

THE MIDDLE EAST STUDIES FORUM PRESENTS

THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

2-4 November 2016

Deakin University Burwood campus

The Middle East Studies Forum is proud to host a major national conference to explore the challenges facing the Middle East. Speakers will address questions such as: Will the region's sectarian divide continue to widen? What future do minorities and women have in the region? Will democratic change come from within? And what does the future hold?

Speakers include:

- Anthony Bubalo (Deputy Director, Lowy Institute)
- Emeritus Professor Joseph Camilleri (La Trobe University)
- Associate Professor Benjamin Isakhan (Deakin University)
- Dr Benjamin MacQueen (Monash University)
- Dr Sarah Phillips (University of Sydney)
- Professor Ihsan Yilmaz (Deakin University)

The conference will be opened by the Chair of the Council for Australian-Arab Relations, Sue Ismiel will open the conference

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION CLOSES SEPT 15 -

Register at: <https://t.co/N398NZC1bK>

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November 2: HDR Workshops
November 3-4: Full conference

The Middle East has experienced endless turmoil since the turn of the millennium. In the past 16 years, the region has endured international intervention, the rise of sectarian conflict, civil wars, drought, nuclear threats, collapsed oil prices and structural economic challenges. The Arab Spring—once hailed as the region's great grassroots push for democracy—failed to banish dictatorship from the region, instead leading to conflicts in Libya, Syria and Yemen, renewed dictatorship in Egypt, and leaving international terrorist groups in charge of large swathes of territory across the region. Key indicators of development, liberty, tolerance and equality have simultaneously declined.

Yet glimmers of hope remain. Tunisia has become a rare democratic outpost, while the 2016 Iranian election returned the largest number of female deputies to parliament since the 1979 revolution. Likewise, within days of the short-lived 2016 Syrian ceasefire beginning, war ravaged pro-democracy protesters returned to the streets across the country.

This complex environment prompts us to bring together leading scholars from across Australia to examine the future of the Middle East. Some of the key questions to be addressed include:

- What is the trajectory of political developments in the region?
- What does this mean for the future of the nation-state?
- Will the sectarian conflict continue to build?
- What future do democratic values have in the Middle East?
- To what extent is extremism setting the agenda, and where are the voices of resistance located?
- What are the ramifications for women and minorities?

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh (Conference convenor)

Dr James Barry

Ms Dara Conduit (Conference secretary)

Professor Fethi Mansouri