



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

CMES Yearbook 2024

CENTRE FOR ADVANCED MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

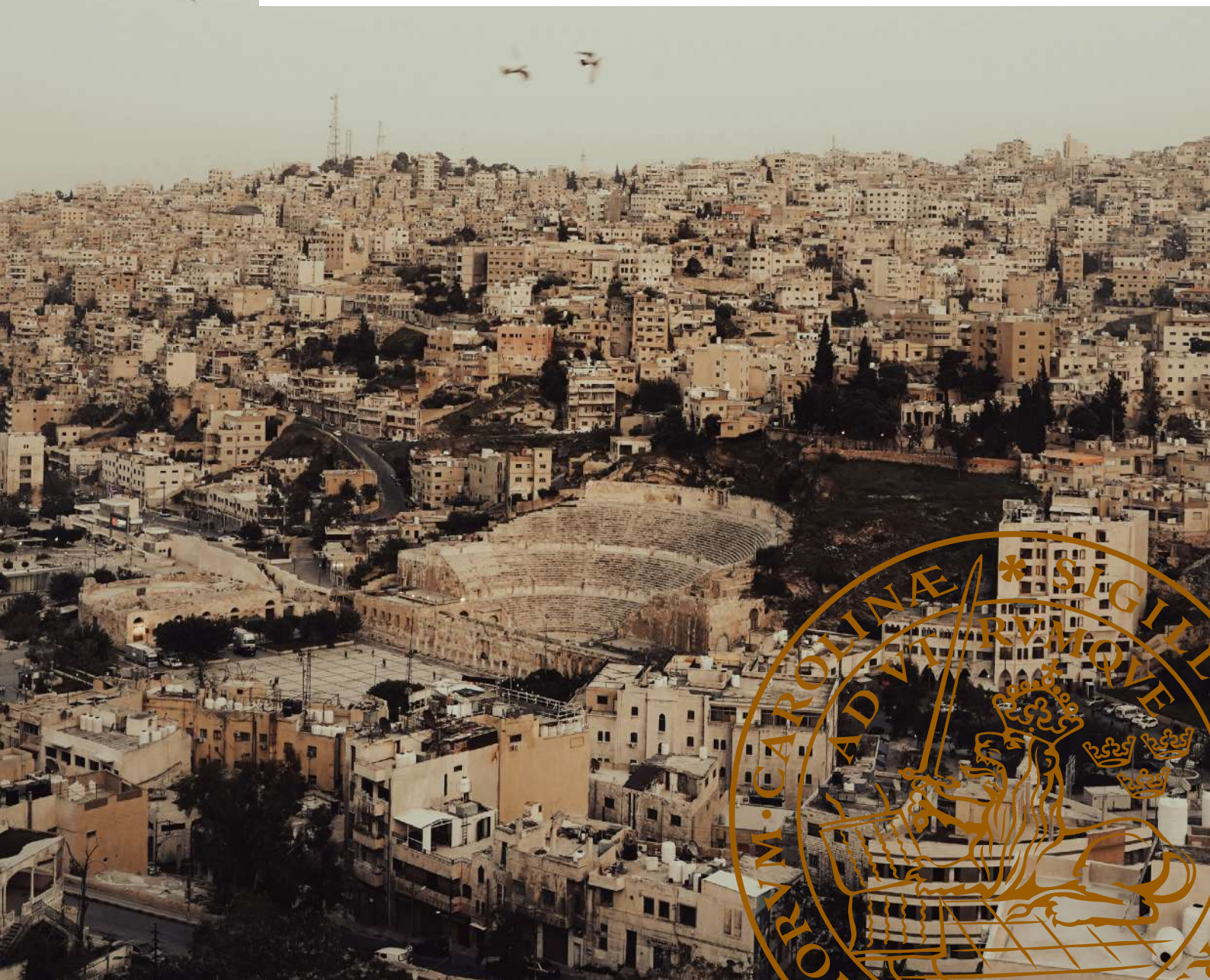


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From the Director

Looking back, 2024 was a highly productive year! CMES/MECW 2.0 has successfully completed its three-year reorganisation, exceeding expectations thanks to the outstanding commitment of our staff - a dream team! The research team expanded significantly, with new PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, tenure-track lecturers, and distinguished visiting fellows, including the Olof Palme Professor and a Fulbright Schuman Scholar. All interdisciplinary flagship projects are now fully operational. The CMES Seminar series is now firmly established in research, welcoming also leading scholars nationally and internationally. Arabic language courses are offered at all levels for all at Lund University.

During the year, CMES hosted several international workshops on topics such as post-conflict activism among women and youth, conflict-environment linkages in Syria, and policy-research dialogue on Europe-Iran relations. We also hosted the SWEMENA 2024 annual conference, achieving record participation across disciplines in Sweden.

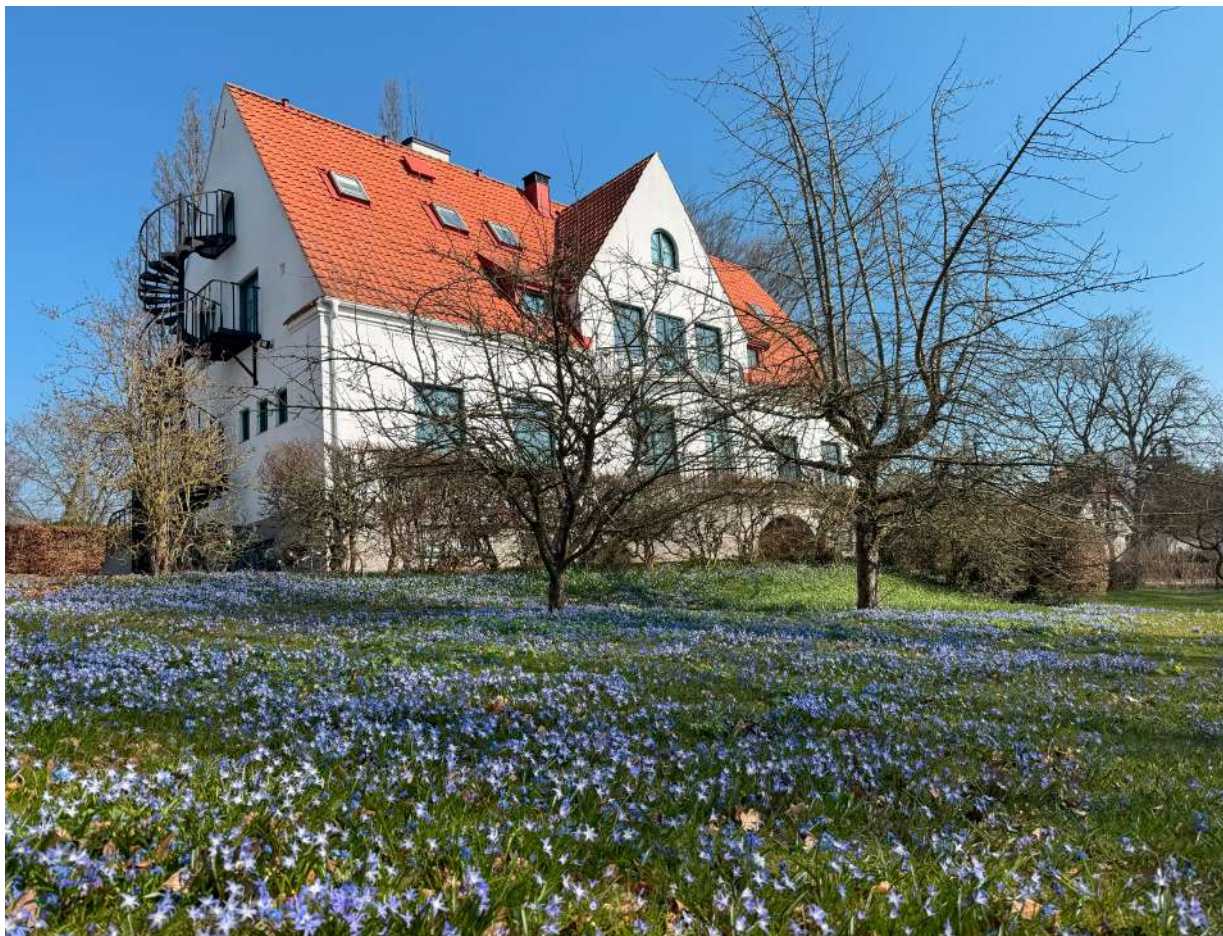
Several new funding and research initiatives have been launched. CMES is currently developing a robust database infrastructure for large-scale data and policy analysis on the MENA region. Collaboration with international organisations, notably the UN University and its new Water Hub at Lund, has been strengthened.

Research communication has been advanced in quality and diversity. Today, we have well-established routines for outreach activities beyond academia and a comprehensive toolbox of dissemination strategies across digital platforms and social media. Media presence has increased through articles, analyses, podcasts, and publications, including many contributions to The Conversation. Additionally, CMES launched a new popular science series, CMES Regional Outlook, providing in-depth analyses of current events in the Middle East.

The escalation of violence in the Middle East since October 2023 has made this year especially challenging. CMES responded by significantly expanding its activities offering a wide range of public events, articles, podcasts, and a new reading course on Israel-Palestine. I am deeply grateful for the extraordinary dedication of our researchers during these times. In collaboration with the Student Association of Foreign Affairs (UPF), CMES organised lectures with senior Middle East correspondents Cecilia Uddén and Samir Abu Eid, as well as rapid response events with Fulbright Professor David Kaye and high-profile panels in Almedalen.

Looking ahead, CMES stands on a strong foundation. Building on the momentum of 2024, we will continue advancing research excellence, deepening interdisciplinary collaboration, and strengthening our societal impact.

Karin Aggestam



About CMES and the Strategic Research Area The Middle East in the Contemporary World

CMES supports, coordinates and expands interdisciplinary research on the Middle East at Lund University.

CMES produces cutting-edge scholarship; generates evidence-based societal and policy-relevant knowledge in cooperation with local, national and international stakeholders; prioritises societal outreach activities, visibility and research communication; and supports interdisciplinary research-based education to students. It coordinates the Strategic Research Area (SR), Middle East in the Contemporary World (MECW) and hosts more than 40 researchers from five different faculties (Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Economics, Faculty of Engineering, Humanities and Theology).

The MECW research program consists of four research themes:

1. Environment and sustainable development
2. Security and sustainable peace
3. Democratization, migration and sustainable socio-economic development
4. Religion, identity, culture

THE VILLA

CMES is located at Finngatan 16 in the central parts of Lund. The villa was built in 1915 by architect Carl E. Rosell for the Forsman family, including the legendary professor of pathology and bacteriology, John Forsman. The Forsmans lived here until 1941, when it was bought by Astrid and Åke Petzäll. The villa was sold to Lund University sometime in the mid-1900s. Around 1960, Economic history and Prof. Oscar Bjurling moved into the building. In 1988, Human ecology resided here and from 2010 to present, the villa is home to CMES.

CMES BOARD

The board members of the Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies during 2024 were:

- Agnes Andersson, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Professor in Human Geography (Lund University)
- Behshid Khodaei, PhD student affiliated with both CMES the Water Resources Engineering division at LTH (Lund university)

- Alexander Maurits, Deputy Dean of the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology and Associate Professor in Church History (Lund University)
- Rouzbeh Parsi, Head of Programme, the Middle East and North Africa Programme at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (Utrikespolitiska institutet)
- Stacey Ristinmaa Sörensen, Director of the Pufendorf Institute for Advanced Studies and Professor of Synchrotron Radiation Research (Lund University)
- Charlotta Sparre, Deputy Director, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

The members of CMES Scientific Advisory board:

- Anders Jägerskog, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist at the Water Global Practice (World Bank)
- Ellen Lust, Professor at the Department of Political Science (University of Gothenburg)
- Kaveh Madani, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)
- Marie-Joëlle Zahar, Professor of Political Science (Université de Montréal)
- Michelle Pace, Professor of Global Studies (Roskilde University)
- Morten Valbjørn Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science (Aarhus University)
- Nadim Houry, Executive Director of the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)
- Nicola Pratt, Professor of International Politics of the Middle East (University of Warwick)
- Raphael Cohen-Almagor, Professor and Founder/Director of the Middle East Study Group (University of Hull)
- Sihem Jebbari, Researcher at Institut National de Recherches en Génie Rural, Eaux et Forêts (INR-GREF)

STAFF

CMES comprises staff from five different faculties at Lund University and with expertise in areas ranging from environmental sustainability and democracy to peacebuilding and religion. Among there staff are



Top: CMES staff gathered for a kick-off at the Swedish island of Ven in August 2024. Right: Dalia Dassa Kaye, visiting scholar at CMES 2023 - 2024. Photo: Ulrika Oredsson.

eight professors, seven associate professors, 20 researchers, five postdocs, and seven doctoral students.

During 2024, CMES welcomed several new staff members. Among them were Adam Almqvist (postdoctoral fellow), Lovisa Rosenquist Ohlsson (PhD student), Malin Wettermark (finance officer), Sami Al-Daghistani (associate senior lecturer), Maira Viana Einarsson (finance officer), Krishna Kumar (postdoctoral fellow), Anne Lene Stein (teaching team), Filippo Verre (postdoctoral fellow), and Altea Pericoli (postdoctoral fellow).

VISITING SCHOLARS

Every semester, CMES welcomes visiting scholars on writing retreats. In 2024, three Lund University scholars were granted writing retreats at CMES: Sinem Kavak, Lisa Strömbom, and Ilkin Mehrabov. During 2023-2024, Dalia Dassa Kaye, a globally recognized expert on international relations and Middle East policy, joined CMES for a visiting fellowship as a Fulbright Schuman scholar.

INTERNS

In the spring semester of 2024, CMES welcomed 11 part-time project interns. The interns were all masters students at Lund University, doing their internships in four different CMES projects.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

CMES has several collaborative partners in Sweden and beyond. Among them are:

- Swedish Middle East & North Africa Network (SWEMENA)



- The Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies (NSMES)
- The Association of Foreign Affairs in Lund (UPF)
- The Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI)
- Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East & North Africa
- Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)
- United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

GRANTS

Every year, CMES supports research on the Middle East with high scientific potential by inviting Lund University scholars to apply for a variety of grants:

Research Initiation

CMES provides seed money for research initiation and preparation of applications for national and international research calls. The aim is to facilitate initial

scholarly work and collaboration on the Middle East at the CMES to prepare project applications.

Research Project Proposals

CMES supports three-year-research projects with high scientific potential through the Strategic Research Area MECW. CMES funds one new project annually and encourages collaboration between scholars from different disciplines at Lund University to conduct interdisciplinary research on the Middle East.

CMES Writing Retreats

CMES supports writing retreats on Middle East research with the aim to finalise an article, book chapter, edited volume or a book for publication in peer-reviewed outlets.

CMES Workshop Proposals

CMES supports and coordinates workshops and higher public research seminars with high scientific potential through the Strategic Research Area MECW. CMES funds 1-2 new workshop per year and encourages interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers from different disciplines within Lund University.

Travel Grants for Field Work and Conference/Workshop Participation

CMES provides travel grants for conducting field work in the Middle East and conference/workshop participation with paper presentations focused on Middle East

research. Applications are open to employees at Lund University.

UNU HUB: WATER IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

In November 2024, Lund University and the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health announced a new collaborative initiative: the United Nations University Hub "Water in a Changing Environment (WICE)" at Lund University. This unique hub - with only two of its kind in Europe and four worldwide - aims to address global water challenges by connecting Lund University researchers and students with the UN's expertise and networks.

CMES is one of three units at Lund University constituting the core team of this strategic partnership.



Right: Inauguration of the United Nations University Hub "Water in a Changing Environment (WICE)" at Lund University in November 2024.

Bottom: Interns at CMES during 2024. Lilljan Daoud, Jaara Chikfa, Boran Zhang, Marine Lambotte, Rupert von der Kammer, Irene Vanni, Fadi Azzo, Asma Ben Salam and Renee Nienhuis. Not pictured: Szebasztián Simic and Firat Berk Sivaslioglu. Photo: Linda Eitrem Holmgren.



CMES Research Projects

CMES hosts and coordinates a large number of interdisciplinary research projects at Lund university. A majority of them are part of the MECW research program but there are also additional projects with external research funding This in an overview of esearch projects located at CMES in 2024.

AI in the Service of Socio-Politically Adapted Sustainable Dust-Storm Control in the Middle East

The goals of this interdisciplinary project are to identify the climate- and human-induced sources of dust and to determine and explain the factors affecting the dust-source areas.

Being Young in Conflict

This is a collaborative research project between CMES and Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) on political youth in conflicts in the Middle East.

Beyond Sacred/Secular Cities - Exploring Politics of Memory, Space, and Religion in Middle Eastern Nationalisms

The project is devoted to exploring 'the city' as a stage for the construction and contest of nationalist imaginations in the Middle East (and beyond).

Comparative Feminist Activism in the Middle East

This project, which aims to explore how feminist practices and strategies for change-making travel between countries, and are passed on from one generation to the next.



Comparative Water Resources Availability in the Middle East

In this project, advanced remote sensing, machine learning, and artificial intelligence methods are being utilized to assess the availability of water resources in the Middle East region.

ECO-Syria: Exploring Conflict-Environment Interactions for Sustainable Development and Conservation

This research project builds on the political ecology approach that frames environmental and ecological changes as an outcome of political processes and empirically focuses on Syria.

FIRE: Fighting Insurgency Ruining the Environment

This project delves into the connection between violent conflict and environmental degradation.

Frictional Homebuilding: Swedish Civil Society Actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

This project explores the complex history of Swedish humanitarian initiatives in the occupied Palestinian territories through the concept of frictional humanitarian homebuilding.

Geopolitics and Regional Cooperation in MENA

This project aims to study shifting geopolitical structures and regional power dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa region

Learning to Succeed: The Integration of the Children of Immigrants in Three Cities

The project investigates the integration of the children of immigrants from Mexico in the US, North Africa in France and Turkey in Germany.

Pyrogeography in Conflict Contexts: Satellite Remote Sensing of Vegetation Fires in the Middle East

This project takes an interdisciplinary perspective and combines earth observation data with both biophysical, political, and socio-economic data to provide an integrated understanding of vegetation fires in drylands.

Research Data Infrastructure on MENA

CMES aims to coordinate and compile data and analyses on the MENA region to be openly shared through a data infrastructure platform.

Syrians at Work: Essays on Labor Markets in Syria and Host Countries

This project contributes to the economic and demographic literature on migration and labor markets with insights on how conditions within the sending country determine immigrant self-selection and labor market assimilation in the host country.

Turkey Beyond Borders - Critical Voices, New Perspectives

This project aims to foster collaboration between academics in Sweden and scholars from Turkey whose academic freedoms are implicitly or explicitly curtailed and violated.

Water Security and Sustainable Development in the Middle East

The project’s objectives are to assess water resources in the MENA region and address areas at risk and potential sources of water stress, analyse diplomatic efforts to resolve transboundary water disputes, and explore how water resource management and water stress affect the political and social stability in the region. were assigned readings, which all course participants were expected to read and discuss. The final meeting was combined with a lunch of Middle Eastern cuisines.

CMES Research Seminars

The CMES Research Seminar is the main collective seminar at the Centre. Lund University researchers and invited national and international leading scholars present ongoing research and analyses of a broad range of exciting topics of relevance for the Middle East.

Everyday Nuclear Histories and Futures in the Middle East, 1945–1948 (1 February)

A CMES seminar with Hebatallah Taha (CMES and Department of Political Science, Lund University) on nuclear histories and futures in the Middle East.

Conflict and Environment in Kurdistan (22 February)

CMES hosted a roundtable to discuss intersections between armed conflict and environmental issues in Kurdistan. Presentations were held by Joost Jongerden, Eleonora Gea Piccardi, and Necmettin Türk. The roundtable was chaired by Pinar Dinc, researcher at CMES and Senior Lecturer in Political Science at Lund University.

Occupying Urban Memory - The Construction of Jerusalem at the Tower of David Museum (29 February)

Torsten Janson, researcher at CMES and Senior Lecturer in History of Religions and Religious Behavioural Science at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, held a lecture about his recent field research in Jerusalem.

A CMES Research Seminar in November 2024 with Sinem Kavak (LUCSUS, Lund University) about Syrian refugees in Turkey and Lebanon. Photo: Matilda Skoglöw.





Doha Corniche, Qatar. Photo: Masarath Alkhaili.

(Un)lonely Impulse of Delight - Rhizomated Subactivism and the Lessons from the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey (14 March)

A CMES Research Seminar on the mass mobilization and the collective political engagement of the Gezi Park protests of 2013 came as a surprise for many in Turkey. This presentation by Ilkin Mehrabov (CMES and Department of Strategic Communication) investigated the protests through the lens of a new concept: rhizomated subactivism.

Societal Impacts of Climate Stress - An Integrated Assessment of Drought, Vulnerability and Conflict in Syria (28 March)

A CMES Research Seminar on the results of the project Climate Stress Syria, with a focus on drought patterns, drought-induced migration and land abandonment in Syria, the climate vulnerability of the agricultural system, and the risk of agricultural collapse. Presentation by CMES researchers Lina Eklund and Pinar Dinc.

On the Edge - Post-Conflict Political Generations of Women and Youth Activists in the 'Second Wave' of the Arab Spring (11 April)

A CMES Roundtable. Speakers: Seréna Nilsson Rabia (University of Bergen, Norway), Ruba Ali Al-Hassani (Lancaster University, UK), May Tamimová (Leiden University, the Netherlands), Matthew Heinrichs (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA), Liv Tønnessen (Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway), Mai Azzam (University of Bayreuth, Germany), and Sarah Anne Rennick (Lund University, Sweden, and Arab Reform Initiative, France). The event was moderated by

Rola El-Husseini Dean, CMES Researcher and Associate Professor in Political Science at Lund University.

Islam, Modern Science, Pseudoscience (25 April)

Robert Vosloo (Stellenbosch University), Henry Mbaya (Stellenbosch University), Lisa Strömbom (CMES and Political Science, Lund University) and Torsten Janson (CMES and CTR, Lund University)

Conditioning Spaces of Memory (13 May)

A CMES Roundtable about South Africa and Israel/Palestine with presentations by Robert Vosloo (Stellenbosch University), Henry Mbaya (Stellenbosch University), Lisa Strömbom (CMES and Political Science, LU) and Torsten Janson (CMES and CTR, LU).

Agonistic Memory-Work in the Aftermath of the Oslo Agreement (16 May)

A CMES Research Seminar in which a chapter in-writing in the book Peace and agonistic memory: Colombia, Israel-Palestine and Northern Ireland (Edinburgh University Press) was presented by Lisa Strömbom.

Haifa – Memories of Jewish-Palestinian Futures (3 June)

A CMES Research Seminar with Elad Lapidot (University of Lille), co-organized with the project Beyond Sacred/Secular Cities - Exploring Politics of Memory, Space, and Religion in Middle Eastern Nationalisms.

AI in the Service of Socio-Politically Adapted Sustainable Dust-Storm Control in the Middle East (13 June)

A CMES Research Seminar presenting the results of the MECW project AI in the Service of Socio-Politically Adapted Sustainable Dust-Storm Control in the Middle East. Speakers: Hossein Hashemi (CMES and Division of Water Resources Engineering), Amir Naghibi (CMES and Division of Water Resources Engineering), Sara Brogaard (CMES and LUCSUS), Ali Mansourian (CMES and Department of Physical Geography and Ecosystem Science), and Pengziang Zhao (CMES and Department of Physical Geography and Ecosystem Science).

MECW Project Launch - Frictional Homebuilding: Swedish Civil Society Actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territories 1967- (12 September)

A CMES seminar presenting the new project Frictional Homebuilding, which explores the complex history of Swedish humanitarian initiatives in the occupied Palestinian territories. The project studies the complex interactions between civil society actors and various stakeholders, shedding light on the frictions and power dynamics shaping Swedish aid over time from 1967 until today.

On Decolonization - Islam, Economics, and Environment (26 September)

A CMES Research Seminar with Sami Al-Daghistani (CMES) on economics, Islam and the environment.

Conflict Mediation in the Arab World (10 October)

A CMES Research Seminar with Isak Svensson (Uppsala University) about conflict mediation in the Arab world. In the seminar, Isak Svensson discussed his new co-edited book Conflict Mediation in the Arab World (2023).

Rethinking the Mosul Dam - A Reassessment of its Impact Beyond the Traditional Narratives (24 October)

A CMES Research Seminar with Filippo Verre (CMES) on the Mosul Dam in Iraq, seeking to provide a comprehensive reevaluation of the dam's contributions to water management and diplomatic relations.

Aid from Gulf Donors in Conflict Zones (7 November)

A CMES Research Seminar with Altea Pericoli (CMES) on aid in conflict zones from Gulf donors. The seminar provided an in-depth analysis of the humanitarian response of the Gulf States in conflict zones and protracted crises. How are Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the

UAE operating in conflict zones and protracted crises? How are the internal and external dynamics of donors and recipients affecting the decision-making process and aid interventions on the ground?

Gendered Refugee Bodies - A Feminist Analysis of Syrian Refugee Mobility in Turkey and Lebanon (21 November)

A CMES Research Seminar with Sinem Kavak (LUCSUS, Lund University) about Syrian refugees in Turkey and Lebanon. Focusing on the experiences of women and gender minorities this seminar explored how refugees navigate patriarchal and homophobic landscapes in their first countries of asylum, and how these landscapes impact on their vulnerabilities, choices, and opportunities for secondary mobility.

UN's Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda in the Middle East - Can Youth Participation in Peacebuilding Withstand Authoritarian Co-Optation? (5 December)

A CMES Research Seminar with Adam Almqvist (CMES) on youth participation in peacebuilding and authoritarian co-optation.

A Tale of Three Brothers - Ezra, Meir and Hayyawi Sawda'I and the History of an Iraqi Jewish Cinema Business (19 December)

A CMES Research Seminar with Pelle Valentin Olsen (University of Bergen) about Iraqi Jewish cinema.



In May, CMES organized a public lecture with Samir Abu Eid, Honorary Doctor in Social Science at Lund University and Foreign Correspondent in the Middle East for Swedish Public Service Television (SVT).

South Africa v. Israel at the International Court of Justice (29 January)

Professor David Kaye (Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Public International Law) held a rapid response seminar on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case between South Africa and Israel. In the seminar, David gave a brief overview of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the ICJ and what South Africa argued in their case. The seminar was jointly hosted by CMES and the Human Rights Law research environment at the Faculty of Law.

Swedish Public Service Television (SVT). The event was chaired by CMES Director Karin Aggestam and was co-organized with the Department of Political Science and the Association of Foreign Affairs in Lund (UPF). At the event, Samir Abu Eid spoke about his experience of being a war correspondent in the Middle East and reporting on the ongoing war on Gaza.

In 2024, Samir Abu Eid was also appointed Honorary Doctor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University.

Inside the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (30 May)

CMES organized a public lecture with Samir Abu Eid, Honorary Doctor in Social Science at Lund University and Foreign Correspondent in the Middle East for

CMES Open House (11 September)

With the beginning of the fall semester, CMES hosted an open house event at Finngatan 16 for students and Lund university staff to learn more about our ongoing

Top: In January, Professor David Kaye held a rapid response seminar on the International Court of Justice case between South Africa and Israel.

Bottom: In January, CMES hosted a lecture with Radio Sweden's senior foreign correspondent in the Middle East, Cecilia Uddén about the peace process and ongoing war in the Middle East.



CMES Public Lectures and Events

Throughout 2024, CMES organised a variety of live events at Lund University and beyond. These events were attended by researchers, students, and members of the public. The lectures and seminars touched upon a wide range of topics related to the Middle East and are summarised below.

Revisiting the Middle East Peace Process in Hindsight of the War (16 January)

In collaboration with the Association of Foreign Affairs in Lund, CMES hosted a lecture with Radio Sweden's senior foreign correspondent in the Middle East,

Cecilia Uddén about the peace process and ongoing war in the Middle East.

Behind the Headlines: Reporting on the Israel-Hamas War (17 January)

Together with the Department of Political Science, Peace and Conflict Studies and the Graduate School, CMES organised a seminar with Cecilia Uddén about the difficulties in reporting on the ongoing war, the global polarisation and the increasing spread of misinformation. She also shared stories from people on the ground in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel.

research and Arabic language courses. Visitors could enjoy Arabic sweets and mingle with our staff.

Peace Day 2024: Elusive Peace in Israel Palestine?

A seminar co-organized with Peace and Conflict Studies at the Department of Political Science. Why does peace diplomacy fail? What role do nuclear weapons play in security, deterrence, and peace? And is it possible to educate for peace? CMES Director Karin Aggestam talked about the failure of peace diplomacy, CMES researcher Hebatalla Taha about nuclear weapons, deterrence, security, and Maria Småberg about education for peace in the past and present.

Almedalen

In 2024, CMES attended Almedalsveckan on Gotland as part of the Lund University delegation. In Almedalen CMES hosted two events, both in Swedish.

Crises, War, and Climate Change – How Do We Manage Limited Water Resources? (26 June)

Water is essential for producing food, energy, and a healthy environment. At the same time, our shared water resources are both limited and under threat. Sustainable water use and marine planning require both solidarity and cooperation. But what are we doing globally to manage our shared water resources? CMES Director Karin Aggestam was part of the panel for this event.

Israel-Palestine – An Intractable Conflict (26 June)

This panel discussion focused on the long-term consequences of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict, exploring how destructive cycles of violence can be prevented, the international community's role in protecting civilians, and the potential for regional actors to play a part in a future resolution. The panel will featured experts from various fields, among them several CMES researchers. The event was moderated by CMES Director Karin Aggestam.

PROMINENT EXTERNAL VISITS

Director of Swedish Dialogue Institute, Charlotta Sparre (6 February)

At CMES, Charlotta Sparre spoke about her work at the Dialogue Institute and her decades long experience of working in the MENA region. Together with CMES staff and students, she discussed her role as a civil servant, views of Sweden in MENA and working as a diplomat in the current geopolitical climate. Charlotta Sparre also discussed the Institute's work on Intergenerational Dialogue.

Morocco's Ambassador to Sweden (24 April)

Karim Medrek, Morocco's Ambassador to Sweden visited Lund University in April. CMES Director Karin Aggestam briefed the Ambassador about the Strategic Research Area the Middle East in the Contemporary World and discussed opportunities for research and student exchanges.

Swedish Foreign Affairs Committee (27 May)

The Foreign Affairs Committee from the Swedish parliament (Riksdagen) visited Lund University and CMES. Director Karin Aggestam was invited to give a presentation about CMES and Middle East research at the university. The committee was also briefed on several other issues at Lund University, ranging from cooperation with Ukraine to international recruitments. The Foreign Affairs Committee includes members from all eight parliamentary parties in Sweden.



CMES Panel Discussions at Almedalen in June 2024. Photos: Linda Eitrem Holmgren.

Policy-Dialogues, Workshops, Conferences

CMES organised several national and international conferences and workshops during 2024.

POLICY-DIALOGUE

Exploring Europe's Changing Perceptions and Policies Towards Iran (8-9 April)

This CMES Policy-Research Dialogue explored a broad set of themes, such as Iran's nuclear program and the nuclear agreement, the Mahsa Amini protests and the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. The issues were discussed in relation to the relationship between Iran and European countries. European-based experts participated to explore the shifts and future trajectory of European-Iranian relations, as well as European policy options for addressing Iran-related challenges moving forward.

WORKSHOPS

Conflict and Environment in Kurdistan (20-21 February)

CMES hosted the workshop "Just and Equitable Ecological Models in Contested and Conflict Environments", organized by the ECO-Syria project team at CMES. The aim of the workshop was to bring together scholars and experts to discuss the three main pillars of the ECO-Syria project: (1) conflict; (2) environment; and (3) policy. The goal was to unpack these three pillars, explore the political and environmental dimensions in a conflict-ridden region, and discuss opportunities and constraints for (international) partnerships for environmental cooperation. There were a total of 20 participants.

Participants in the CMES Policy-Research Dialogue "Exploring Europe's Changing Perceptions and Policies Towards Iran" in April 2024. Photo: Linda Eitrem Holmgren.



On the Edge - Post-Conflict Political Generations of Women and Youth Activists in the 'Second Wave' of the Arab Spring (11-12 April)

The workshop explored the mass popular mobilizations calling for radical regime change in Algeria, Sudan, Lebanon, and Iraq in 2019, which were billed the 'Second Wave' of the Arab Spring. The four countries' historical trajectories were used to investigate the impact on the political subjectivities of women and youth activists and how these informed the ideational, organizational, and strategic dimension of their activism.

Turkey Beyond Borders

CMES researcher Pinar Dinc organised a workshop at the Mediterranean Museum in Stockholm as part of her ongoing project Turkey Beyond Borders: Critical Voices, New Perspectives which is funded by the Swedish Institute and housed at CMES. During the closed workshop, invited scholars came together to discuss the Republic of Turkey and its unresolved issues after its centenary.

Sweden with an interest in the Middle East and North Africa region. The venue for the conference was the Department of Political Science at Lund University.

To welcome all participants, CMES Director Karin Aggestam held the opening remarks. During the opening session a keynote address was also delivered by Charlotta Sparre, former Director of the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the MENA on the topic: *How can we bridge the gap between analysis and practice? Reflections on enhanced exchanges between academics, practitioners and policy makers*. The conference included five parallel panel sessions with topics ranging from *Armed Conflict, Security and Defence* and *Environmental Politics in the Middle East to Diasporas as Transnational Actors*, and *Grassroots Peacebuilding, Coexistence and Civic Education*.

SWEMENA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

22-23 August 2024, CMES organized the Third Annual Swedish Middle East and North Africa Network (SWEMENA) Conference at Lund University. This interdisciplinary annual conference reflects SWEMENA's main objective to bring together different communities of researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers across

Participants and sessions during the annual national SWEMENA Conference, that was hosted in Lund by CMES in 2024. Photo: Linda Eitrem Holmgren.



CMES Regional Outlook

CMES popular science series **Regional Outlook** is based on the multi-disciplinary expertise held by CMES researchers and provides fresh perspectives and in-depth analyses of current events in the MENA region. Now also available in Arabic.

Monitoring Israel’s Destruction of Gaza From Space (2024:1)

This Regional Outlook by Lina Eklund and Hakim Abdi focuses on the role of satellite imagery in shaping our understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the physical damage it has caused the landscape.

Dust Storms in the Middle East - Insights from Satellite Data and AI (2024:2)

This Regional Outlook by Hossein Hashemi provides insight into an emerging environmental hazard: dust storms in the Middle East, one of the driest regions in the world. It also sheds light on the typical drivers and new technologies that can help investigate this phenomenon. Some sustainable mitigation measures are also discussed.

Humanitarian Exceptionalism and the Quest for Post-War Reconstruction in the Gaza Strip (2024:3)

This Regional Outlook by Altea Pericoli focuses on the obstacles of delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza and the challenges of rebuilding and reconstructing the area after the war.

The Jordanian Parliamentary Elections (2024:4)

This Regional Outlook by Adam Almqvist focuses on the 2024 Jordanian parliamentary elections, their political consequences, and how the elections were affected by the War on Gaza.

Any Prospect for Peace Activism? (2024:5)

This Regional Outlook by Lisa Strömbom focuses on the prospect for Israeli and Palestinian peace activism and how, during times of pressure, solidarity groups redress their methods.

The Fall of the Assad Regime: Challenges and Opportunities for Rojava (2024:6)

This Regional Outlook by Pinar Dinc focuses on the recent political developments in Syria and the implications for Rojava, also known as the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.



CMES Language Training Expert Rafah Barhoum at the CMES Certificate Ceremony in May 2024
Photo: Linda Eitrem Holmgren.

Teaching and Arabic Studies at CMES

CMES offers Arabic courses that provide practical linguistic knowledge and cultural background for students and staff who want to study Arabic for work, fieldwork and/or research purposes.

ARABIC COURSES

The Arabic language courses are offered exclusively for Lund University students and staff interested in working and conducting research in Arabic speaking countries. During the autumn of 2024 CMES offered the following Arabic courses:

- A1, Modern Standard Arabic for Beginners, Part I
- A2, Modern Standard Arabic for Beginners, Part I

- B1, Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic, Part I 2

In addition to learning Modern Standard Arabic, participants will also get insights into cultures and traditions of the Arabic speaking world. The courses are based on a combination of lectures, individual studies and seminars. On 20 March, CMES hosted a Nowruz celebration for its staff and students with Persian food and a presentation by CMES researcher Hossein Hashemi. The event was organised by CMES language training expert Rafah Barhoum.

MASTER IN MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The interdisciplinary Master’s Programme in Middle Eastern Studies aims to develop deeper knowledge



about the Middle East of today, train students in critical thinking, and give them the ability to apply this to current events and debates in and about the region. The Programme is run by the Graduate School at Lund University.

READING COURSE ON THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

During the spring semester of 2024, CMES offered a free of charge reading course on the Israel-Palestine conflict for Lund University staff and students. The reading course introduced and elaborated on various perspectives on the Israel-Palestine conflict, focusing on (1) the history and causes of the conflict, (2) the Middle East peace process and its collapse (3) mechanisms for conflict resolution and various visions of peace. The course ran between 15 March and 31 May with one weekly meeting (combining lecture and group discussion) at Finngatan 16. For each lecture, there

CMES CERTIFICATE CEREMONY

On 31 May, CMES hosted an end-of-semester lunch for our students, interns and staff. The participants of the Israel-Palestine reading course, our various Arabic language classes and our research interns were given certificates for their work this semester. Together with CMES staff, they enjoyed Levantine cuisine in the CMES garden at Finngatan. The event was organized by our language training expert Rafah Barhoum.

CMES Certificate Ceremony in May 2024. Photo: Linda Eitrem Holmgren.



CMES in Media and on Digital Platforms

CMES researchers are regularly interviewed in newspapers, radio, TV, and podcasts about current developments in the Middle East.

MEDIA

Throughout 2024, CMES researchers have through various media engagements contributed to public understanding of ongoing developments in the Middle East, such as the Israel-Hamas conflict and the fall of the Assad regime in Syria. The researchers' expertise has been showcased in numerous interviews, articles, and podcasts, providing in-depth analyses and insights into the field.

CMES researchers also continue to make an impact on The Conversation, contributing to Lund University's record-breaking article count in 2024. The Conversation is an international news site that provides researchers with the opportunity to reach a broad audience. With 55 articles from 50 Lund University researchers,

the publications during 2024 reached a total of 1.6 million views. The Faculty of Social Sciences is at the top with 20 articles and 330 000 views. Among these, CMES researchers published four - 20 percent - of the articles:

- Syria's Self-Governing Democratic North-East Comes under Attack with Country in Flux by Pinar Dinc (13 December 2024).
- Israel's Relations with the UN Hit a New Low with UNRWA Ban by Lisa Strömbom (18 November 2024).
- Lebanon and A Potential War with Israel by Rola El-Husseini (21 August 2024).
- Jewish Settlers Make Bid for Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem, by Svante Lundgren (9 February 2024).

NEWSLETTER

The CMES Newsletter is distributed since 2019 and has approximately 800 subscribers. The newsletter provides an up-to-date overview of Middle Eastern research, activities and events at Lund University and



beyond. During 2024, a total of seven newsletters were sent to the CMES newsletter subscribers.

CMES ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

With the aim to spread the word about CMES, its research and activities, the centre is active on several social media platformss. In 2024, that included Linkedin, Facebook and X, with thousands of followers in Sweden and beyond on each digital platform.

CMES Director Karin Aggestam in the program Utrikesbyrån on Swedish National Television (SVT).



Selected CMES Publications in 2024

Here follows a selection of papers, books, and reports published by CMES researchers during 2024. For a complete list of CMES publications see the Lund University Research Portal.

Abdelhady, D., Irastorza, N., Joormann, M., Lind, J. & Root, J., 2024, Gaza and the Right to Have Rights. Nordic Journal of Migration Research. 14, 1, s. 1-3.

Abdelmoez, J. W., 2024, Milestones in Feminist Performance. Afzal-Khan, F., D’Urso, S. & Rosenberg, T. (red.). The ‘Arab Spring’ as a Milestone in Feminist Performance. Routledge, s. 95-112s.

Aggestam, K. & Dunne, T., 2024, The Failure of Diplomacy and Protection in Syria. Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases. Smith, S., Hadfield, A., Dunne, T. & Kitche, N. (red.). 4 uppl. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Al Daghistani, S., 2024, The Making of Islamic Economic Thought Islamization, Law, and Moral Discourses. Cambridge University Press.

Al Daghistani, S., 2024, Recovering Environmental and Economic Traditions in the Islamic World. Al-Daghistani, S. (red.). Leiden: Brill, Vol. 9. s. 1-13 (Themes in Islamic Studies; vol. 9).

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Dinc, P., 2024, CMES Regional Outlook: The Fall of the Assad Regime: Challenges and Opportunities for Rojava.

Dinc, P. & Eklund, L., 2024, Syrian farmers in the midst of drought and conflict: the causes, patterns, and aftermath of land abandonment and migration. Climate and Development. 16, 5, s. 349-362.

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Donelli, F. & Pericoli, A., 2024, Foreign Aid, Identities and Interests: Qatar and the UAE in Sudan. The International Spectator. Nov. 18.

Eklund, L. & Dinc, P., 2024, Fires as collateral or means of war: challenges of environmental peacebuilding in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Ecology & Society. 29, 3.

Eklund, L., Mohr, B. & Dinc, P., 2024, Cropland abandonment in the context of drought, economic restructuring, and migration in northeast Syria. Environmental Research Letters. 19, 1, 014077.

Eklund, L. & Abdi, A. M., 2024, CMES Regional Outlook: Monitoring Israel’s Destruction of Gaza from Space. Apr. 12.

El-Husseini, R., 2024, Charity and Islam in Lebanon: A Case Study of the Northern City of Tripoli. *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*. 47, 4, s. 43-56.

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Kaye, D. D., 2024, Where Will Israel's Multifront War End? There May Not Be a Better Day After. Oct. 2, *Foreign Affairs*.

Kaye, D. D. & Vakil, S., 2024, Is an Anti-Iran Alliance Emerging in the Middle East? *The Limits of Cooperation Between Israel and the Arab States*. Apr. 26, *Foreign Affairs*.

Jerusalem. Photo: Taylor Brandon.



Western Golan Heights. Photo: Robert Bye.

Kaye, D. D. & Vakil, S., 2024, Only the Middle East Can Fix the Middle East: The Path to a Post-American Regional Order. Feb. 1, *Foreign Affairs*.

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Kärrholm, M., 2024, Temporality, nationalism and the territorialisation of public space: Commemorative presences in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. *Political Geography*. 113, August, 8 s., 103142.

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Lundgren, S., 2024, Assyrians and Kurds in Sweden - A Strained Relation. *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kurdische Studien* 11. Praesens Verlag, s. 163-173.

Lundgren, S., 2024, The Rise and Fall of Assyrian Nationalism. *Chronos - Revue d'histoire de l'Université de Balamand*. 45, s. 53-65.

Lundgren, S. & Lund, M., 2024, Judaism. *The Study of Religion in Sweden: Past, Present and Future*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., s. 68-82.

Lundgren, S., 2024, Jerusalem: Jewish settler movement makes bid for large slice of Armenian quarter. Feb. 8, *The Conversation*.

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View of Tabriz, Iran. Photo: Mohammad Mohammadpour.





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Top: Refugee camp in Syria. Photo: Salah Darwish.
Bottom: Istanbul, Turkey. Photo: Mohammad Majid.

Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University

CMES coordinates, supports, and conducts Middle East research at Lund University. We host a large number of interdisciplinary research projects with the Middle East in focus. Most of the research is situated within the Strategic Research Area "The Middle East in the Contemporary World" (MECW), which is funded by the Swedish Research Council.

CMES gathers researchers from five different faculties at Lund University, with expertise in areas ranging from environmental sustainability and democracy to peacebuilding and religion. Each year, CMES organises a variety of live events, attended by researchers, students, and members of the public. We also support Middle East research with high scientific potential by inviting Lund University scholars to apply for a variety of grants.

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

- Join us for seminars, public lectures, book talks, and more
- Read analyses and explanations of developments in the Middle East region
- Sign up to our newsletter

