



Third Annual Environmental  
Politics Conference

# Rethinking the Nexus between Conflict, Climate Change and Environment in West Asia and North Africa

📅 **January 31 to February 2, 2023**

📍 **Rotana Gefinor-Clemenceau, Beirut, Lebanon**

📺 Available on ZOOM & Facebook Live

Conflicts are triggered by environmental issues and are also a source of environmental degradation. Over the past 60 years, multiple conflicts that have ravaged West Asia and North Africa (WANA) have been linked to environmental factors. At the same time, several of the largest recent environmental disasters have been caused and aggravated by armed conflict. This raises several questions on how to understand, conceptualize and rationalize this relationship. How can we better document the relationship between conflict and the environment? What impact has conflict had on pressing issues of food and water security? What role can international organizations play in ensuring environmental priorities are taken into account in post-conflict planning and peacebuilding? How can we build post-conflict institutions that can better handle environmental issues? What role can journalists play in documenting the impact of conflicts on the environment?

Organized by the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI), the Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBS), and Orient Matters (OM), this conference convenes activists, researchers, and practitioners on the frontlines of environmental and climate action in WANA to discuss the complex and multifaceted nexuses and intersections between conflicts and the environment.

## About the Environmental Politics Program

ARI's Environmental Politics Program approaches the environment not simply as a set of natural resources, but also as a shared public space, a domain of public health, and an arena of political economy; inseparable from WANA's broader political and economic discussions. The program brings together a network of scholars, practitioners, and activists to create an ecological community of practice through four key activity areas:

- Understanding and supporting environmental activism in WANA
- Analyzing national-level governance structures and advocating for change
- Highlighting and promoting local initiatives
- Environment in conflict

The program aims to share new ways of thinking about the environmental conditions of the Arab region, foster networks between activists, showcase local experiences contending with environmental injustice, and identify critical locations and margins of maneuver for change.

## About the Robert Bosch Stiftung

The Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH is one of Europe's largest foundations associated with a private company. The Foundation operates on a non-profit, independent, and non-partisan basis across the areas of health, education, and global issues. The latter comprises the topics "Peace", "Climate Change", "Migration" and "Inequality" as well as "Democracy" and "Immigration Society". The Peace strategy focuses on supporting locally-led approaches as a means to contributing to sustainable peace in the Middle East, the Sahel and the Western Balkans. Together with regional stakeholders, we set up initiatives that shape inclusive peace processes and implement projects locally. The ongoing development and implementation of local peace approaches require collective efforts. Hence, we promote exchange among academics and practitioners globally while contributing findings of our work to peacebuilding debates and activities.

## About Orient Matters

Orient Matters (OM) is a research consultancy, focusing on analyses based on policy oriented research as well as strategy consulting for projects in Western Asia. Operating out of Berlin, OM's work is underpinned by local expertise and views from the region. At the intersection of geopolitics, economics/development, and energy/climate, OM provides in-depth expertise, practical know-how, and a network of renowned experts. It supports public and private organizations: in assessing opportunities and risks, designing and implementing projects, and staying up-to-date. Moreover, OM also participates in policy-oriented research and, for this purpose, cooperates with leading institutes and universities.

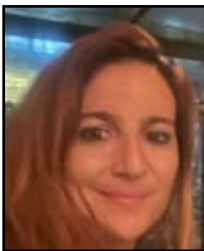
## Day 1: Jan 31, 2023

9:00 - 9:15 am | **Welcome & registration**

9:15 - 9:30 am | **Opening session (welcoming remarks and introduction) delivered by Nadim Houry, Executive Director of the Arab Reform Initiative**

9:30 - 11:00 am | **Panel 1: Re-Thinking the Environment during Conflict: From Afterthought to Central Concern**

The panel will explore the need to better document environmental damage and its long-lasting impact on soil, water, food, and ultimately on societies, for example, in places such as Syria, Iraq and Yemen. This panel will also seek to emphasize the importance of addressing environmental issues in peacebuilding and reconstruction policies. How can we re-center the environment, and environmental damage when thinking about armed conflicts in the region? How are vital natural resources affected by conflict? How can modern imaging software be used to visualize this damage? How can and should humanitarian actors take into account environmental factors in their work?



Moderated by **Sarine Karajerjian**

Sarine Karajerjian is the Program Director of the Environmental Politics program at the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI). Prior to working at ARI, she worked for 15 years at the AUB's Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs since the Institute's inception. Her previous work covered strategic management, fundraising and outreach, and partnerships and grants management. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Anthropology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris and writing her dissertation on the exile and trauma of Syrian refugee women in Beirut. She holds a Masters' degree in Environmental Policy Planning and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health from AUB.

### Speakers:



**Alex Simon**

Alex Simon is a co-founder of Synaps: a Beirut-based research lab that trains local analysts to develop innovative solutions to the most urgent problems facing their societies. He supervises a team of researchers studying economic and environmental issues in Syria, including water management, food security, and energy.



### Omer Badokhon

Omer Badokhon is a social entrepreneur and climate activist Founder and CEO of Tri-S, Winner of the top UN Environmental award Young champions of the Earth Prize. He holds a degree in Chemical Engineering and is passionate about the environment and sustainable energy. He and his team are working to improve and develop biogas small plants as a solution to improve rural livelihoods with sustainable energy. He has over 5 years of experience and working in environmental protection, integrated development and biodiversity conservation in Yemen.



### Wim Zwijnenburg

Wim Zwijnenburg is a Humanitarian Disarmament Project Leader for PAX. He works on conflict and environment related issues in the Middle East, the use and proliferation of emerging military technologies and arms trade.



### Loulouwa Al Rachid

Loulouwa Al Rachid is a leading expert on Iraq, with a research and analyst career spanning more than twenty years; her insights are regularly used to inform decision-making and policy processes as they relate to Iraq. Loulouwa formerly served as Senior Iraq Analyst for the International Crisis Group and a consultant for numerous governmental institutions in France and Europe. She is currently a Senior Political Advisor at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva.



### Basant Abdel-Meguid

Basant Abdel-Meguid is a regional legal advisor in the International Committee of the Red Cross's regional international humanitarian law department for the Middle East and North Africa. She has an LLM in International Law from the University of Edinburgh, a law degree from BPP University in London, and an undergraduate degree in Political Science from Cairo University in Egypt. Prior to her work as a legal advisor for the International Committee of the Red Cross; she was an International Committee of the Red Cross detention and protection delegate in Iraq and Syria, respectively. She also worked as a legal advisor for refugees in Cairo in the UK-based Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA). Currently, she is the regional International Humanitarian Law fileholder for Missing Persons and their Families, Protection of the Natural Environment and Climate Change, Migration and IDPs, Counterterrorism, Forensics, and Customary International Humanitarian Law.

11:00 - 11:30 am

| **Coffee Break**

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

| **Panel 2: Understanding the Nexus between Conflict, Climate Change and the Environment on Food Security**

As the specter of food insecurity grows across the world, particularly in a region that is heavily dependent on food imports like WANA, the impact of conflict and climate change on food systems is becoming increasingly evident. How and why does conflict affect food security in the short and long term? How can food insecurity itself lead to and prolong conflict? For example, explosive remnants can prevent access to agricultural fields and fighting and bombardments often destroy irrigation networks and damage soil fertility. Conflicts can lead to a lack of energy to pump water, an overexploitation of underground water (in the absence of state policing), soil erosion, the disappearance of "grain banks" and financing of farmers, etc. The panel will explore some of the ways the impact has manifested itself in the region, and what is being done in response.



### Moderated by **Farah Al Shami**

Farah Al Shami is a Research Fellow at the Arab Reform Initiative. Her work focuses on Arab Youth Trajectories in Contexts of Conflict; Social Protection in the Post-Covid19 Era in the Arab Region; and the Role of New Labour Movements in Transitions in Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan and Algeria; among others. Prior to working at ARI, she was a Program/s Officer and Junior Researcher at the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), the United Nations-Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), and the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Her previous research work covered a wide array of economic development, political economy and political sociology topics in the Arab region: from Tax Justice, Informal Labour, Gender Policies and Public-Private Partnerships, to Inequalities, the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Transnational Social Movements, Governance and Civil Society. She holds a Masters' degree in Policy Economics and Economic Development from Williams College (MA-USA), a Masters' Degree in Economics from AUB, and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the Lebanese American University.

### Speakers:



### **Younes Abouyoub**

Younes Abouyoub is Chief, Governance and State-Building at the United Nations ESCWA. He is a senior United Nations official with a long experience in conflict resolution, peace building, governance, and sustainable development. He previously worked as the Director of the political office of the United Nations Under-Secretary General for Conflict Prevention; senior political advisor to the United Nations Secretary General Special Envoy to Burundi. He directed the political office of the UN Secretary General Special Envoy to Yemen and acted as his senior special advisor. Among several other positions with the United Nations, Abouyoub was also the senior political officer in charge of the regional affairs in the UN political mission to Libya (United Nations Support Mission in Libya), and Senior Regional Expert in the UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Sudan (Darfur).



### **Hania Chahal**

Holder of bachelor's degree in Agriculture, and Masters Degree in Food Economics and Marketing, Hania Chahal has around twenty years of professional experience in designing, leading and implementing different projects and research across Lebanon as well as the region ( Italy, Yemen, Syria), funded by various donors and international organizations such as USAID, EU, UN, DFID, and JICA among others. She has worked with SMEs, entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and business owners across various regions in Lebanon and outside, gaining wide understanding of the challenges facing business growth and job creation within the regions. Her work has covered a range of different sectors including extensively the agri-food sector, food security, as well as Environment, Health, with gender as cross-cutting across these sectors.



### Saad Dagher

Saad Dagher, a Palestinian farmer as he likes to introduce himself, studied agricultural sciences from 1985 to 1991, and holds a master's degree from the Soviet Union. He introduced the philosophy of agro-ecology to Palestine, and became known as “the spiritual father of agro-ecology in the Arab world”. In the year 2002 he successfully established the first agro-ecological farm in Palestine, and since then he has been leading in his own way the battle of transformation from chemical agriculture to agro-ecology. In addition to many volunteer work, he established his ecological farm (Abu Saeed Ecological Humanitarian Farm). He regularly travels around the world researching ecological farming methods and to provide training and participate in conferences and workshops. He is a founding member of the “Palestinian Agro-ecological Forum”, a Palestinian voluntary group working to spread agro-ecology in Palestine and the Arab world.



### Aline Yacoubian

Aline Yacoubian is currently the Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods Policy Officer for the Oxfam Syria country office. In her role, Aline works closely on researching issues pertaining to economic empowerment of women, access to livelihoods and matters related to food security and agriculture in Syria. Aline holds a Master's degree in public policy and focused on the role of development aid in conflict transformation.

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm | **Lunch Break**

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm | **Panel 3: Water Wars? Rethinking the Nexus of Conflict and Water from the Regional to the Local**

The “water wars” rhetoric has long dominated headlines, especially in coverage of the Middle East and North Africa, regions often considered the most susceptible to water wars. As climate change and contamination strain fresh water supplies, conflict within and across national boundaries can seem inevitable. Yet this narrative also risks ignoring evidence of trans-boundary and local cooperation over water, obscuring other causes of conflicts, or diverting attention from existing water inequalities. How can we best situate, understand, and respond to the real current and future challenges with access to fresh water? How might thinking about water and conflict also lead to more sustainable and equitable practices?



### Moderated by Julia Choucair Vizoso

Julia Choucair Vizoso is a Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the Arab Reform Initiative. She is also Adjunct Professor of International Relations at IE University in Madrid. She holds a PhD in Political Science from Yale University and an M.A. in Arab Studies/B.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. She has served as Vice-Chair of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley (2016-19), Fellow at Stanford University (2014-16), and as Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C., where she was also Editor-in-Chief of the bilingual monthly Sada.

## Speakers:



### **Muna Dajani**

Muna Dajani holds a PhD from the Department of Geography and Environment at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She publishes on topics relating to water history, climate change and environmental politics, and has contributed to numerous studies on the topic of hydro-politics in the Jordan River Basin.



### **Sammy Kayed**

Sammy Kayed is the Co-founder and Director of The Environment Academy at the American University of Beirut - a community born, televised, and expert supported movement dealing with urgent environmental breakdown. He also holds several senior consulting positions with UNEP, the European Commission, and the Union for the Mediterranean, to name a few. He has 11 years of experience leading the formulation of 18 projects focused on the power of expert-community collaboration in bringing forward transformative environmental solutions particularly in states of crisis and collapse. Previously to AUB, he worked with the University of California at Berkeley, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. He has contributed to a number of peer reviewed publications, regularly gives opinions in local and international media, and is committed to supporting place born activism and scholarship that targets systemic change.



### **Ahmed Al Wadaey**

Ahmed Al Wadaey is an associate professor in the Soil, Water and Environment Department, at the Faculty of Agriculture, Sana'a University. He holds a PhD in Soil and Water Sciences from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the United States of America, and has worked on multiple environmental projects in Yemen.



### **Hussam Hussein**

Hussam Hussein is the Executive Director of Partnerships for Development of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) of Jordan. In this capacity, he is responsible for the Science Diplomacy, Global Science Relations, and Science Policy Research divisions. Before joining RSS, Hussein worked in academia and international development on building partnerships for sustainable use of water resources in the Middle East. He did so as a Lecturer and Research Fellow in International Relations at the University of Oxford, at the World Bank as a Private Sector Development Analyst, at UNICEF – WASH in Jordan, and at the European Parliament in Brussels. He comes with years of experience in the development sector, with a focus on sustainable water use and partnerships for development in the MENA region. He obtained his PhD degree from the School of International Development, University of East Anglia. His PhD thesis investigated the discourse of water scarcity in the case of Jordan, and its impacts on transboundary water governance.

4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

**Keynote talk**



**Nasser Yassin**

Nasser Yassin is currently the Minister of Environment in Lebanon. Before his appointment, he was a professor of Policy and Planning at the American University of Beirut (AUB). He founded in 2020 & directed the Lebanon Crisis Observatory to track the repercussions of the crises & to provide evidence and systematic analysis of various facets of the crises hitting the country. He co-chaired the AUB4Refugees Initiative that brought together faculty in AUB responding to refugee crises. Between 2014-2020, he was the Director of Research of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs & served as the Institute's Interim Director in 2019-2020. He holds a PhD from University College London (UCL), an MSc from London School of Economics (LSE), and an MSc and BSc from the AUB. His research and practice interests are in development planning and policymaking in fragile and transition states. He researches and works on policy and social innovation especially in areas of refugee, youth & health policies and programs. He is author of more than 50 internationally published peer-reviewed articles and books. His work on Syrian refugee crisis has been featured in many media channels including Al-Jazeera, BBC, The Economist, New York Times, and Deutsche Welle - among others.



**Nadim Houry**

Nadim Houry is the executive director of the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI). Prior to ARI, Nadim was at Human Rights Watch (HRW) for 13 years where he started and ran HRW's Beirut office for a decade before taking on the role of director of HRW's Terrorism and Counter-terrorism Program. During his time at HRW, he worked across the MENA region, particularly on Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan on a range of human rights issues ranging from freedom of expression to abuses by security forces to labour rights. He has conducted extensive research in conflict zones and his writing often focuses on the themes of governance and accountability. A passionate advocate for change in the region, he has addressed the Security Council and the European Parliament on challenges in the Arab world. A lawyer by training, Nadim worked in the UN as Deputy Counsel for the Volcker Commission which conducted investigations into allegations of corruption into the Oil-for-Food Program in Iraq and was previously a lawyer.

## Day 2: Feb 1, 2023

9:30 - 11:00 am

### Panel 4: Integrating Environmental Priorities in Peace-building: The Role of the International Community

Much has been written about peacebuilding and transitional justice but little has been said about how to integrate environmental priorities as part of these frameworks. Indeed, the desire to achieve environmental justice and stability can be a central pillar of peace negotiations, and international organizations have a chance to play a critical role in such processes. What role can international organizations play to push for the integration of environmental dynamics in peacebuilding? How can such projects be sustainably and transparently funded? How can sustainable reconstruction practices in post-conflict urban areas be a factor in peacebuilding?



#### Moderated by **Atje Drexler**

Atje Drexler is Senior Vice President Global Issues, Germany, overseeing the work of the Robert Bosch Stiftung in the topics Inequality and Conflict. Before that, she was Head of the Department International Understanding and Cooperation. From 2013 to 2019 she headed the department International Relations Europe and its Neighbors, and in addition was responsible for developing the Africa portfolio of the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Atje has been with the Robert Bosch Stiftung since 2001 starting her career in the Health and Science Department where she held the position of Deputy Head of Department from 2007 through 2012. Before joining the foundation, she worked in the automotive industry after graduating from the University of Göttingen in 1998 with degrees in Slavic Studies and Economics.

#### Speakers:



#### **Natasha Hall**

Natasha Hall is a senior fellow with the Center for Strategic and International Studies Middle East Program. She has worked extensively on sustainability issues in the region, co-authoring *Sustainable States: Environment, Governance, and the Future of the Middle East*. She also frequently speaks on the podcast *Babel: Translating the Middle East*, working on everything from the effects of climate change across the region to water insecurity and pollution in Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan. Hall has also published several reports on the aid crisis in Syria, assessing the current situation and providing policy solutions for improving community resilience and achieving stability in the region. Prior to joining CSIS, she worked in conflict-affected areas and in humanitarian emergencies for 15 years in more than 10 countries. She received an M.A. from Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and her B.A. from the University of Virginia in foreign affairs and Middle East studies.



### Hiba Bou Akar

Hiba Bou Akar is an Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University. She is also the founder and director of the Post-Conflict Cities Lab at Columbia University. The lab focuses on the studies of post-conflict urban planning and aims to develop methodological, empirical, and theoretical approaches to planning in contested spaces. Her award-winning book, *For the War Yet to Come: Planning Beirut's Frontiers* (Stanford University Press, 2018), examines how Beirut's post-civil war peripheries have been transformed through multiple planning exercises into contested frontiers that are mired in new forms of conflict. Her first co-edited book, *Narrating Beirut from its Borderlines* (2011), explored Beirut's segregated geographies. Bou Akar received her Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California at Berkeley. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the American University of Beirut, and a Master in Urban Studies and Planning from MIT.



### Salim Rouhana

Salim Rouhana is a Program Leader for Sustainable Development Sectors covering MENA Mashreq Countries at the World Bank Group. Currently Based in Beirut, Salim coordinates the Water, Agriculture, Urban and Resilience, Environment and Social Development sectors. Salim is also the Mashreq focal point on Climate Change and is working on the broader whole-economy Green-Recovery efforts. Prior at the WB, Salim worked as a Senior Urban Governance and Resilience and Task Team Leader covering Africa, East-Asia, and Middle-East and North Africa Regions, focusing on areas related to Decentralization and Urban/Local Governance, City Competitiveness, Territorial and Spatial Development, Urban Resilience and Disaster Risk Management and Slum Upgrading. Salim Holds a BA in Architecture, and Master Degrees in Architecture, Political Science focused on International Affairs and Diplomacy, Urban Planning and Development, and an Executive Master in Business Administration.



### Khalil Dinguizli

Khalil Dinguizli, a dual Tunisian and French national, joined the Bank in 2014 in Tunisia where he has been in charge of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's investments and financing for the private sector. In 2020 he was appointed as Acting Head for Tunisia's office and managed the Bank's operations there. On 1st of September 2021, he assumed a new role within EBRD as the head of Lebanon office. Before joining the EBRD, Khalil worked for 10 years in investment banking at Credit Agricole CIB in Paris. Khalil graduated in finance from IHEC Carthage in Tunisia and from ESCP Business School in Paris.

11:00 - 11:30 am

| **Coffee Break**

11:30 pm - 1:00 pm

| **Panel 5: Post-Conflict Governance: How to Build Strong Institutions that Can Adapt/Mitigate Environmental Impacts**

Bad governance is one of the issues that mark post-conflict situations; it tends to spread throughout state administrations including in the management of environmental issues. Weak governance means that the impact of conflict on the environment can endure for decades after the conflict ends. Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria are all concrete examples. For instance, Lebanon and Iraq's water resource institutions never recovered from the damage inflicted during active conflict, with the same likely to happen in Syria and Yemen. How to address these issues? Notably, how to build strong post-conflict institutions that can tackle the long-term planning needed for environmental issues?



### Moderated by **Angela Laudенbacher**

Angela's work concentrates on security policy as well as on the activities of Arab donor organizations in international development cooperation. Previously, she worked with the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) as well as the Bundeswehr Centre for Public Affairs. Angela studied politics and public administration at the University of Konstanz, the Anglo-American University in Prague, and the Freie Universität Berlin. She is fluent in German and English and reads French.

### Speakers:



### **Carol Chouchani Cherfane**

Carol Chouchani Cherfane directs the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and leads the Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut. Her work supports regional initiatives, inter-governmental processes and inter-agency partnerships on water, energy and food security under a changing climate in support of sustainable development and internationally agreed goals. This includes the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) and the cross-sectoral project on Climate Resilience through Regional Cooperation. Her graduate degree and doctoral studies at the Fletcher School for Law and Diplomacy (Boston) and undergraduate degree from Georgetown University (Washington, DC) are complemented by 25 years of experience working in the Arab and Mediterranean regions on international environmental and natural resource policies for the United Nations, the Harvard Institute for International Development and the World Bank.



### **Shivan Fazil**

Shivan Fazil is a Researcher in Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's Middle East and North Africa Programme. His work mainly focuses on drivers of conflict, peacebuilding and governance in Iraq. He has also featured in the international media, commenting on Iraq's social, political and security dynamics and the challenges of governance after the military defeat of Islamic State. Fazil holds an MSc in Middle Eastern Politics from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His recent publications include: 'Youth Identity, Politics and Change in Contemporary Kurdistan', published by Transnational Press London (2021, eds.); 'Youth Narratives on Hope and Despair in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq', International Journal of Conflict and Violence (forthcoming); 'Reimagining the Social Contract in Iraq', UNDP Report (Jun. 2022, co-author); 'Fixing the Economy and Public Service Provision in Iraq', SIPRI Policy Brief (Dec. 2021). 'Reform within the System: Governance in Iraq and Lebanon', SIPRI Policy Paper (Dec. 2021, co-author).



### **Tarek Alkhoury**

Tarek Alkhoury is currently the Regional Coordinator for Climate Change after coordinating the Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production with UNEP West Asia Office for over 4 years. His main role is leading the development and implementation of UNEP Climate action work in the region based on needs of countries and the region and within the scope of UNEP strategy and programme of work. He has over 13 years of experience in the fields of environment, urban planning, resource efficiency and climate change, 9 years of them have been in the UN System. In 2014, he joined UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi to support Francophone African countries and Arab States in policies and programmes on housing and slum upgrading. Later on, he was appointed as a Regional Programme Officer for Arab States within the Land and Global Land Tool Network Unit (GLTN). Before joining UN-Habitat, he worked for 4 years as an architect and programme manager providing advisory services on integrating green and resource efficiency practices into the project design phase in the Middle East. Tarek is an Architect graduated from Damascus University - Faculty of Architecture. He holds a Master of Environment, Urban and Regional Planning from Reims University and a Specialized Master in Project and Program Management from SKEMA Business School in France.



### **Asma Khalifa**

Asma Khalifa is a Libyan activist and researcher who has worked on human rights, women's rights and youth empowerment since 2011. She worked on raising civil society organisation capacities to do conflict resolution, mediation and peace initiatives. And has worked in several capacities as advisor, researcher on the intersection of gender, youth and conflict. She is the co-founder of Tamazight Women's Movement, a think/do tank that has worked on gender equality and research on the indigenous women of Libya and North Africa. Khalifa is also the Co-Founder of Khalifa Ihler Institute. She is currently doing her PhD at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies.

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm | **Lunch Break**

2:30 pm - 5:00 pm | **Panel 6: Roundtable Discussion with International, Regional and Local Journalists**

How can we build strong coalitions with journalists to cover conflict-related climate change and environmental impacts? Five journalists (from local, regional and international outlets) will convene to share their own stories on covering conflict and its impacts on the region. The issue of media coverage is essential to push environmental issues more as a policy priority in the region.

## Participating Journalists:



### Moderated by **Maya Gebeily**

Maya Gebeily is the Reuters bureau chief for Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. She previously covered the Middle East for the Thomson Reuters Foundation, writing about climate change, tech, socioeconomic developments and other trends shaping our region. She was a reporter for Agence-France Presse for six years, including in Baghdad and Beirut, and has reported as a freelancer out of Beirut, Istanbul, and the Kurdish region of Iraq.



### **Yara El Murr**

Yara El Murr is Beirut-based journalist and documentary filmmaker. She focuses on health and environmental stories but also writes about labor and grassroots initiatives, and has been digging into Lebanon's reckoning with the civil war's legacy through her film work. El Murr has been a journalist at The Public Source since February 2021, where she works on in-depth features and investigations. Recently, she published an article critical of Lebanon's "solar revolution" and the looming e-waste crisis, an article and photo-essay on Lebanon's native flora and the importance of ecological heritage, and a profile of a beekeeping collective in South Lebanon. She has also written about nurse-led climate action in clinics & hospitals for The Guardian, among others. El Murr is an alum of the Oxford Climate Journalism Network at the Reuters Institute and of the Fulbright program. She has a BS in Biology, and an MA in Journalism with a concentration on Science and Health Reporting from CUNY.



### **Alia Ibrahim**

Alia Ibrahim is a co-founder and CEO of Daraj.com, an independent digital media platform that was launched in November 2017. Before that Ibrahim was a Senior Correspondent at Al-Arabiya News Channel. Since 2015, Ibrahim produced and directed episodes for Special Mission, a prime-time investigative reporting show. Ibrahim joined Al-Arabiya in 2008 as a senior roving correspondent. Ibrahim's opinion and news stories appear in a number of publications including Al-Hayat newspaper, Al-Arabiya net, and until 2011 The Washington Post where she had been a contributing reporter since 2005. She started her career in 1996 as a general news reporter at The Daily Star in Beirut. She became managing editor of the newspaper in 2004. Since 2016, she has been an instructor of Journalism at the Lebanese American University.



### **Annia Ciezadlo**

Annia Ciezadlo is an author and journalist who writes about food, war, politics, and power. Her first book, *Day of Honey: A Memoir of Food, Love, and War* (Free Press, 2011), examined how people used food to maintain (or destroy) social ties during wars in Beirut and Baghdad. Since then, she has reported on the ways people use food in crises and catastrophes, from the Arab revolutions and the Syrian conflict to coronavirus and climate change. Her nonfiction writing from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Granta*, *Guernica*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, and other publications. She edits investigations for the award-winning Beirut-based media outlet *The Public Source*.



### **Habib Maalouf**

Habib Maalouf is an environmental writer and journalist who has authored several books and reports on environmental philosophy and on issues related to climate change. He teaches environmental philosophy and environmental media at Antonine University and at the Lebanese University, Faculty of Information.

## Day 3: Feb 2, 2023

### CLOSED WORKSHOP:

#### **Half-day experience sharing and capacity building with local organizations**

given by Alex Simon and Wim Zwijnenburg

Building on the presentations and open discussions of the first two days, this workshop convenes journalists, researchers, and activists to facilitate the exchange of information, the sharing of experience and knowledge and the promotion of networks around the following questions:

- What are the primary challenges of working on environmental and climate issues in times of conflict in WANA? To what extent are these challenges shared across the region or context-dependent?
- What is the state of cross-national networks of collaboration? How can they be improved? What is missing in the context of the impacts of war on the environment and vice versa? How to build sustainable networks and partnerships?
- How can we increase access to and dissemination of reliable, locally-produced knowledge on the nexus between conflicts and the environment?
- How can we nurture communities of practice to come together to share ideas, experiences and best practices, and support each other?
- How can we create bridges with policymakers and journalists in the region to influence decision-making in the context of war?
- How can we use new technological tools to document the impact of conflict on the environment? How can we work closely with local communities and share human stories of local populations?

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## About the Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Reform Initiative is the leading independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality and social justice.

- We produce original research informed by local experiences and partner with institutions to achieve impact across the Arab world and globally
- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region. Founded in 2005, the Arab Reform Initiative is governed by a Plenary of its members and an Executive Committee.

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