



Foundation  
of the Finnish Institute  
in the Middle East



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
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**FIIA**

FINNISH INSTITUTE  
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# DIS\_ORDER NARRATIVES & THE MIDDLE EAST

**Launch webinar for the book *Political Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa*  
Friday, 24 April, 10.00–11.30**

*Political Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa: Conceptions of Order and Perceptions of Instability* (Springer) discusses the role of political narratives in shaping perceptions of instability and conceptions of order in the MENA region. The authors illustrate how, in times of socio-political turmoil and outbursts of discontent such as the Arab Spring, political entrepreneurs explain and justify their political agendas by complementing hard power solutions with attractive ideas and discursive constructions that appeal to domestic constituencies and geopolitical allies.

In this webinar, contributors to the book will provide insights into the performative role of political narratives in the MENA region. They have chosen political narratives as a conceptual lens to improve the understanding of how political entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa operate on the rhetorical level. After presentations covering the non-state actor Hezbollah, the regional dispute around the Persian Gulf, and the role of the assertive, re-merging global player Russia, we'll hear short comments from other contributors to the edited volume and have time for questions and discussion.

The webinar is organised in collaboration with the Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East, the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies/University of Helsinki.

## PROGRAMME

*Chair:* **Hannu Juusola**, Prof. for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Helsinki

### *Introduction*

**Wolfgang Mühlberger**, Senior Research Fellow, FIIA

### *Wartime Narratives of Hezbollah Militants in the Syrian Conflict*

**Chiara Erminia Calabrese**, Researcher at the EHESS/CéSoR

### *Russia in the Middle East: In Search of Its Place*

**Leonid Isaev**, Associate Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics & **Alisa Shishkina**, Senior Research Fellow, National Research University Higher School of Economics and Research Fellow, Institute for African Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences)

### *Evolving Narratives of Political Contestation and Geopolitical Rivalry in the Persian Gulf*

**Kristian Coates Ulrichsen**, Fellow, Baker Institute for the Middle East at Rice University in Texas

### *Comments*

**Toni Alaranta**, Senior Research Fellow, FIIA

**Riikka Kuusisto**, Prof. for Political Science, University of Helsinki

**Olli Ruohomäki**, Senior Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

**Ville Sinkkonen**, Research Fellow, FIIA

### *Questions and Answers*