system. The chances of this being otherwise are slim, he concluded.

**Rami Zurayk** commented that Bassam had just pre-empted his speech and that he endorsed his views. He reminded participants of the plight of local farmers renting from absentee landlords and of the current famine in Yemen, where revolution and uprising have little significance for those eking out a living on hillside terraces. He gave many examples of fear and displacement in the rural sector, giving voice to the Syrian Bedouin now sheltering in the Bekaa valley and wondering how events on the ground are going to change his life. He said, "one year ago I spoke about feeding the Arab Uprisings and I ended with a quote from the African revolutionary Amilcar Cabral who said 'Nobody made a successful revolution without a revolutionary theory.' We don't seem to have any revolutionary theory binding the Uprisings." "What does link them," he said, "is the tremendous impact of rapid change from a productive agrarian economy to one based on services. This is compounded by the absence of any attempt to manage resulting social and economic changes. Rural dwellers represent fifty per cent of the Arab population. The sector has been disenfranchised and people are living in poverty. While the relative proportion of people in rural areas is declining, the absolute number is increasing. And yet the Arab world is the most food insecure region, environmentally, policy-wise, in terms of structural change and because of the diet change." "If you want to buy food from outside that's fine," Zurayk said, "but what do you do with the 50 percent whose livelihood has been wiped out and when nobody wants them as migrants?" In conclusion, he warned that while the Islamists have been declared as 'big winners', it should be noted that they are economic atheists.

**Joshua Stacher** said the whole notion of transition into democracy is problematic - where is it transitioning to he asked? He talked about the need to focus on the importance of the networks of ruling coalitions. He gave an analysis of the differences between authoritarian regimes and why some responded better to crises than others. He pointed out: "If you have centralized executive decision-making, you can carry out disciplined control and implementation". The flipside is decentralization, with more power sharing, but this slows the ability to parse out and solve emerging problems. This, he said, is the difference between Egypt and Syria where, in Egypt, SCAF stepped in and took remedial action before inserting itself as the centralized executive. In Syria, despite appearances that there is a decentralized authority, the weaker state bureaucracy has protracted the decision-making. The outcomes are still unknown, he said, but we should start looking at these networks of ruling coalitions and at how they are trying to re-establish themselves. He suggests we should also look beyond the Middle East at the history of other uprisings, such as in Romania, Serbia and Indonesia where leadership changes eventually reverted to exclusionary designs. His own focus remains on SCAF and its ability to manipulate the agenda while co-opting other players, most especially the ascendant Muslim Brotherhood, which appears to be ready to cooperate in the demobilization of the protestors. He concluded by saying that while the uprisings are being framed as national events, we need to look at the external contributors. He asks: "who in Western and regional capitals is investing in what relationships and policies in collusion with the hierarchies in an effort to maintain their power?"

## **Session Six – Palestine and the Uprisings: Reconciliation, Reform and Representation**

At a time of widespread speculation about the rehabilitation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), **Anis Kassim** gave an opportune reminder of its historic, essentially unprecedented, achievements. His legal analysis of its gains and milestones included the PLO's unique status as a UN observer with the right to participate in all the General Assembly debates – a privilege hard won through a verdict from the International Court of Justice; its participation in all UN subsidiaries, as well as the invitation to the PLO to participate in the debate about the Israeli bombing of Lebanon. In essence, the PLO enjoyed the status of 'state' with all privileges, including the right to table resolutions, but excluding the right to vote. He also reminded participants of the stature with which the PLO was regarded in the Diaspora and throughout the Arab countries, where Arab governments collected taxes on its behalf. The Organization was accepted as a full member of the Arab League, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund and many others. In light of this history, Kassim said he found Abu Mazen's UN membership bid in September 2011 to be futile. The PLO does not need a change of status at the UN, he said, it needs rehabilitation. This is crucial to the Palestinian struggle. In the Palestinian Diaspora there is a clear momentum towards this and towards the election of new members of the Palestinian Council. These factors, in his opinion, form part of the Palestinian Arab Spring in the context of the Arab Uprisings.

**Mohsen Saleh** outlined three strategic threats identified by Israel six years ago in the context of Palestine: internal transformation of the Occupied Territories; the corruption and weakness of the Arab regimes bordering Palestine and their possible ouster in favor of Islamic regimes with animosity to Israel; and the Palestinian demographic boom expected by 2016-17 to surpass the Israeli population. These changes, he says, have begun to materialize. When people took to the streets during the Uprisings, it reflected the role of the Palestinian citizens during the first Intifada and once again there is a shift on the Palestinian street. The new environment reflects Arab and Palestinian aspirations and their perception of Israel. He also perceives a change in attitude towards Palestine in the world at large. On the Islamic front he sees positive outcomes for Hamas and others, whereby a regenerated Arab/Islamic movement will recognize and respond to Hamas's aspirations; but he warns of the danger of exploiting the Sunni-Shia gap and widening tensions in the region. Palestine should be the title on which everyone agrees, he says, including the Iranians and Hizbullah.

Saleh sees the change of regime in Egypt as a chance to revitalize the Resistance and lift the embargo on Gaza. For the moment Egypt is neutral, he says, and in this regard Hamas could be considered a legitimate Arab player involved in restructuring the Palestinian approach. The conflict between Hamas and Fatah played well for the Israelis, so reconciliation is vital. It will require many compromises and the involvement of the Palestinian Diaspora in the reconciliation process is a positive influence. Negative aspects include Israel's ever-increasing militarization, the Judaization process, and attempts to cripple Palestinian factions related to Syria. Hamas's shift from Syria was welcomed because it had the backing of the people, but Palestinians should be aware of not dragging the Diaspora into the internal conflicts of other countries.

**Rami Khouri** reminded participants that the Palestinian conflict is the longest running in the world, crossing the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and representing 64 years in exile, 10 years longer than that of the ancient Jews in Babylonia. These 10 years are significant, he said, because by the third generation attitudes change and so they have with Palestinians. Today there are many activist sites and movements that no longer acquiesce to long-term exile. They reaffirm Palestinian rights and, like the Jews before them, strive to keep their nationhood alive long-term in the Diaspora. They are responding to events in the Arab world, the Occupied Territories, the Uprisings and amongst themselves. People previously separated by physical barriers are in touch, recreating their communities, their collective reassertion of their fundamental humanity, their right to live in their ancestral homeland and to negotiate a fair resolution. Khouri welcomes the new dynamism of non-violent peaceful struggle, the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation, and the BDS movement, which is gaining momentum even in churches in the United States. He points to new reluctance on the part of Israelis to attend campuses in the US and Canada for fear of being heckled, and of the unwillingness of high-level Israelis to travel abroad for fear of being arrested for crimes against humanity. Through these means and in terms of the Uprisings, he says that for the first time in his lifetime he sees that Arab public opinion matters and contained therein is a centrality and commonality about the Palestinian cause and the threat to stability caused by Israel (a recent Gallup poll shows that 84 percent of Arabs felt they should not recognize Israel). If the recent Uprisings were about honor and dignity, then Palestine is at the heart of those sentiments, and the Arab-Israel conflict is key.



## Participants Biographies

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**Ahmad Dallal** is Provost of the American University of Beirut and Professor of history in its Department of History and Archaeology. He joined AUB in the summer of 2009 from Georgetown University in Washington, DC, where he served as the chair of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. His previous academic appointments were at Stanford University (2000-03), Yale University (1994-2000), and Smith College (1990-94). Dallal's scholarship focuses on the history of science, Islamic revivalist thought, and Islamic law. His most recent publication *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History* (Yale University Press, 2010) traces the historical delineations between scientific knowledge and religious authority in Muslim societies. He received his BE (1980) from AUB's Department of Mechanical Engineering, and his PhD (1990) in Islamic Studies from the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures at Columbia University.

**Rami G. Khouri** is the Director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut, as well as a columnist at the Beirut-based Daily Star newspaper. He is an internationally syndicated political columnist and book author, and a fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School and the Dubai School of Government. He has been a visiting scholar at Stanford, Syracuse, Tufts, Mt. Holyoke and Northeastern universities, and in November 2006 he was the co-recipient of the Pax Christi International Peace Award for his efforts to bring peace and reconciliation to the Middle East. He was a Nieman journalism fellow at Harvard University in 2001-02, and recently served for four years on the international advisory board of the International Committee of the Red Cross. He has a BA in political science and MSc in journalism from Syracuse University.

**Karim Makdisi** is an Associate Professor of International Politics in the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at AUB. He is also the Associate Director of AUB's Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, as well its Faculty Director for the "UN in the Arab Region" research project. Makdisi was elected by his peers as a founding member of the Board of Trustees of the recently established Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS). He received his PhD in International Relations from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University (Boston, USA). One of his main current research projects centers on the United Nations as a site of conflict, and his most recently publication is: Makdisi, Karim (2011), "Constructing Security Council Resolution 1701 for Lebanon in the Shadow of the 'War on Terror', *International Peacekeeping*, 18:1, 4-20. Prior to joining AUB, Makdisi worked at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) for three years.

**Ziad Abu-Rish** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). He holds an M.A. in Arab Studies from Georgetown University and a B.A. in History from Whitman College. He is currently writing his dissertation, provisionally entitled "Making the Economy, Producing the State: Conflict and Institution Building in Early Independence Lebanon, 1943-1958." The project seeks to narrate and analyze struggles to organize the Lebanese political economy in the wake of independence. In addition to his academic training, Abu-Rish serves on the editorial teams of both the *Arab Studies Journal* and *Jadaliyya Ezine*. He is currently the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association.

**Bassam Haddad** is Director of the Middle East Studies Program and teaches in the Department of Public and International Affairs at George Mason University, and is Visiting Professor at Georgetown University. He is the author of *Business Networks in Syria: The Political Economy of Authoritarian Resilience* (Stanford University Press, 2011). Bassam recently published "The Political Economy of Syria: Realities and Challenges," in *Middle East Policy* and is currently editing a volume on *Teaching the Middle East After the Arab Uprisings*, a book manuscript on pedagogical and theoretical approaches. Haddad serves as Founding Editor of the peer-reviewed research publication *Arab Studies Journal* and is director of a critically acclaimed film series on Arabs and Terrorism, based on extensive field research/interviews. He also serves on the Editorial Committee of *Middle East Report* and is Co-Founder/Editor of *Jadaliyya Ezine*.

**Waleed Hazbun** is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut (AUB) where he teaches international relations, international political economy, and US foreign policy. He also serves as Director of AUB's Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES). He earned a BA from Princeton University and holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the MIT. Before joining AUB in 2010, he taught at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland and served on the editorial committee of *Middle East Report*. Hazbun is the author of *Beaches, Ruins, Resorts: The Politics of Tourism in the Arab World* (Minnesota, 2008), and recently began writing a biweekly online column for *opendemocracy.net*.

**Toby Jones** is Associate Professor of history at Rutgers University. His scholarship focuses on the political history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Middle East, primarily in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Prior to that, he was a fellow at Princeton University's Oil, Energy and the Middle East project, and worked as a political analyst for the International Crisis Group. Jones is author of *Desert Kingdom: How Oil and Water Forged Modern Saudi Arabia* (Harvard, 2010). He is currently working on a new book project *America's Oil Wars* also to be published by Harvard University Press. Jones has published numerous articles in *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Journal of American History*, *The Nation*, the *New York Times*, and the *Arab Reform Bulletin*, among others.

**Mehran Kamrava** is Professor and Director of the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar. He is the author of a number of books, most recently, *The Modern Middle East: A Political History since the First World War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (University of California Press, 2011) and *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). His edited books include *The International Politics of the Persian Gulf* (Syracuse University Press, 2011) and *Innovation in Islam: Traditions and Contributions* (University of California Press, 2011), as well as *The Political Economy of the Persian Gulf* and *The Nuclear Question in the Middle East* (both by Columbia University Press, 2012).

**Anis F. Kassim** has been a practicing lawyer since 1973. He practiced law in Kuwait from 1975 – 1990, and since 1993 practices law in Amman, Jordan. In 1991 – 1993 he served as the Legal Counsel to the Palestinian Delegation in Madrid and Washington negotiation. In 1981 – 1984 he served as a judge in the Arab League Administrative Tribunal. He started and became the Editor in Chief of the Palestine Yearbook of International Law, and still serves as the Consulting Editor of the Yearbook. He was a member of the Palestinian defence team before the International Court of Justice in the *Wall* case.

**Bahgat Korany** is the Director of the AUC Forum. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a research professor at the University of Montreal, Canada. He has authored numerous conference papers and was guest editor for *International Political Science Review*, *Etudes Internationales*, and *Third World Quarterly*. In addition to publishing monographs and several books, Korany has contributed many articles to periodicals such as *International Social Science Journal*, *Peace Research Society Papers (Canada)*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *Third World Affairs Yearbook*, and *World Politics*. His writings have been translated and published in Arabic, Spanish, Italian and Chinese.

**Jean Said Makdissi** taught English and Humanities at the Beirut University College (presently the Lebanese American University) for many years. She has worked with the women's movement in Lebanon, and has written on Arab women and feminism, literature, and the cinema. She has participated in numerous international and regional conferences, and has been an active member of the Lebanese Association of Women Researchers, co-editing several books, and co-organizing several conferences. Most recently, she co-organized a major international conference on *Arab Feminisms: A Critical Perspective* held at AUB in October 2009. She is the author of *Beirut Fragments: A War Memoir* (Persea Books, 1999) and *Teta, Mother and Me: Three Generations of Arab Women* (W.W. Norton, 2006).

**Ahmad Moussalli** is a Professor of Islamic and Western Political Thought in the Political Studies and Public Administration Department at AUB. He has received several awards including research grants from the Earhart Foundation in 1995 and 1999 and a Fullbright Senior Scholar research grant in 1998. Moussalli recently served as a visiting professor with both the Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding at Georgetown University and the Carsten Niebuhr Institute for Near Eastern Studies at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. Included among his numerous books are *The Historical Dictionary of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Scarecrow Press, 1999) and *Human Rights, Pluralism and Democracy in Islam* (University Press of Florida, 2003).

**Nada Al-Nashif** is Regional Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Regional Office for Arab States and formerly ILO Assistant Director-General in 2007. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of Imagine Nations Group (USA) and as Chair of the Knowledge Consortium of Silatech (Qatar). She is also member of the Advisory Board at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, Weidenfeld Scholarships and Leadership Programme (UK) and a member of the Board of Trustees of the "Welfare Association". In 1991, Al-Nashif started with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) before joining the ILO. She holds a Masters in Public Policy (MPP) from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and a BA in Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) from Balliol College, Oxford University.

**Bashir Saade** holds a PhD in War Studies from King's College, University of London. The subject of his research was the ideological and textual production of Hizbullah through affiliated intellectuals. His PhD thesis is currently in the process of being published. Bashir Saade holds an MSc from the London School of Economics where he specialized in International Political Economy. His dissertation focused on the ideological underpinnings of the discipline. Bashir slowly shifted his interests outside the traditional Political Science discipline to embrace a multi-disciplinary perspective including anthropological and sociological conceptual tools. His current research aims at proposing new perspectives on understanding the relations between Islamic movements and states. He also studies the political philosophy of western and non-western traditions across history.

**Mohsen Saleh** is an Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Arab History, General Manager of Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, Editor-in-Chief of the annual *Palestinian Strategic Report*. Formerly, Saleh was head of the Department of History and Civilization at the International Islamic University (IIUM), Malaysia, and former executive manager of Middle East Studies Centre in Amman. He was granted the *Bait al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem) award for Young Muslims Scholars in 1997, and the Excellent Teaching Award (College level), given by IIUM in 2002. Saleh is the author, contributing author and editor/co-editor of numerous books, and the editor of electronic daily *Palestine Today*. He has also published many articles in refereed scholarly journals and magazines, and is a frequent commentator on current issues in broadcast media.

**Hesham Sallam** is a doctoral candidate in government at Georgetown University and co-editor of *Jadaliyya Ezine*. His research focuses on Islamist movements and the politics of economic reform in the Arab World. Sallam's research has previously received the support of the US Institute of Peace and the Social Science Research Council. He is former program specialist at the US Institute of Peace. Past institutional affiliations include Middle East Institute, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, and the World Security Institute. Sallam received a BA in political science from the University of Pittsburgh and an MA in Arab Studies from Georgetown University.

**Ala'a Shehabi** is an Economics lecturer in Bahrain, a writer, and a pro-democracy activist. She is a founding member of Bahrain Watch and the Bahrain Anti-Violence and Rehabilitation Organisation. She writes for the *Guardian*, *Jadaliyya*, *Foreign Policy*, and *Uncut*.

**Joshua Stacher** is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Kent State University. He is the author of *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Stanford UP, 2012). He is a regular contributor to and on the editorial board of MERIP's influential *Middle East Report*. Stacher has made media appearances and written commentary for NPR, CNN, BBC, Al-Jazeera, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Jadaliyya*, among others. He is also a founding member of the Northeast Ohio Consortium on Middle East Studies. Stacher will be a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center of Scholars during the 2012-2013 Academic Year.

**Rami Zurayk** is the author of *Food, Farming and Freedom: Sowing the Arab Spring* (Just World Books, 2011), and *War Diary: Lebanon 2006* (Just World Books, 2011). He is a Professor in the department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB). He is a long-time activist for political and social justice. He studied at AUB and at Oxford University. His research addresses issues at the nexus of food, landscapes, and livelihoods. He has published over a hundred articles, monographs and technical reports on agriculture, food, environment and education.

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