



Fondazione
Compagnia
di San Paolo



ARAB GEOPOLITICS 2022

A region between conflict and normalisation

Tuesday, the 11th of October 2022, from 2.30 PM to 7.15 PM CET

Rome, MAXXI - National Museum of 21st Century Arts ([via Guido Reni 4a, 00196 Rome](#))

High-Level Conference organised by the **NATO Foundation**,
in cooperation with **NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division**,
Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo and the **NATO Defense College**.

As for each year, the Foundation organised the *Arab Geopolitics* conference in the month of October, inviting **18 international specialists** whose contributions animated the debate on the future of the Arab world. The new wave of normalisation unfolding in the area was at the centre of the discussion together with the need to promote regional stability through a much closer cooperation among the actors involved. Over **three panels**, the speakers analysed the MENA region's fragmented context and its most urgent problems devoting as much attention to current progress and its positive developments ahead.

More than 150 people attended the conference in the Museum's auditorium, actively contributing to a timely and lively debate. **A selection of direct quotes from our speakers follows below.**

Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo, *President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome*

“A pattern of reconciliation seems underway. The so-called Abraham Agreements are a historic development and we hope that they are the beginning of a long journey. Looking from here, I have the impression of an overall more cooperative attitude.”

Mariem Ben Hassine, *Deputy Head, Middle East and North Africa Section, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, NATO HQ, Brussels*

“On terrorism, for instance, which remains one of the most pressing security challenges of our times, we [at NATO] provide crucial support to our MENA Partners, by collaborating with them on counter-IED [Improvised Explosive Device] capabilities and on border security, to name only two domains of cooperation.”

Abdulaziz Sager, *President, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah*

“I would like to study and promote the partnership relations between NATO and the Gulf countries.”

Alon Bar, *Ambassador of Israel to Italy, Rome*

“The Abraham Accords represent a significant change in the way we look at ourselves, and also in the way that many people should look at our region. For the first time, they gave us the possibility to think of ourselves not only as different countries with different interests and economical gaps between us [...], but also as a region with common challenges and shared interests.”

Ebtesam Al-Ketbi, *President and Founder, Emirates Policy Center, Abu Dhabi*

“In this new regional reality, the Abraham Accords have contributed to create new partnerships and have changed the rule of the game in the region. [...] Every country can join, participating to a win-win formula.”

Mark Micallef, *Director, North Africa and Sabel Observatory, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Geneva*

“What is changing in the MENA region? Keeping in mind that the starting point is a series of fragile states, in the past two years we have seen a preoccupying dynamism in the criminal markets. For instance, one of the most concerning events in drug trafficking is the flow of cocaine coming from South America because it uses North Africa as a transit zone and it increases cocaine use in the region.”

Claudia Gazzini, *Senior Libya Analyst, International Crisis Group, Tripoli*

“Looking forward, in theory, the best solutions to Libya’s problems are: a better governance, a unified state and a united international community, and the ability to hold accountable those state officials who have been profiting from the current state of anarchy. These are all easy demands but are difficult to deliver on.”

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