



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA

Digest of Current Publications and Events

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CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

Women, Nation Building and Modernization Projects in the Gulf: Explorations in State Instrumentalization of Women

Gulf Research Meeting, Cambridge University

Proposal Deadline: January 20th, 2019

Women in the Arabian Gulf today, are taking central stage in representing and occasionally spearheading the ongoing process of “nation”-state-building, as well as they contribute to the dynamic reorientation of the large-scale state-modernizing projects across the Gulf. While the current advancement of women in the region is transcending beyond the existing political, professional and leadership stage of women empowerment, their symbolic presence is now rapidly moving towards new unprecedented and “unimagined” spaces, specifically for these women as Arab and Muslim from the Gulf. Until very recently, for example, the Gulf states were the bastion of conservatism but now are parting with its traditional reading of gender roles. Conversely, women’s representation in the public across the Gulf—as strategically framed by the local Gulf officials and media—is also now transforming, formulating women’s embedded positionality and image as part of a broader state agency agenda. More particularly, the state is rapidly yet cautiously advancing women’s multiple roles in all aspects of its diverse tapestry: young leaders, soldiers, educators, sportswomen, fighters, pilots, and “Spartan” mothers (mothers of the young soldiers of the nation). Therefore, women in the Gulf are symbolically emerging as the new ideological “instruments” of the state-led campaign to construct the multilayered vision of the nation-state building agendas and potentially to contribute to this construction and its direction.

The workshop broadly examines the new state-sponsored policies, initiatives, regulations and projects aiming to enhance the public roles, positions, and representations of women in the Gulf in diverse fields, including politics, education, art, economy, army, culture or natural sciences. This workshop additionally aims to explore and synthesize the evolving features, dimensions, and types of female agency by empirically and theoretically looking at grassroots emancipatory activism in the Gulf. By dissecting these processes from a comparative perspective, this workshop intends to uncover complex and multiple interconnectivities and divergences between the two and to explore the implications in the approach towards female empowerment in Gulf states, as well as the dynamic state behaviors in attempting to capitalize on these outcomes.

Anticipated Participants

This workshop is soliciting proposals related to Gulf states’ bids to integrate and instrumentalize women in their nation building projects. Empirical research and insightful scholarship are welcome. Participants are encouraged to address any aspect of the main theme of the workshop which focuses on (but not limited to) the below topics:

- GCC-wide studies based or critical comparative historical narratives and case studies.
- Analytical papers of the personal, professional, national or global leverages that lead to women instrumental presence in the national state projects in the Gulf in the past few years; particularly uncovering patterns of inclusion in state projects or exclusion from these projects.

- The role of these initiatives, programs and policies in promoting each Gulf country and its impact on its foreign relations.
- Nation branding, women and Gulf states, women and nation building: how efforts and discourse of nation building is contributing to nation branding? Can national branding campaigns impact or advance the nation building process in the Gulf?
- State initiatives, policies for and discourse on advancing the role of women in education and higher education organizations in light of nation building projects in the Gulf.
- Women mobility and access to the public space in the gulf as part of the state modernization and nation building efforts of the states.
- Observable shifts in women's roles in the family sphere as appears in state discourse on nation building. The case of "spartan women" in the UAE, for instance.
- The great emphasis on the militarization of women in the public sphere, and the high state support of women to join the military rank and files.
- The state promotion of motherhood and the Mother of the Nation role and symbol of women status in the state ideology
- The sharp shift in Gulf states from denying women the right of the public space, and particularly to an almost overnight shift to promoting women in modernized spaces.
- The role of presence and appearance of women as a national symbol, and the very creation of their image as national icons or attractive symbols and imagined national icons
- State initiatives, policies and discourse in promoting women in politics and empowering them to reach political positions and the impact of women in these positions.
- States initiatives, programs and policies in empowering women in cultural projects and heritage related areas.
- State supported projects or initiatives for women in media and marketing communication.
- States efforts in advancing women artists, scientists and medical doctors, and engineers in light of their national projects.
- Shifting state and societal perceptions of gender roles in state building in the Gulf.
- Emerging and traditional grassroots discourses, in the cyberspace, on women's contribution to nation building.
- The role of cyberspace in enabling a state amplification of its discourse on women and nation building to both internal and external publics.
- The use of cyberspace in women emancipation and agency in the context of the nation building.
- Women as an instrument for soft power and cultural capital in the GCC.
- The instrumental use of stories, images and discourse on women by the Gulf States to projects certain image of the country (brand)

More information [here](#)

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Conference: "The Ties that Bind: Mechanisms and Structures of Social Dependency in the Early Islamic Empire"

Leiden University, 2-6 December 2019

Deadline: January 30th, 2019

Event Description

As part of the ERC-funded project, “Embedding Conquest, Naturalising Muslim Rule (600-1000)”, at Leiden University, this conference aims to bring together both senior and junior scholars to present research which illuminates the structures and mechanisms that allowed the early Islamic empire to function.

Structures and mechanisms

The papers should describe the way that local and regional elites were both embedded in larger *structures* of power and dependency, and employed specific *mechanisms* to achieve their goals. By *structures*, we refer to frameworks such as administration, tax-collection, political networks, religious communities, legal systems, social conventions and patronage networks. By *mechanisms*, we refer to specific instances which establish relationships between actors, including documentary cultures, mechanisms of social integration and embedding (such as oaths, contracts, pledges, marriage, inheritance and succession conventions), mechanisms of social exclusion (such as ostracism, imprisonment, excommunication) and so forth.

Papers may deal with mechanisms and structures that hold the empire together, or examine the fissiparous and centrifugal forces that tend in the opposite direction. Moments of crisis and breakdown are understood as particularly useful both illuminating the precise nature of structures and mechanisms and they are contested, renewed or replaced.

Local and regional elites

In focusing on local and regional elites, we aim to understand how the authority and power of the caliphate was actualized within the daily lives of the empire’s inhabitants. This focus cements a shift in recent years to thinking about the caliphate as a multipolar entity, rather than a pyramidal hierarchy of power (Neff and Tillier), and as a set of relationships and interfaces between actors whose influence derives from being embedded in a particular local context, and power-brokers at the centre of the empire (Paul, Heidemann) . This conference aims to push the field further, by inviting participants to dissect with greater precision the specific *structures, mechanisms, behaviours, strategies and conventions* that enabled key stakeholders to achieve goals which shaped the lives of the inhabitants of the empire.

Source material will be open to presenters, but we particularly welcome papers that combine literary sources with documentary and material sources.

In addition to the presentation of papers, invited presenters will be encouraged to prepare visualizations of the structures and frameworks that they perceive in their materials, to be discussed in a separate session. These visualizations might be formed in terms of networks, hierarchies, blocs, or other models of conceptualizing the relationships between the diverse stakeholders in the empire.

One of the outcomes of the ERC project, Embedding Conquest, will be an edited volume which records the results of this and other conferences. Participants may be invited to submit their contribution as part of the edited volume. If you will be unable to contribute your research to this volume, then please signal that when you submit your abstract.

Details

The conference will take place 2-6th December, 2019.

Papers will be 30 mins with 15 for Q&A. Participant may also be requested to participate in additional discussion and visualization sessions.

Please send an abstracts of around 300 words to e.p.hayes@hum.leidenuniv.nl by January 31st 2018.

Travel and accommodation will be subsidized.

More information [here](#)

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THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION OF 1919: THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN NATION

27-28th of March 2019, SOAS, London

The Egyptian independence movement in 1919 led to the recognition of Egyptian sovereignty in 1922, an Egyptian constitution in 1923, and Saad Zaghloul's appointment as the first prime minister of a government elected by suffrage in 1924. To mark the centenary of the revolution, the British Egyptian Society (BES), the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL) and the London Middle East Institute (LMEI) at SOAS University of London are holding a conference on 27-28 March 2019.

The conference will include presentations by Egyptian and international historians and commentators on the causes and events of the revolution and on themes which may include:

Egypt in the wider context of post Ottoman political development in the Arab World

How the Independence Movement arose and how it was organised

The role of women in the Independence Movement

The impact on Egyptian Society and minorities and on the Sudan

The transition to parliamentary democracy

The strategy and tactics of the protests

The impact on the arts, literature and painting

The British approach and the Milner Commission

The historiography of the 1919 revolution

The revolution and its influence on the next hundred years

The Conference will be organised in eight main sessions. These will have a mixture of moderated panel sessions and presentation sessions with two speakers with 20-minute presentations and 30 minutes for discussion.

There will also be sessions with keynote speakers, as well as a public lecture.

Wednesday 27th March

9.00

Registration

09.30–09.45

Welcome and Introduction

Baroness Symonds, James Watt and Dr Hassan Hakimian

on behalf of the BES, CBRL and LMEI

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09.45–10.45

Session 1: title tba

Keynote Speaker: **Professor Nabil Fahmy**

Dean of the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the American University in Cairo

Chairman: **Professor Magdy Ishak Hanna**

Vice Chairman, British Egyptian Society

10.45

Refreshments

11.15–12.00

Session 2: Reflections on the 1919 Independence Movement

Copts in the 1919 Revolution - An Exceptional Participation in Egyptian Political Life

Mounir Fakhry Abdel Nour

Former Egyptian Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment

Moderator: **Sir Derek Plumbly**

Former British Ambassador to Egypt

12.00-13.00

Session 3: The Great Theft of History: World War One and the Prelude to Revolution

Professor Khaled Fahmy

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Sa'id Professor of Modern Arabic Studies, University of Cambridge

Moderator: **Sir Geoffrey Adams**

British Ambassador to Egypt

13.00

Lunch

14.00–15.15

Session 4: The Strategy and Tactics of the Protests

Telegraphing Revolt: Protest Diffusion in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution

Dr Neil Ketchley

Lecturer in Middle East Politics, King's College London

Workers on the Canal, Camaraderie within Apartheid

Mohamed Elsayed

SOAS Alumnus

Moderator: **Dr May Darwich**

Assistant Professor in the International Relations of the Middle East in the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University

15.15

Refreshments

15.45–17.00

Session 5: Britain and Egypt

The Wafd, the Royal Family and the British

Professor James Whidden

Professor, Department of History, Acadia University

title tba

Dr C. W. Richard Long

Author of *British Pro-Consuls in Egypt, 1914-1929*

Moderator: **Roger Hardy**

Visiting Senior Research Fellow, King's College London

18.00–19.30

PUBLIC LECTURE

EGYPT IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF POST-OTTOMAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB WORLD

Keynote Speaker: **Professor Eugene Rogan**

Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History, Director, St Antony's College Middle East Centre, Oxford University

Chairman: **James Watt**

Chairman, Council for British Research in the Levant

Thursday 28th March

09.00–10.15

Session 6: The Role of Women in the Independence Movement

Revisiting Women and Gender in the 1919 Revolution

Professor Beth Baron

Distinguished Professor and Director, Middle East and Middle Eastern American Centre, The City College of New York

Women and Gender in the 1919 Revolution and Beyond

Professor Margot Badran

Senior Fellow, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim Christian Understanding, Georgetown University

Moderator: **Nabila Ramdani**

Journalist, author of *Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution*

10.15

Refreshments

10.45–12.00

Session 7: The Historiography of the 1919 Revolution

From Nationalism to Islamism; Revolution, the Wafd and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood

Professor Philip Marfleet

Professor, School of Social Sciences, University of East London

Neither Wilson nor Lenin: an Intellectual History of the 1919 Revolution

Dr Hussein Omar

Assistant Professor in Global History, University College Dublin

Moderator: **Dr Anthony Gorman**

Senior Lecturer, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, University of Edinburgh

12.00–13.15

Session 8: Impact on Society and Minorities

The 1919 Revolution and Complications in the Hyphenated Identity of Egypt's Internal 'Other'

Mark Bebawi

Doctoral Student, Rice University

Revolutionary Expectations? The 1923 Egyptian Constitution and the Future of Elementary Education in Egypt

Dr Relli Shechter

Senior Lecturer, Department of Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Moderator: **tbc**

13.15

Lunch

14.15–15.00

Session 9: The Arts

Long Live Degenerate Art! Art as a Liberator for Egyptian Surrealists

Dr Omneya el Naggar

Department of Political Science, the American University of Cairo

Moderator: **Peter Mackenzie Smith**

Trustee, The British Egyptian Society

15.00–16.45

Session 10: The Revolution and its Influence on the Next Hundred Years (panel session)

Panellist: **Farid Khamis (tbc)**

Chairman of the Board, British University in Egypt

Panellist: **Dr Anthony Gorman**

Senior Lecturer, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, University of Edinburgh

Panellist: **Nabila Ramdani**

Journalist, author of Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution

Panellist: **Dr May Darwich**

Assistant Professor in the International Relations of the Middle East in the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University

Moderator: **Professor Robert Springborg**

Italian Institute of International Affairs

16.45–17.00

Closing Remarks: Baroness Liz Symons of Vernham Dean

Chairman, The British Egyptian Society

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Call for Papers: Sociology of Middle East and Muslim Societies for ASA 2019

Deadline: January 9th, 2019

Muslim and Middle Eastern populations are currently under attack by a range of actors, from Western hate movements to Islamist extremists, and from violent authoritarian regimes to elected governments across the democratic world. This session invites papers that bring attention to the repression of Muslim and Middle Eastern populations, as well as how these populations are working to resist extremism in all its varied forms.

For more information, email Dana Moss, *University of Pittsburgh*; dmm209@pitt.edu

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Minor/Small Literature(s): Perspectives on World Literature from Elsewhere

Forum Transregionale Studien and Max Weber Stiftung, Berlin, 10-20 July 2019

Deadline for Applications: January 20th, 2019

We will focus on the political/revolutionary potential of literature in hegemonic struggles as well as the position and ambition of small/minor literatures in the larger linguistic/regional projects, such as Arabic literature in the diaspora.

The Forum Transregionale Studien and the Max Weber Stiftung – German Humanities Institutes Abroad, in cooperation with the Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung Berlin (ZfL), invite doctoral and postdoctoral scholars in the fields of literary and cultural studies and history to apply to attend a Transregional Academy that will be convened on July 11-20th, 2019 at the ZfL Berlin on the theme of:

Minor/Small Literature(s). Perspectives on World Literature from Elsewhere.

The Transregional Academy will be chaired by Zaal Andronikashvili (ZfL), Susanne Frank (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Refqa Abu-Remaileh (Freie Universität Berlin; EUME Fellow

2018/2019), B. Venkat Mani (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Michael Allan (University of Oregon), and Bodhisattva Kar (University of Cape Town).

Up to 21 doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers (within seven years of receiving their PhD) from different countries will introduce and discuss their current research in an international and multidisciplinary setting. The program is aimed at researchers in literary and cultural studies and history, whose research projects are closely linked to the Academy's themes. The goal of the Academy is to examine ongoing projects as they relate to the above-mentioned questions from a comparative perspective. Participants will receive a grant to cover transportation and accommodation costs.

English will serve as the primary language of discussions.

More information [here](#)

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TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

Intellectuals, *Fellahin* and Emancipatory Politics in Rural Egypt

February 4th, 2019

Francesco de Lellis, University of Naples "L'Orientale"

Pankhurst House, London

The relationship between the *fellahin* (peasantry) and the Egyptian Left has been a constant concern for the latter. This dialect, between the peasantry and the intellectuals, was key to the work of the Italian revolutionary militant and theorist Antonio Gramsci, and this talk links these reflections with reference to crucial historical junctures in Egypt.

Registration opens January 22nd, 2018

More information [here](#)

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Nadje Al-Ali – Feminist Dilemmas: How to Talk about Gender-Based Violence in the Middle East?

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

12 p.m. – 1 p.m.

McKinney Conference Room, 111 Thayer Street, Brown University

This talk will chart the trajectories and dilemmas of Nadjé Al-Ali as a feminist activist/academic to research, write and talk about gender based violence (GBV) with reference to the Middle East. More specifically, she will be drawing on research and activism in relation to Iraq, Turkey as well as Lebanon—to map the discursive, political and empirical challenges and complexities linked to scholarship and activism that is grounded in both feminist and anti racist/anti-Islamophobic politics.

The political and academic aim to challenge essentialized ideas of Middle Eastern exceptionalism and conflated notions of Muslim, Arab/Middle Eastern culture has clearly been an on-going and familiar motivation for many academics/activists researching and writing on women and gender issues. Maybe more controversially, Professor Al-Ali will reflect on what she describes as “[her] increasing discomfort with narratives about GBV that focus solely on the impact of external factors, mainly framed with reference to imperialism and neoliberalism, instead of recognizing not simply complicity, but pro-active involvement of various local and regional actors.” Drawing on her previous work on Iraq, and her more recent work on the Kurdish women's movement and queer feminist activism in Lebanon, she will share the dilemmas and tensions involved in a transnational feminist knowledge production and activism.

More information [here](#)

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Civil War in Syria: Mobilization and Competing Social Orders

By Adam Baczko, Gilles Dorransoro, Arthur Quesnay
Cambridge University Press 2017

In 2011, hundreds of thousands of Syrians marched peacefully to demand democratic reforms. Within months, repression forced them to take arms and set up their own institutions. Two years later, the inclusive nature of the opposition had collapsed, and the PKK and radical jihadist groups rose to prominence. In just a few years, Syria turned into a full-scale civil war involving major regional and world powers. How has the war affected Syrian society? How does the fragmentation of Syria transform social and sectarian hierarchies? How does the war economy work in a country divided between the regime, the insurgency, the PKK and the Islamic State? Written by authors who have previously worked on the Iraqi, Afghan, Kurd, Libyan and Congolese armed conflicts, it includes extensive interviews and direct observations. A unique book, which combines rare field experience of the Syrian conflict with new theoretical insights on the dynamics of civil wars.

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Soundtrack of the Revolution: The Politics of Music in Iran

NAHID SIAMDOUST

Stanford University Press 2017

Music was one of the first casualties of the Iranian Revolution. It was banned in 1979, but it quickly crept back into Iranian culture and politics. The state made use of music for its propaganda during the Iran–Iraq war. Over time music provided an important political space where artists and audiences could engage in social and political debate. Now, more than thirty-five years on, both the children of the revolution and their music have come of age. *Soundtrack of the Revolution* offers a striking account of Iranian culture, politics, and social change to provide an alternative history of the Islamic Republic.

Drawing on over five years of research in Iran, including during the 2009 protests, Nahid Siamdoust introduces a full cast of characters, from musicians and audience members to state officials, and takes readers into concert halls and underground performances, as well as the state licensing and censorship offices. She closely follows the work of four musicians—a giant of Persian classical music, a government-supported pop star, a rebel rock-and-roller, and an underground rapper—each with markedly different political views and relations with the Iranian government. Taken together, these examinations of musicians and their music shed light on issues at the heart of debates in Iran—about its future and identity, changing notions of religious belief, and the quest for political freedom.

Siamdoust shows that even as state authorities resolve, for now, to allow greater freedoms to Iran's majority young population, they retain control and can punish those who stray too far. But music will continue to offer an opening for debate and defiance. As the 2009 Green Uprising and the 1979 Revolution before it have proven, the invocation of a potent melody or musical verse can unite strangers into a powerful public.

About the author:

Nahid Siamdoust is a Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer at Yale University's MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies. She has taught at Oxford University and New York University, and previously worked as a journalist based in Iran and the Middle East for *Time* magazine, *Der Spiegel*, and Al Jazeera English TV.

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JOURNAL ARTICLES & OTHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Women, information ecology, and political protest in the Middle East

Nadya Hajj, Patrick McEwan, Rebecca Turkington
Mediterranean Politics, Volume 24, 2019 - Issue 1

Does internet usage increase the likelihood of political protest, and is the effect larger among women than men? Using data from three waves of the Arab Barometer Survey, historical research and interviews with women activists, this paper contributes to the growing body of literature on information ecology and contentious politics in the Middle East. We hypothesized that the internet increases public protest for all individuals but differentially enhances women's involvement in public protest in the Middle East. We find that there are substantial gender gaps in internet usage and political protest, and that internet usage increases political protest of adults, on average, regardless of gender. However, internet usage does not differentially increase public protest among women (including during the Arab Spring). Our paper problematizes the notion that the internet is a low-cost and safe space for women's political activism.

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NGO laws after the colour revolutions and the Arab spring: Nondemocratic regime strategies in Eastern Europe and the Middle East

Leah Gilbert & Payam Mohseni
Mediterranean Politics, 2018

How significant were popular mobilizations like the colour revolutions and the Arab Spring in raising legal regulatory barriers for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Eastern Europe and the Middle East? How do different types of nondemocratic regimes approach NGO laws and state-society relations? This paper investigates and provides a comparative analysis of the NGO regulatory environment of nondemocratic regimes in Eastern Europe and the Middle East from 1995 to 2013, based on an original dataset measuring the severity of laws for the registration and operation of civic groups. We examine whether the uprisings instigated the passage of legal initiatives designed to curb NGO activism in each region, and assess whether patterns emerge based on differences in nondemocratic regime types. We determined that while NGO regulations have largely increased in Eastern Europe, they have actually declined in the Middle East on average. Moreover, greater NGO regulations exist in authoritarian and closed regimes that approach civil society by erecting clear legal blockades to civic activism. In contrast, hybrid regimes employ more-intricate legal strategies in order

to raise the costs of entering and working in the NGO sector without necessarily overtly stifling civic activism.

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Authoritarian resilience and democratic representation in Morocco: Royal interference and political parties' leaderships since the 2016 elections

Thierry Desrues
Mediterranean Politics, 2018

After the 'Arab Spring' and the second electoral victory of the Islamist party of Justice and Development in 2016, Moroccan King Mohammed VI had to find new ways to reduce the uncertainty of transparent elections and, as a result, his loss of control over the winner of the House of Representatives elections and the choice of the Head of Government. This profile will analyse a few of the paradoxical implications of the 2011 constitutional reform and the royal narrative for democratic transition, and how these have impacted the political practice of the relevant actors. More precisely, the profile will attempt to clarify the various accommodations by both the King and the political parties, to contextualize the reform and better understand the persistence of authoritarian features despite the democratic hybridization of the Moroccan political system.

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NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

UAE and Bahrain uphold stiff prison sentences for human rights activists

December 31st, 2018
Karim Fahim
Washington Post

ISTANBUL — Courts in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates on Monday upheld the convictions of two prominent human rights activists serving lengthy prison terms for expressing anti-government dissent on social media, according to lawyers and human rights groups.

The activists, Nabeel Rajab and Ahmed Mansoor, have no right to further appeal.

The court decisions, issued in Persian Gulf monarchies that the Trump administration considers among its closest Arab allies, were condemned by human rights groups as

unacceptable attacks on free speech. The cases also highlight the increasingly aggressive policing of social media by several of the gulf states, which have punished people for criticizing their governments and allied foreign countries.

Bahrain's highest court upheld a five-year prison sentence imposed on Rajab, who was convicted earlier this year for social media posts he wrote in 2015 that criticized airstrikes by a Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen and accused prison authorities in Bahrain of abusing prisoners, according to his lawyer and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, an advocacy group.

The charges against him included insulting state institutions and insulting a neighboring country — a reference to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain's closest ally, according to the Bahrain Institute.

The prosecution of Rajab is part of a years-long crackdown on dissenters and political opponents that began when Bahrain's monarchy forcefully suppressed a pro-democracy uprising in 2011 with the help of troops from other gulf states. Rajab, a leader of the protest movement and a co-founder of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, has been a frequent target of the authorities and served a separate two-year prison sentence for criticizing the government during a television interview.

Bahrain's government has accused protesters of carrying out violent attacks on the security services.

"Today's shameful verdict is a travesty of justice," Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty International's Middle East Research director, said in a statement. "The decision to uphold Nabeel Rajab's conviction and five-year sentence simply for posting tweets expressing his opinions, exposes Bahrain's justice system as a complete farce."

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Iranian security forces clash with students at bus crash protest

January 1st, 2019

Reuters

LONDON (Reuters) - Security forces clashed with students in Iran on Monday in the third day of protests over a deadly bus crash, online videos showed, adding to officials' fears that rising public unrest could threaten national security.

President Hassan Rouhani has ordered an investigation into the accident at Tehran's Azad University that killed 10 students last week. Students have protested over the aging transport fleet and lack of accountability from the authorities.

A video on Twitter showed students at a campus in Tehran chanting slogans and demanding the resignation of the chairman of the university's board of trustees, Ali Akbar Velayati, an aide to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.
Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity of the videos.

Tehran's deputy governor, Abdolazim Rezaie, was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency that the protests were illegal as no permit had been issued for any gathering. He said the police had full control of the streets and no arrests had been made.

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Another hard year for MB top leaders on trial passes

December 31, 2018
Akhbar El Youm

CAIRO – 31 December 2018: No matter how hard your year was, the Muslim Brotherhood top leaders faced harder times, as they have been handed a batch of severe verdicts for the numerous charges they face in their ongoing trials since 2013.

The 90-year old Muslim Brotherhood organization was designated as a terrorist group in Egypt in December 2013, few months after the ousting of Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated President Mohamed Morsi, and the dispersal of pro-Morsi Rabaa and Nahda sit-ins.

Mohamed Badie is the eighth Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood group. He was handed four imprisonment sentences (each equals 25 years in jail) in different cases this year.

In August, A Cairo Criminal Court sentenced Badie and four other Muslim Brotherhood members in the case known as "al-Bahr al-Azam" to life imprisonment over charges of "inciting clashes" in al-Bahr al-Azam district, Giza, causing the death of five people.

In December, the court sentenced Badie for life, along with five other defendants, in the case known in media as "incidents of the Guidance Office."

The prosecution charged the Muslim Brotherhood's figures in the case with participating in providing unknown individuals with the weapons, ammunition, incendiary materials, explosives, equipment and planning required to commit the crime.

Badie, along with 64 defendants out of 682 others, was also sentenced to life on September 23 over charges of inciting violence in a case dubbed in the media as "El-Idwa Incidents".

Earlier in September, Badie and 46 other Muslim Brotherhood members were sentenced to life imprisonment in the case known as "Rabaa sit-in Dispersal."

However, the Court of Cassation reduced earlier in December the 12-year imprisonment sentence issued against Badie to 10 years in the case known in media as "Beni Suef incidents."

Bassem Ouda was minister of supply and interior trade during Morsi's term. He was handed two verdicts in 2018, including life imprisonment, and 15 years in prison in al-Bahr al-Azam case.

In September, the court sentenced Ouda, along with Badie and 45 other MB members, to life imprisonment in the Rabaa sit-In Dispersal case.

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Protest rally in Mahwait to denounce against Saudi aggression crimes

January 1st, 2019
Yemen News Agency

MAHWAIT, Jan. 1 (Saba) – A protest rally was staged on Tuesday by residents with sheikhs of Shibam Kawkaban district of Mahwait province to condemn the war and violations by Saudi-led aggression coalition and its mercenaries.

At the rally, the protesters raised banners, slogans and pictures denouncing the coalition and its siege against the Yemen people for nearly four years. They called on the UN team to condemn the ceasefire violation by the coalition in Hodeidah and pressure on its militiamen to carry out the agreement brokered by the UN in Sweden.

The rally praised the great triumphs achieved by the army against the coalition and mercenaries in all fronts to defend the homeland and its sovereignty.

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Amal Fathy: Egypt court imposes jail term over harassment video

December 31st, 2018

BBC

An Egyptian appeals court has imposed a two-year prison sentence against the women's rights activist Amal Fathy, who criticised the authorities for failing to tackle sexual harassment.

Fathy was charged with "spreading fake news" in May after posting a video in which she recounted her experiences.

She was handed a two-year jail term by a lower court in September, but it was suspended pending an appeal.

The appeal ruling came days after she was freed on bail over a separate case.

Her husband Mohamed Lotfy, head of the independent Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, said she could be taken back into detention at "any time".

Fathy, a 34-year-old mother-of-one, is a former activist in the April 6 youth movement that was at the forefront of the 2011 uprising against former President Hosni Mubarak.

She was arrested in Cairo two days after posting a 12-minute video on Facebook in which she described how she had been sexually harassed twice in one day and condemned the government's failure to protect women.

She also criticised deteriorating human rights, socio-economic conditions and public services.

Fathy was convicted four months later of "spreading fake news that harms national security". A judge sentenced her to two years in prison that could be suspended until appeal pending payment of \$1,120 (£885) in bail and a \$560 fine.

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POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Professor, Assistant Professor, and Associate Professors at the Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), was founded in 2010 to continue fulfilling QF's vision of unlocking human potential. HBKU is an emerging research University that acts as a catalyst for positive change in Qatar and the region while having global impact.

Job Purpose: To conduct teaching, research and service so as to contribute to HBKU becoming a world-class research university and collaborate with faculty members and students to create a vibrant university community that will positively impact and contribute to the development of Qatar and the region by advancing knowledge in their field and developing human capacity through their teaching.

Key Result Areas:

Assume a role of professional leadership in the department/division and in the relevant scholarly discipline
Conduct assigned courses or seminars
Supervise independent study activities
Serve as academic advisor to students | Serve on and chair university and College committees
Participate in the evaluation and promotion of faculty
Render service to the professional or lay community which is relevant to the individual's academic specialty
Participate in curriculum development activities including the development of curricular materials and special instructional methods
Conduct research or undertake comparable scholarly activity
Supervise research projects and theses
Seek funding support for research
Other reasonable tasks as assigned by supervisor
Perform related tasks as assigned.

Operating Environment, Framework & Boundaries:
Work is in a standard higher education setting.

Communications and Working Relationships:

Dean - contact as needed to exchange information and receive approvals
Students - frequent classroom contact and contact as needed outside of class
College committees - regular contact at meetings for information exchange and decision making

Problem Solving & Complexity:

Proactively identifies problems that are inhibiting meeting organizational objectives
Encourages both individuals and teams to solve problems through empowerment and effective delegation and review mechanisms
Ensures the allocation of resources and invests in people and tools to optimize problem solving and decision making efforts
Removes obstacles and facilitates information flow to support effective problem solving across

More information and application [here](#)

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Post Doc Researcher – Contemporary Politics in the Arab World

Princeton University

Deadline: January 30th, 2019

The Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia invites applications for a postdoctoral or more senior researcher related to the theme of the contemporary politics in the Arab world. Applicants can be from the disciplines of history, politics, economics and international relations. The appointment will be for the year, September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020, with the possibility of renewal, subject to satisfactory performance and continued funding. Pending approval by the Department of Near Eastern Studies and the Dean of the Faculty, the researcher will be expected to teach a one-semester undergraduate course, which may be open to graduate students. When teaching, the researcher will carry a secondary title of Lecturer and will be required to hold on-campus office hours during the teaching semester. Candidates must hold the Ph.D. degree and are expected to pursue independent research at Princeton and to participate in Institute-related activities on campus. This position is subject to the University's background check policy.

Interested applicants must apply online at <https://www.princeton.edu/acad-positions/position/9961> and submit a current curriculum vitae, a research statement (maximum length 2 pages), a cover letter, and contact information for three references. The deadline for application is January 30, 2019, 11:59 p.m. EST.

More information and application [here](#)

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Research Fellowships in the 2019-2020 Program of the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School

Deadline: January 15th, 2019

The Middle East Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School is now accepting applications for the 2019-2020 Middle East Initiative Research Fellowship Program. **The application deadline is 11:59p.m. on January 15, 2019.**

The Middle East Initiative Research Fellowship Program offers one year fellowships for researchers at the pre-doctoral, post-doctoral and junior faculty level for research related to Middle Eastern governance and public policy. All fellowships carry a stipend. Eligible candidates include advanced doctoral candidates, recent recipients of a Ph.D. or equivalent degree, and untenured faculty members. Applicants for pre-doctoral fellowships must have passed general examinations and should be in or near the final year of their program. We welcome applications from political scientists, historians, economists, sociologists, and other social scientists. We also encourage applications from women, minorities, and citizens of all countries.

Priority will be given to applications pursuing one of these five primary areas of focus:

- Democratizing Politics: Establishing durable, accountable democracies not only by focusing on political institutions, but also by empowering the region's citizens.
- Building Peace: Addressing the sources of domestic and interstate conflict and generating durable political settlements.
- Revitalizing the State: Reforming the Middle East's social service delivery systems with a special emphasis on health, education, and social protection.
- Democratizing the Market: Working to ensure that the financial and labor markets in the Middle East benefit the entire population, not merely the elite.
- Digital Governance: Assessing how regional governments in the Middle East adapt and integrate technology, as well as how these advances in technology and cybersecurity have shaped governance.

This program is made possible through funding from the Emirates Leadership Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School. All application materials must be submitted in PDF format through the official application portal. The application period will close at 11:59pm on January 15th, 2019. For more information regarding the program and application process, [click here](#).

Please submit inquiries to Julia Martin, Assistant Director for Research and Finance, by e-mail at: Julia_Martin@hks.harvard.edu.

More information and application [here](#)

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Funding Opportunities for 2019-2020 and Research Awards by the "Council of British Research in the Levant"

Deadline: January 10th, 2019

Our funding call for CBRL 2019-20 research awards is now open.

CBRL offers research grants for [fellowships](#), [project awards](#) and [travel grants](#). For further details about the variety of awards that CBRL offers to support academic research in the Levant and for information on how to apply, please visit our [funding page](#).

We look forward to receiving your application!

Post-Doctoral Fellowships & Visiting Research Fellowships

These awards enable either early career postdoctoral candidates or established scholars in university posts to spend time in the Levant region to conduct primary research, develop contacts, give lectures, and write up project results/publications derived from a thesis/research. Application deadline is 10 January 2019. Read more about previous fellows' CBRL funded research [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Travel Grants

These awards cover travel and subsistence costs for students, academics and researchers undertaking reconnaissance tours or smaller research projects in the Levant. Awards are available for both PhD students and post-doctorate applicants of a value up to

£800. Application deadline is 10 January 2019. Read more about previous travel grant recipient's fieldwork [here](#).

More information and application [here](#)

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