



# **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA**

## **Digest of Current Publications and Events**

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**19.01.2018**

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## CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

### **Without Boundaries: The Global Middle East, Then and Now - The Middle East Studies Association 52nd annual meeting**

15-18 November 2018, in San Antonio, TX

Deadline: 15 February 2018

Many of the problems that concern scholars of the Middle East transcend national and regional boundaries. Contemporary concerns about global warming, environmental degradation, migration and refugees, social movements, human rights and humanitarianism, global economic policy, intellectual networks and cultural exchange—both in their present and historical incarnations—can only be addressed fully if social scientists and humanists expand their vision beyond the constructed boundaries that have all too often constricted it. MESA welcomes paper and panel submissions in early 2018 that respond to this theme.

All Topics Welcome Within MESA's Purview

MESA is primarily concerned with the area encompassing Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Israel, Pakistan, and the countries of the Arab World from the seventh century to modern times. Other regions, including Spain, Southeastern Europe, China and the former Soviet Union, also are included for the periods in which their territories were parts of the Middle Eastern empires or were under the influence of Middle Eastern civilization. Comparative work is encouraged.

Member Calls for Participation

Please visit: <http://mesana.org/annual-meeting/member-calls.html> for a list of member calls for participation (panel organizers looking for papers; paper presenters looking for panels).

*More information [here](#)*

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### **Seventh Annual Radical Democracy Conference: What is to be done?**

27-28 April 2018, New York City

Deadline: 15 February 2018

Keynote speaker: Professor Martin Breugh (York University)

The Department of Politics at The New School for Social Research is sponsoring its 7th Annual graduate student conference on the concept, history, practices and implications of radical democracy.

If the preconditions for the rise of the far-right, xenophobia, white supremacy, ethno-nationalism, right-wing populism, religious fundamentalism and fascism can be found within liberal democracy and neo-liberalism, laying bare the violent foundations of the liberal democratic project, then what hope can theories of radical democracy offer toward re-founding society on democratic principles? How have the rise of social movements such as Occupy, the Arab Spring, Rojava, Black Lives Matter, Standing Rock, 15M, AntiFa, and the emergence of left alternatives such as Podemos, MAS and Syriza both exposed the contradictions of institutionalism, capitalism, rule of law, deliberation and other aspects of liberal democracy, and also illuminated the need for radical democratic alternatives? How can we draw inspiration from movements of resistance and networks of solidarity from those being organized inside prisons and detention centers to those occurring from Ferguson to Palestine? How can radical democratic theories help us to (re)imagine strategies of resistance and beyond, opening up new prospects of what is to be done?

We invite abstracts and panel proposals that deal with these questions or other themes dealing with the implications or critiques of radical democracy in our current historical conjuncture. We welcome papers that engage with the myriad of radical democratic theories, from a historical perspective investigating its salience in the history of political thought to more contemporary formulations like Abensour, Brown, Castoriadis, Davis, García Linera, Laclau, Mouffe, Negri, Rancière and Wolin among others. Proposals should not be limited to this list, on the contrary, we are particularly interested in papers and panels utilizing or critiquing the concept of radical democracy itself from the point of view of feminism, post- anti- or de-colonialism, queer theory, indigenous studies, disability studies, critical race theory, or social movements.

Our keynote speaker is Martin Breugh, Associate Professor of Political Theory at York University (Toronto). His research focuses on the theory and practice of emancipatory politics and radical democracy. He is the author of *The Plebeian Experience. A Discontinuous History of Political Freedom* published in Paris in 2007 and translated in 2013 at Columbia University Press. He is also the author of the co-edited volume, *Thinking Radical Democracy: The Return to Politics in Post-war France*, published in 2015.

For individual paper proposals, please submit a one-page abstract (max. 300 words) that includes institutional affiliation, academic level and contact information. Complete panel proposals with up to four papers are strongly encouraged. Please submit your paper or panel abstracts by February 15, 2018 to [radicaldemocracy@newschool.edu](mailto:radicaldemocracy@newschool.edu). Selected participants will be notified early March. Full conference papers are due by April 15th, 2018

More information [here](#)

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## **Social Movements and Protest: Race, Ethnicity, and Radicalism**

4-5 May 2018, San Diego State University

Deadline: 31 January 2018

Join us for the *Mobilization* conference on Social Movements and Protest: Race, Ethnicity, and Radicalism on May 4-5, 2018!

The second conference at San Diego State University is planned as an informal and friendly gathering to present your current work, discuss it with others, network, and, generally, ponder the new directions in which our field is heading. Plenary sessions will emphasize strategies, tactics, and nonviolent approaches to social change about racial and ethnic issues. For open-call sessions, your research on a variety of topics is invited.

The last year's conference was a great success: 140 attendees, 123 presenters, 34 paper sessions, and engaging plenary sessions. We invite all our colleagues studying social movements to our second gathering. Hotel rooms are available in historic Old Town San Diego, an easy trolley ride to the university and a 10-minute ride to San Diego's scenic harbor, Seaport Village, and Gas Lamp Quarter. The conference is planned as an informal and friendly gathering to present your current work, discuss it with others, network, and, generally, ponder new trends and directions in which our field is going. Plenary sessions will focus on strategies, tactics, and nonviolent approaches to confronting racial and ethnic divisions in a variety of state contexts but with emphasis on current racial and ethnic/immigrant strategies to nonviolently confront social violence. Submissions on a range of topics in our field are invited for paper sessions. Organizers will attempt to accommodate submissions by assigning papers to thematic sessions such as:

- Immigration and social movements
- Identity movements
- Strategies of nonviolence
- Tactical variation and movement outcomes
- Radicalism in contemporary movements
- Trends in social movement theory/critical perspectives
- Violent versus nonviolent strategies
- Contemporary issues and popular protest
- Social media, digital technologies, and repertoire shift
- Crossnational and historical analysis
- And more, depending on submissions

Abstracts are due January 31, 2018. You are welcome to contact Mobilization's publication office directly if you have any questions: [Mobilization.Quarterly@sdsu.edu](mailto:Mobilization.Quarterly@sdsu.edu)

More information [here](#)

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## TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

### **How to Understand Popular Uprisings and what Remains of the Arab Revolutions?**

24 January 2018, 5 pm

Venue: Forum Transregionale Studien, Wallotstr. 14, 14193 Berlin, Germany

Speakers: Alia Mossallam, Yassin Al-Hajj Saleh

The popular uprisings of the year 2011 in several Arab countries have been described as extraordinary and transformative experiences and events by participants and observers. For the latter, perhaps with the exception of Tunisia, hopes and expectations for countries with open doors and more space for freedom and social justice have turned into tragedy, for many of the former the revolution is an ongoing present. Seven years after, authoritarian forms of governance, gated spaces, sectarian and identitarian politics have been restored in new forms and scales. We would like to discuss how to talk and reflect about an ongoing struggle. How do the revolutions reconfigure our understanding of similar struggles of the past? How do we judge success and failure, and where do we go from here? What remains or persists of the Arab revolutions? These questions will be at the heart of the conversation. *More information* [here](#)

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### **Egypt as Effigy: Predatory Power, Hijacked History, and the Devolution of Revolution**

24 January 2018, 18:30 – 20:00

Venue: LSE, Wolfson Theatre, New Academic Building, 54 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London

Speaker: Adel Iskandar, Simon Fraser University

Seven years since the popular uprising that shook Egypt, the relationships between state, society, social movements and corporate power have been reconfigured, perhaps even disfigured. On the eve of the anniversary of the January 25 revolution, Adel Iskandar reflects on these changes and asks how they have affected our understanding of social, cultural and political life in the country. He argues that Egypt today is a replica of various historic Egypts, each manifesting as an effigy built for either public scrutiny or glorification. *More information* [here](#)

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### **Nationalism, Sectarianism, and Ethno-Religious Mobilisation in the Middle East**

26 January 2018 - 5:00pm

Venue: Investcorp Auditorium, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford, UK

Speaker(s): Max Weiss (Princeton)

*More information* [here](#)

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## **Jadaliyya/AUB Symposium - Mobilisations in the Age of the Arab Uprisings: Perspectives from Lebanon and Iraq**

26 January 2018 (4:00-7:00pm) - Saturday 27 January, 2018 (9:30am-5:30pm)

Venue: AUB, West Hall, Auditorium C, Beirut, Lebanon

The Lebanese Sociological Association, in collaboration with Jadaliyya/ASI, Lebanon Support, and the Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies Department at American University of Beirut (AUB), is organising a two-day workshop on the topic of social movements in the Arab region, with a special focus on two countries that did not directly witness the Arab Uprisings: Lebanon and Iraq.

While the literature on social movements in the Arab region has witnessed a surge since the “Arab uprisings”, little attention has been given to countries in the region that have not directly witnessed those uprisings but that have been deeply affected by this revolutionary wave that swept through the region in 2011. This workshop proposes to conceptually and methodologically revisit the study of social movements in the Arab region, while shedding special light on the effect of the Arab uprisings on the dynamics of contention across the region. Lebanon and Iraq are two countries that specifically stand out in the region given their remarkable similarities in terms of social and political dynamics (sectarianised societies, post-war context, etc.) and the important effect of the Arab uprisings on their repertoire of contention since 2011. While most of the literature on those two countries is mainly focused on war, violence, sectarianism and terrorism; little studies have looked at social mobilisations and the dynamics of contention from below. Both Lebanon and Iraq have witnessed two main waves of mobilisation post-2011: the first in 2011 and the second in 2015. The workshop will aim at exploring the dynamics of contention in the Arab region since 2011 and will bring together a small group of researchers interested in the question of contemporary social movements and mobilisations in the Arab region.

For confirmation of attendance, kindly email [contact@lebanon-support.org](mailto:contact@lebanon-support.org) with the subject line: “Mobilisations in the Age of the Arab Uprisings.” *More information* [here](#)

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## **Rethinking Nationalism, Sectarianism and Ethno-Religious Mobilisation in the Middle East**

26 to 28 January 2018

Venue: The Investcorp Lecture Theatre, St Antony’s College, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

Nation-states in the Middle East are facing profound challenges. Borders and boundaries are coming under pressure, being (re)made and mobilised owing to a confluence of internal and external factors including war, mass migration, geopolitical competition and domestic struggles. On the one hand,



these regional challenges relate to the dynamics of nation-building. Struggles over the questions that were posed in the nation-building era, including the relation between religion and politics, the nature of citizenship and the management of diversity have continued to impact contemporary conflicts. These have gained further salience in the wake of events such as the Iraqi invasion and the Arab uprisings since 2011. On the other hand, new strategies and technologies utilized by diverse actors, social movements, ethnic entrepreneurs and state elites are producing novel forms of mobilization and politics. At the centennial of the end of WWI, and as the region appears to be at a new crossroads, this conference intends to reflect on nature of borders and boundaries, to be explored from both historical and contemporary lenses with an aim to draw comparative lessons and identify the dynamics of continuity and areas of change. The conference will focus therefore on the questions of why, how and in what ways borders and boundaries have and are being (re)constructed and their implications for the management of diversity. *More information* [here](#)

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## **Law & Revolution: Legitimacy and Constitutionalism After the Arab Spring**

30 January 2018, 18:00-20:00

Venue: Nash Lecture Theatre (K2.31), King's College, London

Speaker: Dr. Nimer Sultany

*More information* [here](#)

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## **Women's movement from late 19th century until 1930s in Istanbul**

31 January 2018 - 2:00pm

Venue: Board Room, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford, UK

Speaker(s): Elife Bicer-Deveci (St Antony's)

*More information* [here](#)

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## **Understanding Political Islam: In Search of the Islamist Other, 1973-2013**

2 February 2018 - 5:00pm

Venue: Investcorp Auditorium, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford, UK

Speaker(s): Francois Burgat (Aix Marseille University)

*More information* [here](#)

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## **Kurdish Women Fighters: A Path Out of Patriarchy?**

7 February 2018, 18:00 – 19:30

Venue: LSE, Room 9.04, 9th Floor, Tower 1, 1 Clement's Inn, London WC2A 2AZ

Speaker: Güneş Murat Tezcür, University of Central Florida

Over the last three decades, tens of thousands of women have joined the ranks of the PKK and its affiliated organisations. What factors explain their violent mobilisation despite life-threatening risks? Building on a unique dataset of more than 9,000 militant bios and in-depth interviews with the families of militants, Güneş Murat Tezcür argues that gender inequality directly influences women's decisions to take up arms, believing that doing so provides them with a path out of patriarchal gender relations. *More information* [here](#)

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## **Grounded Struggles: Land, Dispossession, and Freedom**

9 February 2017

New York City, US

Please join us for a series of films and discussions on grassroots struggles for land, dignity, the means of subsistence, and self-determination in Brazil, Morocco, Tunisia, Haiti and the U.S. In the face of (neo)colonial/(neo)imperial interventions, increased state repression and intensified capital expansion, these grounded struggles shed light on the mechanisms of dispossession as well as cartographies of resistance, solidarity, and transnational connections. By forging alternative modes of development that are not predicated on extraction, surplus, or disposability, these movements expand the horizons of how we might imagine and practice new forms of value and social relations to challenge the structures and logics of racial capitalism. *More information* [here](#)

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## **Philippine Migration to the Middle East and Migrant International Activism**

6 March 2018, 18:30 – 20:00 GMT

Venue: LSE, Room 9.04, 9th Floor, Tower 2, Mobil Court, London WC2A 2AZ

Speaker: Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, University of California, Davis

This seminar forms part of the Social Movements and Popular Mobilisation in the MENA Research Network. Robyn Magalit Rodriguez examines Filipino migrants' international activism, focusing on their participation in the International Migrants Alliance (IMA), an alliance of 120 grassroots migrant organizations from more than 30 countries. She looks at how, through the IMA, migrant activists have been able to draw attention to issues facing Filipino migrants in the Middle East, shape international laws protecting them, and challenge dominant state and civil society narratives around

temporary labour migration regimes, instead treating them as a form of “modern-day slavery.” *More information* [here](#)

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## RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

### **The New Political Islam: Human Rights, Democracy and Justice**

Emmanuel Karagiannis

2018 - University of Pennsylvania Press

Islamist political parties and groups are on the rise throughout the Muslim world and in Muslim communities in the West. Owing largely to the threat of terrorism, political Islam is often portrayed as a monolithic movement embodying fundamentalism and theocracy, an image magnified by the rise of populism and xenophobia in the United States and Europe. Reality, however, is far more complicated. Political Islam has evolved considerably since its spectacular rise decades ago, and today it features divergent viewpoints and contributes to discrete but simultaneous developments worldwide. This is a new political Islam, more global in scope but increasingly local in action.

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## NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

### **Iran's socioeconomic protests are inherently political**

Bahar Saba

12 January 2018, Al-Jazeera

"We are workers. We are not political". This was a slogan that appeared on a series of banners raised by Andimeshk Municipality workers in southern Iran during their protests over unpaid wages earlier this year. At a first glance, the slogan seems to be a confirmation of some of the recent analysis and commentary on the protests that shook Iran in the last two weeks. They were described as a "socioeconomic uprising" or an "economic revolt" devoid of political roots, despite the fact that many slogans did directly target the political establishment. The Iranian authorities have capitalised on such a distinction in order to differentiate between those who in their view have "legitimate" economic frustrations and those who merely create "political unrest". *Continue reading* [here](#)

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## **Tunisians march on seventh anniversary of uprising**

Jillian Kestler-D'Amours

14 January 2018, Al-Jazeera

Several thousand people marched through the main street of the Tunisian capital on Sunday, marking the seventh anniversary of the toppling of the country's former president after mass protests. But, for many people, this year's commemoration of the fall of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali turned into a protest against state austerity measures, unemployment and economic hardship. Protesters chanted: "Work, freedom and national dignity" and "The people want the fall of the budget," among other slogans, as they marched along Habib Bourguiba Avenue. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Workers and Officers in Egypt: The Other Failed Revolution**

Zeinab Abul-Magd

11 January 2018, Jadaliyya

The year 2017 did not end on a good note for Egyptian workers. It was a long year that witnessed renewed trouble for laborers across the country. For instance, the military trial of twenty-six workers at the Alexandria Shipyard – originally a state-owned company that the army acquired upon its privatization a decade ago – dragged for endless months. Including one woman, they were accused of inciting fellow workers to strike to demand better safety measures and fair wages, and many of them were forced to resign from their jobs during the prosecution. Just as the year was winding down last December, the parliament passed a new trade union law that undermines years of labor struggle for freedom of organization. While workers long strove to create independent trade unions, the new law keeps them under the authority of the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), which has dominated labor life for decades. In addition, the law delegitimizes numerous autonomous unions that workers passionately established in the wake of deposing former president Hosni Mubarak in 2011. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## What the Iran Protests Were Not

Vali Nasr

10 January 2018, The Atlantic

Recent protests in numerous Iranian cities and towns caught the world by surprise, and embarrassed Iran's government and ruling political establishment. But the expectation that the protests would escalate into a popular uprising and unravel the Islamic Republic did not come to pass. Iran's rulers could take heart from that, but they cannot avoid the broader debates about the future of the Iranian economy and politics that the protests have set in motion. These were economic protests. They reflected deep-seated frustration with economic stagnation, mismanagement and corruption, and growing income inequality along with conspicuous concentration of wealth at the top. And their geography spoke to the expanding gulf separating large urban centers, especially the capital city Tehran, from smaller towns and rural areas—which correspond roughly to Rouhani's political base and that of his conservative and hardliner rivals, respectively. The protests swept through many of those small towns, and mobilized angry voices among the disgruntled lower wrung of society—those most closely associated with the message of the Revolution. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## [Tunisia:] Henda Chennaoui : « Le contrat entre la société et les politiques est rompu »

Mélanie Matarese

Middle East Eye, 10 January 2018

C'était une coïncidence mais 33 ans après les « émeutes du pain » sous Bourguiba, le 3 janvier 2018, de jeunes Tunisois se sont réunis pour lancer la campagne Fech Nestanneu (Qu'est-ce qu'on attend) pour protester contre la cherté de la vie. Parmi eux : des jeunes déjà engagés dans des mouvements comme Manich Msamah (contre la loi de réconciliation), Hassibehom (contre la répression policière) ou Manesinakomch (pour la justice transitionnelle). Dimanche à Tunis, la manifestation à laquelle ils avaient appelé pour protester contre une hausse des prix entrée en vigueur au 1er janvier, a été dispersée par la police. « Ni peur, ni terreur, la rue appartient au peuple », ont-ils scandé lorsque des policiers ont chargé. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## Tunisia rallies simmer before Arab Spring anniversary

10 January 2018, Al-Jazeera

Hundreds of people clashed with police, blocked roads and burned tires overnight in a northern Tunisian city, with more protests expected before January 14 - the anniversary marking the removal of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the country's former president. At least eight security officers were injured

in the coastal town of Nabeul during clashes with young protesters late on Tuesday, according to Tunisia's press agency TAP. TAP reported that six government vehicles were also destroyed, while 23 people were arrested. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Tunisian opposition leader calls for continued protests**

9 January 2018, Al-Jazeera

Tunisia's main opposition party has called for continued protests against "unjust" government austerity measures, a day after widespread demonstrations left one person dead and several others injured, according to reports. Protests took place in a number of towns across Tunisia on Monday following the government's decision to raise taxes under its 2018 Finance Act. The budget, which took effect on January 1, hiked fuel prices and introduced new tax measures related to the purchase of housing. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Saudi arrests 11 princes over economic protest**

7 January 2018, Al-Jazeera

Saudi authorities have arrested 11 princes for staging a protest in the capital, Riyadh, against the kingdom's austerity measures, according to state media. The announcement by SPA news agency late on Saturday came hours after Sabq, a Saudi website, said that the 11 princes were detained after gathering at al-Hakem palace to demonstrate against a government decision to make the country's royalty pay their utility bills. Upon arrest, they were sent to a notorious maximum-security facility south of Riyadh in contrast to dozens of other high-profile figures who were detained in a luxury hotel last year during an anti-corruption drive. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Iranians chant 'death to dictator' in biggest unrest since crushing of protests in 2009**

Saeed Kamali Dehghan and Emma Graham-Harrison

31 December 2017, The Guardian

Iranians took to the streets for a third day of anti-government protests in what appeared to be the biggest domestic political challenge to Tehran's leaders since the 2009 Green movement was crushed by security forces. At least two protesters were killed in the city of Doroud, in Iran's western Lorestan province, as riot police opened fire to contain a group of people said to have been trying to occupy

the local governor's office. Clashes between demonstrators and anti-riot police became violent in some cities as the demonstrations spread. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Twitter suspends more accounts of Egyptian activists**

Sherif Azer

28 December 2017, Mada Masr

On December 12, 2017, Twitter shut down the account of prominent Egyptian cyberactivist Wael Abbas (@waelabbas), along with subsequent accounts he set up. He received a message from Twitter notifying him of the action, saying, "Your account has been suspended and will not be restored, because it was found to be violating Twitter's Terms of Service, specifically the Twitter Rules against hateful conduct." Abbas is well known for his work on exposing corruption, human rights violations and challenging social norms online. Just before his account was closed, he criticized Alaa Mubarak, ousted president Hosni Mubarak's son, on Twitter, after Alaa accused the January 25 revolution of being an Israeli conspiracy. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Thousands protest after two brothers die in Morocco's 'mines of death'**

27 December 2017, France 24

They call them "the mines of death". In the neglected northern Moroccan mining city of Jerada, hundreds of people risk their lives every day to scrape a meagre living from perilous abandoned coal pits. Last week, two brothers died in a tunnel accident, 85 metres (90 yards) below ground, sparking days of mass protests in the impoverished city. Abderrazak Daioui, who was with the brothers, narrowly escaped the same fate. "Houcine and Jedouane were just below me," the 22-year-old said. "One of them dug horizontally and hit a water well. We were flooded. I hung on my rope and managed to get back up. They weren't so lucky." *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **A Girls Chutzpah: Three Reasons a Palestinian Teenage Girl Is Driving Israel Insane**

Gideon Levy

21 December 2017, Haaretz

Ahed Tamimi, 16, is a heroine, a Palestinian heroine. Maybe the intifada of slappings will succeed where all other methods of resistance have failed. Last Tuesday, Israel Defense Forces soldiers shot Hamed al-Masri, 15, in the head, wounding the unarmed boy from Salfit severely. On Friday, soldiers shot the unarmed Mohammed Tamimi, also 15, in the head. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **[Egypt:] Searching for a battle: Why boycotting the presidential elections is a bad idea**

Amr Abdel Rahman

19 December 2017, Mada Masr

The only logical choice for civil, democratic forces seeking to heed and move beyond the demands of 2011 in Egypt is to dive into the upcoming presidential elections. It is incumbent on them because the events of the past five years have resulted in a ruling elite strategically entrenched in a regressive regional and international order. A decision to engage in the elections may provide democratic groups with an escape from the current paralysis of Egypt's political sphere, and a chance for politics to move away from the duality of "military vs. Islamists." Many politically engaged people have frozen in time since the bloody summer of 2013, amid the crackdown on civil society and general dissatisfaction with economic and social policies. The elections could provide an opportunity to revive their organizational structures and discourses, particularly given their inability to protest — or even express a clear desire for an alternative. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Palestinians are winning the online battle for Jerusalem**

Yousef Alhelou

19 December 2017, The New Arab

Popular demonstrations took place from Morocco to Indonesia amid a shy reaction from politicians in many Arab countries. As protests have continued in Gaza and the West Bank for two weeks now, with reports of homemade projectiles fired from Gaza without any Palestinian faction claiming responsibility, disproportionate force has been used by Israeli occupation forces. Shocking scenes have emerged of Palestinian children arrested, handcuffed and blindfolded, as in the case of the teenager Fawzi al-Junadi who was photographed surrounded by 22 heavily armed Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron. *Continue reading [here](#)*



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## Turkish feminist artist takes on Mount Qaf

[Ayla Jean Yackley](#)

17 December 2017, al-Monitor

Walking into Turkish artist CANAN's solo exhibition at Istanbul's Arter Gallery is like entering a surreal, supernatural and fervently feminist world. "Behind Mount Qaf," the sprawling exhibition — which runs through Feb. 18 — of two decades of CANAN's paintings, photographs, videos, sculptures and more, takes its name from the cosmic mountain of Persian and Arab legend, luring viewers into the familiar realm of allegory before the artist surreptitiously merges the personal, including the use of her own body, with the political. "Mount Qaf is both familiar and otherworldly, but in fact it is a world we all possess: the world inside of us. Myths, fables and dreams are as personal as they are collective — part of our common subconscious," CANAN told Al-Monitor in an interview at the show. "Everything in our individual or shared subconscious is — ultimately — political." *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## Algeria's Berbers protest for Tamazight language rights

Jillian Kestler-D'Amours

15 December 2017, Al-Jazeera

Berber communities in Algeria are calling on the government to allocate state funding to promote and preserve their indigenous language, a demand that has prompted several protests in the country's northern region this week. The protests come after an amendment to 2018 budget legislation that would have formalised the teaching of the Tamazight language in local schools was rejected by members of parliament. "A social upheaval is coming," said Lemnouar Hamamouche, a sociology student at the Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia, in Algeria's northern region of Kabylie, where a majority of the protests have taken place. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## Egyptians tell stories of abuse, harassment on stage

Menna A. Farouk

14 December 2017, Al-Monitor

Despite financial difficulties, lack of staff and government support, the BuSSy (Look) art performance project has been encouraging Egyptian women and men to tell their experiences of gender-related

issues, abuse and sexual harassment on stage. Storytelling workshops, performances and social activities have been organized across the country since the project started in 2006. BuSSy seeks to resist social restraints through theater by giving people from different backgrounds and ages the opportunity to share their stories without fear of stereotyping or criticism. The project organizes storytelling workshops where participants are trained on how to tell their stories. Then they go on stage and do just that. “The participants do not act. They are real people with real stories and all they do is tell their stories openly on stage,” Sondos Shabayek, BuSSy's project director, told Al-Monitor. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Confronting Israel with stones and courage**

Rami Almeghari

14 December 2017, The Electronic Intifada

The people of Gaza took pride in confronting their occupier during the first intifada. Around noon each day, young men would gather at the entrance of Maghazi refugee camp. When an Israeli tank passed, they would pelt it with stones. Israel responded by using cannons that were capable of firing the rocks back at the camp's residents. But the young men kept on resisting. Amin Abu Mandeel, a resident of Maghazi in central Gaza, recalled how he used to fill bottles with urine and excrement and then hurl them at Israeli soldiers. When Israel imposed a curfew on the camp, Abu Mandeel and some other youth hid on nearby farmland. After they managed to throw stones at Israeli soldiers, the youth would flee into an orchard and take cover amid its trees. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Women's theater in Gaza breaks new ground**

Rami Almeghari

11 December 2017, The Electronic Intifada

The title is suggestive, hopeful and – possibly – self-fulfilling. *Hashtag: Gaza will become a better place* is the first play from the Bozour Culture and Arts (*bozour* translates to “seeds”) theater group. It is a play about how Gaza has become a place from where young people want – desperately – to leave and are willing to risk drowning at sea to do so. Ultimately, however, the play suggests that there is reason to stay. That it is written, produced and directed by Bozour's three women theater directors is arguably an indication the hopeful title is more than wishful thinking. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **In Turkey, academics asking for peace are accused of terrorism**

Judith Butler and Başak Ertür

11 December 2017, The Guardian

Last week the trials began in Istanbul of those who signed the Academics for Peace petition in January 2016. A total of 148 trials are scheduled through to May 2018, with new trials expected to be announced in the near future. Each focuses on a single individual, but the indictment is the same for all of them. If they are found guilty, each signatory faces a prison sentence of up to seven-and-a-half years. In the petition, entitled "We will not be a party to this crime", more than 2,000 signatories sought a negotiated solution to the military conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK). *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Women take to streets to demand end to South Sudan war**

10 December 2017, Al-Jazeera

They marched in silence, yet their message was loud and clear. Hundreds of women covered their mouths with tape on Saturday as they took to the streets in South Sudan's capital, Juba, to demand an end to their country's war and the suffering of its people. Carrying posters and signs that read "Bring back our peace now!", "Save my future, stop the war" and "Enough of the bloodshed", women of all ages expressed their anger at a conflict now entering its fifth year. "We, the women of South Sudan, have decided that we have had enough of this. This war has been going on for a long time," a demonstrator said after briefly removing the piece of white tape from her mouth. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **'Local Call' wins award for social change**

1 December 2017, +972 Blog

Hebrew-language site Local Call won the Dror Prize for social change, along with a NIS 25,000 cash prize, on Friday, for spotlighting the joint struggle between Jewish and Arab women against gender violence in Israel. Spearheaded by Local Call and +972 writer Samah Salame, along with Local Call's editors Yael Marom and Orly Noy, the site published a series of articles in 2017 dedicated to the Arab women who often find themselves confronting not only gender violence, but a police force that does little to combat violence against women, a Jewish public that ascribes that violence to "Arab culture," and a mainstream media that almost entirely ignores them. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **[Egypt:] On Warraq Island, popular democracy defies secret state plans**

Heba Afify

19 November 2017, Mada Masr

Since declaring its intention to vacate Nile islands, the state's strategy regarding Warraq Island has gone through several stages: from the use of violence, to negotiation, to legal persecution. In a televised June conference, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi gave orders to prioritize vacating Nile islands as part of a wide-scale state land retrieval campaign, alluding to Warraq Island in particular. It was an allusion that came to a head when security forces descended on the island in July, sparking clashes with residents. The only constant in the state's approach since June has been secrecy. Despite its attempts to vacate parts of the island, the residents still don't know what the state's announced "development plan" for their island entails and what its effect would be on their lives. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **The Radical Women at the Heart of Palestine's First Intifada**

Amy Zimmerman

28 November 2017, Daily Beast

"I'm Zahira. I'm Palestinian. Is that enough?" I'm sitting with Zahira Kamal and Naila Ayesh, two activists and organizers who have spent decades fighting for Palestinian liberation. Kamal's introduction speaks to her priorities and her extensive biography, which includes traveling to the 1991 Madrid peace talks as a member of the Palestinian delegation and serving as the general secretary of the Palestinian Democratic Union Party. For Kamal and Ayesh, *Naila and the Uprising*, the documentary we're here to discuss, is an important work of historical reclamation, shedding light on a period of the Palestinian struggle that they believe to be underrepresented and misunderstood. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Morocco: Protesters, activists and journalists detained over Rif protests must be released**

28 November 2017, Amnesty International

The Moroccan authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Rif protest leader Nasser Zefzafi as well journalist Hamid El Mahdaoui and all others detained in connection with the Rif protests and for peacefully exercising their human rights, said Amnesty International. "The crackdown on Rif protesters in recent months has been relentless. The authorities must free Nasser

Zefzafi and others detained for protesting peacefully or covering demonstrations online. They are prisoners of conscience,” said . Since May, security forces have arrested hundreds of protesters, including children and several journalists over the largely peaceful protests. At least 410 people are currently detained, some of whom were arrested from their homes. Many have already been convicted, with some handed harsh prison terms of up to 20 years, while others, including minors, have been held for up to six months in pre-trial detention. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Jineology: from women’s struggles to social liberation**

Brecht Neven, Marlene Schäfers  
25 November 2017, ROAR Magazine

Following the recent developments in northern Syria, Kurdish women have often been portrayed in the Western media as fierce fighters combating the savage barbarians of the so-called Islamic State. Considering Kurdish female guerrilla fighters as heroines defending Western values of democracy and gender equality, however, frames Kurdish women in an Orientalist narrative that grants political agency and recognition only as long as their actions fit liberal Western values. Yet the struggle that Kurdish women are waging is deeply rooted in radical political thought and practice, and as such does not lend itself as easily to a Western liberal worldview as it might appear at first sight. The Kurdish movement emerged in the late 1970s out of a fragmented Turkish left and radicalized in the torture chambers of Diyarbakir prisons following the 1980 military coup in Turkey. Since its inception it has evolved from a dogmatic Marxist-Leninist caterpillar to a radical democratic butterfly. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Palestinians in Jabal al-Baba protest Israeli expulsion order**

Activestills  
24 November 2017, +972

Around 100 demonstrators joined the Palestinian community of Jabal al-Baba on Thursday, November 23, in the E1 area of the West Bank adjacent to the Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim, to protest a new Israeli-military order that would displace the entire community. On November 16, members of the community received the military order to leave their homes and take with them all of their belongings—the first step in the eventual demolition of their homes. Thursday was the day they were supposed to leave, according to the order. The West Bank area known as E1, where Jabal al-Baba is located, is the site of an Israeli plan to build several thousand settlement housing units. For over a decade the United States and European Union have demanded that Israel halt the project, which would connect annexed East Jerusalem with the settlement of Maaleh Adumim, thereby making a geographically contiguous Palestinian state all-but impossible. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## Women speak out against harassment in Gaza

Mohammed Moussa

22 November 2017, +972 Blog

'I didn't know what to do. He kept insisting, so I felt that I had to answer him to make him stop, I told him that I'm married and have three kids but he didn't believe me.' A report about the women no longer willing to stay silent and the difficulties they face. The growing number of women speaking out against sexual assault and harassment at the hands of powerful men seems to have created a sea change. In Gaza, however, women feeling constrained by conservative societal norms are cautious about speaking out about verbal and physical harassment, especially by local taxi drivers. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## Digital archive preserves creative side of Syrian revolution

AJ Naddaff

22 November 2017, Al-Monitor

The Syrian revolution witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of cultural expressions. Since the protests erupted across the country in 2011, citizens from all walks of life employed art, satire and creative writing to stand against the regime. These protests did not initially call for the downfall of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, but for greater freedoms and dignity, and remained relatively peaceful until December 2011, when rebel groups began forming under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army in response to violence by the state security forces. As the voices of ordinary Syrians have been lost amid the violent clashes that have dominated the past six years, how will the creative spirit of the revolution be remembered in the coming years? Syrian graphic designer Sana Yazigi wanted to make sure that these peaceful voices and creative works are not forgotten. After fleeing her hometown of Damascus and settling in Beirut, she created a simple Wordpress site to publish some of them. Her aim was to document how Syrians spoke out and asked for their rights after 50 years of government-imposed silence. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Young Egyptian artists reflect social problems through their lens**

Salwa Samir

22 November 2017, Al-Monitor

"Art belongs to everybody and nobody. Art belongs to all time and no time," said award-winning British writer Julian Barnes in his novel "The Noise of Time." This phrase inspired a group of Egyptian artists to choose "transition" as the theme of their photography and videography festival in Cairo. The first edition of the festival titled "Cairographie" is currently underway (Nov. 5-Dec. 31) and aims to create awareness of contemporary issues — such as the environment, protests, migration and the youth — through photos and videos. Organized by Darb 1718, a contemporary art and culture center in Cairo that was founded in 2008, the festival is supported by Photopia, a hub for photographers in Egypt. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **[Palestine:] Raised to rebel**

Budour Youssef Hassan

13 November 2017 The Electronic Intifada

The occupied East Jerusalem suburb of Issawiyeh has long been a flashpoint for confrontations between Israeli soldiers and its Palestinian residents. But even by Israel's repressive standards, the crackdown to which the town has been subjected over the past three years has been extreme. In July 2014, and like in many Jerusalem areas, the people of the town – known for the tenacity of its youth-led resistance to Israeli incursions or provocations – rose up in protest at the burning to death of Palestinian teen Muhammad Abu Khudair. Hundreds of village youth streamed to Shuafat, Muhammad's hometown, to take part in his funeral and participate in the ensuing protests. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **A New Generation of Protests in Morocco? How Hirak al-Rif Endures**

Mohammed Masbah

07 November 2017, Arab Reform Initiative

A year after the outbreak of protests in northern Morocco, the accumulated frustration resulting from the authorities' security approach and the absence of prospects for a political solution have widened the scope of political unrest, writes Mohammed Masbah in a new paper comparing two protests movements in the kingdom. While similar structural factors underline the grievances of political protests in Morocco, the 20 February Movement and Hirak al-Rif in the north have taken different paths in the nature and style of their protests, their structure and organization, and their

use of social media. This difference has contributed significantly to the enduring character of the Hirak and the resilience of its activists. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **A room of our own: Building a new anti-racist space in Jerusalem**

Sahar Vardi

7 November 2017, +972 Blog

As Jerusalem grows more hostile toward anything remotely left wing, Israeli and Palestinian activists are looking to create a new space for activists to meet, plan, and struggle to change the face of the city. I was 14 years old when I walked into a small room packed with books in a Tel Aviv alleyway, to hear a lecture about human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution in Israel. It was a subject I knew nothing about, but my youth movement counselor told me about the event, so I went. The truth is I remember very little about the actual lecture, but the experience of entering that space for the first time is something I cannot forget. The Salon Mazal infoshop was the place for these types of lectures — a library where I could look through all the books and learn about various, connected political worlds, and especially a place to meet other activists and talk about the latest protests we attended, and the actions we were planning. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Syria's Arab, Kurdish women join forces to fight for future**

Amberin Zaman

6 November 2017, Al-Monitor

At just 21 years old, Zilan's burdens are already heavy. She has a pair of violent ex-husbands and a daughter from each. But she said she has left all that behind in her home village near Raqqa, the recently liberated capital of the so-called Islamic State in Syria. Zilan is among scores of women joining an all-Arab women's force that was formed earlier this year as part of the Syrian Kurdish Women's Protection Units (YPJ), the globally acclaimed women's militia that has become the bane of jihadis. These fresh recruits are testing the limits of the deep-rooted patriarchy of Arab communities and more critically, the uneasy cohabitation of Arabs and Kurds that is meant to serve as a blueprint for the future of Syria. "I feel respected as a woman. My life has meaning now," Zilan told Al-Monitor during an interview at the Shahid Arin Military Academy for Women in Ain Issa, a nondescript town northwest of Raqqa. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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## **Against normalizing the abnormal: BDS and the struggle for Palestinian rights**

Franco Galdini

3 November 2017, Mada Masr

It has been 100 years since British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote his notorious letter to Walter Rothschild, declaring that Britain would support the creation of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. On the anniversary of this declaration, which also promised “nothing shall be done that may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine,” world leaders are still fusing and confusing anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism to discredit pro-Palestinian activism targeting Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land and systematic oppression of Palestinian rights. Despite this, there is still some global solidarity with Palestinians and a history of organizing in support of boycotts and sanctions against the state of Israel. When Israeli Ambassador to the UK Mark Regev delivered a speech on “Changing political paradigms in the Middle East” to a small audience at the University of Manchester earlier this year, his visit was shrouded in secrecy.

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## **Egyptians highlight human rights abuses as government campaign backfires**

Shahira Amin

2 November 2017, Al-Monitor

A campaign launched by the Egyptian government to promote the World Youth Forum scheduled for Nov. 4-10 at the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh appears to have backfired after internet activists hijacked the conference hashtag #WeNeedToTalk to highlight human rights abuses in the country under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s regime. The conference’s organizers had hoped the hashtag would encourage interaction among the participants ahead of the forum and promote Egypt as a safe tourist destination. Instead, the activists posted images of security forces assaulting and arresting youths at protest sites and shared portraits of jailed journalists, activists and others who have allegedly been tortured or forcibly disappeared. “#WeNeedToTalk about forced disappearances,” Amr Bakly, the director of the Cairo Liberal Forum, an Egyptian nongovernmental organization working to spread liberal values and culture among Egyptian youths, posted on Twitter. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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# POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

## MERIP Executive Director/Editor

Review of applications from: 29 January 2018

The Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) seeks a full-time Executive Director/Editor to lead development of the quarterly magazine *Middle East Report* and its online presence. Building on MERIP's nearly 50-year history as the leading independent, progressive print source for critically informed analyses of the Middle East, the new Executive Director/Editor will spearhead the upgrading of the publication, including its web presence, to meet the challenges of the contemporary era. They will do so in concert with a collective organizational vision recently developed by the Board of Directors in conversation with the larger MERIP collective.

Organizational Description: MERIP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 1971 to provide in-depth critical reporting on the Middle East and North Africa. MERIP publishes the quarterly magazine *Middle East Report* in addition to online-only analyses. MERIP also engages in media outreach and public education. More details can be found at <http://merip.org/about>.

Position Description: The Executive Director/Editor (ED) holds primary administrative responsibility for MERIP and editing responsibility for *Middle East Report* and online publications. The ED reports directly to the Board of Directors and is responsible for overseeing the fulfilment of MERIP's mission and the strategic development of the organization.

### Program Administration Responsibilities:

- Work with the Board to develop a long-range strategy to fulfill MERIP's publishing and outreach mission and make timely progress towards these goals.
- Provide leadership in working with the Board of Directors and staff to develop fundraising goals, identify foundational grants, and cultivate long-term supporters.
- Work with staff and the Board to set an annual budget and maintain operations within its guidelines.
- Work with the Board to collaborate with partner organizations.
- Identify new readerships and institutional subscribers.
- Promote MERIP's work to a larger public and work to maintain MERIP's voice in ongoing debates around Middle East politics and policy.
- Oversee MERIP's web and social media presence, and work with staff and the Board to coordinate those efforts.
- Hire and manage accounting, administrative, and editorial staff as needed and fiscally possible. Facilitate a collaborative work environment.

### Editorial Responsibilities:

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of Middle East politics, society, and culture.
- Work with the Editorial Committee (EdComm) and Issue Development Teams (IDTs) to develop issues of the quarterly magazine.

- Work with the EdComm and IDTs to swiftly review materials received.
- Fact check essays and ensure ethical and professional publication standards.
- Coordinate with the IDT to write quarterly editorials.
- Oversee the copyediting, proofreading, and dissemination of publications.
- Work with the photography editor and graphic artist/layout expert to ensure a visually engaging magazine and online presence.
- Oversee the promotion of publications through social media, and coordinate the production and editing of ancillary video or audio media to supplement the issues.
- Answer all editorial questions as they arise from authors, readers, or publishers.

Qualifications:

- Familiarity with and commitment to MERIP, its publications, and its goals.
- Master's degree in Middle East studies or equivalent.
- Book or magazine editing experience preferred.
- Work experience in the non-profit sector, preferably in a management role.
- Experience overseeing staff in some leadership capacity.
- Experience or strong interest in fundraising/development.
- Basic background in social media and web development.
- Commitment to social and cultural diversity.
- Willingness to initially work from home and work with others at a distance.

Compensation: Remuneration commensurable with experience. Full health and retirement benefits.

Application Instructions: Please send cover letter, resume/CV, writing sample, and names and contacts of three references by email to [silversp@reed.edu](mailto:silversp@reed.edu). Review of applications will begin on January 29 and continue until the position is filled.

More information [here](#)

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## **Three-year Postdoctoral Assistant Professorship in Middle East Studies (Humanities or Social Sciences), Rutgers University**

Review of applications from: 15 February 2018

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey (New Brunswick), invites applications for a non-renewable three-year postdoctoral assistant professorship from any Middle Eastern Studies discipline in the humanities or social sciences.

The duties of the Postdoctoral Assistant Professor include research, teaching, and service. The precise area of research will depend on the candidate's field of expertise and can include preparation and publication of articles, books, and other standard forms of scholarly communication. Teaching

obligations include a standard teaching load of 2-1 and independent work with individual students as needed. In addition, the successful candidate is expected to participate in conferences, workshops, and seminars sponsored by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and to coordinate with the Center's director in organizing events and programming.

Applicants must have received the Ph.D. between July 1, 2013 and July 1, 2018. Applicants who have not completed their PhD at the time of application will need to provide official institutional verification of completion by July 1, 2018 in order to take up the position. The appointment will be effective September 1, 2018. The holder of the position will receive a stipend of \$55,000 annually and Rutgers University health benefits.

Applications consisting of a cover letter, a CV, a brief description (not to exceed two pages in length) of teaching and research interests, and three letters of recommendation should be submitted electronically via Interfolio.

Review of applications will commence on February 15, 2018 and continue until the position is filled.

*More information and application [here](#)*

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