

Middle East Studies Forum Annual Report



2022 in review

In 2022, we moved from strength to strength. Deakin University was listed for a second time as Australia's top institution for Middle East and Islamic Studies. We celebrate Dr Arif Saba receiving his PhD and Prof Ben Isakhan being named Australia's Leading Researcher in Middle East and Islamic Studies.

Research Recognition

In 2022 our members saw continued success. Dr Safiullah Taye became a member of the Board of International Advisory Editors at the Middle East Critique Journal. Prof Ihsan Yilmaz gained success in the new ARC Discovery Project titled: Civilisations Mobilisation, Digital Technologies and Social Cohesion, with Dr Priya Chacko and Dr Ana-Maria Bliuc. Dr Arif Saba completed his PhD and has been awarded his doctoral certificate. Prof Benjamin Isakhan was named Australia's Leading Researcher in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in the *The Australian* annual research report. The Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation was proud to host an international research consortium for Elrha's Global Prioritisation Exercise, led by Dr Marian Abouzeid. We are thrilled with the achievements made by our members. Looking at this track record, it is not hard to see why Deakin University continues to spearhead research on the Middle East.

Academic Achievements

This year our members made outstanding contributions to knowledge by publishing books and articles in esteemed journals. We celebrated four book releases:

- Shahram Akbarzadeh (2022): *Middle East Politics & International Relations: Crisis Zone* (Routledge)
- Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber & Michelle Pace (2022): *Routledge Handbook of EU-Middle East Relations* (Routledge)
- Imran Ahmed, Zahid Shahab Ahmed, Howard Brasted & Shahram Akbarzadeh (ed) (2022): *Religion, Extremism and Violence in South Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan)

- Ihsan Yilmaz (2022): *Authoritarianism, Informal Law, and Legal Hybridity: The Islamisation of the State in Turkey*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

MESF members published [twenty-five journal articles](#) this year in top ranking journals. A sample of 2022 publications:

- Shahram Akbarzadeh, William Gourlay & Anoushiravan Ehteshami (2022): 'Iranian proxies in the Syrian conflict: Tehran's 'forward-defence' in action', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Published online 4 Jan 2022.
- Galib Bashirov (2022): 'The not-so Great Game: the political economy of changing US energy policy in the Caspian Sea' *Review of International Political Economy*, Published online 17 Feb 2022
- Ihsan Yilmaz, M. Demir(2022): 'Manufacturing the Ummah: Turkey's Transnational Populism and Construction of the People Globally', *Third World Quarterly*, Published online 2 Dec 2022.
- Ihsan Yilmaz and M. Demir. (2022): Manufacturing the Ummah: Turkey's Transnational Populism and Construction of the People Globally, *Third World Quarterly*, Published online 2 December 2022.
- Ihsan Yilmaz (2022): Muslim Secularism by Conduct: Attitudes of Young Australian Muslims to Legal Pluralism and Sharia, *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Published online 2 December 2022.
- Joshua Roose, Mario Peucker, & Shahram Akbarzadeh (2022): 'Socio-Economic Disadvantages and Lack of Recognition: Impacts on Citizenship Within Australian Muslim Communities' *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Published online 25 Jul 2022.
- Ahmed S. Hashim (2022): 'Iran at War: From Cyrus to Soleimani' *Middle East Policy*, Published online 12 Sep 2022.
- Benjamin Isakhan & William Gourlay (2022): 'State-society relations and inter-communal dynamics in conflict: Non-Muslim minorities in post-IS Iraq', *Nations and Nationalism*, Published online 24 Apr 2022.
- Ihsan Yilmaz & Mustafa Demir (2022): 'Emotions in a diaspora's interpretation of political developments in their place of origin: the case of Australian Armenians from Turkey', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Published online 24 Apr 2022.

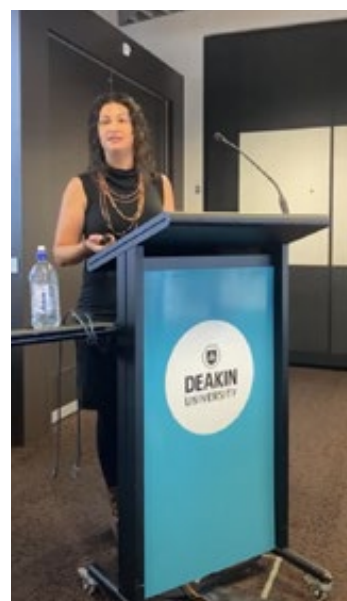
MESF Events

2022 saw four main events hosted that year. May held a webinar on 'The implications of the war in Ukraine for the Middle East' with an esteemed panel consisting of Prof. Sadegh Zibakalam (University of Tehran), A/Prof. Nikolay Kozhanov (the Gulf Studies Center of Qatar University), A/Prof. Anicée Van Engeland (Cranfield University) in conversation with Prof Shahram Akbarzadeh. May was also the celebration of Abbas Farasoo completing his PhD at Deakin University in 2022. He researched the impact of proxy war in Afghanistan. Before joining Deakin University he was Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Ambassador at Afghanistan Embassy in Australia (2014-2017).

Dr Jessie Moritz (Australian National University), lecturer at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (CAIS) at the ANU, presented a powerful webinar presentation on 'Satire and the State in Saudi Arabia' in June. The event examined how satirists navigate highly repressive authoritarian environments and how they respond to attempts to coopt their work by the state.

Lastly in December a conference was held on Deakin's Burwood Campus titled 'The Middle East in Transition' exploring the question, "with the rapid global changes that have occurred since the start of the COVID pandemic, are established understandings of Middle East politics and society still relevant?" Prof Sarah Phillips (University of Sydney) presented the keynote 'After al-Qa'ida, after ISIS? Violence in the Middle East.'

Thank you to all who attended and contributed to these important conversations.



Funding Success

MESF enjoyed great success in funding this year - another indicator of the calibre of our members and their dedication to providing cutting-edge research.

Prof Ihsan Yilmaz	Civilisationist Mobilisation, Digital Technologies and Social Cohesion	ARC Discovery
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Selected Projects in 2022

MESF members engaged in pioneering research. A selection of these projects are listed below, demonstrating the breadth and depth of our expertise and competitiveness.

Lead	Project Name	Funding Body	Duration
A/Prof Benjamin Isakhan	After Islamic State: Local-State-Global Heritage Dynamics in Syria and Iraq	Australian Research Council	2020-2024
Prof Fethi Mansouri	Mapping Social Services Provisions for Diverse Communities	Australian Research Council	2020-2023
Prof Fethi Mansouri	A Transcultural Approach to Belonging and Engagement among Migrant Youth	Australian Research Council	2020-2023
Shahram Akbarzadeh, Ihsan Yilmaz, Zahid Ahmed and Mahmoud Pargoo	Digital technology and the future of democracy in the Muslim world	Gerda Henkel Foundation	2021-2024
Dr Marian Abouzeid	The Global Prioritisation Exercise	Elrha	2022-2024

We celebrate Professor Sally Totman's appointment as Head of School, Social Works and Arts at Charles Stuart University and look forward to our future engagement. Prof Sally was a trailblazer in Middle East studies at Deakin University and will continue her contribution as a MESF non-resident member.

PROFESSOR SHAHRAM AKBARZADEH,
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES FORUM CONVENOR