



## Visit of State Secretary of the Republic Of Germany



H.E. Dr. Thomas Bagger, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, visited the Gulf Research Center (GRC) office in Riyadh, along with his accompanying delegation and H.E. Michael Kindsgrab, Ambassador of Germany to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting was held with senior experts and intellectuals from Saudi Arabia, and discussed the ongoing



regional developments and ways to understand both German and Saudi foreign policy. In terms of regional security, the discussions looked at how Europe can lead the way in assisting in de-escalation efforts in the Middle East. Overall, the roundtable underwent fruitful discussions for both sides to understand the foreign policies of Berlin and Riyadh, especially given the current regional developments.

## Visit of a Delegation from the Master of Strategic Studies Program



A delegation from the Master of Strategic Studies Program (No. 15) of Saudi Arabia's National Defense University, which included a number of the program's faculty and students, both military and civilian, visited the Gulf Research Center's (GRC) office in Riyadh, to learn about the GRC's research activities and programs. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager,



Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, and the rest of the GRC's team received the delegation. The GRC provided an overview of the Kingdom's perspectives on regional developments as part of the visit, as well as discussed potential training program courses that the GRC will host on various security issues.

### ◆ GRC Events & Activities

- Visit of the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of the Republic of Germany.
- Visit of delegation from the Master of Strategic Studies Program of the Saudi Arabian National Defense University

### ◆ GRC Webinars

- GCC-Nordic Relations
- China-GCC: Navigating the Dynamics of GCC-China Relations
- Red Sea Security and the Horn of Africa: Current Situation, Challenges, and Solution

### ◆ GRC Upcoming Activities.

- Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) 2024 Opening Ceremony Announcement & Workshop Descriptions
- Global Leadership Program - Global Economic Module

### ◆ GRC Partnership

- Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Economy and Planning of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Memorandum of Understanding with IE University

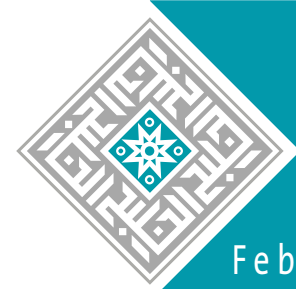
### ◆ GRC Programs

- Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme
- Cultural & Media Program
- Environmental Security and Sustainability Program

### ◆ GRC Publications

### ◆ GRC Participations

### ◆ GRC in the Media



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) held a webinar entitled “GCC-Nordic Relations” on February 21, 2024. The speakers of the webinar were Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center; Dr. Nourah Shuaibi, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University; Dr. Omar Al-Ubaydli, Director of Research at Derasat; Sverre Lodgaard, former Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; Fannie Agerschou-Madsen, Ph.D Candidate at the Danish Institute for International Studies; Dr. Rouzbeh Parsi, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Program at the Swedish Institute for International Studies; and Dr. Tuomo Melasuo, Emeritus Professor at the Tampere Peace Research Institute in Finland. Dr. Christian Koch, the Director of Research at the Gulf Research Center, moderated the webinar.

The webinar covered three key themes:

1. The different perspectives from the GCC and Nordic states on current developments, both regionally and internationally.
2. The view of GCC and Nordic states regarding their respective relationships, including developments and challenges.
3. The way forward in developing cooperation between the two regions and identifying critical areas of focus.

From the Gulf perspective, there are five current priorities when it comes to the regional situation in the wider Middle East: the crisis in Gaza, Iran’s use of proxies that impact regional security, the heightened escalation regarding Red Sea security, the situation in Yemen, and the economic challenges that Arab countries in the Levant and North Africa face. It was highlighted that there should be increased cooperation between the two regions to de-escalate these tensions. Outside of the immediate challenges, various areas of mutual concern still exist, including food, water, and cyber security.

Diversifying economic resources is also a shared interest between the two regions.

The webinar highlighted the similarities between the institutions of the GCC and the Nordic Council and that the GCC can learn much from the Nordic model. For instance, Nordic countries, such as Norway, have shared expertise with Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Oman, regarding renewable energy and the shift away from a heavy reliance on oil and gas. It was noted that the two regions should not try to force stronger trade relations but instead should focus in parallel on technology transfer, enhancing educational ties through research institutions, and increasing people-to-people contact.

The speakers explained that while the economic relationship between the two sides has been stable, the political relationship has had its ups and downs due to the difference in public perception of the Gulf countries in the Nordic states and vice versa, as well as the perception of the Nordic population and media in terms of its relationships with countries beyond the West in general. This has had implications on the development of cooperation between the two regions.

Some of the suggestions put forward in the webinar include:

1. Manage the differences in perceptions between the two sides by increasing dialogue and communication. There is a need to enable avenues of cooperation at the mid-level, parallel to the high ministerial level of cooperation. This includes partnerships among think tanks, universities, R&D centers, business-to-business forums, government-to-government cooperation, research collaboration, and training and exchange programs to address mutual challenges.
2. The two regions should make cooperation for renewable energy, the green transition, and education an essential aspect of their relationship. This includes knowledge transfer to the GCC states.
3. Promote tourism between the two sides and create a civil exchange program to exchange knowledge about the respective regions and improve public perspectives.
4. Develop student exchange programs, vocational training, summer programs, and language programs to provide both GCC and Nordic students with opportunities and experiences that will benefit them professionally and positively shape their attitudes towards the respective regions.



## Organized by

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies



The Gulf Research Center and the Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies in Cairo organized a panel discussion titled Red Sea Security: Challenges and Solutions between Regional Responsibility and the International Community on Thursday, February 8, 2024. Speaking on behalf of the GRC were Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC and Prof. Saleh M. Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC.

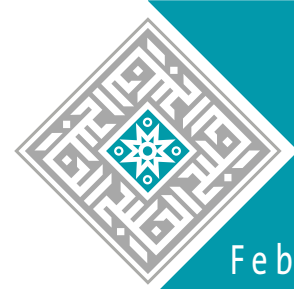
From the Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies, speakers included:

- Dr. Muhammad Mujahid Al-Zayat, Academic Advisor
- Prof. Mohamed Kamal, member of the Advisory Board and Professor of Political Science at Cairo University

The moderator of the session was Major General Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Duwairi, Deputy Director General of the Centre.

The workshop made several important assertions and policy recommendations including:

- Emphasizing the importance of Saudi/Egyptian cooperation in securing the Red Sea.
- Launching a forum to discuss all issues related to the Red Sea region from security, military, economic, and environment, among others.
- Emphasizing Iran's use of the Houthis as a pressure card to deal with the United States of America in other negotiations related to bilateral interests
- Emphasizing that the United States does not want to deter Iran or the Houthis and has not taken any serious action on these two issues
- There are dual dangers to the Red Sea from both the African and Asian sides, the sources of which are the Rapid Support Group and Ethiopia's penetration into Somaliland and the Houthis and Iran respectively.
- Emphasizing the necessity of stopping the Gaza war, resolving the Palestinian issue by the two-state solution to stem the resurgence of terrorist groups under the pretext of defending the Palestinian cause.



Organized by the

Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS)

**China-GCC Webinar: Navigating the Dynamics of GCC-China Relations**

Organized by the  
Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS)

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman, Gulf Research Center
- Dr. JIN Liangdang**, Senior Research Fellow, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies
- Dr. Sarah Almutairi**, Assistant Professor, Political Science Department, Kuwait University
- Dr. DING Long**, Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Middle East Studies Institute, Shanghai International Studies University
- Mohammed Al Hajri**, PhD researcher, Birkbeck, University of London
- Dr. WANG Zhen**, Professor & Deputy Director, Institute of International Relation Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS)
- Dr. Christian Koch**, Director of Research, Gulf Research Center

**Moderator:** Dr. Christian Koch

February 7, 2024 | 12:00-1:30 PM KSA

Gulf Research Center  
Knowledge for All



مركز الخليج للأبحاث  
المعرفة للجميع



上海國際問題研究院  
SHANGHAI INSTITUTES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

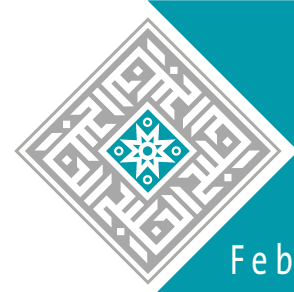
The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS) held a webinar on GCC-China relations entitled 'Navigating the Dynamics of GCC-China Relations' on February 7, 2024. The event focused on the status and priorities of GCC-China relations and aimed to explore how China's diplomatic efforts could align with the regional interests and concerns of the Gulf states. The webinar discussed China's role as a regional stabilizer and to what extent China can maintain this momentum. It also examined how GCC-China relations may evolve in the coming years and their impact on the global geopolitical landscape.

The speakers touched upon the uncertainties in the Middle East region and questions surrounding US involvement. They emphasized the need for regular meetings between China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to stay updated on current developments. The speakers also identified how China's role in the region has moved from one focused on quiet diplomacy to increasing its diplomatic footprint and strategy. While the GCC is paying close attention to China's emerging role, it is also expecting China to use its current ties with countries such as Iran to support their security initiatives to decrease military

activities and escalation. For this, it was mentioned from the Chinese speakers that China will require greater cooperation from the GCC side as well.

Against the backdrop of the current crisis in Gaza, the webinar discussed China's support for a global summit on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The discussion highlighted the need for China to continue supporting ceasefire agreements in which Beijing can coordinate with both sides to achieve a peaceful resolution.

There was a consistent argument that expectations on China's role in the region should not be raised too high, and that the development between the two regions should be based on a complementary relationship that can be explored in various ways, such as economic and security cooperation. Overall, there was an emphasis on the importance of dialogue, understanding, and coordination between China and the Gulf countries. It was suggested that more exchanges are needed to bridge perceptions, enhance mutual trust, and address shared interests. Nevertheless, given the strategic calculation, the webinar stressed how the Gulf states should be clear about what role they perceive China to play in regional dynamics and



through what creative and innovative ways China can position itself in the region.

The webinar highlighted the increasing momentum in GCC-China economic ties and the potential for further collaboration in various sectors, including high-tech, digital technologies and biotechnology. Already, Saudi Arabia became China's number one foreign investor in 2023.

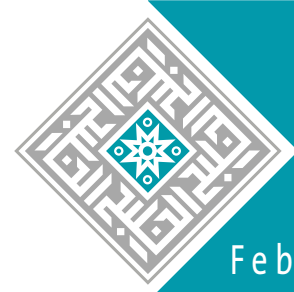
Speakers proposed that China should match the expectations of the Gulf countries and create a cooperative environment for sustainable high-tech economic cooperation. In the last year, it was stated that more than 1,000 business delegations visited Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and various Chinese companies built giant infrastructure projects in Gulf states, from clean energy to railway infrastructure. Discussions on the acceleration of the China-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) were also mentioned, and it was suggested that both sides should set a deadline for making a deal.

The webinar stressed the importance of understanding the

agency of GCC states concerning the development of GCC-China cooperation and the trajectory in the future, and how to enhance more people-to-people exchange as a means to finding continued ways to develop the GCC-China relationship better and for greater understanding to take place.

**Overall, the session put forward several suggestions for policy considerations:**

- First, the call for regular tri-lateral meetings between China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to ensure continuous communication and de-escalation efforts.
- Second, holding regular seminars to delve deeper into specific topics, such as political, security, and economic aspects of GCC-China relations.
- Third, consider setting up a China studies center in the Gulf to foster dialogue and understanding between the GCC and China.
- Fourth, accelerate developments for a deadline for the China-GCC FTA.



The GRC is pleased to announce the Opening Ceremony of the Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) 2024, scheduled to take place on July 9, 2024.

### Opening Ceremony Details:



**Date:** July 9, 2024, at 16:00 BST

**Location:** Cambridge, United Kingdom

The Keynote speakers for the GRM 2024 Opening Ceremony are:

- **H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- **H.E. Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi**, Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
- **The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC**, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth

This will be followed by a panel session. Speakers include:

1. **H.E. Lolwah Rashid Al-Khater**, Minister of State for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar (TBC)

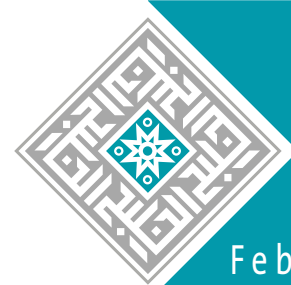
2. **Ms. Manal Radwan**, Senior Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
3. **H.E. Ambassador Nancy Jamal**, The Chief of Strategic Affairs, Director of Human Resources, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain

For more details on the Gulf Research Meeting, please visit the website here.

### GRM 2024 WORKSHOPS

This year's GRM workshops cover a wide range of topics in the fields of politics, economics, energy, security and the wider social sciences as they relate to the wider Gulf region (GCC countries in addition to Iraq and Yemen).

Access each workshop and read its full description [here](#).



**Module 1:** Global Politics, September 11-15, 2023  
**Module 2:** Global Security, November 13-17, 2023  
**UPCOMING Module 3:** Global Economics, April 22-26, 2024

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) held the first and second one-week modules of their Global Leadership Program on Global Politics Issues from September 11-15, 2023, and Global Security Issues from November 13-17, 2023, in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Global Politics module focused on topics such as contemporary global governance, broadening stakeholders in global politics, key issues in global politics and strategic foresight, navigating a fragmented international environment, and diplomacy and effective leadership.

The Global Security module focused on topics such as the evolving nature of security; transnational challenges in the 21st century; violent non-state actors and extremism; organized crime; crisis management; regional and security arrangements; maritime security; the future of warfare; and energy security.

The Global Leadership Program features three one-week modules that address the core political, security, and economic challenges in the international system today. The modules are convened at regularly spaced intervals throughout the year with the final module on Global Economics scheduled for April 22-26, 2024.

The GRC and GCSP are currently planning the upcoming **'Global Economic Module.'**

The program offers participants the opportunity to:

- Improve knowledge about global developments in politics, security, and economics, as well as their impact on the state and society



- Analyze past, current, and anticipated changes occurring in the fields of global politics, security, and economics
- Build critical thinking within a unique learning environment by joining experienced practitioners and scholars from diverse fields in an interactive atmosphere of exchange and debate
- Broaden professional networks across cultures and professional domains, through interaction with peers and experts within the program environment

**To register for the next module and access more details, please visit the program's website [HERE](#).  
Download the brochure [HERE](#).**



On February 20, 2024, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Economy and Planning of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Research Center (GRC). The memorandum was signed by H.E. Professor Al-Baraa Al Iskandarani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy and Planning for Economic and International Affairs, and H.E. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center. The memorandum, which was signed at the ministry's headquarters, aims for cooperation between the two sides in the fields of research and publication on topics related to economic and development affairs, holding events and seminars, scientific research activities aimed at developing and supporting institutional capabilities and increasing human cadres in relevant fields

More details can be found [here](#).



## *The Ministry of Economy and Planning and the Gulf Research Center sign a Memorandum of Understanding*

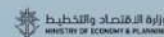
### Goals:

- Cooperation in research, publishing, events, seminars, and scientific and research activities regarding economic and development affairs in the Gulf region
- Cooperation to implement programs, initiatives and activities aimed at developing and supporting institutional capabilities and training cadres in relevant fields
- Forming a joint network of opinion experts to provide consultations on relevant economic topics
- Exchanging information and data related to the field of business of the two sides

### Signatories:

Ministry of Economy and Planning  
Deputy Minister for International  
Economic Affairs  
Albara bin Bassim Alaskandarani

Gulf Research Center  
Chairman  
Dr. Abdulaziz bin Othman bin Sager



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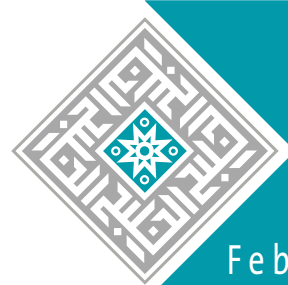
## Memorandum of Understanding with IE University



The President of IE University in Madrid, H.E. Dr. Santiago Iñiguez de Onzoño, visited the Gulf Research Center (GRC) office in Riyadh accompanied by senior members of his team in which both sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, in areas of mutual cooperation in research and executive training programs.







## GLMM

An international independent, non-partisan, non-profit programme established in 2010, hosted and supported by the Gulf Research Center. The programme provides data, analyses, and recommendations contributing to the improvement of understanding and management of Gulf labour migration, population, and labour markets, engaging with, and respecting the viewpoints of all stakeholders. Website: [www.gulfmigration.grc.net](http://www.gulfmigration.grc.net).

### Publications

- Froilan Malit Jr., "Interregional Consultative Migration Dialogues and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in the GCC-Asia Migration Corridor," GLMM Policy Brief No. 7, February 2024
- Magdalena Karolak, "Long-Term Residence: GCC Countries Making a Shift Toward Inclusive Social Policies," GLMM Policy Brief No. 8 February 2024

For all Policy Briefs: [Access here](#)

For all Explanatory Notes: [Access here](#)

For all GLMM Publications: [Access here](#)

### Data Database

GLMM has gathered, analyzed, and republished GCC official tables:

[Access Bahrain Database here](#)

[Access Kuwait Database here](#)

[Access Oman Database here](#)

[Access Qatar Database here](#)

[Access Saudi Arabia Database here](#)

[Access UAE Database here](#)

GLMM has also constructed regional GCC tables based upon the above listed data sources. [Access here.](#)

### Participation

Prof. Nasra Shah, Dr. Françoise De Bel-Air, and Mr. Imco Brouwer participated in a workshop organized by Dr. Fahad

Alsharif of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), entitled "Labor Migration Patterns and their Role in Economic Diversification and Sustainable Development in Saudi Arabia: Acceptance and Resistance Towards Achieving Saudi Vision 2023" in Riyadh 18-19 February 2024.

### Project

GLMM, in cooperation with the International Migration Division in the Direction for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), seeks to enhance the understanding of the Saudi labour market, migration, and population policies and their impact in the project entitled "Vision 2030 and the Socio-Economic Reform Process: The Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia." The project envisages to gather key Saudi and international experts, to engage in discussions, to produce research reports and policy briefs, and to ensure ample dissemination of the outcomes to Saudi policymakers, researchers, economic actors, and wider public. First meetings of the project took place in Riyadh on 20 and 21 February 2024.



### Riyadh Meetings

Mr. Turki Alrammah and Mr. Abdulrahman Alarafi of the Saudi Ministry of Economy and Planning and Mrs. Mariam Alzahrani and Dr. Mehmet Ali Soytaş of the Saudi National Labor Observatory met with Prof. Nasra Shah, Dr. Françoise De Bel-Air, and Mr. Imco Brouwer of the Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) program of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) on 20 February 2024 in the GRC's office in Riyadh to discuss cooperation in a GLMM/GRC project on the "Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia."



### Roundtable Discussion



The Gulf Research Center's Cultural & Media Program hosted the first roundtable seminar of a series of sessions focused on 'How can we build a national strategic vision based on the Arab moral system?' The symposium was moderated by the Director of the Cultural & Media program, Dr. Zaid Al-Fadil, who spoke and introduced the symposium. Participating in the roundtable was the editor-in-chief of the Encyclopedia of Arab and Islamic Ethics, Professor Dr. Marzuq bin Tinbak, who explained the details of his work.



During the symposium, the participants presented many recommendations that contribute to creating this vision and that can be implemented through education, television programs, series, literary partners, and audio podcasts. The

discussants were interested in developing mechanisms that make morality a feature of society, with the aim of strengthening its contents among members of society, starting from the foundation and education among children and ending with all aspects of society's culture and life in general. The roundtable is one of the tracks of the Cultural & Media program at the Gulf Research Center and aims to discuss many main ideas through a group of specialists and interested parties with the aim of communicating them to the responsible authorities and activating them within the strategic plans of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in accordance with Vision 2030.



February 21, 2024

Women were and still are the icons of the founding era including the leader Ghalia Al-Baqmiya during the first founding era and Princess Noura bint Abdul Rahman during the third founding era. In this episode of GRC's podcast, the objective was to shed light on this aspect by meeting with the historian and academic Prof. Dr. Dalal bin Mukhaled Al-Harbi, who dedicated herself to documenting the history of Saudi women through many of her books and studies.

Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program at the Gulf Research Center co-organized and participated in the 20th Global Major Groups and Stockholders Forum (GMGSF) held from February 24 to 25, 2024. The meeting served as the preparatory meeting for major groups and stakeholders attending the UN Environment Assembly. Talks were

organized around the UNEA-6 theme of “Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.” Dr. Raouf as a co-chair of MGFC at the UNEP representing the Gulf Research Center Foundation, spoke in a number of sessions, including the opening, the dialogue with member states, as GEO 7 head, and in the closing sessions.



**Gulf Research Center Foundation**  
Knowledge for All





The Gulf Research Center produces various publications through its research programs, projects, and Gulf Research Meetings. The GRC's publications can be accessed on its website via [this link](#), and the commentary and analysis can be found [here](#).



**Russia-KSA Relations: Two Years of Ukraine Crisis**

Layla Ali  
February 2024



**Commentary & Analyses**  
**Russia-KSA Relations: Two Years of Ukraine Crisis**

Layla Ali  
February 2024



**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Emerging Middle Power in Global Dynamics**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
Chairman, Gulf Research Center  
February 2024



**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Emerging Middle Power in Global Dynamics**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
February 2024



**Pressure is Adding Up, Ratings are Going Down: The US Presidential Elections in the Midst of the Gaza Crisis**

Annah Mosly  
February 2024



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February 2024



**Instability in the Sahel: An Opportunity for the Arab Gulf States?**

Robert Mason  
February 2024



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February 2024



**Europe and Red Sea Security**  
Recent steps could prove useful for wider EU-GCC collaboration

Dr. Christian Koch  
February 2024



**Europe and Red Sea Security - Recent Steps could prove useful for wider EU-GCC collaboration**

Dr. Christian Koch  
February 2024



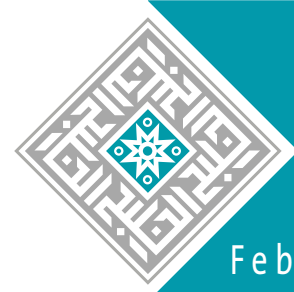
**The Gaza Crisis and Japan's Position**

Noriko Suzuki  
February 2024



**The Gaza Crisis and Japan's Position**

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February 2024



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**Climate Change in the GCC: Security Threats and Opportunities in International Cooperation**

Mohamed Abdelraouf  
February 2024

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**ICJ Ruling: Impact and Implications**

Christine Williams  
February 2024

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**الفييتو الأمريكي على طلب الجزائر بوقف الحرب**

يوسف كامل خطاب  
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**America's Veto on Algeria Request to Stop the War**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
February 2024



مركز الخليج للأبحاث

**انتهاكات إسرائيل للقوانين الدولية الإنسانية و العرفية**

يوسف كامل خطاب  
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مركز الخليج للأبحاث

**موسكو تتحدى الحرب والعقوبات والثلوج**

أ. د صالح بن محمد الخثلان  
مستشار أول  
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مركز الخليج للأبحاث

**«المرتزقة» في حرب إسرائيل على قطاع غزة:**

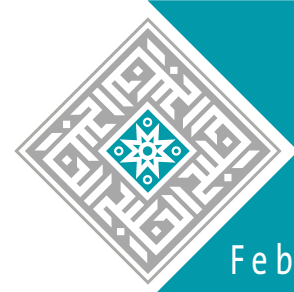
د. عبد الرزاق غوراف  
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**Mercenaries in Israel's War on the Gaza Strip: Numbers and Meanings**  
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February 2024



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Yousef Kamil Khattab  
February 2024



## ملف العدد

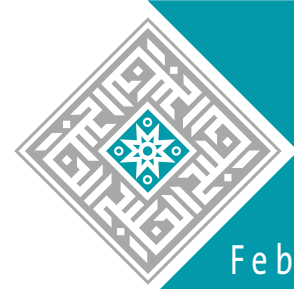
إعادة تقييم المبادرة العربية للسلام: المعضلة والحل

- لن تستقر إسرائيل إلا بسلام يقبله جيرانها وهو ما تطرحه المبادرة العربية
- نجاح المبادرة العربية للسلام يتطلب إطاراً دولياً و ضمانات ملزمة لإسرائيل
- إسرائيل تستخدم نظرية اللامتناهات الست وسلام الجزية والمفاوضات الفردية
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Araa Magazine

194 (February 2024)

Re-evaluating the Arab Peace Initiative: The Dilemma and the Solution



In February 2024, the GRC participated in numerous international events, both online and in-person, tackling issues pertaining to developments in the Gulf region and its broader neighborhood. The GRC emphasizes participating in such events, as it allows for the inclusion of a regional perspective in the debate. The following is an overview of the critical events in which the GRC participated this month.

### February 29 - March 1, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a workshop in Geneva starting on February 29 on “Nuclear Challenges in the MENA Region: Prospects and Solutions” held at the Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID). Dr. Sager spoke on the panel session entitled “Mapping Geopolitical Blockages to Nuclear Development in the Region” that looked at the main geopolitical blockages in regional nuclear cooperation and geo-political rapprochement in the MENA region.

### February 29 - March 1, 2024

Prof. Saleh Alkhatlan, Senior Advisor and Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research participated in the workshop “Refocusing EU Southern Neighborhood and EU-MENA Policies” organized by the Bertelsmann Foundation and held in Brussels. The meeting brought together 30 policy officials and specialists with the objective to generate ideas for crafting a refocused policy framework for the EU’s approach to its southern MENA neighborhood.



### February 28, 2024

Javid Iqbal, Member of the Senior Management and Member of the Board of Trustee of the Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) participated in the WTO’s 13th Ministerial Conference MC13 that took place from 26 - 29 February 2024 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Ministers from across

the world attended the conference to review the functioning of the multilateral trading system and to take action on the future work of the WTO.



### February 27, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received H.E. Mr. Oskar Wüstinger, Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, along with members from the office of the Austrian Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution. Both sides discussed regional developments and ways to enhance cooperation.



### February 26, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the GRC, received H.E. Ambassador Aníbal Gómez Toledo, Mexican Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accompanied by Mr. Marco Antonio Fraire, Head of International Cooperation & Cultural Affairs. Both sides discussed regional developments and areas of cooperation. Among the initiatives of the Gulf Research Center is the GCC-Latin America Research Program on the relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Latin American countries, aimed at fostering a deeper understanding between the two



regions and enhancing partnerships with research centers and official channels.



### February 26, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the GRC, received Mr. Daehwan Kim, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accompanied by his colleague Mr. Hyung Chul SHIN, First Secretary, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed regional developments and areas for further cooperation.



### February 26 - March 1, 2024

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program at the Gulf Research Center participated in the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) from 26 February to 1 March 2024 at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Dr. Raouf co-organized and spoke in numerous sessions during the week, including the Major Groups Daily morning debriefs and the Major Groups press conference. Dr. Raouf

also met with the President of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E Dennis Francis, and with the president of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) H.E. Paula Narváez. Dr. Raouf participated in the meeting as the co-chair of MGFC at UNEP, representing the Gulf Research Center Foundation.



### February 25, 2024

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program at the Gulf Research Center participated in the 6th Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR) meeting held from February 19 to 23, 2024. The OECOR serves as a preparatory meeting of the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) -6 agenda and pre-negotiates and deliberates the content and wording of proposed resolutions, declarations, and decisions for endorsement and approval by the assembly. Dr. Raouf delivered the opening plenary statement on behalf of the Science and Technology Major Group. During the week, Dr. Raouf also facilitated and organized the Major Groups daily morning discussions as well as a bilateral meeting with the EU.







## February 22, 2024

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center, participated in the symposium “The Middle Eastern Dimension of Russian Policy in Global Transformations” organized by the Russian Khakimov Club, which brought together Russian diplomats and Saudi academics. Dr. Al-Khathlan spoke during the symposium about the Russian initiative for security in the Gulf-Arab region.



Bias” in which he discussed the positions of the Arab and Western media on the Gaza crisis and the ways in which it deals with this crisis. He also discussed a number of lessons learned from the war on Gaza at the media level. Watch the full session [here](#).



## February 21, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), contributed a piece on the Global Perspectives on Ending the Russia-Ukraine War focusing on the GCC role in De-escalation efforts for the Council of Councils. Read the full report [here](#).



**Abdulaziz Sager**

*Chair, Gulf Research Center (Saudi Arabia)*

## The Gulf Cooperation Council States Could

## February 20, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) participated as a speaker in the third edition of the Saudi Media Forum. Dr. Sager participated in a session entitled “Gaza in the Media...Between Misinformation and

## February 20, 2024

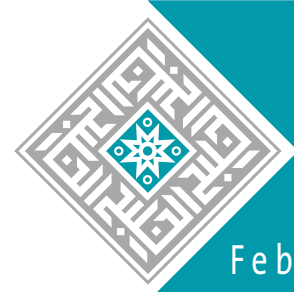
Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) met with Mr. Gevorg Melikyan, Founder and CEO of the Armenian Institute for Resilience and Statecraft at the GRC’s office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed areas of cooperation and strengthening bilateral ties.



## February 20, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received the Head of Regional Delegation for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Mamadou Sow, who was accompanied by his regional team at the GRC’s office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed the ongoing developments in the region and areas for cooperation.





## February 19, 2024

Within the framework of the Gulf Research Center's (GRC) interests within its program on foreign relations for the Gulf, through which it seeks to contribute to developing and strengthening these relations, the GRC received on February 19, 2024, a delegation from the Korea Foundation, which includes both Mr. Jang Kiho, Director of the Asia Program Department, and Mr. Hyukbin Koh, Senior Program Officer of the Asia Program Department. The delegation was received by the GRC's senior advisors, Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan and Dr. Nayef Al-Rasheed. During the meeting, topics of common interest between the two sides were discussed.



## February 17, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the 60th edition of the Munich Security Conference on February 16-17, 2024 in Munich. Dr. Sager participated in the session entitled 'Red Sea' which focused on the situation in Yemen, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden, in which he discussed the effects of the Houthi attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea and the role of actors in ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation in this vital corridor. Panelists of the session also included His Excellency the Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen, Dr. Rashad Muhammad Al-Alimi, Senator and Member of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Christopher Murphy, and



the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Arab Peninsula in the European Parliament, Hannah Neumann.

Watch the full panel session [here](#).

## February 14, 2024

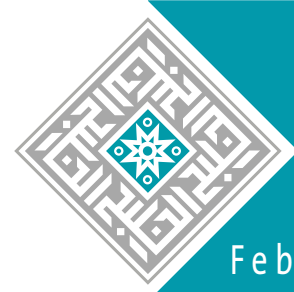
Professor Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the first session of the 13th Middle East Conference of the Valdai Discussion Club in Moscow, Russia, from February 13-14, 2024. The title of the panel was: 'Towards a Comprehensive Settlement in the Middle East.' Prof. Dr. Saleh presented a paper on extremism in Israeli society, Israel's war on Gaza, and the obstruction of peace. The conference participants met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who spoke about Russia's efforts to end the war and the United States' attempts to exclude Russia from international efforts to bring peace and stability. Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that Moscow will host a dialogue between the Palestinian factions to help end the internal divisions.



## February 13, 2024

A delegation of students visited the Gulf Research Center's (GRC) office in Riyadh as part of the 'Kingdom Gateway' program organized by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFRICIS), which gathers and invites a cohort of students to explore the different parts and cities of the Kingdom.





## February 10, 2024

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program at the Gulf Research Center participated in the online forum on the results of the UNFCCC Climate Conference COP28 on February 10, 2024, organized by Abu Dhabi Environment Network in cooperation with the Climate Action Network of Arab World, the Regional CSR Network, and CJC MENA. The forum discussed the results of COP28 and what needs to be done in the next COP, especially from the Arab Regional perspective. Dr. Raouf talked about what is meant by carbon neutrality, whether it is possible to achieve it by 2050, and what systematic changes are needed to realize carbon neutrality by 2050. The good news from COP28 is that it closed with a historic agreement to phase out fossil fuels through various mechanisms.

## February 7, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the Council of Council's (CoC) Ninth Virtual Conference on February 7, 2024. The session's title was 'Stabilizing the Middle East: Where Do We Go From Here?' Dr. Sager focused his discussions on Saudi Arabia's position towards the crisis in Gaza and the regional escalation.

## COUNCIL OF COUNCILS

An Initiative of the Council on Foreign Relations



## February 6, 2024

On the occasion of the World Defence Show in Riyadh on February 5, the Gulf Research Center's Dr. Rafael Hernandez de Santiago explained the upcoming Master on Cybersecurity to the Spanish Secretary of State for Defense, H.E. Ms. Amparo Valcarce which will be organized together with IE University with the presence of Dr. Guillermo de Haro, and the Chairman of the Spanish Association of Defense Industries, TEDAE, H.E. Mr. Ricardo Martí Fluxá. This Master's will be a reference covering a significant gap in the industry.





## February 5, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a panel session entitled “Iran’s Strategic Chessboard: Impact and Implications in the MENA Region” organized by the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation from February 4 to 5, 2024 at the Rome MED Dialogue’s Extraordinary Expert Meeting on ‘Rethinking Security in the Middle East.’ The forum brought 100 experts from over 35 countries to discuss development in the region.



Annah Mosly, a researcher at the Gulf Research Center, participated in the Women of Middle East Network for Peacebuilding annual meeting held by the European Council on Foreign Relations in February in Italy.

## February 1, 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI)- Middle Power Studies Network’s virtual public forum on ‘Eyes on Saudi Arabia: How a Pivotal Middle Power is Raising Its Strategic Game.’ Watch the full webinar [here](#).

**Virtual Event**

**Eyes on Saudi Arabia:**  
How a Pivotal Middle Power is Raising Its Strategic Game

with **Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**,  
Founder and Chairman of Gulf Research Center

**Discussants**

- Prof. Simon Mabon\***  
Professor of International Politics, Lancaster University
- Dr. Md. Muddassir Qamar**  
Associate Professor at Centre for West Asian Studies, School of International Studies  
\*to be confirmed

**Moderator**

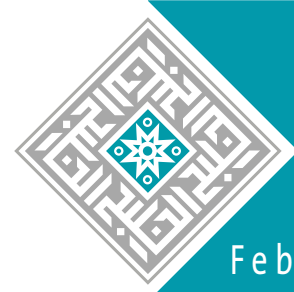
- Dr. Dino Patti Djalal**  
Founder and Chairman of FPCI

**Thursday, 1 February 2024**

- 12:30-14:00 | New Delhi Time
- 14:00-15:30 | Jakarta Time
- 07:00-08:30 | London Time
- 10:00-11:30 | Riyadh Time

**LIVE ON** **YouTube** Free Registration | [bit.ly/MPSNSaudi](https://bit.ly/MPSNSaudi)

[www.fpcindonesia.org](http://www.fpcindonesia.org) **FPCI** FOREIGN POLICY COMMUNITY OF INDONESIA



GRC staff make regular appearances on major regional and global media outlets, and are often quoted in the press, speaking on the most pressing issues impacting the Gulf region. GRC media participation can be accessed at the [following link](#), which leads to the GRC official YouTube channel.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), spoke in an interview with DW Arabic channel at the Munich Security Conference and focused on the issue of Western security approaches towards the region. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated on Al Arabiya in an episode entitled 'An American official to Al Arabiya: Pirates and gangs 'pass' Iran's weapons to the Houthis.'



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in 'The World This Evening' program on BBC News Arabic, discussing Saudi's statement that there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless the independent Palestinian state is recognized.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated on Al-Hadath TV and discussed the issue of the US and Saudi Arabia and how there should be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless the Palestinian state is recognized.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in Al Arabiya in an episode entitled 'Saudi Arabia: No Relations with Israel before Recognizing a Palestinian State.'



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated on Sky News Arabic in an episode entitled 'Saudi Arabia and the US...the defense agreement and the Palestinian Issue.'



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# GULF RESEARCH CENTER NEWSLETTER **FEBRUARY 2024**



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