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About Al Sharq Forum

Al Sharq Forum is an independent, international non-profit organization that aims at consolidating the values of pluralism and justice, while developing long-term strategies and programmes that contribute to the political development, economic prosperity, and social cohesion for the people of the Al Sharq region and the world.

The Forum consists of three pillars working in tandem to ensure the realization of its mission:

**Al Sharq Academia:**
An online platform offering an eclectic range of academic courses aiming at disseminating knowledge from the social sciences and humanities.

**Al Sharq Strategic Research:**
A think tank that looks to undertake impartial, rigorous research to promote the ideals of democratic participation, dialogue and social justice.

**Al Sharq Youth:**
A network of committed and active youth, leading change towards a more inclusive and just world.
For a decade now, our region has experienced a difficult transition period to a new future. Throughout this long decade, Al Sharq, with its different pillars and activities, converged with the hopes and worries of the region’s peoples to create a space for dialogue, and to foster knowledge and capabilities that outline practical horizons for the future. This only strengthens our hope that we will reach the dignified life that we all aspire to. Today, ten years after our establishment, we confirm that Al Sharq Forum still carries the same values and message, which we must keep striving towards, and in which we see the embodiment of our aims of stability, prosperity and liberty.

“Message from the President

Wadah Khanfar
AL SHARQ FORUM CORE BELIEFS

PLURALISM IS A SOCIAL NECESSITY ACHIEVED BY SECURING HUMAN RIGHTS
We believe that diversity is universal, and that the signs of society’s psychological well-being lie in its tolerance, vitality, and interaction. We thus call for dialogue to deal with contrasting ideas, perceptions, and visions.

KNOWLEDGE HAS INTENDED GOALS AND PURPOSES
We believe that science and knowledge are the pillars upon which the human future will be built. We are thus firm believers in prioritizing scientific research and methodological, epistemological thinking, and in linking them to sublime ethical objectives.

OUR VALUES ARE PREVALENTLY UNIVERSAL AND HUMANE
We believe that the values underpinning our consciousness should be of a universal message, seeking goodness, justice, and ethics, and belong to them everywhere.

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE PUBLIC DISCOURSE
We believe that public affairs should be addressed through a process of negotiation among the constituents of each community.

AN EQUITABLE, VIRTUOUS MORAL ECONOMY
We believe that any economic system that is detached from moral values is a project of enslavement and hegemony, and therefore will achieve neither security nor prosperity for the world.

GRASPING LESSONS FROM OUR PAST WHILE CONSCIOUSLY LIVING OUR PRESENT
We are keen to carefully and deeply study the historical experiences of our nations and the world, and believe that our study of history should not make us dwell in the past, nor try to uncritically restore its models, structures, and experiences.

THE FUTURE IS AUSPICIOUS
We believe that our countries are facing a historical transitional phase, and that we are called upon to build the features of the future with a new spirit.
Through its research programs, conferences, and publications, and in line with the Forum’s objectives, Al Sharq Strategic Research carries three central areas of focus: democratization and good governance, regional and international order, and transformation of ideologies and identities.

A think tank that looks to undertake impartial, rigorous research to promote the ideals of democratic participation, an informed citizenry, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and social justice.
Programs
Thematic research tracks in MENA politics with various task forces and files. There are two currently running tracks: the MENA Security Program and the Political Islam Program.

Publications
Analyses, researches, and opinion pieces written by prominent experts in Middle Eastern studies and geopolitics.

Blogs
Short opinion or analytical pieces addressing a specific question or facet of an ongoing political debate.

Events
The events serve as dynamic platforms bringing together researchers, academics, experts, and activists to foster informed dialogue and knowledge-sharing, and promote a culture of reasoned public discourse.
To address the issues and challenges facing the Al-Sharq region, Al Sharq Strategic Research has launched two programs, namely the MENA Security Program and the Al Sharq Program on Political Islam; and three other programs in progress. By bringing together experts, academics, policymakers, and researchers from various fields, Al Sharq Strategic Research aims to increase the level of understanding and quality of policy-making concerning the Al Sharq region.

- Al Sharq Program on Political Islam
- MENA Security Program
- Political Islam in the Second Wave of the Arab Uprisings Task Force
- New Security Arrangements for the MENA Region Task Force
- Armed Non-States Actors File
- The Eastern Mediterranean File

Al Sharq Strategic research is currently working on 3 new programs on:

- Palestine
- Regional Economic Development
- Governance & Democratization
MENA Security Program

State failures, violent extremism, the emergence of militia groups as regional forces, chemical warfare, and the arms race call for the development of new security arrangements for the Al Sharq region. This dire need has led Al Sharq Strategic Research to launch its MENA Security program to address the security problems of the region from a regional perspective, and offer recommendations for security alternatives.

New Security Arrangements for the MENA Region Task Force

This task force aims to take stock of the architecture of regional security in the MENA region with a view to propose tangible recommendations for future steps.

The Eastern Mediterranean File

This specialised file examines the different facets of the geopolitical contest over the new security and energy order in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Armed Non-States Actors File

The COVID-19 pandemic and the collapse of oil prices have affected the (mis)fortune of the armed non-state actors. This file examines their future prospects in light of these dynamics.

The GCC and the Evolving Notion of Gulf Energy Security

Nikolay Kozhanov

Eastern Mediterranean: Conflict or Compromise?

Mitat Çelikpala

The Transformation Struggle of the PYD: Localization Tendency as a Method of Gaining Legitimacy?

Mehmet Emin Cengiz
Al Sharq Program on Political Islam

The Arab uprisings and their aftermath unleashed deep and ongoing processes of transformation within political Islam movements (PIMs). In light of this, Al Sharq Strategic Research launched the Political Islam program as a renewed effort to understand these movements and develop novel conceptual frameworks suited to the new and shifting terrains.

Political Islam in the Second Wave of the Arab Uprisings Task Force

This taskforce aimed to examine the popular uprisings that intensified during 2019 and spread to four Arab states (Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, and Lebanon) in what came to be known as the second wave of the Arab uprisings, which seems to be deepening the crisis of political Islam movements in the MENA region.

Transformation of Political Islam in a Changing Regional Order Task Force

This task force examined and analysed the ongoing transformation of PIMs in the wake of the Arab uprisings. Composed of thirteen research fellows and research assistants, it worked from February to December 2018 on seven countries where the Arab uprisings phenomenon took different forms.

Islamist Movements and Parties in the Algerian Uprising

İsmail Yaylaci, Muhammad Amasha

Is there a Morsi Effect? An Overview of Political Islamists’ Electoral Performances Since 2013

Nicholas Gjorvad
EXPERTS

Mohammad Affan
Ph.D. from the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter
Research Director of Al Sharq Strategic Research

Mehmet Emin Cengiz
MA Degree from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the Middle East, Marmara University
Research Fellow

Yılmaz Ensaroğlu
Advisor at the Ministry of Justice/ Turkey
Senior Research Fellow

Sinan Hatahet
Co-founder of Workiom
Senior Research Fellow

Osama El-Mourabit
MA in International Relations, University of Humboldt-Berlin
Research Fellow

Basheer Nafi
Senior Research Fellow at Al Jazeera Centre for Studies
Senior Research Fellow

Rawan Hammoud
MA from the Department of Religious Studies, New York University
Research Fellow

Galip Dalay
the Richard von Weizsäcker Robert Bosch Academy
Senior Research Fellow

Ömer Aslan
Assistant Professor of at Yıldırım Beyazıt University
Senior Research Fellow
- **İsmail Yaylaci**
  Assistant Professor and Department Chair at Fatih Sultan Mehmet University
  Senior Research Fellow

- **Tamer Badawi**
  Associate Research Fellow

- **İnşan Kimya**
  Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Politics at the University of Virginia
  Associate Fellow

- **Larbi Sadiki**
  Professor of Arab Democratization at Qatar University
  Senior Research Fellow

- **Betül Doğan Akkaş**
  Non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council
  Associate Fellow

- **İnşan Kristina Trauthig**
  Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR)
  Associate Fellow

- **M. Nurullah Gulec**
  Ph.D. Candidate in Economics at Duke University
  Associate Fellow

- **Thembisa Fakude**
  Deputy Chairperson of Common Action Forum
  Associate Fellow
Al Sharq Strategic Research has published over 1,400 pieces on issues ranging from regional politics and security to regional economics and world politics.

**PUBLICATIONS**

The Arab Uprisings: A Decade On

The Arab Uprisings have proved to be one of the most transformative developments in the MENA region. This dossier scrutinizes the democratization processes, the fate of the uprisings, and their formative impact on the region's societies and states.


Turkish-Emirati Relations in Iraq After 2003: A Contained Competition?

This paper attempts to construct a picture from scratch about the relations and competition between Turkey and Gulf Arab countries in trade and politics in Iraq, primarily relying on US diplomatic cables sourced from WikiLeaks from 2003 to around 2010/2011.

Tamer Badawi

Iranian Foreign Policy under ‘Raisi’

This dossier explains how Ebrahim Raisi’s political leanings may introduce fundamental differences to Iranian foreign policy and regional strategy toward the Middle East, Afghanistan, the EU and US.

Hassan Ahmadian, Fatima Al Smadi, Nicole Grajewski, Valentina Pegolo, Mohsen Shariatinia.

Peace-Making in the Middle-East: ‘Normalization’ With... Without Palestine?

Under the “Trump Deal”, the recent normalization of Arab states with Israel has neglected issues of Palestinian justice and right to statehood. This paper argues that this normalization, solely beneficial to Israel, has inherent negative implications on peace-making. Thus, the ‘Trump Deal’ signifies a manifestation of a visibly uneven foreign policy in the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

Larbi Sadiki
Democracy and the Great Pestilence

Amidst the pain and panic, people naturally want to make sense of things, so what can we say about the causes, effects, and historical significance of this new Great Pestilence? What were the implications of the coronavirus pandemic on global democracy?

John Keane

Tunisia’s 25th of July: The End of a Crisis or the Start of a New one

This paper attempts to review the root causes that led to the 25th of July constitutional crisis. It also addresses the possible impact and prospects of this exceptional situation on Tunisia’s democracy and democratization process.

Nedra Cherif

Russia’s “Return” to the Middle East and the Arab Uprisings

This expert brief examines several factors that shape Russian foreign policy in the Middle East, including: Moscow’s geopolitical interests as well as the domestic changes in the region since the onset of the Arab Spring, Middle East, Afghanistan, the EU and US.

Leonid M. Issaev

Biden Administration’s policies towards the Middle East: A Paradigm Shift?

This dossier addresses the massive changes to U.S. foreign policy under the Biden Administration, specifically toward key regional actors, such as: Turkey, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel.

Hassan Ahmadian, Sinan Hatahet, Mohammad Affan, Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, Fatih Şemsettin İşik, Amjad Ahmad Jebreel.
EVENTS

EUROPE AND GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
March 3, 2021

The panel explored Europe’s relationships with the United States, China and Russia in the context of the Middle East. What does Europe’s struggle for influence in the region mean for its geopolitical and geo-security interests?

CHATHAM HOUSE
The Royal Institute of International Affairs

THE ARAB SPRING: 10 YEARS ON
January 27, 2021

The webinar explored the fortunes of the countries at the centre of the Arab Spring and the challenges for reform that have since been compounded by more recent events including the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHATHAM HOUSE
The Royal Institute of International Affairs

Seminar on Political Islam Movements in the Second Wave of Arab Uprisings
October 13, 2020

The panel discussed the outcomes of the year-long research by the “Political Islam in the Second Wave of the Arab Uprisings” task force that examined the political positions and behavior of Islamist movements during the 2019 protest wave.

HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY

• Know more: research.sharqforum.org

• Events
Events


Europe and Its Neighbourhood 2019
December 10, 2019

The panel looked at how ‘Political Islam’ movements and parties acted and reacted in response to the different challenges and opportunities created by the Arab uprisings, including leadership changes, reformist agendas, and bloody civil wars.

Political Islam Movements in the post-Arab Uprisings Period
July 4, 2019

The event discussed the variety of ways in which the Arab uprisings, despite all its shortcomings, have changed the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion of political Islam movements in the Al Sharq region.

Political Trends in The Al Sharq Region After the Arab Uprisings: The Transformation of Political Islam in a Changing Regional Order
February, 2018

Know more: research.sharqforum.org
BLOGS

**Breakthrough in the Gulf Crisis Will Shape Regional Geopolitics**

This piece discusses how the Al-Ula Agreement, that ended the most protracted intra-Gulf dispute in recent memory, will shape the geopolitical future of the Persian Gulf region.

*Samuel Ramani*

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**What Does the Breakthrough in the GCC Crisis Mean for Turkey?**

This blog argues that while challenging, the most realistic path to peace in Yemen is a power-sharing agreement that enables all the major actors in the country to have a seat at the table and address their grievances and legitimate security concerns.

*Giorgio Cafiero*

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**‘Cyber Protest’: The Hidden Facebook of Tunisia’s July 25**

This piece analytically tackles the under-examined cyber dimensions of Tunisia’s July 25 protests, hours before Kais Saied announced his "exceptional measures."

*Larbi Sadiki*

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**Israel’s Dangerous Shadow War with Iran**

This blog explains the dual Israeli strategy that aims to eventually reverse any U.S. willingness to re-enter the nuclear deal by undermining Iranian economic resilience and diplomatic leverage.

*Ali Akbar Dareini*

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**The Blatant Nature of Post-Arab Spring Authoritarianism**

This piece lays out the features of the resurgent authoritarianism in the MENA region, which triumphed at high costs years after the Arab Spring, and how this new authoritarianism is notably different from that of the pre-Arab Spring era.

*Mohammad Affan*

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**The Second Berlin Conference on Libya: What Changed, What Didn’t?**

This piece assesses the success and the shortcomings of the International Libya Conference that was originally held to discuss the progress of and the ongoing challenges to a stable, peaceful Libya.

*Inga Kristina Trauthig*
Al Sharq Internship Program is a 6-month paid internship that has been running since March 2016, and consists of two stages. The program aims at cultivating critical thinking, reading, and analytical writing skills, and encouraging interns to produce research papers under the guidance of their assigned mentors.

**INTERNERSHIP PROGRAM**

Cohorts 6
Nationalities 10+
Interns 25+
Phases internship 2
Training hours 5000+

Jaefer Kedir
Political Science and International Relations

Isra Sakipi
Political Science and International Relations

Marc Martorell Junyent
Middle East Politics and Society

Muhammad Amasha
Sociology

Saman Madadi
Political Science and International Relations

Tuğba Kalem
Political Science and International Relations

Selman Büyükkara
Political Science and International Relations

Rahaf Almomani
Ottoman International Studies

Meryem Ülker
African Studies

MA - 2016
MA - 2018
BA - 2017
BA - 2017
BA - 2019
MA - 2018
MA - 2019
MA - 2020
MA - 2020
MA - 2021
AL SHARQ STRATEGIC RESEARCH IN NUMBERS

- Publications in 3 Languages: 1400
- Publications download: 86,600
- Newsletters: 172
- Website Visits (Dec2020-Dec2021): 101,200

Social media (Dec2020-Dec2021)
- Reach: 1.42M
- Impressions: 696K
- Followers: 10.2K
- Average monthly interactions: 84.450
- Reach: 736K
- subscribers: 6.75K
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