

# 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



**Gulf Research Center**

Knowledge for All

مركز الخليج للأبحاث  
المعرفة للجميع



ESTABLISHED SINCE 2000

# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT



**Gulf Research Center**  
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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



2024 was a year marked by significant regional and global challenges and defined by volatility and unpredictability. This holds particularly true for the region covered by the Gulf Research Center (GRC) involving the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. Throughout the year, these countries found themselves confronted by numerous developments that had a direct impact on their national security as well as their economic and social advancement.

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**The GRC thoroughly believes that the advancement of knowledge and the fostering of dialogue is the best manner through which to address the many regional and international issues of concern**

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Taking this into consideration, and Through a broad spectrum of activities and initiatives, the GRC attempted to put developments into their proper context and contribute to a better and deeper understanding of the critical dynamics at play.

Research and analysis remains the core of the GRC's activities. Our Foreign Relations Research Program covered various topics, including Gulf-Asia, Gulf-Europe, Gulf-Latin America, and Gulf-Nordic-Baltic relations. A notable achievement was the publication of a series of ten research papers on the GCC-NB8 Relations Program, launched in July 2023 and continuing throughout 2024. The Environmental Security and Sustainability Program held events both at COP 29 in Azerbaijan as well as COP 16 on Desertification in Riyadh. Numerous other initiatives were promoted through the Gulf Labor Markets and Migration (GLMM) Program as well as the Cultural & Media Program.

The Tafahum wa Tabadul Project further exemplified the GRC's role in fostering regional dialogue. Through high-level policy workshops that brought together officials from the GCC, Yemen, Iraq, and Iran, the project worked to sustain and deepen the momentum of regional cooperation. These sessions aimed to identify practical mechanisms for collaboration, underscoring GRC's commitment to tangible, action-oriented outcomes.

A significant milestone in 2024 was the establishment of the GRC Foundation's new office in Brussels. This strategic expansion marked a critical step in enhancing Gulf-Europe relations. The office is set to serve as a hub for in-depth research on evolving dynamics between the Gulf Cooperation

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU). By focusing on mutual interests and fostering academic excellence, the office represents the GRC's commitment to bridging gaps and promoting understanding between these two pivotal regions.

GRC's calendar of events in 2024 included the 14th annual Gulf Research Meeting with more than 350 participants, the Gstaad Middle East Dialogue, the OIC-GRC Symposium, as well as the GRC's support for the inaugural Gulf Studies Symposium held in Washington, DC. Specialized ambassador roundtable meetings addressing relations with Central Asia, Latin America, and MIKTA countries provided platforms for nuanced, region-specific dialogue.

On the executive training front, the GRC held its Gulf In-Depth Executive Learning Program in Riyadh and the three-module Global Leadership Program in Geneva together with the Geneva Center for Security Policy.

In terms of knowledge dissemination, 2024 saw the GRC release a wide range of publications, including commentaries and analyses, policy briefs, and research papers on various subjects. Reports included GCC-Sub-Saharan Africa relations, the Swiss Economic Outlook, and the GCC-Africa agriculture sector. Together, these publications not only address diverse and pressing issues, providing valuable insights to both policymakers and

academics, but more importantly provide a regional Gulf perspective to the many issues impacting the region. Our media presence and conference participation provided an additional mechanism to contribute to the policy debates.

Collaboration remained a cornerstone of GRC's approach. Throughout the year, the GRC strengthened its partnerships with research institutions and universities both within the Gulf region and globally. This included signing several new memoranda of understanding, which laid the groundwork for future joint initiatives and projects.

One of the most notable moments of the year was the recognition of GRC Chairman Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, who received the prestigious Medal of Knight in the National Order of Merit from French President Emmanuel Macron. This honor, conferred on May 21 at the Residence of France in Riyadh, celebrated Dr. Sager's unwavering dedication to strengthening Saudi-French relations.

All of the above would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of GRC's global team. Their unwavering commitment has been instrumental in driving the GRC's mission: Knowledge for All. As GRC looks ahead to 2025, it does so with a sense of purpose, building on the foundations laid in past years to continue its vital work in fostering understanding, dialogue, and cooperation in an ever-changing world.

**Dr. Abdulaziz O.Sager**  
**Chairman of The Gulf Research Center**  
**(GRC)**

## GRC OFFICES



### The Gulf Research Center

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) was founded in July 2000 by Saudi businessman Dr. Abdulaziz Sager. Dr. Sager's vision was to fill a significant void and conduct scholarly, high-quality research on all aspects of the broader strategic Gulf region, including the GCC countries, Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. The GRC operates on an independent, non-profit basis.

The Gulf Research Center has been consistently ranked among the top think tanks in the Middle East and worldwide in the University of Pennsylvania's Global Go-To Think Tank Index Report, especially in foreign policy research and public engagement. The GRC believes everyone has the right of access to knowledge, so it has made all its research available to the public through publications, workshops, seminars, and conferences. In addition, as a non-profit organization, GRC injects all income into new programs and activities. The GRC established its headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia with offices in Jeddah, Brussels, Geneva, Cambridge, and a support office in Dubai.



### The Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels (GRCF-B)

The Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels (GRC Foundation Brussels or GRCF-B) was established in 2024 as an International Non-Profit Association in Brussels, Belgium, under the Belgian Civil Code relating to companies and associations. It is, by definition, a not-for-profit institution and an umbrella organization that develops and implements research, training, and educational programs about the Gulf and European region.

The GRC Foundation Brussels conducts research on Gulf-Europe issues, and plays a key role in promoting academic excellence both in and about the Gulf region. It ensures objective and comprehensive analysis and information about this vital part of the world in relation to Europe. This is accomplished through numerous projects that the GRCF-B carries out, often in partnership with other research organizations and the European Union. The GRCF-B is situated in the capital of the European Union, the heart of Europe, and is of great benefit to its work.



## GRC OFFICES



### The objectives of the GRCF Brussels office are:

- Enhance Gulf-Europe relations through a world-class facility providing research and analysis.
- Establish a wide-ranging strategic dialogue that underpins the ties between Europe and the Gulf region.
- Provide a framework for constructive dialogue to enhance institutional capabilities in bilateral relations.
- Build a network of relevant stakeholders from politics, business, media, and academia in a holistic effort to contribute to mutually beneficial ties.
- Promote economic partnerships and enhance business-to-business ties with new initiatives and dialogues.
- Identify and propose new areas of cooperation outside the current scope.



- Support a widening cultural dialogue between Europe and the Gulf region.
- Promote youth and research exchanges.

Cooperation with renowned research institutions and other organizations in Europe is an essential part of the Foundation's work. The GRCF Brussels works to build networks across all official and unofficial channels, thus broadening and enhancing relations between the Gulf region and Europe.

The Foundation qualifies to receive funding and participate in programs supported by international organizations, the European Union, and various independent international foundations. Under the laws of the constituent states of the European Union, donors based in the European Union are eligible to receive tax benefits for supporting the work of the GRC Foundation Brussels.



### **The Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF)**

The Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRC Foundation or GRCF) was established in 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. It is, by definition, a non-profit institution and an umbrella organization under which research, training, and educational programs about the Gulf region are developed and implemented. The GRC Foundation conducts research on Gulf issues, promotes academic excellence in and about the Gulf region, and ensures objective and comprehensive analysis and information about this vital part of the world. This is accomplished through numerous projects that GRCF carries out, often in partnership with other research organizations. The location of the GRCF in Geneva, a place where exchanges of ideas on global governance and security regularly take place, has been crucial for its success. Cooperation with renowned research institutions, universities, and other organizations is essential to the Foundation's work.



In 2011, the Foundation was awarded special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The GRCF is also accredited by the governing council of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). In 2012, the GRCF, together with the Migration Policy Centre (MPC) of the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, established the Gulf Labour Markets and Migration (GLMM) Programme, promoting better understanding and policies in these critical domains for the Gulf and the countries of origin of the migrants. The Foundation qualifies to receive funding from and participate in programs supported by international organizations, the European Union, the United States, and various independent international foundations. Under the laws of Switzerland and the Canton of Geneva, donors based in Switzerland are eligible to receive tax benefits for supporting the work of the GRC Foundation.



## GRC OFFICES



### The GRC Cambridge (GRCC)

The Gulf Research Centre Cambridge (GRCC) was established in August 2009 through a cooperative effort between the Gulf Research Center Foundation in Geneva and the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge. The primary goal of the GRCC is to advance education and research on political, economic, social, environmental, security, and energy issues related to the Gulf region. One of the critical aspects of the work of the GRCC is organizing the annual Gulf Research Meeting at the University of Cambridge. More information about the Gulf Research Meeting is available [here](#).

The Gulf Research Centre Cambridge is a non-profit, registered charity organization under the Charity Commission for England and Wales and can therefore receive tax-deductible donations.



### The GRC Support Office: Knowledge Corporation (K-Corp)

The GRC's support office is based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Knowledge Corporation is a solution provider specializing in event management, knowledge and consultancy, ICT, publishing, media production, and training.



# GRC IN 24 YEARS



**53** Research Programs  
**30** Research Projects



**100,000 +**  
Pages Translated



**500+**  
Conferences, Forums,  
Workshops and Lectures



**1,200 +**  
External Research  
Contributors



**37,000+**  
Event Participants



**12**  
Accreditations and  
Recognitions



**180+**  
Visiting Scholars  
and Interns



**115+** Cooperation and  
Partnership Agreements



**240** Staff (Cumulative)  
from **23** Countries



**18** Training and Executive  
Learning Programs with  
1,200+ Participants



**320+**  
Publications



**6**  
Scholarships Granted

# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

GRC MAIN HIGHLIGHTS





# Knight of the National Order of Merit

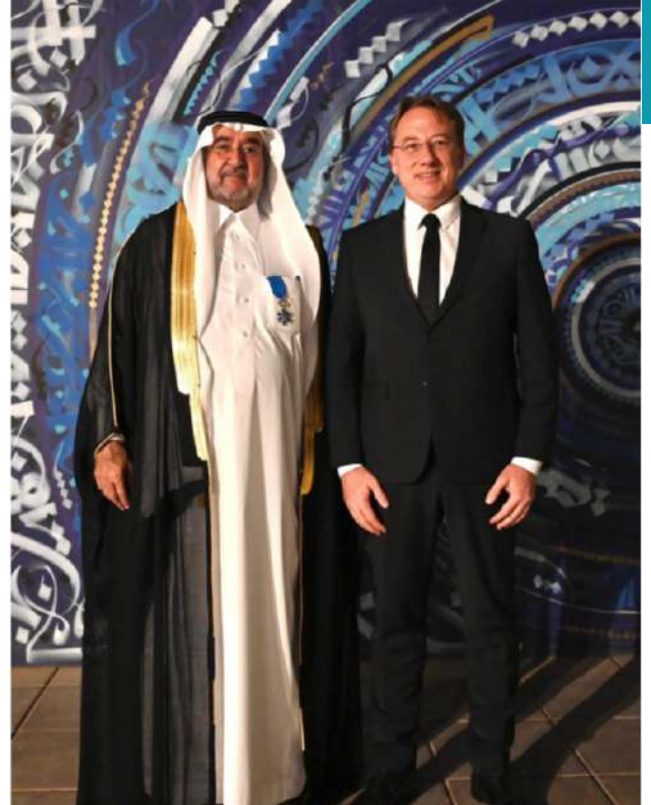
from French President Emmanuel Macron  
Riyadh, Residence of France



*Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, being awarded by H.E. Ambassador Ludovic Pouille, France's former Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, received the prestigious Medal of Knight in the National Order of Merit from French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This recognition symbolizes Dr. Abdulaziz Sager's strong bond and cumulative achievements in enhancing relations between Saudi Arabia and France.

The ceremony was hosted and organized by H.E. Ambassador Ludovic Pouille, France's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the Residence of France in Riyadh. Distinguished guests and EU ambassadors were among those who attended the ceremony. After being awarded the Medal, Dr. Sager gave an acceptance speech where he extended his appreciation to President Macron, the government of France, the French Foreign Ministry, the French embassy in Riyadh, and Ambassador Pouille, as well as outlined the growing relations between Saudi Arabia and France.



He concluded his speech by re-emphasizing that through his organization, the Gulf Research Center, he and his team will continue to work toward strengthening the relations between Saudi Arabia and France in various dimensions, ranging from economics and energy to culture, defense, security, and political coordination. He reiterated his commitment to using all capacities to their fullest to distribute knowledge, raise understanding about both countries, and propose strategies for further nourishing and developing the existing ties between the two countries.



## Opening of GRC's Brussels Office



The Gulf Research Center Foundation's office in Brussels, Belgium opened its doors in September 2024. This important milestone marks a significant step forward in the expansion of the GRC's work, as the Brussels office will serve as a hub for conducting in-depth research on the evolving dynamics between the Gulf and Europe.

The Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels will focus on addressing key areas of mutual interest between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union, promoting academic excellence both within the Gulf region and on Gulf-related issues. We aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities shaping GCC-EU relations while fostering dialogue and collaboration between policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders from both regions.

The work is part of the GRC's work on promoting GCC-EU and Gulf-Europe relations since the start of the dedicated research program in 2004. Since then, the GRC has engaged in numerous projects, also with the European Union, to better understand the dynamics underpinning mutual ties. The ability to work from the EU's headquarters in Brussels will allow for further engagement with all EU institutions with numerous events planned during 2025.

### **For more information on the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels**

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# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

GRC RESEARCH PROGRAMS



# GRC Foreign Relations Program

The Gulf Research Center's mission is to further information and knowledge relating to the Gulf by providing a comprehensive, independent, and credible platform for advanced research on GCC politics, economics, defense, security, and social issues, and their implications and relevance. The scope of the research programs is defined in coordination with the GRC Academic Board and is continuously updated to ensure that the research is in accordance with current issues of concern.

The GRC undertakes research on all elements impacting policy-making in the Gulf, including: political systems and development, foreign relations of the Gulf, defense and security issues, the economy, as well as environmental issues and the role of energy and its regional and worldwide dimensions. In each of its research programs, it is the objective of the GRC and its extensive community of researchers and contributors to shed light on unexplored issues and relationships that are and will be of increased importance both for the Gulf region and the rest of the world.

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**Through rigorous research and analysis, the program explores key areas of cooperation and challenges in Gulf-Asia, Gulf-Latin America, Gulf-Sub-Sahara Africa, Gulf-Nordic-Baltic, and Gulf-Europe relations**

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The Foreign Relations Program at the Gulf Research Center (GRC) serves as a cornerstone for advancing the study of the Gulf's evolving relationships with various territorial regions across the globe. Through rigorous research and analysis, the program explores key areas of cooperation and challenges in Gulf-Asia, Gulf-Latin America, Gulf-Sub-Sahara Africa, Gulf-Nordic-Baltic, and Gulf-Europe relations. By fostering a deeper understanding of these interconnected dynamics, the program aims to contribute to policy-making and strengthen the Gulf's role as a pivotal player in global affairs.

## Structure of the research programs

Each of the research areas is structured to encourage the dissemination of original research and to serve as an information resource base where all materials necessary for a solid understanding of an area of interest come together. Each research program involves:

- 1. Research and analysis:** The core of each program is substantive academic research with a particular emphasis on policy issues, and their implications and relevance. A series of research projects look in-depth at some of the issues defining the region, with the aim of putting forward policy prescriptions and analysis within a proper context.
- 2. Conferences and workshops:** GRC is active in organizing conferences and workshops that complement its various research programs, with the aim to create more clarity within and interaction among the policy and the academic communities. In addition, GRC events also reflect current discussions and concerns in the region and are meant to highlight those debates. [Click here to see our upcoming and past events.](#)
- 3. Executive learning:** One important component of the research programs is to conduct executive learning programs that disseminate knowledge to key individuals, keeping GRC research relevant to key stakeholders.

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## ANNUAL REPORT

GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities





# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## GCC-ASEAN Webinar: Looking Forward: Outlines for Developing GCC-ASEAN Cooperation

January 18, 2024

### GCC-ASEAN WEBINAR

Looking Forward: Outlines for  
Developing GCC-ASEAN Cooperation






**12:00-1:30 PM**  
(Saudi Arabia time)

**January, 18 2024**

 <small>Dr. Abdulaziz Sager Chairman Gulf Research Center</small>	 <small>Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee Senior Fellow Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA)</small>	 <small>Dr. Mansour Almarzooqi Director of the Center for Strategic Studies &amp; American Studies Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies</small>	 <small>Andrea Molina Chief Research Officer (Migration Studies) Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies Foreign Service Institute - Philippines</small>
 <small>Dr. Hasan Alhasan Senior Fellow for Middle East Policy International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)</small>	 <small>Nevin Sinsiri Advisor, Geopolitics Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)</small>	 <small>Khin Maung Zaw Joint Secretary Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies</small>	 <small>Dr. Ngo Di Lan Research Fellow Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies (IFPSS), DAV</small>

  
**Gulf Research Center**  
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## Participating Speakers' Institutions



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) held the first session of its GCC-ASEAN webinar series entitled “Looking Forward: Outlines for Developing GCC-ASEAN Cooperation” on January 18, 2024. The event focused on the status of relations and the priorities related to the “ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council Framework of Cooperation 2024-2028.” Dr. Christian Koch, the Director of Research at the GRC, moderated the session.



In his welcoming remarks, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, emphasized the importance of developing stronger academic and think tank network relations with ASEAN countries. He also discussed the potential for expanding trade, labor markets, investments, and innovation ties. Dr. Sager suggested that attention should be given to bringing about a GCC-ASEAN free trade agreement which would open the door for further cooperation in areas like renewable energy, food security, and the digital economy. The establishment of a GCC-ASEAN business council to facilitate private-sector engagement could also be beneficial.



Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee, Senior Fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA), expressed her aims for more dialogue between think tanks in Southeast Asia and the GCC countries as both regions face a lot of complex challenges. Their work together could therefore assist policymakers from the regions to overcome some of these issues. She highlighted that the current broader geopolitical and geoeconomic developments in the last few years have inevitably led the two regional blocs to strengthen their engagements with each other to build greater strategic alignment at the region-to-region level. In terms of economic relations in

2022, trade between the two blocs increased from USD 85.2 billion in 2021 to USD 110 billion, with the current trade volume reaching close to USD 140 billion. Trade has not only increased but also diversified from trading primarily in crude oil and fossil fuels and associated logistics to various products and services, from electronics and machinery to other high-growth sectors, such as food, financial services, and e-commerce.



Mr. Newin Sinsiri, Advisor on Geopolitics from the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), highlighted how the ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council Framework of Cooperation could promote more economic cooperation through the increased role of private sectors and shared experience on economic integration in terms of policy dialogue on trade and investment. He underlined the importance of people-to-people connectivity with increased cultural exchanges, knowledge sharing, trade fairs, and other mechanisms essential to narrowing the developmental gap between the two regions.



Dr. Hasan Alhasan, Senior Fellow for Middle East Policy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), stressed how the GCC is expressing interest in engaging more substantively with ASEAN and how this is part of the GCC's broader strategic diversification plan, given the fact that the Gulf states are attempting to diversify their security, political, and economic relations away from the West, and looking for a broader set of partners. Dr. Alhasan reiterated how the GCC-ASEAN relationship remains centered on energy but he stated that there is also an increased focus on new emerging and renewable forms of energy. For the GCC states, the strategy is to cement themselves as central energy players and play a key role in the transition towards newer forms of energy.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities



Mr. Khin Maung Zaw, Joint Secretary from the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies, highlighted the importance of food security and how ASEAN can provide food supply security for the GCC states. He also identified digital currency and financial technology as another area that both sides should engage in. He suggested that the GCC and ASEAN, as regional blocs, can create a common market framework for food, marine products, livestock, and agriculture.



Dr. Ngo Di Lan, Research Fellow at the Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies (IFPSS – DAV), stressed the importance of fostering cooperation on both the multilateral and bilateral levels. He identified strengthening tourism flows between the two regions as important to further developing infrastructure, creating business opportunities, and boosting trade and investment flows.



Dr. Mansour Almarzoqi, Director of the Center for Strategic Studies & American Studies at the Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies, re-emphasized the institutional instrument of contact and that to understand one another better, one must develop efficient ways of communication through education. He argued that the two blocs were still in an ‘exploration stage’ of developing their relations with one another. This includes, for example, the divergent security alliances of all the GCC and ASEAN member states and how certain countries have better relations with China than others. It should also be acknowledged that some GCC countries have stronger ties with ASEAN countries than others.



Andrea Molina, Chief Research Officer (Migration Studies) at the Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies, Foreign Service Institute, highlighted the importance of making a conscious effort to bridge the gaps and build a stronger foundation, especially now that the challenges both regional blocs are facing, whether they be economic, geopolitical, or environmental, do not adhere to the arbitrary boundaries. She emphasized the waning influence of traditional global powers, coupled with the rise of new players, which created a shifting landscape. This new reality requires collective solutions that transcend borders in order to better face the apparent challenges in these volatile regions. It also reflects the policies of the GCC countries which are seeking diversification beyond their immediate allies.

**Speakers** suggested that the holding of the GCC-ASEAN summit in Riyadh in October 2023 should now be followed up with more focused ministerial meetings and exchanges. At the same time, many specific issues need to be addressed, which requires a second track of experts, where the cooperation of the regional blocks can examine what specific functional collaboration between the GCC and ASEAN can look like. Important issues mentioned were food security, AI technology, and renewables. The main focus on the second track of experts is to coordinate specific working groups between GCC and ASEAN experts to develop concrete ideas that can ultimately be proposed at the political level. On the societal track, people-to-people cooperation should be enhanced and focused on building networks and having regular exchange mechanisms. This will allow for greater familiarity to be created and generate a greater sense of understanding to be promoted between the two regional blocs, eventually moving out of the exploratory phase and towards regular institutionalized cooperation.



# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

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

- First, ASEAN should consider having the GCC as a comprehensive dialogue partner and invite the GCC to regular regional meetings, such as the ‘ASEAN Regional Forum,’ to enhance regional-to-regional cooperation and institutional relationships.
- Second, a comprehensive institutional framework should sustain the current GCC-ASEAN momentum, with more regular dialogue and joint working groups.
- Third, the importance of regular, structured, and institutional contact between GCC and ASEAN and the potential for cooperation in renewable energy, food security, and the digital economy should be emphasized.
- Fourth, it is essential to focus on the context of the rise of the GCC as a geopolitical global player, coupled with the return of regionalism.
- Fifth, there is a dire need for the think tank community to promote and educate both GCC and ASEAN regional bloc communities and understand each of the regional perspectives better to develop more pertinent and realistic policies.
- Sixth, safeguarding labor rights by the Global Compact for Immigration must be undertaken.
- Seventh, securing vital trade routes and economic interests to ensure regional stability and cooperation will also require that robust maritime security measures between both regions be increased.



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### Visit of a Delegation from the Master of Strategic Studies Program of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's National Defense University

February 6, 2024



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 Foreign Relation Program Activities

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

February 7, 2024

Organized by the

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

Gulf Research Center  
Knowledge for All



مركز الخليج للأبحاث  
للدراسة والبحوث



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

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

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上海國際問題研究院  
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Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
Chairman  
Gulf Research Center



Dr. JIN Liangxiang  
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  
Relations Studies  
Shanghai Academy of Social  
Sciences (SASS)



Dr. Christian Koch  
Director of Research  
Gulf Research Center

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

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS) held a webinar 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.



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

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.

To overcome existing differences in ties, it was noted that it is essential to examine and understand the different Gulf states' political economy systems and why some projects in the cities succeeded and others did not, especially given the bureaucratic institutions. 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:**

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

# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## Red Sea Security and the Horn of Africa: Current Situation, Challenges, and Solutions

February 8, 2024

Organized by the

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:

1. Emphasizing the importance of Saudi/Egyptian cooperation in securing the Red Sea
2. Launching a forum to discuss all issues related to the Red Sea region from security and military to economy and environment, among others
3. 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
4. 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
5. 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.
6. Emphasizing the necessity of stopping the Gaza war, resolving the Palestinian issue by implementing the two-state solution to stem the resurgence of terrorist groups under the pretext of defending the Palestinian cause.

# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## GCC-Nordic Relations Webinar

February 21, 2024



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.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

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.

For example, due to apprehension about public sentiment toward the GCC countries, companies have hesitated to invest in or establish strategic alliances there. On a more regional level, it was highlighted that the Nordic states are very active when it comes to supporting various regional dialogues and mediation efforts, such as Sweden's mediation between Iran and Iraq during the 1980s and Norway's role between the U.S. and Iran.

### **Some of the suggestions put forward in the webinar include:**

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.

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.

Promote tourism between the two sides and create a civil exchange program to exchange knowledge about the respective regions and improve public perspectives.

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.





## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### Visit of the State Secretary of the Republic of Germany H.E. Dr. Thomas Bagger

February 27, 2024



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.



# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## The Crisis in Gaza and the Challenge of Regional Order in the Middle East

March 13, 2024

The Crisis in Gaza and the Challenge of Regional Order in the Middle East  
Organized by the Gulf Research Center (GRC)

March 13, 2024  
1:00-3:00 PM KSA  
zoom

**MODERATOR**  
Dr. Christian Koch  
Director of Research  
Gulf Research Center

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
Chairman  
Gulf Research Center

Dr. Abdel Aziz Hamad Aluwaisheq  
Assistant Secretary General  
for Political Affairs and  
Negotiations  
Cooperation Council for the  
Arab States of the Gulf

Pol Morillas  
Director  
Barcelona Centre for  
International Affairs (CIDOB)

Dr. Maria Luisa Fantappiè  
Head of the  
Mediterranean, Middle  
East and Africa  
Programme  
Istituto Affari  
Internazionali (IAI)

Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
Senior Advisor  
Gulf Research Center

Ambassador Senén  
Florensa  
Executive President  
IEMed - European  
Institute of the  
Mediterranean

Cian FitzGerald  
Researcher  
The Institute of  
International and  
European Affairs (IIA)

Ambassador Marc Otte  
Senior Associate Fellow  
President of the Brussels  
International Center  
Egmont

Gulf Research Center  
Knowledge for All

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) held a webinar on March 13, 2024, entitled 'The Crisis in Gaza and the Challenge of Regional Order in the Middle East.' The event examined what steps Europe and the GCC states can take to both de-escalate the current crisis as well as pave the way for a medium- to long-term political solution. H.E. Ambassador Jorge Hevia, Spanish Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, provided initial welcoming remarks. The speakers of the session included H.E. Dr. Abdel Aziz Hamad Aluwaisheq, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Negotiations of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf; Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center; Ambassador Senén Florensa, Executive President of the IEMed - European Institute of the Mediterranean; Dr. Pol Morillas, Director of the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB); Dr. Maria Luisa Fantappiè, Head of the Mediterranean, Middle

East and Africa Programme at the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI); Cian FitzGerald, Researcher at the Institute of International and European Affairs; and Professor Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor of the Gulf Research Center. Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC, moderated the session.

Despite no international consensus on the actions needed for an immediate ceasefire, speakers argued that there is an urgent need to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. In this domain, Europe's role in war-ending diplomatic efforts was seen as essential, also in terms of restoring some of Europe's relevance as a geopolitical actor. During the webinar, several suggestions were made including pushing for a United Nations Security Council resolution recognizing Palestinian statehood, addressing Israeli settler violence in the West Bank with sanctions, and engaging other countries outside

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

the West in the move towards Palestinian recognition. Emphasis was given to how Europe and the GCC can coordinate their efforts to create a broader strategic vision, for example, through an international peace conference. The speakers expressed cautious optimism that such collective efforts involving the GCC and EU could play a constructive role in moving current discussions forward.

From a GCC perspective, it was underlined that a ceasefire should be immediate and sustainable, and that the war cannot be allowed to continue under any pretext, given the extreme conditions the people in Gaza are living in. Key to determining how Gaza should be governed in the future as well as Israeli-Palestinian negotiation, is that this must be decided by the Palestinians themselves and that the international community should support whatever decision is reached within the context of Palestinian national unity. For the GCC, the Palestinian Authority is seen as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinians.

In addition, the Arab Peace Initiative is seen as a platform to explore ways to revive the peace process. Challenges preventing progress being made in a possible political process include the position of Prime Minister Netanyahu's government which opposes the two-state solution, and paradoxically, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its associated rejectionist front. Taken together, this holds regional repercussions and has implications for the broader Middle East region. The attacks on international shipping and the efforts by the Houthi militias have already disrupted the peace process in Yemen, for example.

Another challenge highlighted was the different positions on the crisis of individual EU member states. It was noted that after seven months of conflict, the direct effects of it on Europe have become visible, illustrated by the growing social polarization within European society. Overall,

one of the significant shortcomings highlighted on the European side was that instead of addressing the overall conflict, Europe has been focusing on different side effects of the conflict, such as the security of the Red Sea and the tension and political spillover in Lebanon. It was argued that it would be better if Europe would take a broader strategic approach to ending the conflict.

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

- The crisis in Gaza is an opportunity for Europe to restore some of its geopolitical relevance by focusing on ending the war in Gaza and promoting stability in the region.
- The idea of an International Peace Conference can be advanced with European countries such as Spain advancing this concept.
- The European Union should work with the GCC states to build alliances in the region that advocate support for a two-state solution as the only viable political solution.
- International support for a legitimate Palestinian Authority in Gaza is required as the PA cannot be discredited further. This includes involvement of the EU in the political process of building the Palestinian state.
- Putting pressure on the U.S. to stop vetoing UN Security Council resolutions, realigning the role of the P5 to help reach a political solution, and using all levers within the UN multilateral system should be considered.
- Research centers from the EU and the GCC should come together and produce a joint publication(s) on the strategic view of the situation that can then be presented to officials on both sides.

### GCC-Latin America Ambassador Roundtable Meeting

May 5, 2024



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) organized a roundtable discussion titled ‘Developing GCC-Latin America Relations’ on Sunday, May 5, 2024, at the GRC office in Riyadh. The meeting, moderated by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, convened esteemed Iberoamerican ambassadors residing in Riyadh, along with experts and academics from the GCC.

#### **Participants who attended the meeting included:**

- H.E. Mr. Aníbal Gómez Toledo, Ambassador of Mexico to Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Dr. Nelson Yemil Chabén, Ambassador of Uruguay to Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Mr. Carlos Rodolfo Zapata, Ambassador of Peru to Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Mr. Validimir Andres Gonzalez Quesada, Ambassador of Cuba to Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Mr. Ricardo Ernesto Cucalon Levy, Ambassador of El Salvador to Saudi Arabia
- Mr. Abderrahman Agadou, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Mr. David Velasquez Caraballo, Ambassador of Venezuela to Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Mr. Sergio Taam, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Brazil



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

- H.E. Ms. Ivanna Silva, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Argentina
- H.E. Mr. Manuel Hernandez, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Spain

### **Experts and Academics also attended the meeting, including:**

- Dr. Mansour Almarzoqi, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the Prince Saud al-Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies
- Mr. Abdulaziz Alageel, Co-Founder of Edhafat and Former Secretary General of Gulf Organizations of Industrial Consulting (GOIC)
- Prof. Dr. Saleh Al Khathlan, Senior Advisor (GRC)
- Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research (GRC)
- Dr. Mohammed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environment Program (GRC)
- Dr. Rafael de Santiago, Senior Researcher (GRC)

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, delivered the opening address, underscoring the significance of the Latin American region, its demographic weight, with 8% of the global population, and the substantial growth in trade between the GCC and Latin America, which surged from \$20 billion in 2020 to nearly \$32 billion by 2022. Dr. Sager also touched upon pivotal issues such as the Gaza crisis and diplomatic relations with Iran.

Following Dr. Sager's opening remarks, the discussion began with an emphasis on the evolving synergy between two regions frequently in the international spotlight, drawing parallels with the Palestine situation.

The historical collaboration dating back to the 1950s was underscored, presenting compelling statistics: the GCC's combined GDP totaling \$2.2 trillion compared to Latin America's \$5.5 trillion, despite the GCC comprising only six nations. At the same time, Latin America consists of over 30 countries. The significance of addressing the Gaza and Palestine issue was highlighted by the per capita GDP disparity and the vast potential for trade cooperation, echoing the sentiment, "If there is no prosperity, there is no peace," drawing from Latin America's historical experiences. The imperative of fostering peace and prosperity was emphasized, drawing upon shared experiences and aspirations, particularly in light of the Gulf's proactive stance in defusing conflict escalation.

Dr. Saleh Al Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, highlighted two key points during the discussion. First, Saudi Arabia's proactive diplomatic engagement regarding the Gaza conflict emphasizes the Kingdom's longstanding commitment dating back 75 years. Saudi Arabia's enduring responsibility towards Arab issues was noted, namely the recent impetus provided by the success of Vision 2030. Driven by the understanding that stability is foundational for prosperity and peace, Saudi Arabia actively engages in regional and international efforts to resolve the conflict.

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**Evolving synergy between two regions frequently in the international spotlight, drawing parallels with the Palestine situation**

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## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities



Second, Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Collective South initiative, which aims to amplify the voice of Southern nations in shaping the global agenda, was outlined. Efforts to promote cooperative relations over competition within the Collective South framework were also highlighted. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's advocacy for middle-power diplomacy, including engagement with countries in Latin America, to foster a more multipolar international system was brought into the discussion.

**“viable and realistic action plan has to be established to connect the two regions and that a summit between the GCC and Latin America will be an excellent opportunity”**

Dr. Koch, Director of Research at the Gulf Research Center introduced two main objectives that have guided much of the Center's work since its inception. Firstly, to

provide a regional perspective from within the region itself. While there is a great deal of discussion on the Middle East and, in particular the Gulf, at the think tank level, most of this discourse takes place around the globe, with little input from within the region. The Center's aim is to foster a better understanding by presenting a regional perspective. Secondly, they strive to fill gaps in research. The GCC-Latin America Research Program is a clear example of this, as it is one of many areas that could be studied more thoroughly. It was also mentioned that establishing better relations with younger scholars from Latin America and linking them with the Saudi research staff of the GRC should be encouraged.

The discussion went on to address the big challenge that is bringing together the two regions, who being on different sides of the world, are faced with significant connectivity challenges.. The disconnect leads to issues of perception vs reality with regard to the opportunities that exist between them. It was emphasized that distance should not take away from the vast possibilities and resources available for the two sides to share in every field, particularly in trade and investment.

The discussion led to an understanding that a viable and realistic action plan has to be established to connect the two regions and that a summit between the GCC and Latin America will be an excellent opportunity to identify common interests. The participants highlighted the importance of mutual understanding and visits by high-ranking officials to foster stronger ties between Argentina and Saudi Arabia and diplomatic relations on trade, connectivity, and cultural ties.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities



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**Acknowledging the need to strengthen diplomatic ties, deepen cultural understanding, and enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation**

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The conversation also covered the challenges and potential areas of cooperation, including defense, environment, climate change, and geopolitical technology. The discussion also highlighted the potential for increased collaboration between Saudi Arabia and Mexico, with a proposal made for a joint public policy report.

The meeting concluded by acknowledging the need to strengthen diplomatic ties, deepen cultural understanding, and enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This approach aims to address shared challenges and take advantage of mutual opportunities. The final proposal was a new initiative—a GCC-LATAM summit, which could serve as a platform for further dialogue and collaboration, ultimately contributing to strengthening relationships between the regions.



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### GCC-Central Asia Ambassador Roundtable Meeting

May 8, 2024



The Gulf Research Center's (GRC) GCC-Central Asia Research Program organized a GCC-Central Asia roundtable meeting in its office in Riyadh on May 8, 2024, in which it gathered ambassadors of the Central Asia region, including **H.E. Ambassador Akram Karimi Muhammadar**, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan; **H.E. Ambassador Ulukbek Maripov**, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan; **H.E. Ambassador Madiyar Menilbekov**, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan; **H.E. Ambassador Shahin Abdullayev**, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and **Mr. Bakhrom Sharipov**, Counselor of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Experts from the West Asia department at the Foreign Ministry and the Saudi business community also participated in the meeting. Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor of the GRC, and Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC, moderated the meeting.

The roundtable meeting fostered a platform for robust dialogue and collaboration. Key outcomes included identifying concrete points of cooperation, notably the organization of forums, webinars, and joint studies between think tanks in the two regions to explore ways to enhance relations in all fields. The meeting focused on the current relations and developments between the GCC countries and Central Asia in coordination with the first GCC-Central Asia Summit held in Saudi Arabia in August 2023. The meeting preceded the first GCC-Central Asia Investment Forum, which was held in Riyadh on May 29, 2024, and aimed to explore economic and investment opportunities across various sectors such as renewable energy, petrochemicals, agriculture, food security, industry, healthcare, tourism, logistics services, infrastructure, technology, and digitalization.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

Participants in the meeting stressed that the investment forum will bring about a quantum leap in relations between the GCC and Central Asia, representing two regional blocs whose presence is growing in the international arena. The participants noted the growing development in all aspects of cooperation between the GCC and Central Asian countries. They confirmed the existence of opportunities to enhance relations from the level of collaboration to the level of a strategic partnership, which is also affirmed by the 2023-2027 Joint Action Plan for Strategic Dialogue and Cooperation that was adopted after the GCC-Central Asia Strategic Dialogue meeting held on September 7, 2022, in Riyadh at the foreign ministerial level. This entails strengthening partnerships in new horizons, including political and security dialogue, economic and investment cooperation, enhancing communication between people, and sharing best practices and knowledge across all domains, including media, sports, tourism, youth affairs, culture, education, and tourism.

Economic and trade relations have been at the forefront of GCC-CIS ties. The participants emphasized the priority of cooperation in the economic fields, including energy, logistics services, food security, and investment, and the need to deepen people-to-people relations to increase mutual understanding. The participants affirmed that both regions want to enhance trade exchanges and investment flows. From the Central Asian side, the ambassadors stressed that their governments prioritize economic cooperation through energy, especially renewable energy, in their expanding bilateral ties with the GCC countries, who have expressed a particular interest in investing in the Central Asian region's energy sector.

On the geostrategic level, the participants also mentioned the ways in which the Central Asian countries have been affected by the developments in Afghanistan and the Ukraine crisis. In light of current geopolitical and geoeconomic issues, Central Asian countries are attempting to establish more avenues of collaboration. Against this backdrop, the issue of security, including cybersecurity, was mentioned as an essential point of cooperation, given that most Central Asian countries are landlocked, bordering areas of Russia and Iran. A particular challenge that was mentioned in the meeting which both regions are facing, is the fact that the current global geopolitical contestations have strengthened terror organizations and triggered the emergence of affiliates in Eurasia and the Middle East. The determination to support regional and international efforts to combat terrorism and extremism and their funding sources is, therefore, one of the high priorities for both regions. It is also mentioned in the joint statement from the summit meeting.

Overall, the roundtable meeting paved the way for strengthened partnerships through networking opportunities, facilitating mutual understanding. Through the GRC's GCC-Central Asia Research Program, we aim to provide a platform for discussion and collaboration to reflect the steady growth in the relationship between GCC and C5+1, particularly during the last few years, and to benefit from the tremendous potential that these two regions have.





### Maintaining Convergence in EU-GCC Energy Ties

May 23, 2024



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) held a webinar entitled ‘Maintaining Convergence in EU-GCC Energy Ties’ on May 23, 2024. The speakers of the webinar were H.E. Dr. Majid AlMoneef, Chairman of the Association for Energy Economics, and Prof. Giacomo Luciani, Master in International Energy Transitions at Sciences Po Paris. Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC, moderated the session.

Sustainable energy security is a core focal area in the EU’s Strategic Partnership document towards the Gulf region put forth in 2022. The EU-GCC policy document emphasizes the importance of partnership for a green transition and sustainable energy security, outlining the need for strategic engagement, speeding up the green transition, and meeting climate-related commitments. The document further provides some policy recommendations including setting up an EU-GCC energy and climate expert group, annual ministerial meetings on energy and climate issues, engagement on sustainable finance, and facilities for expertise on circular economies.

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**Sustainable energy security is a core focal area in the EU’s Strategic Partnership document towards the Gulf region put forth in 2022**

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It was noted at the outset of the webinar that the energy scene has changed dramatically since the GCC and the EU first signed their cooperation agreement in 1988. More recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has heightened Europe’s focus on the Gulf for energy matters, leading to an effort to increase cooperation with the region. While one sees projects being implemented at the bi-lateral level, the follow-through on agreements at the GCC-EU level remains slow, with the free trade negotiations being the primary example. In terms of outlook, the suggestion put forward was one of a continued transition on many different levels and one that is likely to be more bumpy and unstable than smooth and steady.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

The webinar discussions highlighted the need for cooperation between the EU and the GCC in many different areas including sustainable energy security and the potential of hydrogen and carbon capture and sequestration (CCUS) technologies. Both speakers emphasized the importance of realistic and flexible approaches to climate commitments and the necessity for technical dialogue and integrated value chain projects to foster EU-GCC collaboration. Regarding technical cooperation on the hydrogen economy, the webinar highlighted how technical cooperation on desalination, infrastructure for hydrogen, and shipping and handling standards are areas for potential EU-GCC collaboration. Regarding the Gulf region, the GCC is investing in renewables for green hydrogen production and has the potential for blue hydrogen production with CCUS technology. Opportunities within the mineral sector, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, were also mentioned given the EU's concern over critical raw materials. In addition, Europe's revaluation of CCUS and nuclear energy as potential components of reducing emissions has recently opened up areas for renewed cooperation.

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**A call for Europe to remain a partner of choice for the GCC by reevaluating policies like CBAM**

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The webinar also examined divergences in energy strategies. While Europe and the Gulf region have clearly stated commitments to net zero and emission reduction targets, they disagree on the exact path for best achieving these goals. For example, the GCC has advocated for a Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) as an alternative metric for measuring emissions. The GCC's approach to nuclear energy also differs from Europe's, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE considering atomic power generation while some European countries have moved into the phasing out of nuclear energy. More importantly, there are deep concerns inside the GCC regarding the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and its impact on GCC industries with the GCC seeing the CBAM as discriminatory and potentially inviting trade wars. The CBAM is therefore seen as the primary policy that must be re-evaluated by the EU.

### **The session put forward several suggestions for policy consideration:**

1. First, a call for Europe to remain a partner of choice for the GCC by re-evaluating policies like CBAM and engaging in cooperative discussions on critical issues.
2. Second, more investment in mining and a cooperative approach to developing necessary resources are needed.
3. Third, it is essential to set realistic targets for net zero emissions and be flexible in revising them. What is important in the end is to look at outcomes and deal with the realities rather than quickly imposing solutions.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### GCC Ambassadors Luncheon Meeting

May 30, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Dr. Christian Koch, Director of the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussel's office and Director of Research at the GRC, organized a luncheon for the GCC ambassadors and representatives of the GCC embassies in Brussels on May 30, 2024. Those in attendance were H.E. Khalid Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Jindan, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; H.E. Khalid Fahad Al-Hajri, Ambassador of the State of Qatar; H.E. Abdulla Faisal Jabur Al-Doseri, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain; H.E. Nawaf N. Alenezi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait; H.E. Haifa Al-Jadea, Ambassador of the Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the European Union; H.E. Mohamed Al-Sahlawi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates; and Mr. Humaid Almansoori, Head of Parliamentary Affairs, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates.

During the luncheon, the participants discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the Gulf and Europe and ways the soon-to-open Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) office in Brussels can provide the space to develop and deepen the relationship between both sides by building networks across all official and unofficial channels, thus broadening relations between the Gulf and Europe. This is important as the Gulf states need a voice in Europe to ensure their interests are heard and understood.





## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### Central Asia Ambassador's Roundtable Meeting

October 7, 2024

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) GCC-Central Asia Research Program, in partnership with **H.E. Ambassador Madiyar Menilbekov**, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, organized a roundtable meeting at the GRC office in Riyadh on October 7, 2024, in light of celebrating the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan.



This meeting gathered ambassadors of the Central Asia region, including **H.E. Ambassador Akram Karimi Muhammadar**, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan, **H.E. Ambassador Ulukbek Maripov**, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan, **H.E. Ambassador Shahin Abdullayev**, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and **H.E. Ambassador Nodirjon Turgunov**, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Experts from the Saudi business community also participated in the meeting. The meeting focused on the current relations and developments in cooperation between Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia, in addition to the overall relations of the Kingdom with the other countries of Central Asia. The participants noted the growing development in all aspects of cooperation between the GCC and Central Asian countries including political and security dialogue, economic and investment cooperation, enhancing communication

between people, and sharing best practices and knowledge across all domains, including media, sports, tourism, youth affairs, culture, education, and tourism.

Economic and trade relations have been at the forefront of GCC and Central Asia ties. The participants emphasized the priority of cooperation in the economic fields, including **logistics services, infrastructure, investment projects**, and the need to deepen people-to-people relations to increase mutual understanding. The participants affirmed that both regions want to **enhance trade exchanges and investment flows**. From the Central Asian side, the ambassadors stressed that their governments prioritize economic cooperation through energy, especially **renewable energy**, in their expanding bilateral ties with the GCC countries, who have expressed a particular interest in investing in the Central Asian region's energy sector.



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities



The roundtable also explored the potential for establishing a **joint fund** between the Gulf and Central Asia, emphasizing how such a mechanism could drive future economic and investment cooperation. Both regions expressed interest in enhancing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between Central Asian and Saudi bank chambers, as well as with other GCC states' government chambers. **Expanding think tank institutional relations** between the two regions was also highlighted as a critical way to foster deeper collaboration and policy dialogue.

Both regions discussed the importance of organizing business delegations to facilitate direct engagement and explore joint ventures, particularly in sectors of mutual interest. Collaborative projects focusing on neighboring regions were also highlighted as a way to promote regional stability and shared growth. Additionally, both sides saw significant potential in launching joint natural resource projects that leverage the wealth of resources from Central Asia and the Gulf states, including energy, minerals, and agricultural assets, to benefit both regions economically.

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**Expanding think tank institutional relations between the two regions was also highlighted as a critical way to foster deeper collaboration and policy dialogue**

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# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## Roundtable on EU-GCC Relations Supported by the European Union



October 10, 2024

On October 10, 2024, the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels convened a roundtable discussion on EU-GCC relations ahead of the inaugural EU-GCC Summit at the heads of state level on October 16 in Brussels and in line with the official opening of the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels office (GRCF). The roundtable brought together stakeholders from both regions to discuss pressing issues and identify areas of mutual interest. The objectives of the meeting included:

- Deepening the understanding and analysis of current political and security issues and their respective dynamics.
- Exploring sustainable economic and energy collaborations and opportunities within the framework of agreed climate targets and green transition commitments.
- Identifying mechanisms to enhance social and people-to-people connections.



### Panel Session:

The first panel on ‘**The Middle East Regional Environment from a Gulf and European: Current Drivers, Assessments and Outlooks**’ had input from Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, Helene Le Gal, Managing Director of the Middle East Department of the European External Action Service, and Sheikha Najla AlQassimi, Associate Researcher of the Global Affairs Department of the Dubai Public Policy Research Institute (b’huth).



*Panel Session 1*

This panel focused on the geopolitical landscape and how it is characterized by trends of uncertainty, normalization of force, increased fragmentation and polarization, and an acceleration of global transition. It was emphasized that it is more important than ever to focus on reconstructing the human element in future action plans on post-conflict building and regional cooperation. It was further mentioned that discussions on any potential developments in the Saudi-Iran

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

relationship should be conducted and examined through four pillars: different political systems, ideology, oil policy, and regional security.

The second panel of the GCC-EU Relations workshop was focused on **“Enhancing Sustainable Economic and Energy Partnerships between the GCC and EU in Green Transition Context”** brought into light the pessimism on both sides regarding the prospect of a EU-GCC FTA, raising questions on the bilateral agreements as an alternative.



*Panel Session 2*

The speakers included Léon Delvaux, Principal Advisor, DG Trade from the European Commission, Dr. John Sfakianakis, Chief Economist at the GRC, Haitze Siemers, Senior Advisor, DG Energy at the European Commission, and Faris Al-Sulayman, Founder of Haala Energy, and Non-Resident Scholar at the Middle East Institute.

It was highlighted that more focus should be put on exploring opportunities towards a roadmap for comprehensive trade agreements with more bold, ambitious opportunities. In addition, better and more coordinated decarbonization efforts, structured Sovereign Wealth and EU Investment Funds, and trilateral partnerships for example with Africa should be pursued.

The third and final session, **“Strengthening Social & People-to-People Ties with a Focus on Human Rights- Women’s Empowerment and Youth Engagement”** highlighted the critical importance of a paradigm shift to effectively address the people-to-people exchange.

The speakers of this panel were Felix Fehling, Cooperation Officer, DG for International Partnerships (INTPA), Hanaa AlMoaibed, Associate Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House, and Khalid Al-Huraibi, Founder and Managing Director at Impact Incorporated.



*Panel Session 3*

The discussion highlighted that while journeys are different and the end goals are not necessarily the same, mutual respect and cooperation should still be in place. There was a call to think beyond the EU perception on women and youth needs in the GCC to actually build collaborative initiatives based on first-hand, context-specific notions of these needs. This could come about by marking a systematic and structural shift from previous conversations and strategies to focus on co-designed and co-created projects based on ecosystem and strategic mapping.



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### German - Saudi Roundtable Meeting Visit of MP Thomas Röwekamp, Member of the German Parliament October 27, 2024



On October 27, 2024, the Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted a roundtable discussion at its Riyadh office, coinciding with the visit of MP Thomas Röwekamp, a distinguished Member of the German Parliament. The event, organized in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, aimed to foster dialogue and deepen mutual understanding between Germany and Saudi Arabia regarding their shared commitment to promoting stability in the Middle East.

The session provided a valuable platform for Gulf and German policy experts and researchers to explore potential avenues for collaboration across various sectors, including security, economic development, and cultural exchange. Discussions emphasized the importance of a coordinated approach to address regional challenges such as conflict resolution, economic diversification, and sustainable development. Both sides highlighted their commitment to strengthening diplomatic ties and working together on initiatives that would positively impact regional peace and stability.

The roundtable underscored the strong foundation of Gulf-German relations and identified specific areas where the two nations could leverage their unique strengths to contribute to a more secure and prosperous Middle East.





# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## GCC-Korea Cooperation Seminar



Organized by the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

November 12, 2024

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted the first 'Korea-GCC Cooperation Seminar' in Riyadh, marking a significant step toward strengthening ties between Korea and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This seminar gathered experts, policy officials, and academics from both regions, creating a platform to discuss current dynamics and potential avenues for deeper collaboration in key areas such as energy, security, defense, and economic growth. Discussions highlighted shared priorities, particularly developing a strategic partnership that includes enhanced cooperation in security and defense. With growing geopolitical complexities in the region, delegates acknowledged the importance of forging robust security alliances and exploring defense collaborations that address shared challenges and support regional stability. Energy cooperation also took center stage, with dialogue around renewable energy, nuclear energy, and Korea's advancements in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). The event also provided a space to discuss other regional issues, such as economic diversification and sustainable development goals.



Delegates from the **Gulf Cooperation Council**, the Saudi **Ministry of Economy and Planning**, the **Ministry of Energy**, the **Ministry of Commerce**, the **Ministry of Investment**, the **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, and Gulf states embassies in Riyadh attended the seminar. Representatives from the **Shura Council**, **Riyadh Chamber of Commerce**, **Saudi Nuclear Energy Holding Company**, **Princess Nourah University**, and members of the **Saudi-Korean Parliamentary Friendship Committee** also participated. From the Korean side, delegates from KOTRA Riyadh, the Commercial Section of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, KIND - Korea-KSA Infrastructure Cooperation Center, and KOSME Korean SMEs and Startups Agency attended.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

This multi-stakeholder presence underscored the seminar's role as a bridge between Korea and the Gulf states, fostering open dialogue and encouraging practical solutions to shared challenges. Through these discussions, both sides explored how they might deepen their partnerships to address global and regional issues, emphasizing the importance of economic resilience, energy security, and environmental sustainability as foundational elements of their cooperation.



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**Dr. Abdulaziz Sager emphasized the role of collaborative engagement in deepening mutual understanding and driving actionable policy frameworks, setting the stage for an era of closer cooperation on multiple fronts**

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**H.E. Choi Byung-Hyuk**, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and **Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), opened the session with welcoming remarks that underscored the strategic importance of Korea-GCC relations. Ambassador Choi reaffirmed Korea's commitment to fostering a stable and prosperous relationship with the Gulf states. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager emphasized the role of collaborative engagement in deepening mutual understanding and driving actionable policy frameworks, setting the stage for an era of closer cooperation on multiple fronts. Both sides expressed confidence that the seminar would lay the groundwork for expanded economic, political, and social partnerships between Korea and the GCC, particularly in security, defense, and sustainable development.

### Session 1:

#### **Korea-GCC Relations: Navigating Current Dynamics and Future Opportunities**

**H.E. Dr. Abdel Aziz Hamad Aluwaisheg**, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Negotiations, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

**H.E. Albaraa Al-Iskandarani**, Deputy Minister of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Planning

**Dr. Lee Kwon-Hyung**, Head of the Middle East Team, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)

Chair: **Dr. Ali Al Qarni**, Head of Asia Unit, Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies (IDS)

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

The first session of the Korea-GCC Cooperation Seminar highlighted the Republic of Korea's economic growth trajectory and examined the current structure of GCC-Korea trade relations, where oil comprises a substantial 92% of GCC exports to Korea. Despite an impressive trade volume of \$50 billion, participants recognized that this figure falls short of the vast economic potential between the two regions, pointing to untapped opportunities in non-oil sectors. The session underscored the need for diversification, suggesting that the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Korea and the GCC could be transformative. Such an agreement would not only bolster trade volume but could also promote more sustainable economic growth by fostering cross-border investments and shifting focus from merely trade in goods to creating long-term investment partnerships. By advancing the FTA, both sides could leverage complementary strengths to achieve higher levels of innovation, especially in technology, manufacturing, and services, creating new economic synergies.



*Panel Session 1: Korea-GCC Relations:  
Navigating Current Dynamics and Future  
Opportunities*

The seminar also addressed Korea's emerging role as a "middle power" with significant influence in regional security matters. Recognizing Korea's capabilities in this regard, participants discussed the potential for closer collaboration in humanitarian aid, emergency response, and political coordination to promote stability in the Gulf region. There were calls for strengthening military and defense ties, which could serve the dual purpose of supporting local defense industries and enhancing the collective security framework within the Gulf. This cooperation could involve knowledge exchange, joint training exercises, and potentially co-developing defense technology tailored to regional needs. Participants agreed that sustained political engagement is essential to provide strategic depth and resilience to the Korea-GCC partnership. The session further emphasized people-to-people diplomacy, with recommendations to encourage tourism from Korea to GCC states as a means of building cultural understanding and reinforcing diplomatic relations.

The longstanding and rapidly evolving Korea-GCC relationship was highlighted as having substantial multi-sector strategic potential, particularly as both sides look to align government policies with private-sector initiatives. Korea's experience in technology-driven sectors and its competitive advantages in innovation and manufacturing make it a valuable partner for GCC countries seeking to diversify their economies beyond oil. Within the KSA/UAE-Korea trade corridor, there was a clear consensus on the importance of maximizing economic opportunities, especially in emerging sectors such as clean energy, digital infrastructure, and green technology. The session highlighted that by actively pursuing joint ventures and public-private partnerships, Korea and the GCC could not only enhance economic ties but also contribute to a more sustainable and diversified future for both regions.

# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## Session 2:

### Korean Energy Cooperation

**H.E. Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed AlSulaiman**, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Tech Engineering Consultants, Former Vice President for Renewable Energy at KACARE

**Dr. Kang Han-Ok**, Vice President for SMART Development, Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI)

Chair: **Eng. Abdulaziz Al-Akeel**, Co-Founder of Value-Added Company (Edhafat) and Former Secretary General of Gulf Organizations of Industrial Consulting (GOIC)

The discussion in the second session delved deeply into the promising collaboration between Korea and Saudi Arabia in the field of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), an area poised for strategic impact. Panelists noted that SMRs, due to their compact size, scalability, and flexibility, are uniquely well-suited for environments like Saudi Arabia, where energy demands are rising, and sustainability is a national priority. Unlike traditional large reactors, SMRs can be deployed more quickly, cost-effectively, and with fewer resource requirements, making them an ideal solution for diversifying the Kingdom's energy landscape.

There was a strong consensus that by focusing on joint development and implementation of SMR technology, both Korea and Saudi Arabia could not only meet immediate energy needs but also contribute to long-term energy security in the region. Participants highlighted the potential to leverage Saudi Arabia's vast landscape and resource capacity with Korea's advanced technological expertise to create high-impact SMR projects that could set a new standard for nuclear energy collaboration in the Middle East.



*Panel Session 2: Korean Energy Cooperation*

The session also highlighted the evolution of Korea-Saudi Arabia cooperation. While historically productive, the relationship has often been transactional, focused on specific projects rather than long-term strategic objectives. Moving forward, panelists underscored the importance of elevating this partnership from a transactional to a transformative alliance, focusing on sustainable economic growth as a shared priority.

The panelists acknowledged that by aligning their strategies and investments, both nations could foster an environment conducive to innovation, resilience, and shared growth. They proposed establishing joint research centers and pilot projects to test and refine SMR technology specifically for the environmental conditions of the Middle East. The session concluded with a strong call for Korea and Gulf states to institutionalize their partnership, creating a framework that would facilitate deeper strategic cooperation in SMRs and beyond, ultimately positioning the two nations as leading players in sustainable nuclear energy.



# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## Session 3:

### Korea-GCC Dialogue on Regional Issues

**Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center

**Prof. Dr. In Nam-Sik**, Director-General for Strategic Region Studies, Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA)

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan**, Senior Advisor at the GRC

The third and final session addressed the profound shifts in U.S. policies and the complex geopolitical landscape in Northeast Asia, with a concentrated focus on three major issues: the ongoing instability on the Korean Peninsula, rising regional tensions and threats in the Middle East, and the pressing need for more robust strategic alignment among allied and partner nations. Experts noted that the evolving security dynamics in Northeast Asia have significant implications for both Korea and Gulf nations, with instability on the Korean Peninsula potentially affecting regional stability and security globally. Broader tensions with influential players in Asia also present challenges that require both proactive and collaborative approaches to ensure regional resilience. As the Gulf states continue on their path towards greater diversification and security autonomy, they are increasingly open to strategic partnerships that reinforce their stability and address shared security threats, making Korea a valuable partner.



*Panel Session 3: Korea-GCC Dialogue on Regional Issues*

A key theme in the session was the need to enhance and conduct joint maritime security exercises to address common threats, especially as both Korea and the Gulf nations rely heavily on safe maritime routes for trade and energy transport. By developing joint response protocols, both sides can ensure they are prepared to counteract potential disruptions caused by piracy, territorial disputes, or regional conflicts that could impact maritime security.

Furthermore, participants emphasized the critical role of multilateral forums, such as the United Nations and other international bodies, as avenues for supporting each other's regional goals and interests. Strengthening defense industry collaboration was seen as mutually beneficial, allowing both Korea and Gulf nations to build resilience through shared defense technologies, joint manufacturing initiatives, and co-investment in defense R&D. This collaboration would provide Korea with a foothold in the Gulf's expanding defense market, while Gulf states would benefit from Korea's advanced technology and experience in areas like missile defense, cybersecurity, and military logistics.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

The Gulf countries, driven by a desire for greater independence and a balanced international stance, are moving towards policies that enhance their self-reliance and neutrality. This approach is reflected in their foreign relations strategy, which increasingly seeks balanced partnerships that do not rely solely on traditional Western alliances.

Recognizing that maritime security is a pressing global issue—with Korea also deeply impacted by its maritime vulnerabilities—participants discussed the importance of moving beyond conventional trade arrangements to establish genuine strategic partnerships. This involves setting clear partnership objectives, including security, energy sustainability, and defense industry synergies, and defining mechanisms and channels to achieve these objectives. Participants agreed that establishing regular high-level dialogues, creating a framework for defense cooperation, and instituting working groups focused on specific security and defense areas would be instrumental in advancing Korea-Gulf cooperation, ultimately contributing to greater stability and prosperity in both regions.

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**participants discussed the importance of moving beyond conventional trade arrangements to establish genuine strategic partnerships**

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### Key Outcomes and Policy Recommendations

#### Establishing a Strategic Framework Beyond Traditional Trade:

- This seminar underscored the importance of moving beyond traditional, transactional trade relations between Korea and the GCC, focusing instead on forming strategic partnerships with long-term impact. To achieve this, it was recommended to clearly define what constitutes a “strategic partnership” between these regions.
- Establishing mechanisms and channels—such as dedicated liaison offices, regular policy dialogues, and bilateral councils—was highlighted as essential to ensure effective and sustained cooperation. By articulating shared objectives, Korea and the GCC can develop more cohesive policies that align their goals in areas like security, technology, and sustainable development.



# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## Initiating Early Cooperation Ahead of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- While the activation of a Korea-GCC FTA will be significant, participants noted that there is a strong foundation for initiating cooperation immediately, rather than waiting for formal ratification. It is encouraged to act now, leveraging existing platforms and agreements to launch collaborative projects, share technology, and engage in joint research.
- This proactive approach would allow both regions to build momentum, foster trust, and demonstrate the tangible benefits of their partnership, thereby smoothing the path for a more comprehensive FTA when it comes into effect.

## Facilitating Informal Expert Group Visits and Task-Oriented Meetings

- A key recommendation was the creation of informal expert groups focused on priority areas such as energy, security, and advanced technology.
- These groups would comprise specialists and experts from Korea and the GCC, forming task groups to address specific challenges and opportunities. Informal, frequent exchanges between these experts—whether through visits, workshops, or virtual meetings—could help both regions identify mutual goals and develop actionable insights without the formality of state-level negotiations. This flexible approach would facilitate agile responses to emerging issues and promote innovative problem-solving.

## Enhancing Engagement with the Private Sector

- Both Korean and GCC participants emphasized the critical role of the private sector in driving economic growth and innovation.
- There was broad consensus on the need for structured engagement with private enterprises from both regions. It was recommended that future cooperation frameworks incorporate mechanisms for private-sector involvement, including public-private partnerships, investment incentives, and dedicated business councils. By fostering stronger ties between Korean and GCC businesses, the two regions can accelerate knowledge transfer, leverage capital and expertise, and support entrepreneurship and job creation across diverse sectors.

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**It is encouraged to act now, leveraging existing platforms and agreements to launch collaborative projects, share technology, and engage in joint research**

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# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## Saudi-Nordic Relations Webinar

November 13, 2024



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted a webinar titled “Saudi-Nordic Relations” on November 13, 2024. The panel of speakers included Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center; Prof. Saleh AlKhathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center; Amb. Jakob Hallgren, Ambassador and Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI); Prof. Jakub Godzimirski, Research Professor at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI); Dr. John Sfakianakis, Director of Economic Research & Chief Economist at the Gulf Research Center; and Mr. Mohammed Hadi, Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA). Dr. Christian

Koch, the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels Executive Manager and Director of Research at the Gulf Research Center, moderated the webinar.

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**The webinar focused on Saudi-Nordic relations, exploring developments and opportunities for collaboration**

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## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

The webinar focused on Saudi-Nordic relations, exploring developments and opportunities for collaboration. The discussion was part of a broader research program on GCC-NB8 relations. The meeting highlighted the importance of addressing regional conflicts and fostering sustainable economic and cultural partnerships. Participants expressed interest in further dialogue and collaboration to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.

### **Political and Security Dimensions:**

The webinar covered the current approach and efforts by the GCC states, particularly Saudi Arabia, in emphasizing the mediation of differences through negotiations, diplomacy, and dialogue, which has come to the forefront through the GCC Vision for Regional Security and the recent Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. Of the five Nordic countries, three have recognized the State of Palestine, including Iceland, the first Nordic country to recognize Palestine in 2011, followed by Sweden in 2014, and, most recently, Norway in 2024. The importance of Norway's position on Palestine was highlighted in the session, with the speakers arguing that the other Nordic countries should consider taking such a step as well. The speakers highlighted that finding peaceful solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East is at the top of Norway's political agenda and includes a high level of public support.

In terms of security, the speakers highlighted the importance of increasing efforts in strengthening maritime security and countering terrorism and extremism, given the expected rise following the instability in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. Denmark currently plays a significant role in maritime

security in the region. The speakers also emphasized that Sweden and Finland both became members of NATO last year, leading to new and interesting avenues for collaboration with Saudi Arabia, especially in shared challenges such as terrorism and cybersecurity. There are also opportunities to ensure and strengthen defense collaboration.

### **Economic and Energy Relations:**

While economic relations between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries exist, the speakers concurred that there is untapped potential for substantial growth. Currently, there is limited trade between the two sides, but the technology and innovation sectors present promising opportunities. The Nordic sovereign wealth funds could play a pivotal role in promoting economic growth in Saudi Arabia by initiating investments in the Kingdom, especially given the strategic Vision 2030 program that aims to diversify the economy. The speakers delved into investment strategies and the potential for joint funds. Finland, in particular, identified Saudi Arabia as the most important export destination for Finnish products in the Gulf region.

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**the speakers highlighted the importance of increasing efforts in strengthening maritime security and countering terrorism and extremism**

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## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

One issue discussed was that while there is an investment flow going from the Nordic countries into Saudi Arabia, there is not so much going the other way, (from Saudi Arabia to the Nordic countries). In terms of trade, in 2023, the outflow was close to one-sixth of what the Nordic countries exported to the Kingdom. As a result, and given the many projects being conducted in Saudi Arabia as part of Vision 2030, there exists much room for further enhancing economic ties related to the theme of trade and development. The innovation sector was identified as one area to focus on.

Energy also plays a crucial role in the relationship with collaboration in renewable energy and decarbonization efforts underlined. The speakers highlighted that recent years have witnessed the signing of many cooperation agreements and MoUs between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries on cooperation in the energy sector, seeking to increase cooperation in areas such as renewable energy, development of stable electricity systems, and various technologies and solutions to mitigate climate change such as carbon capture and sequestration.

### **Social and Cultural Aspects:**

One common issue identified in the session was the difference in public perception of the Gulf countries in the Nordic states and vice versa, as well as the negative perception of the Nordic population and media in terms of its relationships with countries beyond the West in general. This has had implications for the development of cooperation between the two regions. In response, the webinar addressed the importance of fostering people-to-people contact and educational ties as one effort to improve mutual perceptions. Sweden was cited as an example of educational cooperation through its Nord Plus program. Promoting tourism between the regions was also mentioned, given that there is a focus on

both luxury and eco-tourism, with a projection of 800 million US dollars in revenue in the tourism sector for the GCC in 2024.

### **Key recommendations of the webinar included:**

- All Gulf speakers emphasized the need for Denmark and Finland to follow through on the recognition of Palestine as an independent state in the UN system. This recognition is seen as a crucial step towards promoting peace and stability in the region.
- Strengthening the role of the Nordic countries in promoting safer maritime security in the Red Sea and Gulf waters, given that freedom of navigation is crucial for both sides.
- Exploring ways to further enhance cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries in combating terrorism and extremism. Additional efforts should also be made to increase collaboration on the humanitarian side.
- Increasing dialogue and communication to manage the differences in perceptions between the two sides. Creating a dedicated research institution or research program on the relationship was suggested to expand networks and enhance Saudi-Nordic relations.
- Saudi Arabia should be added to the list of countries that can receive investments from the Nordic sovereign wealth funds to increase economic relations.
- One of the key steps towards enhancing economic relations is the establishment of a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the GCC. This agreement could significantly boost economic relations between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries, providing a structured framework for trade and investment.

## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### GCC-MIKTA Roundtable:

### Strengthening Multilateralism in the Face of Global Challenges: A MIKTA Perspective

November 14, 2024



The Gulf Research Center (GRC), in coordination with the Embassy of Mexico to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is the coordinator of MIKTA this year, organized a roundtable meeting on November 14, 2024, that brought together ambassadors from MIKTA countries (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Türkiye, and Australia) to discuss their shared commitment to multilateralism in light of today's complex global challenges.

As an alliance of influential middle powers from diverse regions, MIKTA represents a unique partnership with the potential to drive constructive change in international relations. The meeting marked the first meeting between the GCC and MIKTA as two blocs, emphasizing the increasing relevance of middle-power coalitions in mediating global issues, promoting economic stability, and addressing security concerns.



## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

### A Unique Middle-Power Alliance

MIKTA's composition is unique in its cross-continental span, with each country holding significant economic weight within its respective region. Despite their geographical and cultural diversity, MIKTA members share a commitment to stability, development, and good governance, operating within different regional contexts that offer a broad perspective on global challenges. The ambassadors highlighted that MIKTA's diversity is an asset, enabling it to serve as a bridge between different parts of the world and to foster inclusive, multipolar governance. Through collaborative approaches, MIKTA can provide incentives for mediation processes, thus positioning itself as a stabilizing force in international affairs.

This meeting highlights how the world is navigating an era of unprecedented complexity in international relations, marked by ongoing conflicts and a shift toward a more multipolar, unpredictable global order. In this context, the MIKTA countries—Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Türkiye, and Australia—have recognized the pressing need for stronger multilateral frameworks to address these challenges. With regional stability increasingly impacted by global issues, ambassadors discussed how MIKTA has emerged as a coalition advocating for a multilateral approach as the optimal solution. The shared belief among MIKTA countries is that coordinated international efforts, rather than isolated national approaches, will be essential to tackling issues of security, development, and governance that now transcend borders.



By fostering closer regional ties, MIKTA intends to build a foundation that not only supports sustainable growth but also strengthens resilience against global economic and environmental shocks. This collaborative approach further underscores MIKTA and GCC openness to exploring opportunities for collaboration, including academic and policy research, where the two blocs can work together on shared goals.

It was discussed that in the past four years, the multilateral system has been significantly challenged by regional and trade security disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, introduced new vulnerabilities to global supply chains and trade routes, while security threats—such as Houthi attacks on maritime routes—have brought severe repercussions to regional trade and food security.

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These crises have underscored the need for resilient, rules-based systems that can better withstand future shocks. While bilateral relations have strengthened in response to these challenges, the participants in the meeting echoed the need for “mini-lateral” partnerships, where smaller focused groups can address targeted issues within the larger multilateral system. Through such partnerships, plural-lateral frameworks can



# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

provide a pragmatic response to complex challenges, ensuring that international systems are adaptable, efficient, and better equipped to protect global trade and food security.



As a collection of countries with distinct cultural and economic backgrounds, MIKTA exemplifies the potential of diverse nations to work together toward a shared goal of global peace and sustainability. Türkiye in particular, highlighted food security as a priority issue during its 2022 chairmanship of MIKTA, recognizing that this issue directly impacts global stability and requires immediate, collaborative action. The Turkish delegation emphasized MIKTA's potential as a “driving force” for effective global governance in today's multipolar world. By actively engaging in issues like food security, MIKTA showcases its commitment to constructive leadership, encouraging global cooperation for a more habitable, peaceful world.

## Outcomes and Recommendations

The seminar identified several key areas for potential GCC-MIKTA collaboration:

- **Knowledge sharing:** Establish platforms for sharing expertise on extremism, counterterrorism, and sustainable development, areas where both blocs face shared challenges.
- **Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements:** Explore opportunities for FTAs between GCC and individual MIKTA countries to strengthen economic ties.
- **Development Initiatives:** Joint training programs and academic partnerships focused on development cooperation and policy research can deepen connections and improve mutual understanding.
- **“Mini-lateral” approaches:** Small-scale partnerships can address specific challenges, such as food security and maritime safety, within a broader multilateral framework.
- **Rules-based multilateral systems:** Both GCC and MIKTA members reaffirmed their commitment to a rules-based international order, which can help build resilience in trade and security.



# GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities

## Saudi-European Roundtable

December 10, 2024



On December 10, 2024, the Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted a roundtable in Riyadh on the occasion of the visit of Prof. Dr. Daniela Schwarzer, Member of the Executive Board of the Bertelsmann Foundation, and Christian Hanelt, Senior Expert on Middle East from the foundation's Europe's Future Program. The discussions focused on Gulf-Europe relations, addressing key challenges posed by the current regional escalations and exploring Europe's role in promoting stability and security in the Gulf region.

The event was attended by HE Mr. Christophe Farnaud, Ambassador of the European Union to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and HE Mr. Michael Kindsgrab, Ambassador of Germany to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Delegates from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gulf Cooperation Council, the German-Saudi Arabian Liaison Office for Economic Affairs (GESALO), and leading Saudi experts on European affairs also participated in the discussions. The roundtable provided a platform to assess the challenges shaping European security and economic policies, particularly in the context of the EU's new leadership, the incoming U.S. administration, the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, and the evolving global dynamics involving China and the Middle East.

The roundtable discussion covered how the European Union finds itself at a crossroads, navigating complex internal and external dynamics amidst global uncertainty. Internally, a new structure of informal coordination is emerging, although a formal transfer of competence remains elusive. Neither France nor Germany is willing to act unilaterally on major issues, preferring to consult with other EU member states. Externally, Europe faces a shifting geopolitical landscape as the U.S. gradually withdraws from certain roles, compounded by the unpredictability of U.S. policy under figures like Donald Trump. Concerns over U.S. tariffs, escalating tensions with China, and a potential push toward protectionism further strain Europe's economic growth, which is already under pressure.

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**European Union finds itself at a crossroads, navigating complex internal and external dynamics amidst global uncertainty**

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## GRC Foreign Relation Program Activities



In the Gulf and Middle East, the EU grapples with a gap between its ambitions and its capacity to act. Collective stances on conflicts like Syria and Gaza remain fragmented, with internal debates—such as Germany’s position on Palestine—highlighting divisions. While the EU recognizes the strategic importance of closer Gulf relations, building meaningful partnerships is seen as a long-term process, challenged by economic nationalism and competing interests, particularly in the Mediterranean and North African regions. The EU acknowledges that it cannot engage with its southern neighbors solely through a lens of migration and negativity.

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**The EU acknowledges that it cannot engage with its southern neighbors solely through a lens of migration and negativity**

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**The EU also faces critical questions about its engagement with Russia, requiring consensus on strategic goals post-ceasefire, as well as its approach to Israel-Palestine relations**

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On the broader political stage, Europe seeks a clearer strategy regarding regional security, especially concerning Saudi Arabia’s role in conflicts like Syria and Gaza. While economic and energy cooperation with the Gulf continues to grow, there is a pressing need for a unified political agenda to support these ties. The EU also faces critical questions about its engagement with Russia, requiring consensus on strategic goals post-ceasefire, as well as its approach to Israel-Palestine relations, where collective action is urgently needed. Ultimately, Europe’s ability to address these challenges hinges on strong leadership and member states’ willingness to reconcile differences and pursue a coherent strategy in both regional and global contexts.

# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

**Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)**





# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)



**SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR:**  
Nasra M. Shah



**MANAGING DIRECTOR:**  
Imco Brouwer

## GLMM Mission

The Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme is an international independent, non-partisan, non-profit programme established in 2010. It is 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 labor markets, engaging with and respecting the viewpoints of all stakeholders. Access the GLMM website [here](#).

## The Year 2024 in a Nutshell

Thanks to fundamental financial and organizational support from the GRC and building upon over 13 years of experience, GLMM has continued its activities in 2024. It has dramatically increased activities on



**SENIOR FELLOW:**  
Françoise De Bel-Air

and in Saudi Arabia from the GRC's Riyadh office, as well as developed and implemented two major research projects with Saudi, GCC, and international experts; organized multiple workshops; continued its webinar series; increased its data and publication output; and further expanded its networks and strategic cooperation with key partners in Saudi Arabia, the GCC, Asian and African countries of origin of migrant workers, and elsewhere.

# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

## GLMM Accomplishments in 2024

- Developed a three phase/year research project on “Vision 2030 and the Socio-Economic Reform Process: The Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia” and implemented its first phase/year
- Developed a three phase/year research project on “Highly Skilled Migration to the Gulf States: How Do GCC Countries Fare in the Global Competition for Talent?” in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) – Regional Program for the Gulf (RPG) and implemented its first phase/year
- Organized a highly successful workshop “Migration to the Gulf: Possible Scenarios for the Future A View from the GCC and from Countries of Origin,” at the 14th GRM, Cambridge, 9-11 July 2024
- Organized two workshops at the GRC Riyadh office on 7 May 2024 and 1-2 December 2024
- Welcomed a new non-resident fellow: Dr. Mehmet Soytaş (National Labour Observatory (NLO), Riyadh)
- Welcomed a new Advisory Board Member: Dr. Anna Triandafilydou (Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) on Migration and Integration at Toronto Metropolitan University)
- Continued to publish factsheets, policy briefs, and explanatory notes
- Prepared 14 research reports and 14 policy briefs from its research projects, due in January 2025
- Prepared a special Issue of the Asian Pacific Migration Journal (APMJ), due in March 2025
- Prepared a volume from its GRM 2024 workshop to be published in South-South Migration, Springer, due in 2025
- Continued to gather, analyze, and republish GCC official documents and data in their respective databases
- Continued its webinar series
- Reinforced strategic cooperation with existing partners and established cooperation with new partners in Saudi Arabia, the GCC, in Asian and African countries of origin of migrant workers and elsewhere
- Reinforced its networks of GCC data producers, GCC data users, and GCC and global researchers
- Participated in advisory boards, workshops, and seminars of other organizations

## Advisory Board

- On June 10, 2024 the GLMM international advisory board met to discuss GLMM activities of 2023-2024 and its plans for 2024-2025. The board is comprised of:
- Prof. Mouawiya Al Awad, Professor at Zayed University/Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), Dubai
- Prof. Lubna Al Kazi, Professor at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kuwait University, Kuwait City

# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

- Dr. Fahad Al Sharif, Senior Researcher at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), Riyadh
- Dr. Marla Asis, Director of the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC)/Editor of the Asian Pacific Migration Journal (APMJ), Manila
- Prof. Ibrahim Awad, Director of the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS), Cairo
- Dr. Khalil Bohazza, Director of the Labour Affairs GCC Executive Bureau, Manama
- Dr. Ryszard Cholewinski, Senior Migration Specialist at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), Beirut
- Dr. Jean-Christophe Dumont, Head of the International Migration Division in the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Development (OECD), Paris
- Prof. Ray Jureidini, Former Professor at the Hamid Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Doha
- Dr. Nader Kabbani, Director of Research at the Middle East Council for Global Affairs (MECGA), Doha;
- Prof. Gerasimos Tsourapas, Professor of International Relations, University of Glasgow.
- In November 2024, it welcomed a new member: Prof. Anna Triandafillydou, Canada Excellence Research Chair on Migration and Integration at Toronto Metropolitan University.

For more information on the advisory board members click [here](#).

## Non-Resident Fellows and Non-Resident Interns

In 2024, GLMM welcomed a new non-resident fellow, Dr. Mehmet Soytaş.

### Fellows

- Dr. Magdalena Karolak, Associate Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University, Dubai, February 2023-present
- Dr. Georges Naufal, Associate Research Scientist at the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University, a visiting Scientist at the Center for Health Data Science and Analytics at Houston Methodist Research Institute, formerly American University of Sharjah, March 2023-present
- Dr. Mehmet Soytaş, Senior Advisor, National Labour Organization, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, December 2024 - present

### Interns

- Sharique Umar, graduate student, Gulf Studies Center, Qatar University, April 2023-present
- Aashish Karn, graduate student at Lancaster University, October 2023-present

For more information on the Non-Resident Fellows and Interns click [here](#).

## Publications

In 2024, GLMM continued to publish factsheets, policy briefs, and explanatory notes.

### Factsheets

[Towards a Knowledge-Based Labour Market in Saudi Arabia?](#)

Factsheet No. 10, April 2024, by Françoise De Bel-Air

# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

## [Sub-Saharan African Migrants in the Gulf States](#)

Factsheet No. 11, June 2024, by Françoise De Bel-Air

## [Ageing in the Gulf States](#)

Factsheet No. 10, April 2024, by Françoise De Bel-Air

## [Second and Third Generation Foreign Residents Born in Kuwait](#)

Factsheet No. 9, January 2024, by Françoise De Bel-Air

For all Factsheets, access the web-page [here](#).

## Policy Briefs

## [GCC Remittance Flows: Resiliency During Rough Seas](#)

Type: Policy Brief - GLMM - EN - No. 9/2024  
by Georges Naufal

## [Long-Term Residence: GCC Countries Making a Shift Toward Inclusive Social Policies](#)

Type: Policy Brief - GLMM - EN - No. 8/2024  
by Magdalena Karolak

## [Interregional Consultative Migration Dialogues and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in the GCC-Asia Migration Corridor](#)

Type: Policy Brief - GLMM - EN - No. 7/2024  
By Froilan Malit

For all Policy Briefs, access the web-page [here](#).

## Explanatory Notes

## [The Regulation of Platform Work and Labour Hire Companies for Migrant Workers in the Gulf Council Cooperation Countries – a New Challenge or an Old Problem?](#)

Type: Explanatory Note - GLMM - EN - No. 4 / 2024

by Sophia Kagan and Ryszard Cholewinski

## [What is the Nature of the Employment Challenge in the GCC Countries?](#)

Type: Explanatory Note - GLMM - EN - No. 3 / 2024

by Wasseem Mina

## [Reforms without Rights: The GCC States' Blinkered View of Labour Reforms](#)

Type: Explanatory Note - GLMM - EN - No. 2 / 2024

by Rima Kalush and Vani Saraswathi

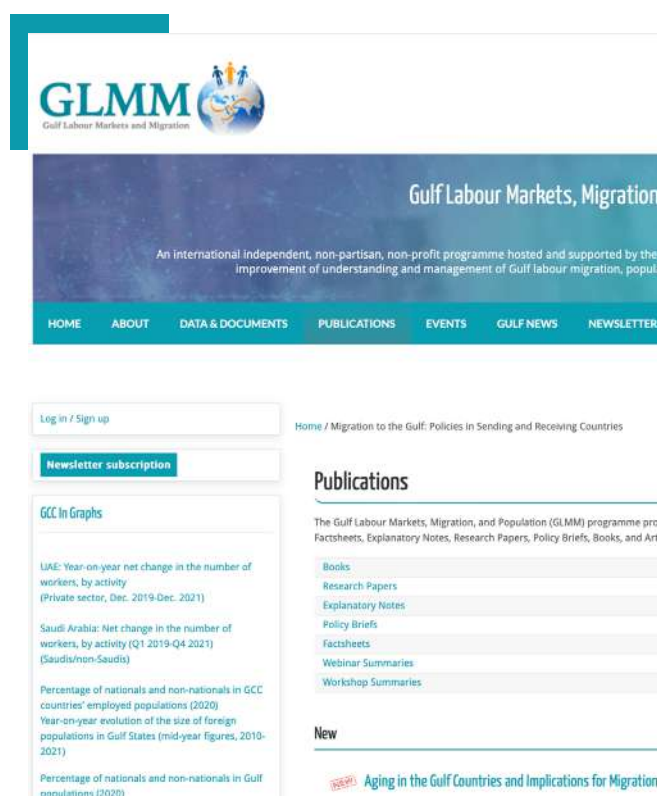
## [Numbers Increasing, Dependency Decreasing: The GCC Changing Labor Immigration Emphasis](#)

Type: Explanatory Note - GLMM - EN - No. 1/2024

by Onn Winckler

For all explanatory notes, access the web-page [here](#).

Click [here](#) for all GLMM publications.





# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)



## Research Reports

In July 2024, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) published a regional report and twelve country reports (in English and Arabic) as the result of a joint project of the ILO/Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) and the Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) programme assessing the labour migration statistics for the 6 GCC and 6 other Arab Mashreq countries. Access the full report [here](#).

The regional and country reports were drafted by a core team of experts of the GLMM under the auspices of the Gulf Research Centre Foundation (GCRF) in Geneva. The core team comprised: Philippe Fargues, former Robert Schuman Chair and Founding Director of the

Migration Policy Centre (MPC), European University Institute (EUI), Florence, and Scientific Director, GLMM; Nasra M. Shah, Professor of Migration and Development, Graduate Institute of Development Studies, Lahore School of Economics, and Scientific Director, GLMM; Françoise De Bel-Air, Researcher and Consultant, Senior Fellow, GLMM; and Imco Brouwer, Managing Director, GLMM. The report was prepared under the overall coordination of Ryszard Cholewinski, Senior Migration Specialist and Nader Keyrouz, former Regional Labour Statistician, ILO ROAS.



GLMM also published its activities report covering the period January 2023 - July 2024. Access the report [here](#).

## Policy Research Projects



### **Vision 2030 and the Socio-Economic Reform Process: The Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia**

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 gathers 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 the wider public. The first meetings of the project took place in Riyadh on 20 and 21 February 2024.



**On 7 May at the GRC's Riyadh office, GLMM launched the project with the participation of:**

- Mr. Badr Alsharif (economic policy expert) and Dr. Mehmet Soytas (labour economist) who are part of the eight Saudi, Saudi-based, and international experts conducting the research for the project
- Saudi Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD)
- National Labor Observatory (NLO)
- Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC)
- King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC)
- UN organizations: IOM, UNHRC, UNICEF, UNODC

The Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), and the International Migration Division in the Direction for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) expressed interest in the project but were unable to attend the meeting.

A virtual meeting with the authors was held on 29 October.

The final meeting of the first phase/year was held on 1-2 December – for details see below.

# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

## Objectives of the project:

- Enhance understanding of the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics at all skill levels, and population policies and their impact on Saudi Arabia.
- Provide sound background information on the above, and policy advice for Saudi policymakers and economic actors, within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030.
- Foster a network of key Saudi experts, academics, and institutions, as well as international experts on the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics, and population policies and their impact.
- Create the conditions for continued research on the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics, and population policies and their impact on Saudi Arabia.



## Process

A foundational element of the project is the active involvement of experts from Saudi institutions, international organizations, academia, and think tanks who exchange

knowledge and views on key issues relating to the future of labor markets and migration within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030 in an informal setting operating under the Chatham House Rules. These experts have been and will continue to be fundamental in identifying the most important topics to be researched, reviewing, and discussing draft papers, participating in public events and webinars, and using the acquired knowledge in the definition and implementation of their policies and further research.

## Focus of the project

- Saudi citizens' socio-economic characteristics and their possible future trends
- Future labour needs and migration in and to Saudi Arabia
- Challenges and opportunities created by the reforms
- Transversal issue: Data for evidence-based policy making and enhanced knowledge

## Phases of the project

The project is divided into 3 phases of approximately 10-12 months:

- Focus on highly skilled labour
- Focus on Saudi citizens
- Global changes in the Saudi labour market

Activities and output: Statistical data; Laws, bilateral agreements, and policy documents; Research papers; Policy briefs; Factsheets; Workshop; Outreach meeting for selected stakeholders; Outreach webinar for the wider public.



# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)



In May, GLMM agreed on a joint project with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) entitled “Highly Skilled Migration to the Gulf States: How Do GCC Countries Fare in the Global Competition for Talent?” The project aims to provide an in-depth analysis of highly skilled migration trends and dynamics in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. It examines policies, migration dynamics, and outcomes related to the attraction, recruitment and retention of highly skilled talent from Arab (Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia) and Asian (India, Pakistan, the Philippines) countries of origin to three GCC states: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Activities and output: Statistical data; Laws, bilateral agreements, and policy documents; Research papers; Policy briefs; Factsheets; Workshop; Outreach meeting for selected stakeholders; Outreach webinar for the wider public.



The project will produce a total of eight Research Reports and eight corresponding Policy Briefs. The first drafts were submitted at the end of September. Revised (final) drafts were submitted at the end of October.

A virtual meeting with all authors was held on October 22.

The final meeting of the first phase/year was held on 1-2 December – for details see below.

## Research Project Results Meeting

What is the future of labour and migration in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states? How can the region better attract and retain foreign talents to meet their labour force needs, especially within the context of their various economic transformation agendas? These are the questions that were discussed during an expert meeting held at the Gulf Research Center in Riyadh on December 1 and 2, 2024. The two-day event was organized as part of the Gulf Labour Markets, Migration and Population Programme (GLMM) of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation (KAS) Regional Programme for Gulf States. The event gathered local and foreign academics, experts, and stakeholders from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, as well as from major migrant sending countries: India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Egypt and international organizations.

In this meeting 6 research reports and 6 policy briefs of the “Vision 2030 and the Socio-Economic Reform Process: The Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia” were presented and discussed as well as 8 research reports and 8 policy briefs of the “Highly Skilled Migration to the Gulf States: How Do GCC Countries Fare in the Global Competition for Talent?”



# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

## Webinars

In 2024, GLMM launched three webinars. The first webinar was on January 17, 2024 and was entitled: “Gulf-Born, Second and Third Generation Foreign Residents: A Resource for Gulf States.”



### The webinar featured six distinguished experts:

- Nasra M. Shah, Scientific Director of GLMM, Professor of Migration and Development, Lahore School of Economics, Pakistan
- Neha Vora, Professor of Anthropology, American University of Sharjah, UAE
- Gennaro Errichiello, SOAS University of London, UK
- Musaab Alkhatib, Research Associate at the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute, Qatar University, Qatar
- Areej Jamal, University College London, Social Research Institute, UK
- Nadeen Dakkak, Lecturer in World and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Exeter, UK

### Among other things, the speakers addressed three key questions:

- What is the socio-demographic and educational profile of Gulf-born, second and third generation foreign residents?
- What are their specific skills and competencies?
- How could existing policies be adapted in order to better channel the potential of these residents to Gulf states' socio-economic development processes?

The second webinar was organized by GLMM and the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS)/Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) and was entitled “Emerging Trends in Sub-Saharan African Migration to the GCC” on June 12, 2024.



Speakers of the webinar included: Mr. Lawrence Egulu - Commissioner for Employment Services, Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development of the Republic of Uganda; Mrs. Aida Awel - Chief Technical Adviser, Labour Migration at International Labour Organisation (ILO), Addis Ababa; Mr. Paul Odhiambo - Independent Policy Analyst, Nairobi; Prof. Lahra Smith - Associate Professor and Director, African Studies Program, Georgetown University; Dr. Kristian Alexander - Senior Fellow at the Rabdan Security & Defense Institute (RSDI), Abu Dhabi; and Dr. Françoise De Bel-Air - Senior Fellow, GLMM.

# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

The third webinar was organized by GLMM and the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies (CGAPS) and was titled “Aging in the Gulf Countries and Implications for Migration to the Region,” on December 9, 2024.



This webinar discussed the current and possible future implications of aging in the Gulf states on migrants and migration dynamics and policies. It also examined how healthcare, labour and migration policies adjusted to socio-demographic changes, including the expansion of elderly, impact non-working resident foreign populations.

The webinar featured Jessica T. Maluch, Director of Strategy, Research, and Impact at the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research in Ras al Khaimah, UAE; Idil Akinci, Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Edinburgh; Nasra M. Shah, Professor of Migration and Development at the Lahore School of Economics, Pakistan and the Scientific Director of GLMM; and Luca Maria Pesando, Associate Professor of Social Research and Public Policy at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYU-AD), as speakers for the session. Imco Brouwer, Managing Director of the GLMM Programme at the Gulf Research Center Foundation, moderated the webinar.

For more details on GLMM webinars visit the website [here](#).

## Gulf Research Meeting 2024 Workshop

Entitled “Possible Scenarios for the Future: A View from the GCC and from Countries of Origin,” GLMM organized a successful workshop in the framework of the 14th Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) in Cambridge from July 9-11, 2024, marking the 11th time that GLMM has done so. A total of 16 papers were presented and discussed.

Lubna Alkazi: Challenges to Kuwaiti Women’s Integration in the Private Sector; Maria Dolores Picot: Transformative Labour Reforms in Qatar: An In-Depth Examination of Their Efficacy and Implications for Future Patterns in Labour Migration; Nejla Ben Mimoun: Beyond Oil: GCC Migration Trends in the Era of High-Skilled Labor and Technological Revolution; Gokuladas V K: Impact of Educational Needs of the Wards of the Expatriate Community on Migration Decisions: An Empirical Study on the Perceptions of Expatriate Skilled Workers in the Sultanate of Oman; Bilesha Weeraratne: Changes in UAE Visa Regulations and the Dynamics in Informal Networks in Migration: Evidence from Sri Lanka; Sabnam Sarmin Luna and Md Mizanur Rahman: Feminized Migration in the GCC States: The Future of Asian Female Labour Migration to the Gulf; Michael Ewers and Bethany Shockley: Renegotiating the Expatriate Bargain: New Forms of Migrant Bargaining, Belonging, and Inequality with Policy Reform in the UAE; Kailash Das: Dynamics of Migrants from India to GCC countries; Hessam Habibi Doroh and Javad Heyran Nia: Iranian Baluch Migration to the Gulf Deciphering the Baluch Mindset on Migration to the GCC; Noosha Uddin: Decentralized Migration Governance in Migrant-Sending States: Examining Incentives for Advocacy, Refusal, and Reluctance in the Bangladesh-

# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

Qatar Corridor; Anu Abraham: Determinants of the Decision to Migrate and Destination Choice of Labor Migrants from South Asia to the GCC; Nasra M. Shah and Memoona Qazi: Future of Labor Migration from Pakistan to the Gulf Countries: An Overview; Manal Nadeem and Amaan Siddiqui: Deconstructing Dichotomies: Exploring Contemporary South Asian Emigration to the UAE Beyond Economics; Mayada Medhat: Future Migration Trends from Egypt to the Newly Secularized Saudi Arabia; Burak Yalim: Evolving Patterns of Turkish Migration to the UAE: Dynamics, Policies, and Future Prospects; Froilan Malit: Multilateral Migration Institutions in the Global South: Institutionalization, Socialization, and Diffusion Processes in the Asia-Gulf Corridor.

For more [information](#):



## Data and Documents Databases

In 2024, GLMM gathered, analyzed, and republished official legal GCC documents and approximately 100 tables in the respective public databases.

Legal documents (for all GCC countries) can be accessed [here](#).

## Statistics

Access GCC Statistics [here](#).

Access Bahrain Statistics [here](#).

Access Kuwait Statistics [here](#).

Access Oman Statistics [here](#).

Access Qatar Statistics [here](#).

Access Saudi Arabia Statistics [here](#).

Access UAE Statistics [here](#).

GLMM also constructs unique GCC regional tables based exclusively on the official country data. Access the regional tables [here](#).





# Gulf Labour Markets and Migration Programme (GLMM)

## GLMM Africa

On October 1-2 GLMM's Imco Brouwer participated in a meeting in Addis Ababa organised by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Africa Migration Policy Center (FES-AMPC) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on the occasion of the presentation of a report by Free the Slaves entitled "From Illegal Migration to Human Trafficking: Dangerous Journeys across the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula."

## GLMM Pakistan - (Gulf -) Canada

For the month of October Prof. Nasra Shah was a Visiting Professor at the Toronto Metropolitan University within the framework of The Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration (CERC Migration) led by Prof. Anna Triandafillydou.

During her visit, Nasra focused on analyzing the socio-demographic and economic profile of this group based on secondary data.

Nasra also collected some primary data by conducting focus group discussions with selected professionals and their families. The initial work will form the basis of a larger study looking at transnational linkages of Pakistani migrants in Canada, their sense of identity and belonging to the host country, and their future plans. She also explored whether Pakistani migrants migrated first to the Gulf then subsequently further migrated to Canada and why.

## Participations

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.





# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

Environmental Security and Sustainability  
Research Program



# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program



**Director of Program:**  
Dr. Mohamad  
Abdelraouf

The GRC Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program looks at environmental issues in the Gulf region and seeks to document information about specific concerns related to the area to increase awareness about key environmental issues:

- Trends in the state of the environment and natural resources in the Gulf and their natural, social, and economic drivers
- Major environment and sustainability initiatives
- Environmental threats such as water, desertification as well as climate change, and Construction and Demolition (C&D) debris

More information about the Environmental Security and Sustainability Program can be found on the [GRC website](#).

## Activities in 2024

### GRC Attendance at COP16 in Riyadh

The Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) received the provisional accreditation from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) based on its active role in research and activities in the field of environment and combating desertification and land degradation. GRCF is one of the very

few organizations working in the Gulf that received the UNCCD accreditation. The GRC delegation to COP16 included: Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, the founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability research Program Director, and Ms. Yara Almaged, Research Intern, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program.

### GRC stand at COP16

The Gulf Research Center had a desk and banner within the stand of The Cooperative Society of Moringa and Desert Plants, in the Blue Zone area where GRC staff met and explained the GRC's mission, activities and publications to visitors especially in the environment field.



### GRC organized three side events during COP16:

**The first side event:** The Role of CSOs in Combating Desertification. The event took place on 11 December 2024 at 2pm in the COP16 Blue Zone, Inspired by Faith pavilion. The event was attended by around 25 people from various civil society organizations and government representatives. Participants discussed the role of civil society, think tanks,

# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

youth, women, indigenous people, and civil society organizations (CSOs) in combating desertification, droughts and land degradation. Also discussed was the role of citizen science in collecting data from remote areas that governments and international organizations cannot reach. In addition, the side event presented an initiative by GAIIA Foundation for tree planting and green certification to fight climate change and desertification.



**The second side event:** The Economic Use of Desert Areas in Fighting Climate Change in Arab Countries. The event took place on 11 December 2024 at 6 pm in the COP16 Blue Zone, Room

MET-06. Opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice Chairman of the Gulf Research Center on behalf of Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, the founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center. Dr. Sager emphasized the urgency of addressing desertification and land degradation in Saudi Arabia and the GCC, where extreme climatic conditions and rapid socio-economic changes have intensified these challenges. He underlined the importance of initiatives like the Saudi Green Initiative—aiming to plant 400 million trees by 2030—and the Green Middle East Initiative, which fosters regional collaboration similar to the European Green Deal. He also stressed the role of international cooperation, nature-based solutions, and the active involvement of civil society, research institutions, and the private sector in combating desertification. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 underscores the nation's commitment to environmental sustainability, making COP16 a milestone for global partnerships and actionable solutions to climate change.

The second opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Quentin Blommaert, of the Hydrogen/Decarbonization Diplomacy Office (H2-diplo) of GIZ in Riyadh. Emphasis was placed on the fact that Saudi Arabia is making rapid progress in its renewable energy transition, driven by abundant solar and wind resources and supported by robust government initiatives. A key development is the ongoing decarbonization of the country's energy mix, replacing hydrocarbon combustion with solar plants and other renewables. At the forefront of these efforts is the Decarbonization Diplomacy Office, established through a collaboration between Saudi Arabia and Germany, with implementation by the German International Corporation (GIZ). The initiative aims to decarbonize industries, accelerate economic diversification, and create value chains that integrate clean climate technologies.

# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

The session was opened with praise for the Kingdom's progress and its commitment to achieving the best outcomes, while also fostering cooperation among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Yemen. Emphasis was placed on the importance of civil society in its diversity and the role of increasing local and international investments in the environmental sector.

A distinguished group of experts discussed various topics, including the multiple uses of plastic, whether recycled or newly manufactured, with one surprising moment highlighting the importance of plastic. Others focused on investment opportunities and mutual interests to advance environmental safety agendas. The session also featured audience participation through questions and interactions that enriched collaboration between organizations and civil societies, promoting integration to achieve optimal outcomes.

Prof. Dr. Mohammed Alzuhairi, from the University of Technology-Iraq Al Mortaqa Foundation for Development and Accredited Member, United Nations, presented "Land Degradation & Waste Resources" (Sustainable Solutions), which focused on land restoration by plastic. He discussed using waste plastic, which includes biodegradable hydrophilic polymers, to enhance soil properties. His analysis included pathways to reduce costs associated with manufacturing scale-up as well as renewable energy use and continued R&D.

Mr. Wassim Merheby CEO and cofounder of Verofax, presented his aim to help countries combat desertification by encouraging them to decarbonize their industries while equipping them with the necessary national tools and platforms to measure, report, and verify emissions reduction programs, particularly

from industrial use cases. A notable initiative in this regard is the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which aims to prevent carbon leakage in markets exporting to the EU by creating a fair and accountable system.

He discussed the aim to promote this model globally, assisting countries in establishing robust national frameworks, including emergency systems for measuring, reporting, and verification (MRV). Such systems are essential to ensure transparency, drive decarbonization efforts, and support the transition toward sustainable industrial practices.

Dr. Daniel Krahel DIAPOL-CE- Policy Dialogue and Knowledge Management on Climate Protection Strategies, GIZ spoke on the German Ministry of Environment in global dialogues on sustainable planet protection strategies, focusing on West Asia and neighboring regions. He discussed that while [they] don't implement solutions directly, [they] facilitate political dialogue, knowledge transfer, and provide scientific and advisory support.



Photo Source: [Arab News](#) (2024)



# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

A key focus was nature-based solutions, which prioritize adaptation to climate challenges. However, implementation is complex due to competing land use, water conflicts, and the need to engage local communities. Involving locals from the start is essential to ensure ownership and sustainability, whether through community-based tourism, sustainable agriculture, or other economic opportunities.

Dr. Benjamin Smain shared his experience addressing climate insecurity hotspots, particularly in Iraq, where water scarcity and land degradation are major challenges.

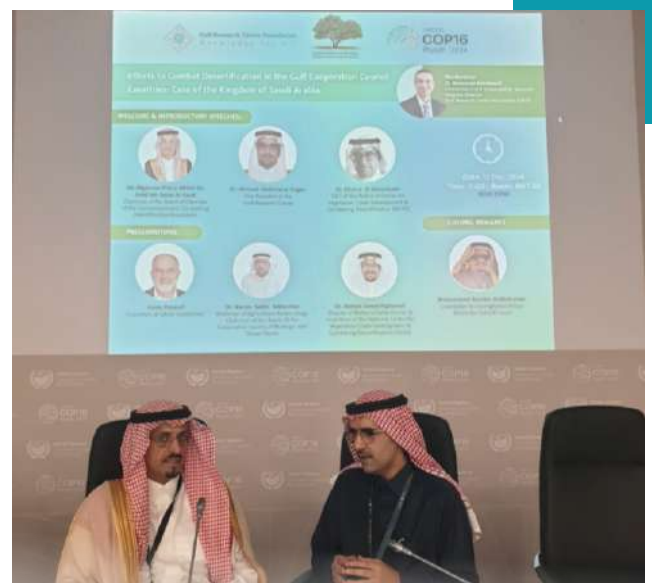
In the Iraqi marshlands, livelihoods such as water buffalo herding and fishing face threats from overfishing, including unsustainable practices like electrofishing. Instead of criminalizing these practices, Dr. Benjamin suggested sustainable solutions through:

1. Community-agreed fishing pauses to replenish fish stocks.
2. Providing alternative tools like nets that protect small fish.
3. Gradual introduction of sustainable practices with local support.

Broader solutions require water infrastructure development and economic diversification, which Iraq's resources can support if acted on promptly. Regional cooperation is also vital; successful examples like solar farms in Jordan or sustainable practices in Saudi Arabia can be adapted to Iraq's needs.

While scaling solutions is challenging, crises often drive innovation, especially when urgency creates opportunities for those most affected. Through local collaboration and targeted strategies, we can build resilience against climate challenges.

**The third side event: Efforts to Combat Desertification in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries: Case of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.** The event took place on 12 December 2024 at 11 AM in the COP16 Blue Zone, Room MET-02 and was moderated by Dr. Mohammed Abdelraouf of the Gulf Research Center.



# Environmental Security and Sustainability

## Research Program

Opening remarks were delivered by His Highness Prince Miteb bin Fahd bin Faisal Al Saud, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Environment and Combatting Desertification Association. His Highness Prince Miteb expressed his thanks to the Gulf Research Center for organizing this session and highlighted the importance of building effective partnerships to develop voluntary initiatives that contribute to supporting local communities to confront environmental challenges.

He presented the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in making environmental sustainability one of its main objectives. He pointed out that a previous study indicated that about 24 billion tons of fertile soil are lost annually due to desertification, with more than one and a half billion people around the world directly affected by this dangerous phenomenon.

This highlights the role of civil society organizations, universities and research centers in the Kingdom to support the efforts of the government represented by all ministries, headed by the Ministry of Environment and all its affiliated national bodies and centers, as well as government funds.

He stressed community environmental awareness to pave the way towards building a sustainable and prosperous environment for future generations

Dr. Sager then spoke on the urgency of addressing desertification and land degradation in Saudi Arabia and the GCC, where extreme climatic conditions and rapid socio-economic changes have intensified these challenges. He underlined the importance of initiatives like the Saudi Green Initiative—aiming to plant 400 million trees by 2030—and the Green Middle East Initiative, which fosters regional collaboration similar to the European Green Deal.

He also stressed the role of international cooperation, nature-based solutions, and the active involvement of civil society, research institutions, and the private sector in combating desertification. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 underscores the nation's commitment to environmental sustainability, making COP16 a milestone for global partnerships and actionable solutions to climate change.

The session began with Dr. Haris Yousef, CEO of GAIIA Foundation, who introduced the idea of giving a digital identity to the tree and called for the support of the authorities for the annual green certificate in his statement.

He referred to the efforts to obtain the green certificate "Emission Right" as a license to pollute, stating that "With the money we earn from a polluted economy, we are trying to clean the air. The question here is can environmental feasibility become a financial incentive and not a burden? The answer is yes."

He pointed out that one cubic meter gives us 70-100 thousand hectares of oxygen per year and stores about 500 grams of carbon and cools the atmosphere by the equivalent of 20 thousand deciliters per hour, in addition to other economic and environmental benefits. Using the technologies available in the Kingdom, artificial intelligence algorithms, we can confirm and measure these numbers and issue a renewable certificate that accompanies growth and contains the tree's data and measurements. Thus, he confirmed that they can give the tree a digital identity.

He also praised that here in the Kingdom everything is ready for the birth of Eco-money or coin and the first environmental bank in the world can be born so that the tree becomes the source of this money. The KSA Green Initiative is not only a beautiful initiative but it is the foundation that enables us to build a new environmental economy.

# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

He called on the decision makers in KSA and the Middle East Green Initiative to support the annual green certificate capable of transforming the initiative into a global model for financial afforestation with the aim of financing afforestation. This model is capable of stimulating a new green economy.

Then Dr. Nasser. Saleh Alkhalifah, Professor of Agricultural Biotechnology and Chairman of the Board of the Cooperative Society of Moringa and Desert Plants presented the application of agricultural biotechnology on desert plantation explaining that it is a group of technologies in biochemistry, microbiology, plant physiology, and biophysics working together in favor of plant micropropagation and plant development by improving the genetical or chemical components to produce new materials of great value for humans.

Then Dr. Rashad Saeed Alghamdi the Director of National Laboratories & Seed Bank at the National Center for Vegetation Development & Combating Desertification presented the concept of water reuse as a nature based management solution for plant sustainability in dry environments.

Last but not least, closing remarks were made by Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Mohaisen, the Counselor to His Highness Prince Miteb bin Fahd Al Saud. He emphasized the pioneer efforts of Saudi Arabia in combating desertification locally, regionally and globally. He also presented the idea of establishing a civil society network for environmental associations working in the six GCC countries to coordinate efforts, as well as to hold positions in international forums like COP16.

## Capacity Building Workshop for UNEP Accredited Organizations



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program co-organized an online workshop with the UNEP Civil Society Unit entitled ‘Capacity Building Workshop for UNEP Accredited Organizations’ which took place on January 17, 2024. The objectives of the Capacity Building Workshop were to:

- Increase understanding of how and where Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) can engage in UNEA-6 and its preparatory processes.
- Educate UNEP-accredited organizations on the Major Group modality to stakeholder engagement in UNEP.
- Develop a joint approach to Major Group coordination towards UNEA-6.



# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

## February 24 to 25, 2024: 20th Global Major Groups and Stockholders Forum (GMGSF)

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.



## The 6th UN Environment Assembly

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 as a co-chair of MGFC organized CSOS side events in the “Green Room” and spoke in a number of sessions during UNEA 6.

## UN Science-Policy-Business Forum



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program spoke in the closing session of the UN Science-Policy-Business Forum convened during the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6). Dr. Raouf reflected on the importance of effective engagement of the Major Groups at all levels of decision making as well as the need for new economic, environmentally adjusted indicators to measure progress in achieving sustainable development goals at all levels.



# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

## Major Groups Press Conference. At UNEA 6



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program organized and spoke at the Major Groups press conference held by Major Groups Facilitating Committee at UNEA 6. Dr. Raouf Presented Major Groups insights about various UNEA 6 proposed resolutions and UNEA 6 negotiations updates.

## Climate Change as an Emerging Security Threat



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center, presented a paper titled “Climate Change as an Emerging Security Threat: Cases from MENA Region,”

organized by Gulf Studies Center - Qatar University and the International Studies and Security Research Association - Turkey in Bodrum, Turkey. The workshop was supported by NATO’s Emerging Security Challenges Division under the Science for Peace and Security Programme.

## Environmental Security and Sustainability Program

### May 2024 Activities



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, the Director of the Gulf Research Center’s (GRC) Program on Environmental Security and Sustainability, recently visited the GRC Riyadh office to further strengthen the Center’s collaborative efforts in Saudi Arabia. During his visit, Dr. Abdelraouf held a series of strategic meetings with key stakeholders, including representatives from various Saudi ministries and institutions, to discuss and enhance cooperation on environmental security and sustainability initiatives.

The primary focus of these meetings was to align the objectives of the GRC’s environmental program with the national priorities of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the context of Vision 2030. Dr. Abdelraouf engaged in detailed discussions with officials from the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture, and the discussions centered on identifying critical areas for collaboration, sharing best practices, and exploring innovative solutions to address environmental challenges in the Kingdom.

# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

Dr. Abdelraouf emphasized the importance of a holistic and integrated approach to environmental security, highlighting how sustainable practices can contribute to economic diversification and long-term ecological balance. The meetings also provided an opportunity to outline joint research projects, capacity-building initiatives, and policy advisory services that the GRC can offer to support Saudi Arabia's environmental goals.

These interactions are aimed at creating a network of local experts and stakeholders who can work together to implement sustainable practices and policies effectively. Dr. Abdelraouf's visit concluded with a commitment from all parties to continue working closely together, leveraging the expertise and resources of the GRC to advance Saudi Arabia's environmental security and sustainability agenda. This visit marked a significant step in enhancing the partnership between the GRC and Saudi institutions, ensuring a collaborative approach to addressing the region's environmental challenges.

## Meetings that took place in GRC Riyadh:

### 5 May 2024

Dr. Christian Koch, GRC Director of Research, Dr. Nayef Alrasheed, Senior Researcher at the GRC, and Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC Environment and Sustainability Research Program director, met with Dr. Abdallah Al-Radady, Head of the Innovation Department at the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture to discuss possible joint cooperation including webinars, research, and policy papers. They also spoke about the GRC joining the Food and AgriTech Alliance of KSA.

### 5 May 2024

Dr. Christian Koch, GRC Director of Research, and Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC Environment and Sustainability Research Program director, met at the GRC office in Riyadh with Mr. Quentin

Blommaert, Head Hydrogen Diplomacy Office, Riyadh, to discuss possible joint cooperation, including webinars, research and policy papers, and possible joint cooperation for the next Climate Talks COP29 in Azerbaijan and the next UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh.

### 6 May 2024

Dr. Christian Koch, GRC Director of Research, Dr. Nayef Alrasheed, Consultant at the GRC, and Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC Environment and Sustainability Research Program director met with Dr. Mohamad Hejazi, Climate and Sustainability Program Director, Dr. Mari Luomi, Senior Researcher, Climate and Sustainability Program, and Mr. Brian Efird, Strategic Partnerships Director at the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies Research Center (KAPSARC) office in Riyadh. The meeting covered possible joint cooperation in terms of webinars, research papers, and workshops at the 15th GRM in Cambridge, UK in 2025, as well as possible cooperation for the upcoming climate talks, COP29, in Azerbaijan.

### June 14, 2024



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Program at the Gulf Research Center, and GRC Researcher Hannan Alghamdi attended a breakfast meeting organized by the Arab-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CASCI) on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. The meeting featured representatives from the Ministry of Investment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Investment

# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

Promotion Authority (SIPA), and members of CASCI. The meeting highlighted the evolving dynamics of Saudi Arabia's economy and emphasized the Kingdom's commitment to fostering a welcoming environment for international investors. The discussion also showcased new regulations and policies, illustrating how they streamline the investment process and pave the way for growth and collaboration.

**July 25, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director and Dr. Hares Youssef, Founder of the GAIIA Foundation met with Mrs. Habiba ElMarashy, Chairwomen of Emirates Environmental Management Group (EMG) at its premises to discuss GAIIA's proposal for an eco-currency and the GAIIA protocol for tree planting and decarbonization. Their discussion also focused on the planning of possible GAIIA project presentations at EMG events and workshops.

**July 24, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director and Mr. Javid Iqbal, Board member of Gulf Research Center Foundation met in Dubai's KCorp office with Dr. Hares Youssef, Founder, GAIIA Foundation and Dr. Oliver Loisel, Co-Founder and CEO, to discuss preparation for possible side events during COP29 this year and COP30 next year. They also discussed the plan for next steps for a GAIIA proposal on eco-currency and establishing an intergovernmental organization that can adopt and promote the corresponding GAIIA protocol.

**2-5 September 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director, participated in the second meeting of



# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

the Intergovernmental and Multistakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) of the 7th edition of Global Environment Outlook that took place in Nairobi, 2-5 September 2024. The meeting reviewed the progress in drafting of the chapters and summary for policymakers within the GEO 7 process as well as reviewed the budget. Dr. Abdelraouf is a member of the IMAG representing the Gulf Research Center.

## 9 September 2024

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program, chaired the monthly coordination telecall of the UNEP Major Groups Facilitation Committee, which aimed to plan a Major Groups engagement at the future summit and the coming UNEP CPR meetings.

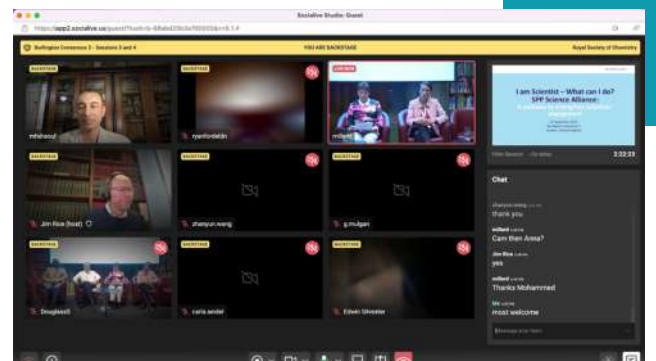
## 17 September 2024

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director chaired the monthly coordination telecall of the SPP Scientist Alliance, aiming to plan and coordinate the next practical steps for the official establishment of the alliance. In the call, it was agreed to set various committees, such as a host committee, funding committee, and by-laws committee.

## 27 September 2024

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program, participated in and presented in an webinar by the Royal Society of Chemicals (UK) Burlington Consensus 3 on Friday, September 27th, on the role of the Science and Technology Major Group at UNEP in the Science Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution prevention.

## 14 October 2024



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center, participated in a coordination call between co-chairs of the Major Groups at both UNEP and HLPF to coordinate Major Groups engagement over the next few months in major UN events either in Nairobi or New York.

## Bonn Climate Change Conference UNFCCC SB60

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the GRC's Environmental Security and Sustainability program, attended the 60th session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) in Bonn from June 5-10 which was the main preparatory meeting for UNFCCC COP29 in Azerbaijan in November 2024.

Dr. Abdelraouf participated in various sessions on climate justice, finance, loss and damage, as well as meetings of the Climate Action Network. He also met with various stakeholders from civil society organizations, the UN, and member states, including with the holder of the next presidency of COP29 from Azerbaijan.



# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

The key meeting was with the UN Science Policy Business Forum, in which the GRC played an active role with Major Groups at UNEP as well as other UN agencies in preparation for COP29.



Photo Source: [United Nations \(2024\)](#)

## International Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) preparatory meeting for the OEWG3 SPP

The third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare proposals for a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (OEWG-3), was held at the International Conference Center in Geneva (CICG), Switzerland, from June 17-21, 2024.

The Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) led the Civil Society participation in the meeting from June 16-21 as GRCF is currently the co-chair of the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) of UNEP. As part of the GRCF's responsibilities, it coordinated the:

- UN Major Groups consultations on June 16th as a preparatory meeting
- Daily morning briefings for UN Major Groups

- Two meetings for the proposed Global Scientist Alliance for Chemicals on June 17th and 21st.
- A meeting with UNEP Chief Scientist to discuss the proposed Global Scientist Alliance for Chemicals



## 11th Annual Subcommittee Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN Environment in Nairobi

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director participated in the 11th annual Subcommittee Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN Environment in Nairobi, Kenya from July 8-12, 2024 to discuss the UNEP work program, budget, and mid-term strategy and preparations for the seventh United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA7). Dr. Raouf, in his capacity as the co-chair of Major Groups and Stakeholders, coordinated the daily morning briefing for Major Groups and bilateral meetings between Major Groups and UNEA president, UNEA Vice President, as well as with the Head of the Secretariat of UN Environmental Management Group.

# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program



## Provisional Accreditation from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



The Gulf Research Center Foundation received the provisional accreditation from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) based on its active role in research and activities

in the field of environment and combating desertification and land degradation. This was a timely accreditation as the UNCCD COP16 was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from December 1-13, 2024. GRCF is one of the very few organizations working in the Gulf that have received the UNCCD accreditation.

## UN Summit of the Future



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC's Environmental Security and Sustainability

Research Program director, participated in the Summit of the Future and its preparatory meetings (Action Days) on September 20-23, 2024 at UN headquarters in New York. The summit outcomes include the Pact for the Future, Declaration on Future Generations, and Global Digital Compact. The Gulf Research Center, together with UNEP, UNSPBF, and others, co-organized an offsite event on 21 September 2024 at Estonian House in New York titled "The Pact for the Future and Annexed Declaration on Future Generations and Global

Digital Compact." The event was well attended by governments, businesses, civil society, and the media.



## Gulf Research Center (GRC) in COP 29

The Gulf Research Center Foundation, represented by Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director, participated in the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties, COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. GRC is a UNFCCC-accredited observer organization and participates in the daily coordination meetings of the Science and Technology Major Group.

The Gulf Research Center held various bilateral talks and meetings at COP29 to discuss potential cooperation and the development of climate talks. Bilateral talks included countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Morocco, China, Azerbaijan, Germany, the UK, Oman, and Thailand, as well as international organizations such as the UNDP, the OPEC Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) as well as many private companies and civil societies organizations.

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf spoke on November 14, 2024, on the need of good international governance for new emerging technologies of geoengineering for combating climate change at the Green Zone at COP 29 during a side



# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

event at the Azersun Pavilion co-organized by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Change and the German Chambers of Commerce.

Dr. Raouf also participated in numerous official side events at various pavilions of countries and organizations on topics such as the new climate finance goal, the circular economy, accelerating the transition to clean energies, the possibility of achieving zero carbon by 2050, green cities, and climate financing strategies. This also included events for the launching of national and international initiatives such as the National Green Projects Initiative of Egypt and the China International Initiative on International Zero Carbon Cooperation for Island Countries.



## The First Saudi AgriFood Tech Alliance

Then Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program represented by Ms. Layla Ali, Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the first quarterly meeting for the Saudi AgriFood Tech Alliance (SAFTA) in Riyadh on October 10, 2024.

## Webinars

### The Role of Major Groups in the Science Policy Panel for Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention

The Gulf Research Center Foundation, the United Nations Environment Program, Major groups at UNEP, and the Royal Society of Chemicals of the UK co-organized a webinar titled “The Role of Major Groups in the Science Policy Panel for Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Prevention” on May 21, 2024 to discuss possible engagement mechanisms of various major groups in the SPP.

The webinar was part of preparations for the Open-Ended Working Group 3 (OEWG3) on an SPP on chemicals, waste, and pollution prevention, which was held in Geneva in June 2024. The UNEP and the SPP secretariat presented the current draft documents and provisions for Civil Society Participation.

# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

The science major groups presented the group initiative of establishing an SPP science alliance to follow the work of SPP when created. Different major groups presented their insights about different modalities and avenues for the effective engagement of major groups in the future work of the panel and its various sub-bodies and/or committees.



## Food Security Forum in Light of Desertification and Climate Change in the Arab World 2024

On June 29, 2024, in recognition of World Day of Desertification and Drought, the Abu Dhabi Environmental Research Network, the Gulf Research Center, and The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa participated in a webinar titled “Food Security Forum in Light of Desertification and Climate Change in the Arab World 2024.” The Forum supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13, 15, and 17.

Ten experts from the following organizations participated in discussions on desertification, drought, and climate change as some of the most important environmental challenges facing the Arab region, exacerbating other environmental problems, whether water, air pollution, food security, etc.:

- The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
- The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)
- Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD)
- The Gulf Research Center (GRC)
- The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
- The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA)
- Abu Dhabi Environmental Research Network
- The Arab Union for Water and Food Security (AUWFS)
- Sulaiman Bin Abdulaziz Al Rajhi Charitable Foundation
- The Jordanian Society for Desertification Control and Badia Development (JSDCBD)
- Golden Grass Incorporated, Saudi Arabia





# Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program

The experts presented a wide range of experiences and solutions to fight desertification and climate change. There are a number of policies that must be followed by countries affected by climate change and threatened by desertification. The most important policies are (but are not limited to):

- Climate change adaptation policies and procedures
- Sustainable rational management of water resources including water recycling
- Applying a basket of policy mix tools such as economic tools and legislation to stimulate sustainable agriculture

- Exchanging best practices and experiences between Arab countries who face the same challenges
- Investing in new technologies and technology transfer (whether social, economic, administrative, or technological innovation)
- Encouraging the use of traditional and indigenous methods in agriculture whenever possible

It was noted that the success of the above-mentioned policies is important to achieving the various Vision plans of the Arab countries including initiatives such as Saudi Arabia's Green Initiative and the Green Middle East. The full webinar can be viewed [here](#).



Photo Source: [UNDRR](#) (2024)



# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

Cultural & Media Program



# Cultural & Media Program



**Director of Program:**  
Dr. Zaid AlFadeil

The establishment of the “Cultural & Media Program” at the Gulf Research Center seeks to contribute to the preservation and development of the region’s culture. The cultural program is concerned with creating, managing, and translating the center’s cognitive content in various artistic forms and carrying out various cultural and scientific studies on social and other matters related to human knowledge. The program also manages and organizes multiple scientific forums and conferences with a cultural dimension.



## The program seeks to:

- Deepen the state of knowledge through supporting, translating, and publishing all serious studies in various cultural, heritage, and scientific frameworks (historical, social, political, anthropological, literary, and others).
- Developing a state of awareness of the dimensions of the development of the communication process and the accelerating trend towards modern means of communication and the new world, and measuring the repercussions of this on interactivity between the media and the audience receiving the message.
- Strengthening cultural action within society and developing the spirit of creativity among its members in cooperation with the official sponsoring bodies, and based on the goals and visions of the cultural strategy plan of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

More information on the GRC’s Cultural and Media Program can be found [here](#).

## Activities in 2024

The Gulf Research Center’s Cultural & Media Program hosted the first roundtable seminar of a series of sessions focused on the topic: ‘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-Fadeil. 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



## Cultural & Media Program

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.



After the success of the Gulf Cultural Dialogue Labs series at the Gulf Research Center in 2023, the GRC, in cooperation with the Jordanian Narratives Laboratory held the first seminar of the Narratives Laboratory entitled “Features of Tourism,

Archaeological and Historical Integration between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.” This was supervised by writer and researcher Mufleh Al-Adwan, founder and head of the Jordanian Narratives Laboratory, with the participation of a number of specialists.



The Gulf Research Center's cultural program published a video celebrating the 94th Saudi National Day. Watch the full video [here](#).



## Cultural & Media Program

The Gulf Dialogue Lab at the Gulf Research Center presented the first roundtable forum in November in cooperation with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which discussed the topic: ‘The Islamic world and the question of a common identity,’ with the participation of a group of speakers from various Arab-Islamic countries.



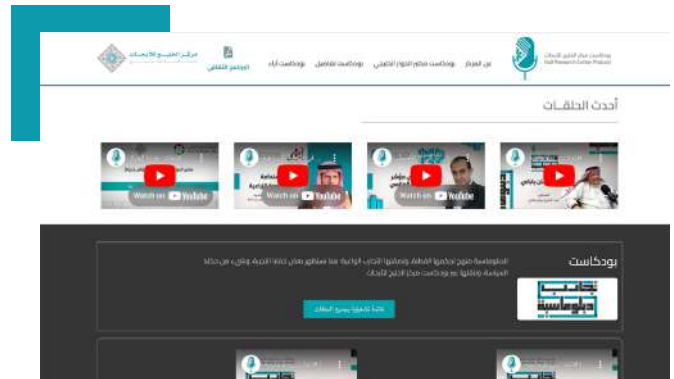
### Gulf Dialogue Lab



The **Gulf Dialogue Lab** is one of the first projects launched in the GRC's Cultural and Media program. It focuses on monitoring the cultural activities at the level of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and studying the mechanisms and ways of developing the role of media in each country. It presents many training programs and research covering various topics. Access all the webinar sessions for the Gulf Dialogue Lab [here](#).

### Gulf Research Center (GRC) Podcast

In 2024, the GRC held 25 podcasts. [Click here](#) to access the GRC's podcast.



### Publications

The GRC's Cultural & Media program issued a book in March 2024 on the ‘Gulf's Cultural Dialogue Laboratory.’ The book is a result of the opinions, recommendations, and ideas that were discussed through a series of seminars in the Gulf Dialogue Lab, which discussed the nature of the cultural scene and its movements in all the countries of the GCC. Access the full publication [here](#).



# Cultural & Media Program

## Research Papers



**Traits and Characteristics of Soft Power**  
By: Shahad AlGhamdi  
June 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



**Arab Media and Culture in the Age of Cognitive Diaspora**  
By: Magda Dagher  
August 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



**Professional Opportunities for the Arabic Language**  
By: Shaker Nouri  
June 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



**Arabic Documentation Department: The Historical Legacy is Not for Lamentation or Bragging**  
By: Mohammed Issa Al-Adwan  
August 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



**King Faisal International Prize... The Icon of the Arab Awards**  
By: Mufleh al-Adwan  
July 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



**The Education System: Reality and Hopes?**  
September 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



**Did the Media Play its Role in Marketing the National Achievement?**  
August 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



**Saudi Arabia's Strategic Determinants Between 2015-2024**  
September 2024  
Access the full paper [here](#).



# Cultural & Media Program



## National Unity in Timeless Words

September 2024

Access the full paper [here](#).



## The Concept of Culture: Who is an intellectual?

November 2024

Access the full paper [here](#).



## Umm Kulthum: The Muse of Musical Modernism

October 2024

Access the full paper [here](#).

More information about the Gulf Research Center's Cultural & Media Program can be found on the program's website [here](#).



## The Evolution of the Concept of Identity and its Political Implications for the Arabian Peninsula

October 2024

Access the full paper [here](#).



## Local Cultural Identity as a Condition for Globalization: Gulf Countries Lead the Way

November 2024

Access the full paper [here](#).



# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

### EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



# Gulf Research Meeting

## Annual 14th Gulf Research Meeting 2024

Organized by the  
Gulf Research Center



The Gulf Research Meeting - July 2024, Cambridge

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted its 14th annual Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) in Cambridge from July 9-11, 2024, attended by over 400 experts, scholars, and practitioners. The event's participants were spread out over 13 workshops overseen by 27 workshop directors. The workshops covered a host of issues ranging from security and conflict resolution to AI and climate change related to the Gulf region. The Gulf Research Meeting seeks to hold academic meetings that lead to publications on topics related to social sciences with a focus on the Gulf region. More details on the meeting can be found on the [GRM website](#).

The GRM Opening Ceremony was moderated by GRC Director of Research Dr. Christian Koch and included welcoming remarks by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, and Prof. David Cardwell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Strategy and Planning at the University of Cambridge. This was followed by speeches from **H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud**, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, **H.E. Mr. Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi**, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, **H.E. The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC**, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and **H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio**, European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf region.



## Gulf Research Meeting

The second half of the opening ceremony featured a panel discussion with three distinguished women from the Gulf region, and was moderated by Dr. Christian Koch, GRC's Director of Research. Panel speakers included **H.E. Sheikha Jawaher Ebrahim Duaij Al-Sabah**, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State of Kuwait, who shared insights on the role of women in peace and diplomacy, with a focus on human rights issues; **H.E. Ambassador Nancy Jamal**, Chief of Strategic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain, who discussed her experiences in counter-terrorism, preventing extremism, and developing frameworks for sustainable security; and **H.E. Dr. Manal Radwan**, Advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who reflected on her involvement in high-level security discussions and the evolving international political landscape.

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), welcomed all guests and participants and remarked on the challenges facing the region and the importance of "building bridges, allowing for spaces where discussions and exchange of views can occur." He stated that it was important to keep "an open door for a wide array of individuals and institutions to engage in deliberations that can overcome existing obstacles" through events such as the GRM.

Professor David Cardwell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Strategy and Planning at the University of Cambridge, warmly welcomed attendees to the GRM, highlighting the importance of collaboration, especially in light of current global conflicts. He noted the University of Cambridge's active engagement with the Gulf region through various academic and cultural initiatives and emphasized the critical need for research and dialogue on issues like economic

diversification, climate change, and artificial intelligence. He concluded by expressing optimism for productive discussions and new collaborations during the conference.

In his virtual address at the opening ceremony of the Gulf Research Meeting, H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, emphasized the importance of intellectual discourse in order to better understand regional dynamics. He stressed the need for a rules-based international order to prevent chaos and conflict, urging a commitment to international law and peaceful dispute resolution. H.H. Prince Faisal highlighted Saudi Arabia's dedication to regional stability, cooperation, and economic prosperity. He also called for an immediate ceasefire and renewed dialogue to resolve the Palestinian conflict, advocating for justice, equality, and mutual respect. Access the full [speech here](#).

In his keynote speech, H.E. Mr. Jasem AlBudaiwi, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, highlighted the relevance of the Gulf Research Meeting as a crucial platform for dialogue on all issues pertaining to Gulf regional affairs. Access the full speech [here](#).

In her keynote address, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC Secretary-General of the Commonwealth emphasized the importance of international cooperation in addressing global challenges. Highlighting the roles of international organizations like the Commonwealth, H.E. detailed various initiatives undertaken by the Commonwealth aimed at sustainable development, climate resilience, and environmental stewardship. These include the Common Sensing Programme for disaster management, the Blue Charter for ocean conservation, the Common Earth Initiative for nature-based climate solutions, and the Clean

# Gulf Research Meeting

Ocean Initiative to tackle marine plastic pollution. The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth also introduced the Climate Finance Access Hub and the Common Space Initiative, which explores the potential of space technology for sustainable development. The overarching message was a call for unity and collaboration to build a sustainable, peaceful, and prosperous world. Access the full [speech here](#).

In his keynote speech, H.E. Luigi Di Maio, the EU Special Representative for the Gulf Region, highlighted the importance of the EU-GCC strategic partnership. He emphasized the need for trust, collaboration, and the fulfillment of promises to achieve sustainable peace and prosperity. H.E. Di Maio emphasized the significance of diplomatic maturity in discussing shared understandings and differences, and he spoke about the transformative power of human connections. In terms of EU-GCC ties, he highlighted the potential milestone of a first-ever EU-GCC Summit to be held later in 2024, which he believes could be vital for shared security, prosperity, and global stability in these uncertain times. At the same time, he condemned threats to international navigation and maritime security as have recently occurred in the Red Sea. Access the full [speech here](#).

## GRM 2024 Opening Ceremony



Dr. Christian Koch, GRC Director of Research, master of the GRM 2024 opening ceremony, speaks at the event.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, delivers a welcome speech at the GRM 2024 opening ceremony.



**Gulf Research Centre Cambridge**  
Knowledge for All

**GULF RESEARCH MEETING**

# Gulf Research Meeting



Professor David Cardwell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Strategy and Planning at the University of Cambridge, welcoming attendees to the 14th annual Gulf Research Meeting.



The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC Secretary-General of the Commonwealth delivering her keynote address at the 14th annual Gulf Research Meeting in Cambridge.



H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, delivering his virtual speech in the opening ceremony.



H.E. Luigi Di Maio, the EU Special Representative for the Gulf Region, delivering his speech in the opening ceremony.



H.E. Mr. Jasem Albudaiwi, Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, delivering his speech in the opening ceremony.



GRM 2024 opening ceremony panel discussion in progress with H.E. Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ebrahim Duaj Al-Sabah, H.E. Ambassador Nancy Jamal, and H.E. Dr. Manal Radwan.



# Gulf Research Meeting



H.E. Dr. Manal Radwan giving her input during the panel session of the opening ceremony.



H.E. Ambassador Nancy Jamal providing her input during the panel session of the opening ceremony.



H.E. Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ebrahim Duaij Al-Sabah during the opening ceremony panel session.

Over the following two days, the Gulf Research Meeting conducted the following 13 parallel workshops:

## GRM 2024 Workshops



**Workshop 1:** Towards a Global Coalition: Gulf countries, BRICS+, and the Future of the Global Order



**Workshop 2:** The GCC between the Kurdistan Region and Iraq



**Workshop 3:** Securing the Future: The GCC States' Endeavors in Defense Industry, Warfare Technologies and Policy



**Workshop 4:** The Structural Economic Challenges that GCC Economies Face to Move Toward Economic Diversification and Sustainability

# Gulf Research Meeting



**Workshop 5:** Blue Gulf: New Models and Systems for Regenerative Environments and Communities in Changing Climates and Rising Seas



**Workshop 9:** Conflict Resolution Initiatives in the Gulf and Beyond: Strategies of Engagement and Prospects of Success



**Workshop 6:** The Gulf Family: Transition, Tradition, and Tenacity



**Workshop 10:** Migration to the Gulf: Possible Scenarios for the Future: A View from the GCC and from Countries of Origin



**Workshop 7:** Gulf States' Engagement with Sport: Domestic and Global Drivers



**Workshop 11:** GCC Energy Transition in the Era of Energy Security



**Workshop 8:** Navigating the Future of Artificial Intelligence in the GCC Region: Opportunities and Challenges



**Workshop 12:** Silk Road or Spice Route? The Gulf's Rising Connectivity with Asia, Africa, and Europe



# Gulf Research Meeting



**Workshop 13:** The Politics and Policy of Climate Change in the Gulf

## GRM 2024 Photo Gallery



H.E. Mr. Jasem AlBudaiwi with Dr. Abdulaziz Sager



H.E. Luigi Di Maio, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, and H.E. Mr. Jasem AlBudaiwi



H.E. Mr. Jasem Al Budaiwi with Dr. Abdulaziz Sager and Dr. Christian Koch



GRM participants gathered at the West Road Concert Hall ahead of the Opening Ceremony.



Ambassador Talmiz Ahmed, Ambassador Stuart Laing, and Professor Tim Niblock at the Opening Ceremony



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, H.E. Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ebrahim Duaij Al-Sabah, H.E. Ambassador Nancy Jamal, H.E. Dr. Manal Radwan, Dr. Christian Koch



2024 GRM Participant Reception



## Gulf Research Meeting



GRCC Council Meeting



GRM 2024 Workshop Directors



GRM 2024 participants gather in King's College for the GRM Welcoming Dinner.

# TAFAHUM WA TABADUL Project

As a non-profit organization, the GRC engages in externally-funded research projects focusing on the Gulf region. Such projects allow collaboration with other institutions and creates a broader base for scholarship and research activities.

تفاهم وتبادل

TAFAHUM WA TABADUL



CARPO  
Center for Applied Research  
in Partnership with the Orient



In 2024, the regional dialogue initiative **Tafahum wa Tabadul** convened official representatives from West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (WAAP) - a region that subsumes the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council plus Yemen, Iraq, and Iran - for high-level policy workshops.

The fundamental objective of the **Tafahum wa Tabadul project** is to outline a process for regional security in the WAAP region. In addition, it aims to generate an overall “understanding” (tafahum) among regional stakeholders on a collaborative process toward regional security followed by the identification and implementation of concrete areas of “exchange” (tabadul). The project is funded by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA of Switzerland and implemented by CARPO and the GRCF

More details about the project are available [here](#).

Various events were held in 2024 as part of the Tafahum wa Tabadul Project, including the following:

20-21 November 2024

**Workshop Track Level 1: 6th High-Level Policy Workshop, Switzerland**

22-23 October 2024

**Workshop Track Level 2: “Climate and Energy Security in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula,” Germany**

25-26 June 2024

**Workshop Track Level 1: 5th High-Level Policy Workshop, Switzerland**

29-30 April 2024

**Workshop Track Level 2: The Concept of Healthy and Sustainable Cities in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (II), Jordan**

5-6 March 2024

**Workshop Track Level 2: “The Concept of Healthy and Sustainable Cities in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula,” Germany**

7-9 January 2024

**Workshop Track Level 1: 4th High-Level Policy Workshop, Switzerland**

# 2024

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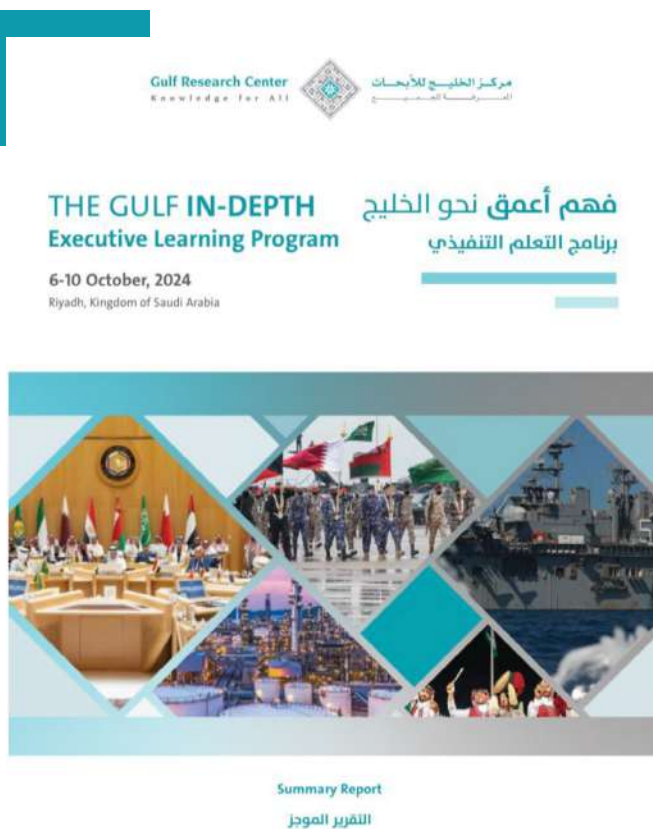
## ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Learning & Training Programs





# Gulf In-Depth Executive Learning Program



The Gulf Research Center organized, as part of its executive learning programs, the Gulf In-Depth Executive Learning Program, which took place at the GRC office in Riyadh from October 6 to 10, 2024. The Gulf In-Depth is a week-long program designed to deepen understanding of the strategic dynamics shaping the Arabian Gulf and its global interactions. The program commenced with a keynote address by **H.E. Jasem Mohamed AlBudaawi**, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), who emphasized the importance of **collaboration among Gulf states**. The program brought together 20 participants from 18 different countries, fostering comprehensive discussions on the region's dynamic transformations and highlighting the significance of regional cooperation and the evolving geopolitical landscape.



Spanning five days, each day of the program revolved around a key theme featuring 14 sessions that addressed a wide array of political, security, and socioeconomic changes in the Gulf. The first day focused on **The Gulf in Transition**, exploring current political dynamics and their implications for governance and stability. The second day featured discussions on **The Political Environment in the Gulf Region**, including the political position of the Gulf in a new world order, public policy formulation in the region, and an outlook on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The third day examined **The Gulf Economy**, highlighting trends, diversification efforts, and growth opportunities. The fourth day addressed **Gulf Foreign and Security Issues**, discussing regional security challenges and the geopolitical landscape. Finally, the fifth day focused on **The Gulf Moving Forward**, with sessions dedicated to climate change and the role of the media in shaping perceptions of the region.

# Gulf In-Depth Executive Learning Program



## The program offers:

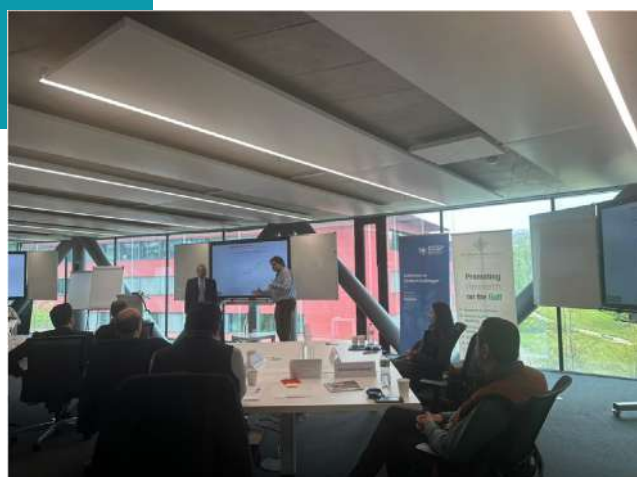
- Opportunities to learn from experts on Gulf society, culture, politics, economics, and security.
- Understanding the links between the Gulf and key strategic regions of the globe and what they mean for the development of the region.
- Uncovering the links between educational and social institutions, politics, economics, and media.
- Discovering possibilities for lucrative investment in one of the fastest-developing regions in the world.
- Understanding developments in the Gulf region as separate from those in the wider Middle East.

The Gulf Research Center published a summary report on the program reflecting the GRC's commitment to raising awareness and promoting knowledge about the Gulf region. The full report can be accessed through the following link: <https://programs.grc.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Gulf-In-Depth-Program-2024.pdf>



# Global Leadership Program

Geneva, Switzerland



**Module 1: Global Politics**, September 11-15, 2023

**Module 2: Global Security**, November 13-17, 2023

**Module 3: Global Economy**, April 22-26, 2024

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) held the third one-week module of its **Global Leadership Program on Global Economic Issues** from April 22-26, 2024, in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Global Economics module focused on topics such as the shifting geo-economic trends; energy security in a time of crisis; sustainable development; effective leadership; Gulf countries in the global economic context; economy of oil and gas; emerging economies; industry, supply chain, role of technology; and monetary systems.

**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



# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

GRC Partnership Events



# Gulf Research Center & Ambrosetti Roundtable

## Gulf Research Center & Ambrosetti Roundtable: “New Relevance of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, and the Middle East - Global Perspectives”

January 15, 2024



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and The European House - Ambrosetti (TEHA) jointly organized a roundtable on January 14, 2024 at the GRC Riyadh office titled “New Relevance of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, and the Middle East - Global Perspectives.” The meeting brought together academics, diplomats, and business community representatives to examine Middle East geopolitics from a nuanced perspective. Welcoming remarks were made by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, and Luca Miraglia, CEO of The European House - Ambrosetti Middle East & Central Asia. The event featured key speaker Federico Rampini, journalist, writer, and principal expert in geopolitics at TEHA. Guests included H.E. Roberto Cantone, the

Italian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and H.E. Christophe Farnaud, the EU Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

In his talk, Mr. Rampini argued that several factors have enhanced Saudi Arabia’s global relevance:

- The war in Ukraine redirected focus away from Russia, aligning Europe with the Gulf for energy supplies.
- The pandemic and the new Cold War between the West and China increased interest in Middle Eastern partnerships for manufacturing.
- The renewed interest in Africa’s resource-rich landscape has led to collaborations with countries like Saudi Arabia.

## Gulf Research Center & Ambrosetti Roundtable

- The Abraham Accords initially marked a geopolitical innovation, though the landscape shifted following the October 7th Hamas attack.
- Saudi Vision 2030 and implemented social changes have attracted global interest.
- The issue of democracy and human rights within Western countries: Democracy and human rights debates in the West may see improved relations with Saudi Arabia due to shifting political ideologies.
- The geopolitical posture of KSA: The growing alignment between Saudi Arabia and Russia in OPEC+ raises concerns in the US, offering opportunities for China and Russia.
- The effects of the War in Gaza and the Red Sea turmoil highlighted Saudi Arabia's regional influence but also exposed diplomatic challenges.
- Business sentiment contradicts media narratives, as the business community sees Saudi Arabia as an optimistic, thriving market.

The discussions facilitated a thoughtful analysis of the changing geopolitical landscape, contributing to the discourse on the roles of regional powers such as Saudi Arabia in the international system.





# Inaugural Gulf Studies Symposium (GSS)

**Inaugural Gulf Studies Symposium (GSS)**  
**In partnership with the**  
**Gulf International Forum (GIF) & Georgetown University**  
March 4-5, 2024



The Gulf International Forum, in partnership with the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, organized the inaugural 'Gulf Studies Symposium (GSS),' which took place from March 4-5, 2024, at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. The GSS was inspired by the Gulf Research Meeting (GRM), organized by the Gulf Research Center in Cambridge since 2010.

Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice-President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), spoke at the Opening Ceremony and panel session which took place at Georgetown University's Gaston Hall.

The GSS 2024 consisted of seven workshop themes focused on Geopolitics; US-Gulf Policy; Defense and Security; Foreign Policies of the Gulf States; Energy Policy; Economy, Governance and Reform; Society and Culture. Find out more details [here](#).



## Symposium

Organized between the

Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the Gulf Research Center (GRC)

March 27, 2024



The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Gulf Research Center (GRC) organized a symposium on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, entitled 'Ramadan is a Unifying Ritual Among Islamic Peoples' at the OIC's headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, senior diplomats, intellectuals, and members of the media attended the symposium.

The symposium began with a welcoming speech by His Excellency the Secretary-General of the OIC followed by the Chairman of the GRC, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager. In his speech, Dr. Sager stressed the great importance of the OIC as the second largest international organization after the United Nations and the unifying voice of the Islamic world. He expressed his aspiration that

this symposium would be the start of cooperation between the organization's General Secretariat and the Gulf Research Center, and that it would be followed by many qualitative programs and events on other agreed-upon topics. Dr. Zaid Alfadeil moderated the panel session of the symposium.

Following the event, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Gulf Research Center as a cultural and knowledge partner. The memorandum was signed by the General Secretariat, H.E. Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs Ambassador Tariq Ali Bakheet, and the Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager in the presence of H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the OIC. More details can be found [here](#).

# Gstaad Middle East Dialogue

## Gstaad Middle East Dialogue

June 28-30, 2024

Gstaad, Switzerland



The Gulf Research Center (GRC), in partnership with the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP) and the Institute of Peace and Diplomacy (IPD), concluded a two-day closed workshop in Gstaad, Switzerland, from June 28-30, 2024, under the framework of the “Gstaad Middle East Dialogue,” in which mechanisms and implications for the Middle East post-October 7th were discussed.

The Gstaad Dialogue brings together – in a discreet, policy-focused annual dialogue – a diverse group of credible security and policy experts from the region to develop fresh thinking and pragmatic initiatives for addressing today’s regional dilemmas. Participants will be selected from the expert community, as well as from policymaking circles, to ensure that there is an impact at the decision-making level.



By involving relevant governmental actors, diplomatic representatives, well-connected experts, and members of civil society, the Gstaad Dialogue serves as a Track 1.5 “theory-to-implementation bridge.” Through open and robust discussions, it aims to identify common ground, distill important lessons, and produce actionable policy recommendations that will be conveyed to decision-makers for consideration. In addition, the Gstaad Dialogue serves as a laboratory for incubating and elaborating upon ideas that are being developed through ongoing dialogue in and about the Middle East.

“

**Through open and robust discussions, it aims to identify common ground, distill important lessons, and produce actionable policy recommendations that will be conveyed to decision-makers for consideration**

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# Young Voices on Saudi-German Academic Exchange

## Young Perspectives on Joint Cooperation: Enhancing the Saudi-German Academic Exchange



The Gulf Research Center (GRC), in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, organized the program on ‘Young Perspectives on Joint Cooperation: Enhancing the Saudi-German Academic Exchange’. The first session took place at the GRC’s office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from October 5 to 7, 2023.

The program is aimed to increase academic exchange between researchers from Germany, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia, on the other, by building and sustaining networks between individuals and institutions in both regions. Ten young researchers participated in the program, divided into separate two-person teams to work on specific issues and write a comprehensive policy brief on issues impacting Saudi-German ties. The workshop allowed for an initial exchange of views on such topics as Saudi Arabia and Germany in an era of energy transition, the strategic outlook of Saudi Arabia and Germany in a multipolar world, and Germany and Saudi Arabia in a period of social transition.

On June 11, 2024, the young researchers participated and presented their paper at the GCC-German Young Leaders Forum which was an exclusive side event of the 6th German-Arab Gulf Dialogue on Security and Cooperation organized by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the German-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG) in Berlin.



The researchers worked on their policy papers that were finally published on November 20, 2024:



**Germany and Saudi Arabia's Strategic Outlook in a Multipolar World**

**Preparing for the World Cup 2034**

**Youth Empowerment as a Pillar of Saudi-German Climate Cooperation**

# British International Studies Association (BISA) Conference

## GRC and the British International Studies Association (BISA) Conference July 8, 2024



**BISA** British  
International  
Studies  
Association

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the British International Studies Association (BISA) jointly organized its third mini-conference on Critical Reflections on Contemporary Foreign Policy Analysis through the BISA Foreign Policy Working Group at the University Arms Hotel in Cambridge on July 8, 2024.

**The program included four panels covering the following topics:**

1. Theoretical re-assessments of foreign policy in the current context
2. Economics and foreign policy: costs, capacity, and sanctions
3. Religion in foreign policy
4. Polycrisis: foreign policy and risk management



# Perspectives on Regional Security Workshop

Sideline Event at the Doha Forum 2025

December 8, 2024



In collaboration with the Doha Forum, New Ground Research (NGR) and the Gulf Research Center (GRC) convened a closed roundtable session titled “Perspectives on Regional Security” to discuss the recently launched Gulf Cooperation Council Vision for Regional Security. Held on December 8, 2024, on the sidelines of the Doha Forum, the session brought together prominent experts and representatives from the global think tank community.

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# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

### GRC MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

Collaboration with think tanks and research organizations is vital to the Gulf Research Center's mandate. The cooperation agreements the center has signed with several institutions worldwide aim to support each other in research, policy facilitation, and implementation of long-term conditions for peace, security, and sustainable development

# GRC MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

## Gulf Research Center (GRC) MoU with the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies



On January 29, 2024, the Gulf Research Center and the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies renewed the Memorandum of Understanding between the two centers. The agreement involves research exchanges, holding training courses between both institutions, and providing mutual support in capacity-building programs. The areas of cooperation also encompass joint research, dissemination of findings, convening conferences, and facilitating the exchange of scholars.

## Gulf Research Center (GRC) MoU with the Ministry of Economy and Planning of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



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 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](#).



## Gulf Research Center (GRC) MoU with Mashura Center for Research & Studies

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with the Prime Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Bisher Al-Khasawneh, before giving his lecture on Saudi-Jordanian relations at the invitation of the Mashura Center for Research & Studies in Amman, Jordan. Following the visit, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding in areas of mutual cooperation in research and executive training programs.



# GRC MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

## Gulf Research Center (GRC) and Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) MoU 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.

## Gulf Research Center (GRC) MoU with the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)



The Gulf Research Center and the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) 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.

## Gulf Research Center (GRC) MoU with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



The General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Gulf Research Center (GRC) organized a symposium on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, entitled 'Ramadan is a Unifying Ritual Among Islamic Peoples' at the OIC's headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, senior diplomats, intellectuals, and members of the media attended the symposium. Following the event, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Gulf Research Center as a cultural and knowledge partner. The memorandum was signed by the General Secretariat, H.E. Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs Ambassador Tariq Ali Bakheet, and the Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager in the presence of H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the OIC.

## Gulf Research Center (GRC) MoU with the Argentine Council for International Relations (CARI)



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Argentine Council for International Relations (CARI) have recently signed an MoU with the aim of deepening the understanding of relations between Latin America and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states. This collaboration seeks to enhance academic knowledge and provide practical insights into Latin America-GCC relations as part of the GCC-Latin America Research Program.



## GRC MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

### **Gulf Research Center (GRC) MoU with The European House - Ambrosetti (TEHA)**



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and The European House - Ambrosetti (TEHA), the first private think tank in Italy and among the top 10 in Europe, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on April 18, 2024. The goal of this cooperation is to enhance research, consultancy, and business collaborations, and to organize impactful events.

### **Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) MoU with the Mexican Council on Foreign Affairs (COMEXI)**



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Mexican Council on Foreign Affairs (COMEXI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 17 December 2024. This partnership aims to deepen the understanding of relations between Latin America and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states. As part of the GCC-Latin America Research Program, this collaboration will enhance academic knowledge and offer insights into the evolving dynamics of Latin America-GCC relations.

Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) MoU with Interpeace (International Organization for Peacebuilding - Geneva)

### **GRCF/GRC will cooperate with Interpeace to pursue the following objectives:**

- Promote the long-term conditions for peace, security, and sustainable development in the Middle East region and globally
- Build the capacity of institutions and peoples to assist in the planning, coordination and implementation of national, regional and international initiatives aimed at improving mutual understanding, resolving outstanding issues of conflict and promoting regional and trans-regional cooperation for stability and security
- Work towards the development of a common agenda for peace and security in the Middle East region and globally, based on the principles of non-violent interaction and mutually sustaining cooperation



# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

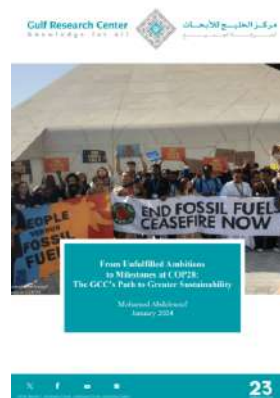
### GRC PUBLICATIONS

The Gulf Research Center produces a wide variety of publications through its research programs, projects, and the Gulf Research Meetings. GRC's publications can be accessed on its website [here](#), and the commentary and analyses can be found [here](#).

## Commentary & Analyses



**GCC-Iceland Relations**  
Amnah Mosly  
January 2024



**From Unfulfilled Ambitions to Milestones at COP28- The GCC's Path to Greater Sustainability**  
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf  
January 2024



**China's Regional's Diplomacy and Strategy in Light of the Gaza Crisis**  
Layla Ali  
January 2024



**BRICS & Saudi Arabia's Membership: What Does This Mean?**  
Layla Ali  
January 2024



**Brazil's Dual Path: Between its OPEC+ Alliance and its Renewable Energy Leadership**  
Hannan Alghamdi  
January 2024



**Saudi Arabia Needs to See a New Approach from Washington**  
Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
January 2024



**Saudi Arabia-African Summit: the Road Ahead**  
Michael W. Wilson  
January 2024

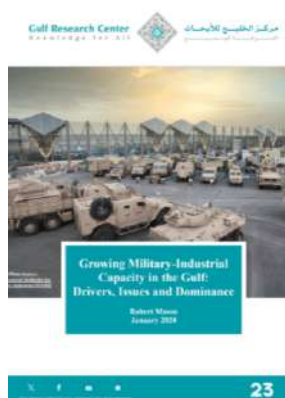


**Repeating the Mistakes of the 2003 Iraq Invasion**  
Dr. Christian Koch  
January 2024



# GRC PUBLICATIONS

## Commentary & Analyses



### Growing Military-Industrial Capacity in the Gulf: Drivers, Issues and Dominance

Robert Mason  
January 2024



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

Amnah Mosly  
February 2024



### Eurasian Powers Are Benefiting from the War in Gaza

Emil Avadliani  
January 2024



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

Robert Mason  
February 2024



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

Layla Ali  
February 2024



### Europe and Red Sea Security

Dr. Christian Koch  
February 2024



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

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
February 2024



### The Gaza Crisis and Japan's Position

Noriko Suzuki  
February 2024

# GRC PUBLICATIONS

## Commentary & Analyses



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

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf

February 2024



### Security of the Red Sea Shipping Corridor: International Responsibilities and the Role of Japan

Noriko Suzuki

March 2024



### ICJ Ruling: Impact and Implications

Christine Williams

February 2024



### Reflections on the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Rio De Janeiro

Hannan Alghamdi

March 2024



### GCC-Lithuania Relations

Amnah Mosly

March 2024



### Towards a Sustainable Ramadan

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf

March 2024



### Free and Open: From the Indo-Pacific to the Red Sea and Beyond

Robert Mason

March 2024



### Saudi-Iran Rapprochement: One Year On

Layla Ali

March 2024

# GRC PUBLICATIONS

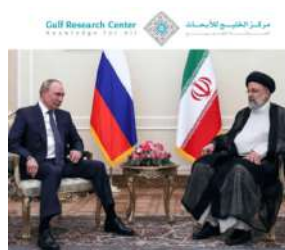
## Commentary & Analyses



### GCC-Latvia Relations

Amnah Mosly

March 2024



### Iran and Russia Align to Build a New Order

Emil Avdalani

April 2024



### Europe and Regional Security in the Gulf

Dr. Christian Koch

April 2024



### GCC-CIS Relations: Developing Regional Cooperation

Layla Ali

April 2024



### GCC-EU Ties are Progressing but Obstacles Remain

Original Piece Published by (Arab News)

Dr. Christian Koch

April 2024



### Cultural Cooperation: Saudi Arabia and China

Amnah Mosly

April 2024



### Beyond the Gloves: Developments in Saudi Arabia's Boxing Sector

Amnah Mosly

May 2024



### Scope and Facets of Japan-Saudi Arabia Relations

Noriko Suzuki

May 2024





# GRC PUBLICATIONS

## Commentary & Analyses



### GCC States' Initial Steps to Combat Desertification

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf

May 2024



### Reforming the United Nations: A GCC Perspective

Christine Williams

May 2024



### GCC-Latin America Trade and Investment Relations

Hannan Alghamdi

May 2024



### Europe's Toughened Stance on Migration

Dr. Christian Koch and Houda Barroug

May 2024



### GCC-Norway Relations

Amnah Mosly

June 2024



### Gulf Investments in China: A New Strategic Partnerships (Published in ISPI Dossier)

Layla Ali

June 2024



### Opportunities and Limits of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum

Layla Ali

June 2024



### From Black Gold to White Gold: Saudi Arabia's Move into Lithium

Hannan Alghamdi

July 2024



## Commentary & Analyses



### China's Strategic Diplomacy: Analyzing Recent Unity Deal Between Hamas and Fatah

Layla Ali  
July 2024



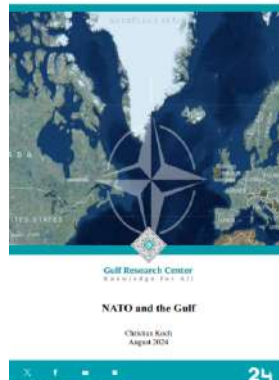
### Nayib Bukele and Saudi Arabia: A New Era of Relations

Hannan Alghamdi  
August 2024



### GCC-NATO Relations: The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)

Amnah Mosly  
July 2024



### NATO and the Gulf

Dr. Christian Koch  
August 2024



### Saudi-Canada Relations: One Year Later

Amnah Mosly  
July 2024



### From the Desert to the Mines: The GCC's Role in Africa's Mineral Development

Michael Wilson  
August 2024



### Risks to Rapprochement: The Death of President Raisi, the Israel-Gaza War, and Iranian Regional Policy

Robert Mason  
July 2024



### What Does President Biden's Withdrawal Mean?

Amnah Mosly  
August 2024

## Commentary & Analyses



Gulf Research Center  
KNOWLEDGE FOR ALL  
Assessing the Impact of President Pezeshkian's Election on GCC-Iran Relations & What Should GCC States Expect  
Layla Ali  
August 2024

### Assessing the Impact of President Pezeshkian's Election on GCC-Iran Relations & What Should GCC States Expect

Layla Ali

August 2024



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### A Regional and Global Perspective on the Venezuelan Crisis

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What a Harris Administration Could Mean for the Gulf and Wider Middle East  
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### What a Harris Administration Could Mean for the Gulf and Wider Middle East

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### GCC-Sweden Relations

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### GCC Role in the UN Summit of the Future

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Shifting Contours of Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy  
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### Shifting Contours of Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy

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On the Right Track: The EU and the GCC Must Maintain the Momentum Towards a True Strategic Partnership  
Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
September 2024

### On the Right Track: The EU and the GCC Must Maintain the Momentum Towards a True Strategic Partnership

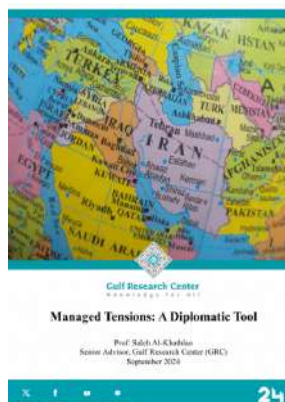
Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

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# GRC PUBLICATIONS

## Commentary & Analyses



### Managed Tensions: A Diplomatic Tool

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan

September 2024



### The SCO: Expansion Drive in an Unstable World

Emil Avdaliani

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### Saudi Arabia and the United States: Renewing the Strategic Relationship in Complex Times

Amnah Mosly

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### China's Empire in Africa: Key Takeaways for GCC Countries

Houda Barroug

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### Gulf-Europe Relations

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan

September 2024



### Japan's Perspective Towards Iran's Foreign Policy: The Gaza Crisis and Beyond

Kenta Aoki

September 2024



### The Governance of Natural Resources in Africa and the Role of the Gulf States

Hubert Kinkoh

September 2024



### The Changing Paradigm of the EU's Institutional Foundations of Security

Houda Barroug

October 2024

## Commentary & Analyses



**New Alliances: The 2024 BRICS Summit and Its Strategic Implications for the Gulf Region**

Layla Ali\*

November 2024



**New Alliances: The 2024 BRICS Summit and Its Strategic Implications for the Gulf Region**

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October 2024



**Enhancing Gulf-Europe Relations: GCC-Benelux and Northern Europe**

Amnah Mosly

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**Conflict Resolution Efforts by GCC States in Africa**

Hubert Kinkoh\*

October 2024



**Conflict Resolution Efforts by GCC States in Africa**

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October 2024



**From Ports to Pipelines: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Influence on Africa's Oil and Gas Landscape**

Michael William Wilson\*

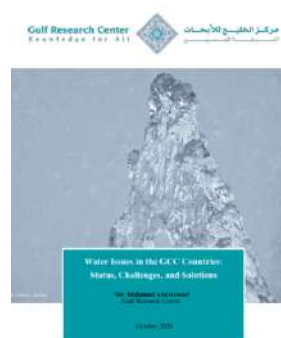
October 2024



**From Ports to Pipelines: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Influence on Africa's Oil and Gas Landscape**

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**Water Issues in the GCC Countries: Status, Challenges, and Solutions**

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf

October 2024



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Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf

October 2024



**EU-GCC: Time Looks Ripe for Security and Defense Cooperation**

Published in ISPI Dossier

By Aldo Lupo and Chiara Lorenzini

Houda Barroug and Eleonora Ardemagni

October 2024



**EU-GCC: Time Looks Ripe for Security and Defense Cooperation (Published in ISPI Dossier)**

Houda Barroug and Eleonora Ardemagni

October 2024



**An EU-GCC Summit at a Critical Time: Is Europe Ready?**

Christian Koch\*

October 2024



**An EU-GCC Summit at a Critical Time: Is Europe Ready?**

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**The EU-Mercosur Agreement: Europe's Most Polarizing Trade Deal**

Hannan Alghamdi

November 2024



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November 2024

## Commentary & Analyses



**Towards a Renewed Commitment: Regional Leadership, Transitioning U.S. Policy, and the Imperative for Resolving the Palestinian Issue**

Layla Ali

November 2024



**A Shift in Policy Towards Syria: How Far Should the EU Go?**

Houda Barroug

November 2024



**A Disappointing COP 29**

Mohamed Abdelraouf

November 2024



**GCC-US Relations in Trump's Second Term: It's Not Necessarily All Bad News**

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan

November 2024



**GCC-US Relations, Regional Instability, and the Second Trump Administration**

Amnah Mosly

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**Strategic Energy Partnerships: The GCC and South Korea's Path to Energy Security**

Noriko Suzuki

November 2024



**New Faces, Old Challenges: A Path Forward**

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**Partners in Defiance: Russia and Iran Move Closer to Alliance**

Emil Avdaliani

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### Saudi Arabia is Leading the Way in Combating Desertification

Mohamed Abdelraouf

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### Saudi-U.S. Relations: Navigating a Second Trump Term

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager  
December 2024



### Strengthening Ties with the Caribbean: GCC Relations with the Dominican Republic

Hannan Alghamdi  
December 2024



### Extremism in the Sahel: A Region in Crisis and the Search for New Allies

Michael William Wilson  
December 2024



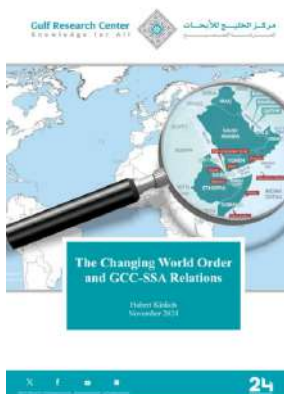
### Towards a Renewed Commitment: Regional Leadership, Transitioning U.S. Policy, and the Imperative for Resolving the Palestinian Issue

Layla Ali  
December 2024



### GCC-NB8 Relations

Amnah Mosly  
December 2024



### The Changing World Order and GCC-SSA Relations

Hubert Kinkoh  
December 2024



### The Rise of a Confident Central Asia

Emil Avdaliani  
December 2024

## Araa Magazine



‘Araa’ is an Arabic word meaning opinions or perspectives. Araa Magazine **مجلة آراء حول الخليج** (translated as Perspectives from around the Gulf) is a monthly periodical that focuses on the affairs of the Gulf region, providing in-depth analyses in Arabic of current affairs in Gulf security, politics, economics, environment, energy, and social issues, in addition to the challenges that the region is facing in these areas. Araa was the first Gulf periodical specializing in Gulf affairs bringing together a network of more than 600 contributing writers, including scholars, academics, and other specialists working in the Gulf region. It is a concrete reference for those in academia and higher education working at various

regional universities. Araa Magazine is an independent platform that provides a space for differing opinions within social and moral responsibility. Click here for all Araa Magazines.



## The following are the twelve issues of Araa Magazine that were published in 2024:

### Issue 193 (January 2024)



Harvest of the Past Year and Anticipation of a Year to Come (2023/2024)

### Issue 194 (February 2024)



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

### Issue 195 (March 2024)



Security of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa: International and Regional Responsibility

### Issue 196 (April 2024)



The Gulf Vision for Regional Security: Starting Points - Goals - Joint Efforts

### Issue 197 (May 2024)



The Third Anniversary of the Russian-Ukrainian War: Chances of Settlement or Escalation

### Issue 198 (June 2024)



The Impact of the US-China Trade War on the Arab Region and the Gulf States

### Issue 199 (July 2024)



The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI): The Relationship Between Gulf States and NATO and the Need for

### Issue 200 (July 2024)



International Courts and Protecting the Rights of People of Third World Countries

### Issue 201 (August 2024)



Water and Food Security in the Arab Region: Challenges and Sustainable Solutions

### Issue 202 (October 2024)



The Impact of the Rise of the Far Right in Europe on International and Regional Relations

### Issue 203 (November 2024)



Arab Maghreb Union Countries: Challenges and Catalysts

### Issue 204 (December 2023)



Chances of Peace and War in the Middle East: Prospects and Solutions





**Review of the International Court of Justice's Ruling Regarding Gaza**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
January 2024



**Joint Defense Agreements: Between Restlessness and Anxiety**  
Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
January 2024



**Genocide Lawsuit Against Israel: Importance, Rationale, Expected Outcomes, and Feasibility**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
January 2024



**The Proposed Maritime Route between Cyprus and Gaza: An Israeli Strategy for Displacement and Reinforcing the Blockade, or an International Effort to Alleviate the Suffering of Palestinians?**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
January 2024



**The Genocide Case Against Israel. Guidance from Gambia v. Myanmar and Relevant Cases**  
Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
January 2024



**Gaza War "One Hundred Days' Harvest"**  
Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf  
January 2024



**Challenging the Illusion of the Two-State Solution: Examining Israeli Extremism**  
Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
January 2024



**Analyzing the Assassination of Saleh Al-Arouri: Unraveling Complex Questions and Exploring Possible Answers**  
Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf  
January 2024



**The United States' Role in Fueling the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Point of View**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
January 2024



### America's Veto on Algeria's Request to Stop the War

Yousef Kamil Khattab

February 2024



### Israel's Violation of International Law: Humanity and Custom in the War on Gaza

Yousef Kamil Khattab

February 2024



### Moscow Defies War, Sanctions, and Snow?

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan

February 2024



### Mercenaries in Israel's War on the Gaza Strip: Numbers and Meanings

Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf

February 2024



### The Visit of the Sudanese Foreign Minister to Iran and its Implications

Yousef Kamil Khattab

February 2024



### Suspension of Funding to UNRWA: A New American-European Collaboration Against Palestinians in Gaza

Yousef Kamil Khattab

February 2024



### Results of the Presidential Elections in Russia (Expected Implications and Repercussions)

Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf

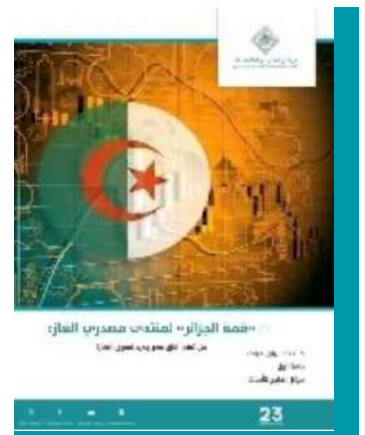
March 2024



### The Economic Crisis in Egypt: Causes, Consequences, and Signs of a Solution

Yousef Kamil Khattab

March 2024



### The "Algeria Summit" of the Gas Exporters Forum: Does it open the horizons of a new era for the gas market?

Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf

March 2024





### Saudi Arabia Through the Eyes of Experts

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan

March 2024



### Israel Bombed the Iranian Consulate in Damascus: A Clear Crossing of the Borders of the Conflict and Violating International Norms

Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf

April 2024



### The Present and Future of the Russian World: Reading a Russian Document

Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf

April 2024



### The Upcoming Saudi-American Defense Agreement - Its Content, Objectives, Conditions, Challenges, and Scenarios

Yousef Kamil Khattab

May 2024



### Escalation of Global Military Spending: A Numerical Analysis of the Causes and Implications

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May 2024



### Normalization and the Keys of the White House

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan

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### A Year of Conflict in Sudan. What are the results...and where are things headed?

Yousef Kamil Khattab

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### American University Movements: Rebellion Against Zionist Beliefs or Circumstantial Movements?

Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf

May 2024



### The Launch of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Leaders' Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan

Ambassador Madyar Menelbekov

June 2024





### The Iranian Presidential Elections and their Domestic, International, and Regional Impact

Yousef Kamil Khattab  
June 2024



### Putin and Kim: Comments on the Visit

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
June 2024



### Sudan's Orientation Towards Russia: Historical Dimensions, Current Motivations, and Future Implications

Yousef Kamil Khattab  
June 2024



### The Global South: When Illusion Intersects with the Truth

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
June 2024



### The Rise of Extreme Right-Wing Gains in European Elections

Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf  
June 2024



### Riyadh and Washington: Towards a Partnership for the Next Five Decades

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
June 2024



### China's Strategic Diplomacy: Analyzing Recent Unity Deal Between Hamas and Fatah

Layla Ali  
July 2024



### American Foreign Policy in Trump's Second Term

Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
July 2024



### Artificial Intelligence and Deepfakes: Will They Become a Weapon for Extremist Groups to Spread Hate Speech?

Dr. Musaab Faleh Alharbi  
July 2024



**The Election of Candidate Masoud Pezeshkian as President of Iran: Internal, Regional, and International Implications**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
July 2024



**Bangladesh and the Administration of the Geopolitical Conflict Between the Asian Triangular Nuclear Power**  
Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf  
August 2024



**The Current Situation in the Middle East Amid Rising Tensions between Iran and Israel**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
August 2024



**Ukraine's Attack on Russia's Kursk: Does it Change the Rules of War in Ukraine?**  
Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf  
August 2024



**The Saudi National Anthem and the American Jazz Musician: A Project That Never Saw the Light of Day**  
Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
September 2024



**Implications of Ukrainian Forces' Incursion into Kursk**  
Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
September 2024



**Algerian Presidential Elections**  
Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf  
September 2024



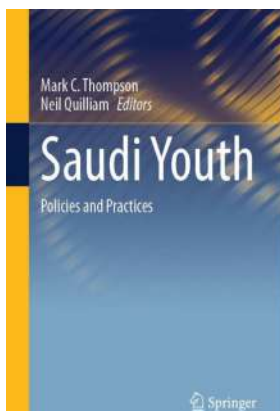
**BRICS as Seen by the Russians**  
Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan  
October 2024



**The Development of the Russian-Ukrainian War in Light of the Modernization of the Russian Nuclear Doctrine**  
Yousef Kamil Khattab  
December 2024

## Books & Reports

### GRM 2021 Publication



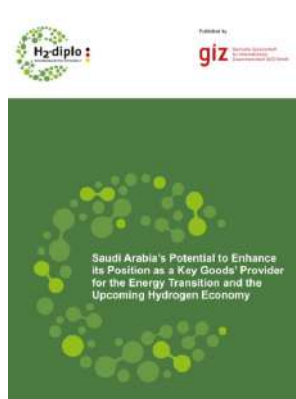
The Gulf Research Center is proud to announce the publication of another Gulf Research Meeting volume. Editors Mark C. Thompson and Neil Quilliam have put together “Saudi Youth: Policies and Practices,” which delves into the

complexities of youth policy in contemporary Saudi Arabia in various dimensions such as sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural spheres.

View the volume at the following link:  
Saudi Youth: Policies and Practices Springer  
[Link: https://t.co/j8q7y9bd1d](https://t.co/j8q7y9bd1d)



**GCC and Swiss Economic Outlook**  
August 2024



**Saudi Arabia's Potential to Enhance its Position as a Key Goods' Provider for the Energy Transition and the Upcoming Hydrogen Economy**

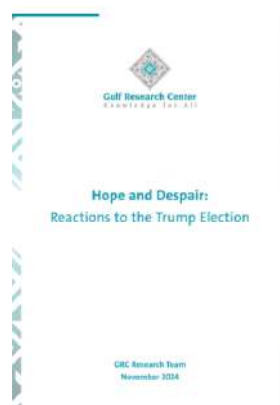
Dr. Mohamed Raouf for German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ)

August 2024



**The Economy of Saudi Arabia in the 21st Century**  
Prospects and Realities

Edited by John Sfakianakis



**Hope and Despair: Reactions to the Trump Election**

GRC Research Team

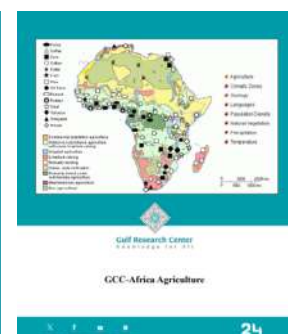
November 2024

### Reports



**GCC-Sub-Saharan African Countries: Relations and Opportunities**

August 2024



**GCC-Africa Agriculture**  
Gulf Research Center

November 2024



## Country Updates and Trade Reports



**France-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
March 2024



**Spain-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
March 2024



**US-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
March 2024  
September 2024



**German-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
May 2024



**Syria-GCC Relations**  
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June 2024



**India-GCC Relations**  
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August 2024



**Türkiye-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
August 2024



**China-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
August 2024



**Hungary-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
August 2024

## Country Updates and Trade Reports



**Australia-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
August 2024



**Canada-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
September 2024

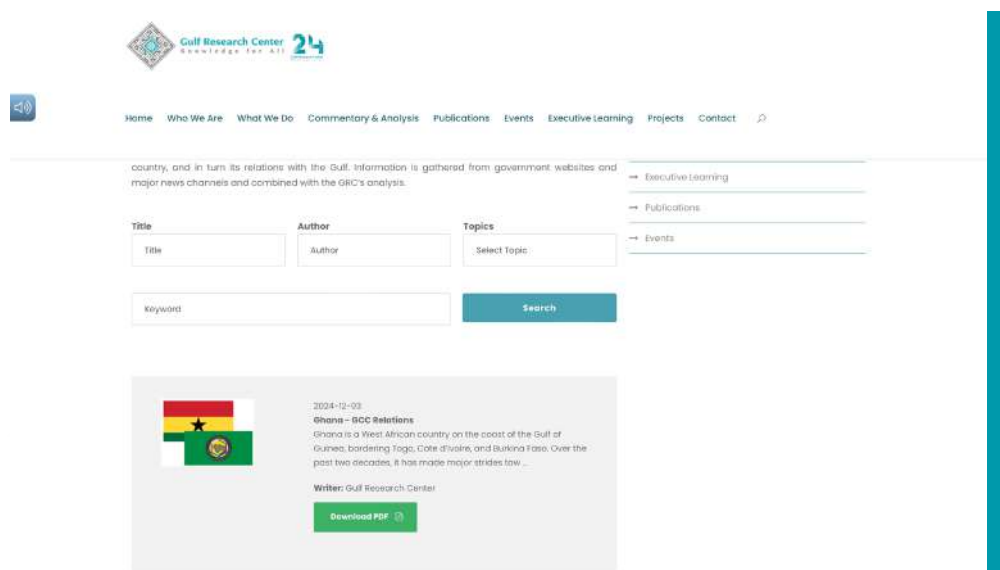


**South Africa-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
November 2024

Access GRC Publication Website [here](#).



**Ghana-GCC Relations**  
Gulf Research Center  
November 2024



## GRC's Annual Strategic Review 2024



The Gulf Research Center launched its Annual Strategic Survey on July 4, 2024. The chapters in this volume seek to provide some insight into how the Gulf countries have perceived the changing regional and international scene and how their role is central to the outcome of the developments taking place.

Key developments stand out when one looks at the Gulf's strategic environment and position as of 2024. The Gulf region

continues to grapple with the devastating crisis in Gaza and the strategic repercussions it has had for the Middle East as a whole and puts the GCC states in a difficult position. The tragic events of October 7 were a stark reminder that stability in the region cannot be achieved until a just and equitable solution to the Palestinian issue culminating in the establishment of a Palestinian state is achieved. Unfortunately, the conflict continues unabated with the current Israeli government displaying absolutely no willingness to undertake the necessary steps towards a resolution to the crisis. This undermines not only regional stability but also highlights the failure of the wider international community to push for and implement a needed response.

This volume also delves into the various focus issues that have emerged as key priorities when it comes to the Gulf, ranging from the security of the Red Sea, the question of reform of the GCC, and the Gulf's relations with Asia, in addition to key developments and challenges for the GCC labor markets.

The Gulf Research Center's goal is to foster informed dialogue and policy-making by presenting data and analyses that reflect the perspectives and priorities of the GCC states.

Read the full report [here](#).



# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

### GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

Throughout 2024, the GRC participated in numerous external events, both online and in person, on issues pertaining to the developments in the Gulf region and its wider neighborhood. GRC places particular emphasis on such participation as it allows for a regional perspective to be included in the overall debate. The following is an overview of the key events in which the GRC participated.

# GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**January 3, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, participated as a speaker in a panel at the Arab Strategy Forum in Dubai, UAE, entitled 'Twenty Years Since the Iraq Invasion: The Consequences and Results.' Dr. Sager discussed how Iraq has turned into an arena used to launch new operations, and how the country entered a phase of greater presence of foreign forces.

**January 12 and 16, 2024**



**Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research, held the following meetings in Brussels:**

- With the staff of the EU Special Representative of the Gulf office including Philipp Schönbrun-Kappman, Political Advisor; Elsa Jouanolou, also Political Advisor
- Christos Aivaliotis, Policy Officer in the European Commission Directorate for Education, Youth and Sports where he works on the GCC states where the focus was on the various educational opportunities offered to the GCC through Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus Mundus Plus.

- Perla Srour-Gandon of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Beatrix Immelkamp and the European Parliamentary Research Service
- Birgit Loeser, Head of Division of MENA Regional Affairs and Ingo Schendel, OIC Desk Coordinator in the European External Action Service
- Amer Mohamed Al-Amr, Deputy Head of Delegation of the GCC in Brussels and Abdulwahab Besharah, Counsellor.

**January 16, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, received at the center's headquarters in Riyadh, a number of students visiting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as part of the Kingdom Gateway program that the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies is working on and targets visiting students from a number of prestigious universities from outside the Kingdom.

**January 16, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, received His Excellency Mr. Javier Solana, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, former Secretary-General of NATO, former High Representative for the

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

European Union, and former Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, at the Center's headquarters in Riyadh. During the meeting, several topics related to the Gulf and the Middle East regions were discussed.

**January 17, 2014**



Dr. Saleh Al Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center, and Dr. Saud Alsehali examined the dissertation of Dr. Fahad Suleiman Al Farraj titled "The Arab Press Discourse Towards the Western Approach to Human Rights Issues in the Arab World: An Analytical Study on a Sample of Arab Newspapers." Dr. Al Farraj successfully obtained his PhD degree from the Department of Journalism and New Media at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University under the supervision of Dr. Abdullah Al Rifai.

**January 18, 2024**



At the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, participated in a dialogue session held at the Ministry's headquarters in Manama on January 18, 2024, as part of the activities of the Conference of Heads of Missions of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The session discussed the competition between great powers, the resulting challenges and opportunities, and the role of Middle Eastern countries

in this emerging global order. The former Ambassador of the European Union, Mr. Marc Pierini, participated in the discussion.

**January 24, 2024**

GRC Chairman Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Vice-President Dr. Ahmed Sager, Director of Research, Dr. Christian Koch, and GRC Senior Advisor Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan participated in a discussion at the Japanese Embassy in Riyadh with Kazutaka Kawahara, Deputy Chief of Missions; Kazuhiro Higashi, Charge d'Affaires and Fumihiko Goto, Counsellor and Head of the Political Section in which they discussed recent developments and the impact on GCC-Japan ties.

**January 24, 2024**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, and Dr. Christian Koch, GRC's Director of Research, attended the reception hosted by Amb. Christophe Farnoud of the EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the framework of the first EU-GCC Security Dialogue held in Riyadh.

**January 25, 2024**

The GRC Riyadh office received Beatriz Salvador Garcia, Deputy Head of Division, MENA.1 Regional Affairs at the European External Action Service in Brussels. She was accompanied by Jaap Ora, Deputy Head of Mission of the EU Delegation Office in Riyadh and Lacramioara Iwaz, Political Officer at the EU Delegation. From the GRC side, Chairman Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Vice-President Dr. Ahmed Sager and the Director of Research Dr. Christian Koch attended the meeting. The two sides discussed the status of overall EU-GCC relations and elaborated on ways the institutional cooperation can be enhanced.



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**January 28, 2024**



Prof. Dr. Saleh bin Muhammad Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center and Member of the National Society for Human Rights, announced the results of the elections of the Saudi Journalists Association in electing a new Board of Directors for the Authority in his capacity as Chairman of the Election Monitoring Committee.

**January 29, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a lecture entitled 'The Centrality of the Jordanian-Saudi Relationship in Light of Regional Crises' at the Mashura Center for Studies in Amman, Jordan. The lecture was moderated by Dr. Amer Al-Sabaila. Dr. Zaid Al-Fadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media program also attended the lecture. More details about the lecture can be found [here](#).

**January 29, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with the Prime Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Bisher Al-Khasawneh, before giving his lecture on Saudi-Jordanian relations at the invitation of the Mashura Center for Studies and Research in Amman, Jordan

**February 1, 2024**

**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 Quamar**  
Associate Professor at Centre for  
West Asian Studies, School of  
International Studies

**Moderator**

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

**Thursday, 1 February 2024**  
14:00-15:30 | Jakarta Time  
10:00-11:30 | Riyadh Time

**12:30-14:00 | New Delhi Time**  
**07:00-08:30 | London Time**

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](#).

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**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 together 100 experts from over 35 countries to discuss developments in the region.

**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 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.

**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–Arab World, the Regional CSR Network, and CJC MENA. The forum covered 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.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**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 (KFCRIS), which gathers a cohort of students to explore the different parts and cities of the Kingdom.



**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 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](#).



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**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 included 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 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 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) 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 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](#).

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**February 21, 2024**



**Abdulaziz Sager**

*Chair, Gulf Research Center (Saudi Arabia)*

**The Gulf Cooperation Council States Could Help in De-escalation**

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](#).

**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.

**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 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



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

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 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, 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 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 28, 2024**



Javaid Iqbal, Member of the Senior Management and Member of the Board of Trustees 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



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

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 29 - March 1, 2024**



Prof. Saleh Alkhathlan, 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 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.

**March 1, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program 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.

**March 3, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program spoke in the closing session of the UN Science-Policy-Business Forum convened during the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6). Dr. Raouf reflected on the importance of effective engagement of the Major Groups at

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

all levels of decision making as well as the need for new economic, environmentally adjusted indicators to measure our progress in achieving sustainable development goals at all levels.

**March 5, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a virtual speaker in a seminar organized by the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) and the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington D.C., USA. The title of the session was “Dynamics of the Middle East” and it examined the role of regional powers amidst the ongoing crisis, in addition to global power competition and cooperation.

**March 6, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), hosted a dinner in Riyadh in honor of H.E. The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, who was accompanied by her delegation and the Canadian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Ambassador Jean-Philippe Linteau, as well as some of the Saudi dignitaries, including the Saudi Ambassador to Canada H.E. Ambassador Amal Al-Muallami.

**March 7, 2024**



Layla Ali, Researcher and Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research, held a discussion with the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia think tank. They discussed the cooperation between the two institutions focusing on joint activities and research.

**March 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received at the GRC's office in Jeddah the Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Jeddah, Mr. Wang Zhimin. During the meeting, Gulf-Chinese relations and a number of topics of common interest were discussed.

**March 11, 2024**

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research, participated in an online discussion entitled “Transformation Trends: Less democratic, less successful” in conjunction with the release of the 2024 Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI). The BTI is a global report on democracy, the economy and governance in 137 developing and transforming countries to shed light on the state of democracy, market economy and governance. The 2024 report covers the years 2021 to 2023.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

### March 14, 2024

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research, met with Adeline Bouche, Delegate to the Working Party on the Middle East/Gulf from the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the European Union. They discussed issues within the context of EU-GCC relations.

### March 18-20, 2024



Layla Ali, Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the NEXT Milan Forum 2024 entitled “Empowering Future Leaders” organized by the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI). She participated as a speaker in a masterclass session entitled “Think Tanks and Policymaking: Access and Impact,” in which she discussed the challenges impacting policymaking and the role of think tanks in the context of the Gulf region.

### March 25, 2024



The Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, received His Excellency Ramūnas Davidonis,

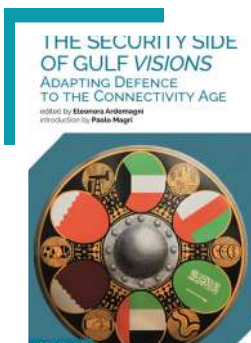
Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Jeddah. During the meeting, several topics related to the Gulf and Lithuania as well as GCC-Baltic relations were discussed.

### March 26, 2024



Layla Ali, Researcher and Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research, held a discussion with the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI). They discussed the cooperation between the two institutions, focusing on joint activities and research.

### March 26, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), contributed a chapter on the perspective of the impact of the Gulf Visions on foreign and defence policy to the report published by Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) entitled The Security Side of Gulf Visions. Dr. Sager’s chapter examines ‘The Regional and World Vision Behind Saudi Transformation.’ Access the full publication [here](#).



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**March 27, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a webinar organized by Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) on the issue of ‘Gulf in the Horn: Rivalries, Interests, Projections.’ Dr. Sager discussed the Gulf position in the Horn of Africa, and given its proximity to the Red Sea, taking into consideration its maritime, commercial, and security value for the Gulf countries.

**March 28, 2024**



Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan participated in the forum organized by the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh as it launched its vision for regional security held at the headquarters of the GCC in Riyadh in the presence of the Secretary-General of the Council, members of the diplomatic corps in the Kingdom, and representatives of regional and international organizations and research centers.

**April 17, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated virtually as a speaker in a panel entitled ‘Regional Politics: Shifting Alliances Amid Rising Instability’ at the 8th edition of the Sulaimani Forum that took place from April 17-18, 2024, at the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani, organized by the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS). The forum opened with keynote speeches from Barham A. Salih, former President of Iraq, Nechirvan Idris Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region, and Mr. Ammar al-Hakim, Head of the National Wisdom Movement. Watch Dr. Sager’s participation in the panel session [here](#).

**April 24-27, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center,

presented a paper titled “Climate Change as an Emerging Security Threat: Cases from MENA Region,” organized by Gulf Studies Center - Qatar University and the International Studies and Security Research Association - Turkey in Bodrum, Turkey. The workshop was supported by NATO’s Emerging Security Challenges Division under the Science for Peace and Security Programme.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**April 24 and 25, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research attended the Third Conference on Promoting Regional Security in the Gulf/MENA Region hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland and the European External Action Service. The meeting brought together officials from European governments alongside representatives from European think tanks working on the projects related to Middle Eastern and Gulf security. H.E. Luigi Di Maio, the EU's Special Representative for the Gulf region attended the meeting and provided an overview of EU-GCC developments including the High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation that took place on April 22, 2024 in Luxemburg.

**April 29, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received H.E. Mr. Diego Martínez Belío, Secretary of State for Foreign and Global Affairs of Spain, and his accompanying delegation, along with H.E. Mr. Jorge Hevia, Ambassador of Spain to

Saudi Arabia at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations in fields of interest and ongoing regional developments.

### **The delegation included:**

- H.E. Ms. Carmen Magariños Casal, General Director for the Maghreb, Mediterranean and Middle East
- Ms. Maria Luisa Benítez-Donoso Tarascón, Chief of Staff
- Rt. Hon. Mr. Pablo Pérez Guerreira, Deputy Director General of the Middle East
- Mr. Sufyan Barhoum, Embassy Protocol Officer

**April 29, 2024**



On April 29, 2024, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met at the GRC's office in Riyadh with the Senior Advisor to the European Institute of Peace (EIP), Mr. Patrick de Vries, accompanied by the EIP's Senior Advisor and former State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden, Ms. Annika Söder, and the Programme Manager of the Middle East Programs at the EIP, Mr. Jamie Pleydell-Bouverie. During the meeting, various regional and international issues of common interest and ways of cooperation between the EIP and the GRC were discussed.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**April 30, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), chaired a panel session of the ‘Saudi, German and European Perspectives on a Changing World: Middle East Peace, Maritime Security, Multipolar World?’ in Riyadh organized by the Center for European Studies at Prince Saud Al-Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies (IDS) in cooperation with the German Embassy Riyadh and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). Dr. Sager chaired the session, which discussed multipolarity and the role and influence of the Arab Gulf and Europe in a complex world. Participating in the session was Prof. Volker Perthes, Senior Advisor SWP and former UN Under Secretary-General and Special Representative for Sudan.

**April 30, 2024**



Her Excellency Ana Milena Muñoz de Gaviria, the Non-resident Ambassador of Colombia to Saudi Arabia, was welcomed at the Gulf Research Center (GRC) office in Riyadh by Chairman Dr. Abdulaziz Sager. Her visit focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the GRC’s recent initiatives, with a particular interest in the GCC-Latin America Research Program. This recently launched program aims

to foster mutual understanding and promote cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council and Latin American countries, as well as enhance partnerships with research centers and official channels.

**May 1, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended the opening of the Embassy of the Republic of El Salvador in Riyadh. During the inauguration, Dr. Abdulaziz met with the Foreign Affairs Minister, H.E. Alexandra Hill, and H.E. Ambassador Ricardo Cusalón. They discussed the Kingdom’s cooperation with Latin American countries, a key interest of the GCC-Latin America Research Program at the Gulf Research Center. They also explored potential collaborations between think tanks in El Salvador and the GCC.

**May 6, 2024**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Serge Stroobants, Director of Europe & MENA at the Institute for Economics and Peace, at the GRC office in Riyadh to discuss areas of cooperation.

**May 6, 2024**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Maria Fantappie, Middle East & Africa Program at Istituto Affari Internazionali, at the GRC office in Riyadh, and discussed regional developments.



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**May 7, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended a workshop organized by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, The German-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG), and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Riyadh. The workshop focused on Palestine and Ukraine: Perspectives and Potential Cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Europe.

**May 8, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC, attended the opening of the first European Chamber of Commerce (ECCKSA) in the Gulf in Riyadh which was hosted by H.E. Ambassador Christophe Farnaud, the EU Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman.

**May 15, 2024**

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC, met with Birgit Loeser, Head of

MENA.1, Beatriz Salvador Garcia, Deputy Head of Division, and Elizabetta La Gala, Policy Officer at the European External Action Service to discuss recent developments in EU-GCC Relations and the work of the GRC in this regard.

**May 18, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at GRC, attended the annual conference of EuroMeSCo held in Brussels on May 16 and 17, 2024. The theme of the conference was “Mediterranean Foresight: Exploring Future Scenarios of Cooperation” with more than 100 researchers and specialists attending the discussions.

**May 19, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the high-level meeting co-organized by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), Nizami Ganjavi International Center, and the United Nations Alliance of

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

Civilizations (UNAOC), entitled ‘Global Uncertainties - What Lies Ahead in the Middle East,’ in Riyadh. Dr. Sager chaired and moderated the session ‘The Middle East in a New Global Geopolitics.’ Speakers of the session included:

- H.E. Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the Arab League 2001-2011, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt 1991-2001
- H.E. Miguel Angel Moratinos, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations; Under-Secretary General of the United Nations
- H.E. Dr. Marwan Al-Muasher, Foreign Minister (2002–2004), Deputy Prime Minister (2004–2005) of Jordan
- H.E. Dr. Abdel Aziz Hamad Aluwaisheg, Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Negotiation Affairs for the Gulf Cooperation Council

**May 20, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received a delegation from Mitsui & Co. Ltd. Global Strategic Studies Institute (MGSSI) Think Tank from Japan in the GRC's office in Riyadh on May 20, 2024. Both sides discussed ongoing updates and developments in the region.

**May 21, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received H.E. Prof. Dr. Emrullah İşler, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed the ongoing developments in the region and ways to achieve further cooperation.

**May 21, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received H.E. Mr. Nikoloz Revazishvili, Ambassador of the Republic of Georgia to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accompanied by Rati Kvantaliani, First Secretary at the Embassy of Georgia to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, and Yemen, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed regional and international developments of common interests.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**May 21, 2024**



Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center (GRC) participated as a speaker in a session entitled Digital Time from a Cultural and Media Perspective within the sessions of the Jordan Forum for Media and Digital Communication under the patronage of H.E. Prime Minister Dr. Bishr Al-Khasawneh. During his speech, Dr. Zaid stressed that the digital age has greatly affected knowledge, as knowledge must be complete, yet the public is tending to read more electronic books to get quick information and fail to read thoroughly.

**May 21, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC, participated in a discussion on “The Futures of State Governance from a Global South Perspective” held by the African Futures and Innovation Program. The objective of the meeting was to explore the current and evolving nature of state governance across different regions including the Middle East with an emphasis on the governance dynamics unique to the Middle East and the Gulf.

**May 21-22, 2024**

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC, participated in the GCC Strategy Group of the European Council on Foreign Relations held in Brussels. The meeting brought together experts and policy officials from both the GCC and Europe to discuss the shifting dynamics of the Gaza War, the role of the Gulf countries in a multipolar global order and how Europeans can work with rising Gulf powers.

**May 24, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and member of the International

Crisis Group’s (ICG) Board of Trustees, attended a virtual President’s Report session hosted by Dr. Comfort Ero, President and CEO of the International Crisis Group, with the ICG’s Board of Trustees on the current state of global politics, focusing on the dominant feature of friction among significant powers.

**May 25, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the first panel of the 15th edition of the Al-Jazeera Forum in Doha, Qatar, on May 25, 2024. The panel’s title was: “Al-Aqsa Flood in the Context of the Palestinian National Struggle: Resistance and Political Prospects.”



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**May 26, 2024**



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) was delighted to receive at its Riyadh office, H.E. Dr. Javier Cremades, President of the international law firm Cremades & Calvo-Sotelo and President of the World Jurist Association. During the visit, which took place on the occasion of his trip to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, organized by H.E. Dr. Muhammad bin Abdul Karim Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, many different thoughts and ideas were exchanged.

**May 27, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Professor Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan, GRC's Senior Advisor, received at the GRC's office in Riyadh a delegation from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Riyadh and Dutch regional diplomats. During the visit, many different thoughts and ideas were exchanged on regional and international issues.

**May 27, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received at the GRC's

office in Riyadh Mr. Michael Müller, Member of the German Parliament (Bundestag) for the Chancellor's Social Democratic Party (SPD), and previous mayor of the City of Berlin. During the visit, many different thoughts and ideas were exchanged on regional and international issues.

**May 28, 2024**



Layla Ali, Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended the second virtual NEXT Masterclass organized by ISPI which was entitled 'Think Tanks and Impact on Policymakers' which was hosted by Dr. Paul Samson, President of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI).

**May 28-29, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated at the Schuman Security & Defence Forum organized by the European Union External Action Service 2024 in Brussels from 28-29 May 2024. The Schuman Forum is the EU's flagship high-

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

level political event for discussing shared security, defense, and peace issues with its closest partners. Dr. Sager participated in the Think Tank Side Event, which brought together security and defense policy experts from think tanks and academia from the EU and key partner countries. The event focused on critical issues such as peace, security, and defense, aiming to foster stronger cooperation between the EU, its member states, and partner countries.

**May 30, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received at the GRC's office in Riyadh H.E. Mr. Jaan Reinhold, Ambassador of Estonia to Saudi Arabia, on his farewell visit. Many different thoughts and ideas were exchanged on regional and international issues during the visit.

**May 30, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Dr. Christian Koch, Director of the Gulf Research Center Foundation's office in Brussels and Director of Research at GRC, visited the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels on May 30,

2024, and met with Florin Nita from the EUSR Gulf office; Birgit Loeser, Head of MENA 1 and responsible for GCC; Beatriz Salvador Garcia, Deputy Head MENA 1; Elisabetta La Gala, Policy Officer and Viktorija Budreckaitė from MENA 4 responsible for bilateral GCC-EU ties. During the meeting, both sides discussed GCC-EU ties and ways to improve relations in light of regional developments.

**June 5, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with Dr. Małgorzata Bonikowska, President of the Center for International Relations Foundation (CIR), at the GRC's office in Riyadh on June 5, 2024. During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance cooperation and exchange experiences between the research centers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Poland.

**June 5, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a panel on Diplomatic Dialogues: "Ambassadors Unveil Visionary Ventures in Arab-German Collaborations" that was organized by the 27th Arab-German Business Forum in Berlin, on June 5, 2024. Dr. Sager



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

emphasized the importance of enhancing business ventures between Germany and the Arab region, focusing on the Gulf and specific sectors in which they can be achieved. Speakers of the panel also included: Dr. Christoph Ploß, Member of the German Parliament, H.E. Maitha Saif Majid Al-Mahrouqi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Germany, H.E. Khaled Mohamed Galaleldin Abdelhamid, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dr. Dorothea Schütz, Head of the V.D. Subdivision Middle East, Africa, Development Policy- Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, H.E. Mr. Wacef Chiha, Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia, H.E. Dieter Walter Haller, Managing Director of Haller Consult GmbH.

**June 7, 2024**



The third Wanshou Dialogue on Global Security kicked off on Wednesday June 5 in Beijing, with more than 60 international security experts from over 20 countries and international organizations in attendance. Rafael Hernandez de Santiago, Senior Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC) participated in the forum.

**June 8, 2024**



Dr. John Sfakianakis, Chief Economist at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), which took place from June 5-8, 2024, in Russia in which the Sultanate of Oman was the Guest of Honour. Dr. Sfakianakis held discussions and participated in meetings with various enterprises at the forum.

**June 10, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a panel session at the 6th German-Arab Gulf Dialogue on Security and Cooperation organized by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the German-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG) in Berlin on June 10, 2024. The panel focused on the ‘Socioeconomic Transformations in Germany and the Gulf – Understanding Objectives, Identifying Opportunities for Cooperation.’

**June 11, 2024**



Layla Ali, Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker and presented her paper, written in tandem with Leontine von Felbert, in a panel session on ‘The GCC, Germany, and Differing Approaches to Multipolarity’ at the GCC-German Young Leaders Forum which was an exclusive side event of the



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

6th German-Arab Gulf Dialogue on Security and Cooperation organized by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the German-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG) in Berlin on June 11, 2024.

**June 14, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the Environmental Security and Sustainability Program at the Gulf Research Center, and GRC Researcher Hannan Alghamdi attended a breakfast meeting organized by the Arab-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CASCI) on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. The meeting featured representatives from the Ministry of Investment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Investment Promotion Authority (SIPA), and members of CASCI. The meeting highlighted the evolving dynamics of Saudi Arabia's economy and emphasized the Kingdom's commitment to fostering a welcoming environment for international investors. The discussion also showcased new regulations and policies, illustrating how they streamline the investment process and pave the way for growth and collaboration.

**June 24, 2024**



Noriko Suzuki, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center (GRC) based in Tokyo, Japan, met with H.E. Dr. Ghazi Faisal Binzagr,

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Japan. Both sides discussed ways of collaboration between the GRC and the Saudi embassy in Tokyo in various fields of interest.

**July 3, 2024**



Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor to the Gulf Research Center, participated in the 2nd Austrian Peace Forum held in Vienna and presented a paper on Saudi mediation efforts.

**July 3, 2024**



His Excellency, Mr. Javier Solana de Madariaga KCMG CYC, Chairman of the Royal Board of the Trustees of Prado Museum, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain, Former Secretary General of NATO, Former EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary General of the Council of the European Union and of the Western European Union, received Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) for a private visit to El Prado Museum in Madrid, Spain on July 3, 2024. Further discussions have taken place between both sides in areas of common interests.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**July 3, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), signed his acceptance as a Member of the Board of Trustees of the World Law Foundation at the invitation of H.E. Dr. Javier Cremades, Chairman of the World Association of Jurists for International Relations and Peace through Law (<https://worldjurist.org>) in Madrid, Spain on July 3, 2024. Acting as witness was the Hon. Mr. Iván Duque, Former President of the Republic of Colombia being a member of the Foundation. Further discussions took place between both sides in areas of common interest. This was followed by an official lunch with the attendance of members of the Foundation, Ambassadors accredited in Spain, together with wide representation of the media, business, telecom and law sectors.

**July 4, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended a private reception in Madrid, Spain, hosted by the Vargas Llosa Foundation and International Foundation for Freedom in honor of the Former President of Argentina, the Hon. Mauricio Macri in which both sides discussed the GRC's research program on GCC-Latin America and other topics. Former President of the Republic of Colombia, The Hon. Iván Duque, H.E. Javier Cremades, and Chairman of the World Law Foundation, among other top political and business global leaders.

**July 4, 2024**



On the occasion of the launch of the new Master Program on Cybersecurity by IE University together with the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, acted as witness to an agreement signed between IE University by its President Dr. Santiago Íñiguez de Onzoño and TEDAE (Spanish Association of Defense, Security, Aeronautics and Space Technology Companies) by its Chairman H.E. Ricardo Martí Fluxá on July 4, 2024, in Madrid, Spain. TEDAE's role is to bring together companies involved in the new program. Dr. Sager and Dr. Íñiguez also discussed different fields of future cooperation in areas of international relations and academia. Dr. Sager also provided closing remarks made to the IE University Mentorship Program.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**July 5, 2024**



H.E. Mr. Diego Martínez Belío, Secretary of State for Foreign and Global Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain, hosted a luncheon on July 5, 2024, in Madrid in honor of Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) upon his visit to the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain. The General Director for the Maghreb, Mediterranean and Middle East together with several Middle East political advisors of the Secretary of State also attended the luncheon in which both sides discussed the current political situation and developments in the region.



**July 8, 2024**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated virtually as a speaker in the ‘NATO 2024 Beyond the 75th Anniversary’ event organized by the NATO Defense College Foundation and the Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa (CASD) on July 8, 2024. Dr. Sager joined Session II on ‘Reinforcing Partnerships in the South - A Renewed Strategic Outlook,’ which discussed ways to enhance strategic and security cooperation between the GCC and NATO.

**July 15-17, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a seminar organized by the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) of the U.S. National Defense University (NDU) and the SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research in Istanbul from July 15-17, 2024. The seminar focused on security in the Mediterranean Sea and the role of international actors.

**July 17, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the conference organized by the Project Aladdin and Bahçeşehir University under the auspices of UNESCO entitled “Towards Environmental, Social and Economic Sustainability: Challenges and Solutions” in Istanbul on July 17, 2024. In his session, Dr. Sager focused on his perspective on peace diplomacy and the role of youth in the international community.



# GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**July 24, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director and Mr. Javid Iqbal, board member of the Gulf Research Center Foundation met in Dubai's KC office with Dr. Hares Youssef, Founder, GAIIA Foundation and Dr. Oliver Loisel, co-founder and CEO, to discuss preparation for possible side events during COP29 this year and COP30 next year. They also discussed the plan for next steps for a GAIIA proposal on eco-currency and establishing an intergovernmental organization that can adopt and promote the corresponding GAIIA protocol.

**July 25, 2024**



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director and Dr. Hares Youssef, Founder of the GAIIA Foundation met with Mrs. Habiba ElMarashy, Chairwoman of Emirates Environmental Management Group (EMG) at its premises to discuss GAIIA's proposal for an eco-currency and the GAIIA protocol for tree planting and decarbonization. Their discussion also focused on the planning of possible GAIIA project presentations at EMG events and workshops.

**July 25, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and GRC Researchers Layla Ali and Amah Mosly, participated in the Council of Councils Tenth Virtual Conference organized by The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) titled 'What Will the Series of Pivotal Elections in 2024 Mean for Democracy?'

**August 2, 2024**



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of Tunisia, Dr. Abdulaziz bin Ali Al-Saqr, held a luncheon at his residence in honor of the Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager.

**August 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Balázs Selmei, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Mr. Sándor Major, Deputy Head of Mission, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on August 11, 2024. During the meeting, both sides reviewed relations between the GCC states and Hungary, including between the Kingdom and Hungary specifically, given the developments in the region and in light of Hungary's current presidency of the EU.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**August 12, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Dr. Suhel Ajaz Khan, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the meeting, both sides discussed relations between India and the Gulf and India-Saudi relations. Both sides also discussed areas of mutual interest, with a focus on enhancing cooperation in academia and research.

**September 3, 2024**



Noriko Suzuki, Senior Advisor at the GRC, participated in the reception marking a significant milestone for Japan and Turkey: the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations. To celebrate this important occasion, both countries are hosting various commemorative events. As part of these celebrations, the Middle East Research Group, in collaboration with the Turkish Historical Society of the Atatürk Institute for Culture, Language, History, and Advanced Studies, will hold a special seminar.

**September 3, 2024**

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels, met with H.E. Rua Al-Zadjali, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman as well as with H.E. Abdulla bin Faisal Al-Doseri, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the EU and NATO. Both meetings dealt with the state of play in EU-GCC ties as well as the GRCF work in Brussels.

**September 3, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels office met with H.E. Nawaf Alenezi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Belgium and the European Union at the Kuwaiti Mission in Brussels. They discussed the preparations for the EU-GCC Summit meeting in October 2024 and the overall state of ties between the two sides. Dr. Koch also informed the Ambassador about the status of the GRCF office in Brussels and its planned activities.

**September 4, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and Prof. Saleh Al-



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with Birgit Loeser, Head of Division, MENA Regional Affairs from the European External Action Service (EEAS) from the EU, and her colleagues at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 4, 2024. Both sides discussed the development of GCC-EU relations, specifically in light of the upcoming GCC-EU summit on October 16, 2024.

### September 5, 2024



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels office met with H.E. Khalid Fahad Al-Hajri, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Belgium and Luxembourg. In their discussion, they focused

on Belgian-Qatari relations and how the GRCF office can help to develop those ties further.

### September 9, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Madiyar Menilbekov, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Mr. Kazbek Bolysbayev, Counsellor, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. During the meeting, both sides discussed Saudi-Kazakhstan relations in light of the establishment of their diplomatic ties 30 years ago, as well as GCC-Kazakhstan relations and other issues of mutual interest.

### September 10, 2024



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director, participated in the second meeting of the Intergovernmental and Multistakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) of the 7th edition of Global Environment Outlook that took place in Nairobi, from September 2-5, 2024. The meeting reviewed the progress in drafting of the chapters and summary for Policy Makers within the GEO 7 process as well as reviewed the budget. Dr. Abdelraouf is a member of IMAG representing the Gulf Research Center.

### September 10, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Francesco Rocchetti, ISPI Secretary General and Curator of the Rome MED Dialogues, Aldo Liga, Research Fellow for the MENA Centre at ISPI, and Luigi Toninelli, Researcher at ISPI, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 10, 2024. This meeting was in light of the Regional MED Dialogue in Riyadh. Both sides also discussed cooperation between GRC and ISPI and areas of mutual interest.



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**September 10, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Symeon G. Tsomokos, Founder and President of the Delphi Economic Forum, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 10, 2024. During this meeting both sides discussed areas of mutual interest as well as the upcoming Delphi Economic Forum which is set to take place from April 9-12, 2025 <http://delphiforum.gr>.

**September 11, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels office held discussions with H.E. Mohammed Al-Sahlawi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Belgium and the European Union as well as H.E. Fahad Aljaimaz, Head of Delegation of the Gulf Cooperation Council to the European Union. While updating on the GRCF plans for Brussels, they also discussed the EU-GCC Summit meeting which was held on October 16, 2024 in Brussels.

**September 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the Regional Meeting of the MED Dialogue co-organized by the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) and the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) in Riyadh on September 11, 2024, entitled "From the Gulf to Europe: Greening Energy Relations." He spoke in the opening session of the meeting "Rethinking EU-GCC Strategic Partnership in Times of Crisis," where he addressed the impact of geopolitical factors on GCC-EU relations.

**September 12, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Liselotte Kjærsgaard Plesner, Ambassador of Denmark to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the GRC office in Riyadh. During the meeting, both sides discussed areas of mutual interest and recent regional developments.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**September 12, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Rafik Mansour, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Policy of the U.S. Department of State, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed areas of mutual interests related to education and culture.

**September 19-20, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels office and Houda Barroug, Researcher at the GRC, participated in a two-day workshop organized by the Bertelsmann Foundation on the topic of "Strengthening the EU's Southern Neighborhood Policy." The workshop brought together 30 experts and officials to explore how the EU's Southern Neighborhood policy can be strengthened when it comes to socio-economic cooperation, trade and investment, and bilateral and regional cooperation. Dr. Koch provided input on the role of the GCC states and the impact of the increased competition with the US, China, and Turkey.

**September 20, 2024**

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels office visited NATO Headquarters where he met with Nicola de Santis, Chief of the Public Relations Section and Damien Arnaud, Strategic Engagement Coordinator. They talked about the developments in the Gulf region and possible joint activities on Gulf-NATO relations.

**September 23, 2024**

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels office held a meeting with H.E. Ambassador Abdulaziz Ahmed Al-Malki, Head of Mission of the State of Qatar to the European Union and NATO. In addition to providing an overview of GRCF activities in Brussels, the two sides discussed the state of Gulf-NATO ties as well as developments on the EU-GCC front.

**September 24, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCF Brussels office and Director of Research at the GRC gave a talk to a group of students and academics from Kuwait and Oman on their visit to Brussels. The purpose of the visit for the delegation was to gain a better understanding of the EU, exchange with academic institutions, and explore potential academic partnerships. The students from Oman and Kuwait represented winners of an essay competition on environmental and climate change topics earlier in the year and were sponsored by the EU. In his presentation, Dr. Koch discussed the work of the GRCF office in Brussels and spoke about developments in GCC-EU relations.



# GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**September 26, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with Ms. Kim Ralston, Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassy, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 26, 2024. Both sides discussed areas of mutual interest.

**September 26, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with Sebastian Brökelmann, Deputy Head of Division for the Middle East at the German Foreign Ministry, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 26, 2024. Both sides discussed areas of mutual interest.

**September 30, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR's) first virtual Re:Order Strategy Group Meeting on September 30, 2024, which is its flagship project that explores emerging visions of the global order.

**October 2, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Kjersti Tromsdal, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 2, 2024. Both sides discussed cooperation and areas of mutual interest.

**October 2, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Jean-Philippe Linteau, Ambassador of Canada to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 2, 2024. Both sides discussed cooperation and areas of mutual interest.

**October 2, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Björn Kavalkov-Halvarsson, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Sweden to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 2, 2024. The two sides discussed cooperation and areas of mutual interest.



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**October 6, 2024**



Noriko Suzuki, GRC's Senior Advisor participated in the Saudi Royal Cup. The Saudi Royal Cup is a Grade 3 horse race held annually in Japan, primarily at the Tokyo Racecourse. It is a key event for 2-year-old thoroughbreds and serves as an important early indicator for future stars in Japanese horse racing. The race is typically run over a distance of 1,600 meters on turf. As a prestigious event, it attracts promising young jockeys and is viewed as a stepping stone to major races like the Japan Cup and the Japanese Classics. The Saudi Royal Cup represents a collaboration between Saudi Arabia and Japan, promoting their shared interest in the global horse racing industry.

**October 6, 2024**



H.E. Mr. Patrick Maisonnave, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, invited Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), to the French Residence for lunch on October 6, 2024. A discussion took place on various areas of cooperation, including research and education.

**October 6, 2024**

As part of cultural activities aimed at deepening mutual understanding between the UAE and Japan, the UAE Embassy in Japan hosted a UAE cultural event in Tokyo on the UAE's collaboration with JAXA highlighting a significant partnership in space exploration and technology. One of the key milestones in this collaboration was the successful launch of the UAE's Mars Mission, the Hope Probe, in 2020, using Japan's H-IIA rocket from the Tanegashima Space Center. This mission marked the UAE's first interplanetary endeavor, with JAXA providing vital technical support. The collaboration between the UAE and JAXA reflects both nations' commitment to advancing space exploration, scientific research, and fostering international cooperation in the aerospace sector. Noriko Suzuki, GRC's Senior Advisor, participated in the event.

**October 8, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Valerio De Molli, Managing Partner and CEO of the European House Ambrosetti, and his accompanying colleagues at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 8, 2024, in which they discussed areas of mutual interest and cooperation.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**October 9, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a keynote speaker in the opening panel on 'Regenerating Our Planet: Innovative Solutions for Climate Adaptation and Change' at the 12th Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Forum on October 9, 2024, in Dubai. Dr. Sager focused on climate strategy, considering both adaptation and mitigation to better address climate change's current and future effects and the necessity to balance ecological, economic, and social considerations when applying a specific solution or strategy.

**October 10, 2024**



Layla Ali, Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the first quarterly meeting for Saudi AgriFood Tech Alliance (SAFTA) members in Riyadh on October 10th. The meeting proved a good opportunity for alliance members to share valuable insights and discuss plans for UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh in December 2024. The Gulf Research Center is a member of SAFTA.

**October 16, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC and Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation's office in Brussels, conducted an interview with 'Les Echos' in which he discussed how the 'stakes of [the GCC-EU Summit] are high' especially in light of the current escalation in the region. Dr. Koch argued that the GCC "believe[s] that the Europeans are not putting enough pressure on Israel to de-escalate. They fear being caught up in a wave of Iranian reprisals in the event of a war between Jerusalem and Tehran." Read the full article [here](#).

**October 17-19, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and member of the International Crisis Group (ICG) Board of Trustees, participated in ICG's Board of Trustees meeting in London from October 17 to 19 to discuss critical global issues and strategies for conflict resolution. Many topics were discussed, including the future outlook of the ICG over the next five years, and an analysis of the current situation in the conflict areas, the rising number of conflicts globally, and key challenges such as the US elections, Horn of Africa, maritime and Red Sea security, escalations in the Middle East, climate and conflict, and the rising number of conflicts in Haiti, Sudan, Myanmar, the Sahel, and Ukraine.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**October 22, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center, and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan met with Tom Allan, Head of Iraq and Arabian Peninsula Department at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 22, 2024. During the meeting, they discussed ways of enhancing research cooperation between think tanks in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom.

**October 25, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation's Office in Brussels, participated as a speaker in the panel on the "Strategic Narrative of the Southern Region" at the Arab Geopolitics 2024 conference, organized by the NATO Defense College. Watch [here](#) as Dr. Koch discusses the need for increased security alignment and collaborative efforts between NATO and the GCC to ensure regional stability.

**October 27, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Chang Hua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on October 27, 2024, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides engaged in discussions on areas of mutual interest.

**October 27, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Leo Kwartén, a lecturer from The Clingendael Institute, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 27, 2024, where they discussed areas of mutual interest and cooperation.

**October 29, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio, the European Union Special Representative for the Gulf Region at the European External Action Service (EEAS), and his accompanying official delegation, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 29, 2024. During this meeting, both sides discussed areas of mutual interest, including cooperation with the GRC Foundation's office in Brussels on GCC-EU research activities.



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**October 30, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Nodirjon Turgunov, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh, on October 30, 2024. During the meeting, the two sides discussed areas of mutual interest and areas of cooperation in research activities. They also discussed the necessary arrangements for GRC to organize a workshop under the title "Relations between GCC and Central Asian Countries" in April 2025 on the occasion of the GCC-Central Asian Countries Summit, which is expected to be held in Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan, in May 2025 and is expected to bring together think tanks from both regions.

**October 30-31, 2024**

Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation's Office in Brussels, participated as a speaker in the Council of Councils (CoC) 15th Regional Conference in Brussels on October 29, 2024. Dr. Koch spoke in the session on 'EU-Middle East Relations' and discussed how the EU should have a cohesive and unified approach for post-conflict scenarios in the region and how it should build stronger partnerships with key regional players to enhance the EU's influence and effectiveness in addressing conflicts and promoting stability.

**November 3, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Iraqi Consul General Mr. Mohammed Samir Al-Naqshbandi at the GRC's office in Jeddah. The meeting focused on enhancing research collaboration between the GRC and Iraqi research institutions, with both sides planning a series of workshops to strengthen ties between the GRC and Iraqi think tanks.

**November 3, 2024**



At a ceremony held at the Cultural Palace, Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Madiyar Menilbekov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, presented a certificate of appreciation and a commemorative gift from the Kazakh Embassy to the Gulf Research Center (GRC) in recognition of its efforts in developing relations between Central Asian countries and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The award was received by Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of GRC, on behalf of Dr.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, who expressed his appreciation for this honor and affirmed GRC's commitment to advancing collaborative research efforts in other institutions in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries.

**November 4, 2024**



Noriko Suzuki, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with H.E. Dr. Ghazi Binzagr, Saudi Ambassador to Japan, and the Head of Public Policy at Netflix to discuss potential collaboration for EXPO 2025. Netflix has been actively collaborating with the Governor of Tokyo to promote Tokyo as the world's leading capital city.

**November 5, 2024**



Noriko Suzuki, Senior advisor at the GRC, met with H.E. Mr. Hasan Mohamed Zamanan, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Japan to discuss research cooperation.

**November 6, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and member of the World Law Foundation (WLF) Board of Trustees, participated in the WLF's Board of Trustees Meeting virtually on November 6, 2024. The meeting involved discussions about the WLF activities and action plan for 2025.

**November 8, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), took part in a closed panel discussion hosted by the Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies in Riyadh. The discussion included Saudi specialists and a delegation from the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The session explored Saudi-Iranian relations and other areas of cooperation.

**November 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Fawaz AlTayeb, Board Director of the Noon Center for Strategic Studies and Dialogue (NASS) in Mosul, Iraq at the GRC office in Riyadh. The meeting focused on exploring areas of cooperation and shared interests in research activities.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**November 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended a luncheon hosted by H.E. Mr. Carlo Baldocci, the Ambassador of Italy to Saudi Arabia, at his residence. The lunch honored the visit of H.E. Mr. Alessio Nardi, Advisor to the Minister for Security Policies and Justice, Cooperation, and Development at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as Mr. Maurizio Greganti, Minister Plenipotentiary and Principal Director for the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Gulf countries.

The discussion centered on current regional developments and explored pathways for closer collaboration between Italian think tanks and those in the Gulf region to enhance Gulf-Italian relations.

**November 13, 2024**



GRC signed an MoU with the Sasakawa Foundation and met with the grandson of its founder, who is the founder and chairman of the Sasakawa Economic Foundation. Discussions were held regarding potential collaboration.

**November 13, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Dr. Tong Fai, Director of Division of Security Studies from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences at the GRC office in Riyadh, along with Mr. Liu Linzhi, Research Assistant, Division of Security Studies, and Mr. James Li, Board Chairman/Co-Founder of Starwin. During this meeting both sides discussed areas of cooperation between both centers in different research activities.

**November 13, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Guo Wanda, Executive Vice President of the Chinese Development Institute (CDI), along with his delegates, Mr. Yu Lingqu, Executive Director of the Department of Financial Development and Enterprise Research at the CDI, and Mr. Kris Liu, Director of International Cooperation Department at the CDI, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed areas of cooperation in research activities between both institutions.



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**November 17, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the Sir Bani Yas Forum from November 15-17, 2024, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

**November 20, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and GRC's Senior Team received at the GRC's office in Riyadh H.E. Balázs Selmeçi, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Sándor Major, Deputy Head of Mission, Dr. N. Rózsa Erzsébet, and Dr. László Csicsmann. Many different thoughts and ideas were exchanged on regional and international issues during the visit.

**November 20, 2024**



Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, received a delegation of students from the Department of Political Science at King Abdulaziz University at the GRC's office in

Jeddah on Wednesday, November 20, 2024. During the meeting, they discussed ways and areas of joint cooperation in research activities, and the possibility of holding workshops and seminars in various fields.

**November 22, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation's (GRCF) Brussels office, met with a delegation of young Bahraini leaders from the 'Youth Pioneer' initiative. The visit, organized by the Bahraini Embassy in Brussels, facilitated meaningful engagement between the delegation and the GRCF team. The Bahraini leaders explored avenues for collaboration while also immersing themselves in the rich cultural offerings of the European Union, fostering a deeper understanding of EU institutions and culture.

**November 27, 2024**

Layla Ali, Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the 5th CARPO Research Forum and spoke in a session titled 'The Middle East and Central Asia.' Layla spoke about the evolving relations between Central Asia and the Gulf and both regions' opportunities for developing relations.

# GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**November 27, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the 10th Rome MED Dialogue, organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and ISPI (Italian Institute for International Political Studies) in Rome on November 27, 2024. Dr. Sager participated as a speaker on a panel titled ‘The Future of Iran-Gulf Relations.’

During the session, Dr. Sager underscored the necessity for a strategic shift in Iran’s regional approach, contingent upon Tehran’s willingness to embrace such changes. He emphasized that while initiating dialogue is a constructive move, substantial advancements will only occur when all involved parties are prepared to make mutual concessions.

**December 1, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the first session of the 11th Gulf Studies Forum organized by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha entitled “The Positions of the Arab Gulf States on the Palestinian Issue” and discussed a working paper entitled: The Saudi Position on the Israeli War on Gaza and Its Determinants.

**December 2, 2024**



H.E. Mr. S. Premjith, Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, hosted a luncheon at his residence in honor of the visit of Mr. TEO Chee Hean, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security of the Republic of Singapore. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) attended the luncheon and engaged in discussions on issues related to international and regional development.

**December 3, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager at the Gulf Research Center Brussels, and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met Mr. Heiko Nitzschke, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa from the German Federal Foreign Office at the GRC’s office in Riyadh where both sides discussed relations between the Horn of Africa and the Gulf.

**December 3, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Yuki



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

Mizunoe, President and CEO of Mizuho MEA Regional Headquarters Company, Mr. Kiuotaka Shibata, Chief Strategy Officer, and Managing Director, Mr. Yosuke Inoue, at the GRC's office in Riyadh where they discussed regional economic development.

**December 4, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), hosted a meeting at the GRC's office in Riyadh with H.E. Aníbal Gómez-Toledo, Ambassador of Mexico to Saudi Arabia, followed by Guillermo Gutiérrez-Nieto, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Mexico in Saudi Arabia, and Dr. Bram Govaerts, Director General of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). The meeting also included Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager at the Gulf Research Center Brussels, and Hannan Alghamdi, Researcher at the GRC. The discussion focused on CIMMYT's projects and presence in the region, food security challenges, and exploring avenues for collaboration to address these critical issues.

**December 4, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in an interview with Silk Way TV from #Kazakhstan who visited the GRC's office in Riyadh. Dr. Sager spoke about the cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan. Watch the interview [here](#).

**December 5, 2024**



As part of the Gulf Research Center's (GRC) Research Program on GCC-Latin America relations, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, hosted a meeting at the GRC office in Riyadh with H.E. Andy Rodriguez Duran, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to Saudi Arabia. The meeting, attended by senior staff and researchers from the GRC, focused on the strengthening of ties between the Dominican Republic and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Discussions explored opportunities for collaboration between Dominican think tanks and the GRC, emphasizing the shared interest in fostering deeper engagement between the two regions.

**December 7-8, 2024**



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) Foundation Brussels office, and Layla Ali, Researcher at the GRC, participated and attended the 20th IISS Manama Dialogue from December 7-8, 2024 in Bahrain.



## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**December 8, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in a session titled “EU-Iran Dialogue on Regional Stability,” at the Doha Forum. This session was in partnership with the Center for International Policy Research.

**December 8, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the session on “The Future of US Strategy in the Middle East Following the 2024 Election,” at the Doha Forum. This session was held in partnership with the Atlantic Council. Watch the full session [here](#).

**December 8, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the session on the “Accountability and the Axis of Resistance” held on December 8, 2024, at the Doha Forum. This session was in partnership with Chatham House.

**December 10, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), hosted H.E. Kjersti Tromsdal, Ambassador of Norway to Saudi Arabia, and Norway's Special Representative for Yemen, Ms. Heidi Johansen, at the GRC office in Riyadh. The meeting focused on discussions surrounding regional developments in Yemen.

**December 10, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRC Brussels office, and Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Director of the GRC's Environmental Security and Sustainability Program, met with Dr. Daniel Krahle, Advisor at GIZ, and Dr. Benjamin Smale, Advisor for Climate and Strategic Foresight at GIZ, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The meeting focused on exploring areas of mutual cooperation and shared research interests.

## GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**December 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Suhel Ajaz Khan, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The discussion centered on ongoing regional developments.

**December 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), held a meeting with Dr. Thomas Volk, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, along with his colleagues at the GRC office in Riyadh. The discussion focused on areas of mutual cooperation and key regional developments.

**December 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Chang Hua, Ambassador of China to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The discussion centered on ongoing regional developments.

**December 15, 2024**



On December 15, 2024, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Prof. Dr. Jia Wenjian, President of Beijing Foreign Studies University, accompanied by Dr. Xue Qing Guo, Director of the Centre for Arabic and Islamic Studies, and Dr. He Jing, Director and Associate Professor of the International Exchange and Cooperation Office at the GRC's office in Riyadh. The discussion focused on fostering collaboration in research activities between the two institutions.

**December 17, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received Her Highness Princess Nouf bint Abdulrahman bin Nasser Al Saud, President of the non-profit organization, 'Li Ajlehum,' to discuss the possibility of cooperation in the field of social studies and research and providing the best services to people with motor disabilities. The meeting also focused on how to encourage the private sector to support these types of charitable associations and stakeholders, in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 in this vital and important humanitarian sector.



# GRC EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT (Timeline of Events)

**December 18, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated

in a workshop organized by the Prince Saud Al-Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies in Riyadh on December 18, 2024. The workshop focused on the situation in Syria following the collapse of the Assad regime, exploring the current dynamics and potential future scenarios.

**December 18, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), welcomed a delegation of military students from the National Defense University to the GRC's office in Riyadh on December 18, 2024. During the visit, the delegation was introduced to the GRC's research activities and studies, with a particular focus on international, military, and security relations.

**December 18, 2024**



**CARNEGIE**  
ENDOWMENT FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
PEACE

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the panel session titled "The Great Powers and Security Competition in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa," organized by the Carnegie Endowment's Middle East Program. In his remarks, Dr. Sager emphasized that the Middle East and the Horn of Africa remain pivotal arenas for great power competition due to their geostrategic significance and economic importance.

**December 19, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the GRC, met with Mr. Ryan Caugherty, Global Head of Talent at Forbes, at the GRC office in Riyadh. The meeting focused on exploring areas of cooperation between the GRC and Forbes in the talent sector, with an emphasis on knowledge exchange and potential joint initiatives.

**December 19, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, and Dr.

Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the GRC, met with H.E. Prof. Abdullah bin Salman Al-Salman, Acting President of King Saud University (KSU), at KSU's headquarters in Riyadh. The meeting focused on exploring avenues of cooperation between the GRC and KSU, including joint studies, research activities, collaborative scientific events, and training programs.



# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

### GRC IN THE MEDIA

GRC media participation can be accessed at [the following link](#), which leads to the GRC official YouTube channel.

# GRC IN THE MEDIA

January 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in an interview on Al-Arabiya entitled ‘Israeli strikes...targeting members of the Al Quds Force and Hezbollah in Damascus and Lebanon, Saudi Warns that Tension in the Red Sea may get out of control.’ Access the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in an interview on Al-Sharq entitled ‘Ethiopia and Somalia... the Crisis of Alliances.’ Access the full interview [here](#).

## Spotlight 2030



A growing global relevance

Arab News released an article on the recent roundtable held on January 14, 2024 in Riyadh at the Gulf Research Center’s office on “The new relevance of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf region, and the Middle East.” Access the full article [here](#).



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), was quoted in the POLITICO article ‘Middle East braces for chaos as Iran and West square up.’ Access the full article [here](#).

## زيارة بلينكن للسعودية والحلول المرتقبة



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), published an article in ‘Asharq Al-Awsat’ entitled ‘Blinken’s visit to Saudi Arabia and the expected solutions.’ Access the full article [here](#).

# GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), published an article in the *Arab News* newspaper, entitled ‘Saudi Arabia needs to see a new approach from Washington.’ Access the full article

[here.](#)



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in an interview with the Al-Mawgif program and discussed the prominent events that affected the region, specifically Saudi Arabia, during the year 2023. Access the full interview [here.](#)



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in an interview with ‘Dubai This Morning’ discussing the Arab Strategy Forum 2024.

## February 2024



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.



## GRC IN THE MEDIA

March 2024



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 GRC, participated in an episode of “Here in Riyadh” on Alekhbariya discussing the launch of the GCC’s Regional Security framework. Watch the full episode [here](#).



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 GRC, participated in a podcast program entitled ‘Politics Time with Tariq Al-Homayed.’ The episode addressed several topics, including:

- Blinken’s visit to the Middle East in an attempt to secure a ceasefire in Gaza
- US-Saudi relations
- Houthi attacks and the security of the Red Sea
- Relations between Russia and the West following the re-election of Putin and its impact on the war in Ukraine

Watch the full episode [here](#).



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.’

## GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in the Al-Arabiya news program discussing U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to the Middle East in search of ways to secure a ceasefire in Gaza. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in the Al Ekhbariya news program and discussed the situation in Palestine. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in the Al Sharq TV (Bloomberg) program and discussed U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to the Middle East and ways to end the conflict in Gaza. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in the MBC program with TV presenter Tariq Al-Homayed and discussed the most important political developments and events in the region. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in the Al-Arabiya news program, discussing U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Saudi Arabia and Egypt to discuss de-escalation efforts in Gaza. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abderrezzaq Gharraf, Senior Researcher at the GRC, participated in the Elwatania TV news program and discussed US Vice President Kamala Harris' most recent speech about the war in Gaza. Watch the full episode [here](#).



## GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Abderrezzaq Gharraf, Senior Researcher at the GRC, participated on Channel 3 News and discussed the Algerian Summit. Access the full episode [here](#).

### April 2024



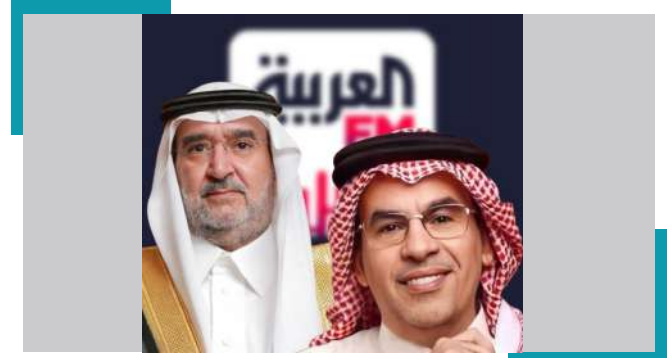
Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the Al-Sharq TV (Bloomberg) news channel in an episode entitled 'Blinken's tour and the Arab road map' in which he discussed the meeting between the US and the Six-Party Ministerial Meeting that convened in Riyadh. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) participated in the Here In Riyadh News program discussing the Six-Party Ministerial Meeting that convened in Riyadh. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) participated in an interview in an article for Asharq Al-Awsat entitled 'European readiness to recognize the Palestinian state...and continued Saudi pressure.' Access the full article [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), was a guest on the 'Politics Time' podcast program with Tariq Al-Humaid on AlArabiyaFM. Access the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in an Iraqi news program on 'Ras Al-Satr' in an episode entitled 'Iran threatens Israel and Europe with intercontinental missiles.' Watch the full episode [here](#).



## GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), discussed the Gulf's perspective on the role of Europe in the Red Sea in an interview on DW Arabia during which he examined the remarks made by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs/ Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr. Josep Borrell at a press conference on EUNAVFOR ASPIDES. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated on the Radio Monte Carlo International program on the anniversary of the seventh pledge of allegiance for the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in a TV interview on AlArabiya news channel in an episode entitled 'A new visit by US National Security Advisory Jack Sullivan to Saudi Arabia.' Watch the full interview [here](#).

الشرق الأوسط  
صحيفة العرب الأولى



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), was interviewed by Asharq Al-Awsat in an article entitled 'Who benefits from destabilizing the security of Jordan? Riyadh stressed that the security of Amman is a red line.' Access the full article [here](#).

### May 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated on Al Sharq TV on the 'On the Border' program (Bloomberg), in an episode entitled: "Blinken's Tour and the Arab Roadmap," which focused on the talks between the US and the six-party Arab Committee.

### June 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the FRANCE 24 program discussing deaths among the pilgrims during this year's Hajj season. Watch the full episode [here](#).

## GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the 'Here In Riyadh' program in an episode that covered the 'Cooperation Council: Biden's proposal for Gaza' "positive" and 'The Gulf system: "A unified vision for the future."' Watch the full episode [here](#).

### July 2024



Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, participated in a podcast on "Post-Oil" on Ather Channel in an episode titled: "What is the Future of Saudi-Iranian Relations?" Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), was interviewed by Kuwait Rasd TV on July 10, 2024, during the 14th Gulf Research Meeting at the University of Cambridge. Watch the full interview [here](#).

### August 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared in an interview on Asharq News on August 22, 2024, where he discussed two crucial topics: the potential for cooperation and trade between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, especially considering the newly activated Coordination Council, and how Saudi-Iraqi coordination might help reduce regional tensions and improve security. The discussion was featured on Asharq TV's "The Link," focusing on these significant regional issues. Watch the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, participated in an interview on August 10 on Asharq TV (Bloomberg) in a program called "On the Border." The episode was titled "Iran and Israel..Shadow Wars and Rules of Engagement."

Watch the full interview [here](#).

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in an interview on



# GRC IN THE MEDIA

September 2024



August 7, 2024, on the Iraqi Al-Taghyir channel's program "Ras Al-Satr," in an episode titled 'To Deter Israel: Pakistan Threatens to Move 'Shaheen' Missiles Towards Iran.'

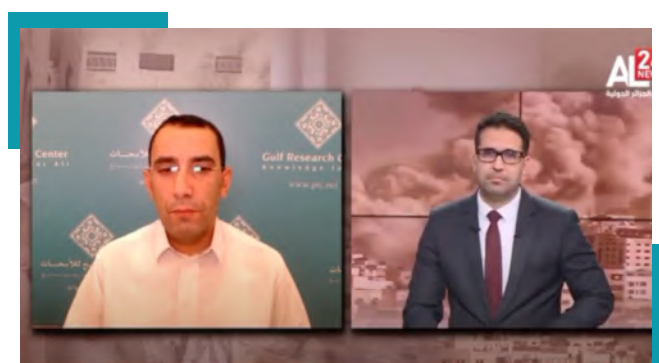
Watch the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in Sky News Arabic and discussed Iranian reactions towards the assassination of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah. Access the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in an interview on August 6, 2024, on the "Here in Riyadh" program on Al Ekhbariya News channel. The episode, titled 'Iran - Israel: Preparing for the Next Steps', covered recent developments in the region and Hamas' announcement of Yahya Sinwar as their new leader following Ismail Haniyeh's assassination in Tehran. Watch the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf, Senior Researcher at the GRC, participated on Al Jazeera International and discussed the risks of expanding the war in Gaza and how this would open a new front in Lebanon. Access the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in an interview on August 6, 2024, on Al-Arabiya program. The episode, titled 'Anticipating a Possible Iranian Response,' covered the current escalation in the region and the possible reactions from Iran following Ismail Haniyeh's assassination in Tehran. Watch the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on Al Arabiya FM's "Time for Politics with Tarek Al Hamdi" podcast program in which he discussed the latest developments in the region.



## GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in Al Sharq TV's (Bloomberg) program, 'On the Border' in an episode titled "Egypt and Ethiopia at the Turning point of Somalia." Access the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the 'Hena Riyadh' news program in an episode entitled 'US Withdrawals from the Region and Alternatives.' Access the full episode [here](#).

### October 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in the program 'Time for Politics with Tariq Al-Hamid' airing on Al Arabiya Radio FM where he discussed the latest developments in the region including:

- Saudi Arabia hosting the first high-level meeting of the 'Global Alliance for Implementing the Two-State Solution' in Riyadh
- U.S. Elections
- Potential Israeli strike on Iran

Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Adelrazzaq Gharraf, Senior Researcher at the GRC, participated on the 'Global Algeria' program and commented on the visit by the Algerian President to Egypt and Oman. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated as a speaker on AlArabiya in an episode titled: 'Following the Israeli Response to Iran, the Gulf Calls for Self-Restraint and Sparing the Region from Expanded Conflict'. Watch the full episode [here](#).

## GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated on the 'Here in Riyadh' program on Al Ekbariyah where he discussed the recent visit of U.S. Secretary of State and the political and military developments in the region. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in an interview on the Al Hadath channel where he discussed the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State to the region and the political and military developments in Lebanon. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in Al Arabiya where he discussed U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visits to Riyadh to discuss ways to de-escalate the situations in Gaza and Lebanon. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated on Asharq TV (Bloomberg) in an episode titled: 'Saudi-Jordanian confirmation of the necessity of a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon.' Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated on the MBC Bulletin and discussed the EU-GCC Summit in Brussels. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated on Radio Monte Carlo International where he discussed the EU-GCC Summit in Brussels. Hear the full episode [here](#).



## GRC IN THE MEDIA



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCF Brussels office, participated in an interview on Al Arabiya where he discussed the GCC-EU Summit in Brussels. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Abelrazzaq Gharraf, Senior Researcher at the GRC, spoke on 'Global Algeria' and spoke about the developments of the war in south of Lebanon. Watch the full episode [here](#).



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research at the GRC and Executive Manager at the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels office was quoted in Qatar News Agency's article on 'EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement Strengthens Relations' in which he mentions that the EU-GCC Summit comes at a very important time, given all the regional developments, stressing that both the EU and the GCC are determined to deepen their partnership. Read the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated on 'Asharq TV' in an episode titled: "The Anniversary of the October 7 Attack... Regional Repercussions and Open Scenarios." Watch the full episode [here](#).

### November



Dr. Abelrazzaq Gharraf, Senior Researcher at the GRC, spoke on 'Al Sharooq' channel to discuss the current state of Algerian diplomacy on its National Day. Watch the full episode [here](#).



On November 1, 2024, the Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, was featured on Al-Sharq TV's (Bloomberg) program "On the Border" to discuss "The Riyadh Meeting and the Global Alliance Roadmap for the Two-State Solution."

Watch the full interview [here](#).



## GRC IN THE MEDIA



On November 12, 2024 Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf, Senior Researcher at the Gulf Research Center, participated in an interview on Al-Wataniya channel to comment on the Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh. The interview can be accessed [here](#).



Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf, later appeared on Algeria International Channel to discuss the outcomes of the Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh. The interview can be viewed [here](#).



On November 12, 2024 Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, appeared on Today's Program on Al-Ekhbariya News Channel to discuss "The Riyadh Summit: A Unified Position to Stop Israeli Aggression." The interview can be viewed [here](#).

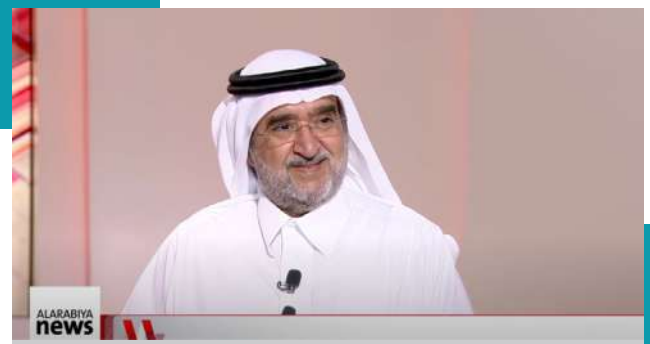


On November 13, 2024, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center and Crisis Group trustee, participated in a Crisis Group video discussing Saudi Arabia's stance on the regional escalation in the Middle East. Watch the video [here](#).



On November 14, 2024, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, participated in the "Arab Talks" podcast with Nour Jloud on Al-Jadeed Lebanese channel to discuss "The Decisions of the Extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh." You can access the interview [here](#).

### December 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in Al Arabiya News to

## GRC IN THE MEDIA

discuss Ahmed Al-Shara's statements during his recent interview with Al Arabiya channel, as well as Syria's relationship with Arab Gulf countries. Watch the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in Al-Arabiya interview and discussed Ahmed al-Sharaa's statements in his recent interview with Al Arabiya. Watch the full interview [here](#).



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in an interview with Silk Way TV from Kazakhstan who visited the GRC's office in Riyadh on December 2, 2024. Dr. Sager spoke about the cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan. The interview can be accessed [here](#).



On December 15, 2024, the Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, participated in the program "Time for Politics with Tariq Alhomayed" on Al Arabiya FM radio, discussing the future of Syria after the fall of Assad and the latest developments in the region. Watch the discussion [here](#).



On December 21, 2024, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), was interviewed on the "Here In Riyadh" program on Al Ekhbariya Channel. He discussed the tragic car ramming attack in Magdeburg, Germany, and the statement issued by the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the incident.

The interview can be watched [here](#).

# 2024

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## ANNUAL REPORT

GRC STAFF





## GRC STAFF



**Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**  
Chairman



**Dr. Mustafa Alani**  
Senior Advisor & Director - Security and Defense  
Research Program



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Executive Manager - Gulf Research Center  
Foundation Brussels  
Director of Research



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Trustee and Founding Member of the Gulf  
Research Center Foundation Geneva



**Dr. John Sfakianakis**  
Program Director - Economic Research, Chief  
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**Prof. Saleh M. Alkhatlan**  
Senior Advisor

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Chief



**Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf**  
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## GRC STAFF



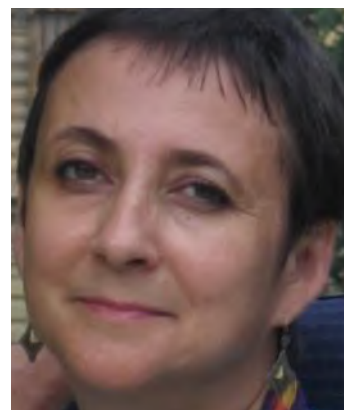
**Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf**  
Senior Researcher



**Youssef K. Khattab**  
Senior Researcher



**Imco Brouwer**  
Executive Director - Gulf Labor Markets and  
Migration Programme



**Françoise De Bel-Air**  
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**Noriko Suzuki**  
GRC Branch Japan



**Samir Kandil**  
Assistant General Manager



## GRC STAFF



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**Mohammed Gomaa**  
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**Rahaf Sarhan**  
Graphic Designer



**Yosef Alghazoli**  
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## GRC STAFF



**Shahad Alghamdi**  
Marketing Specialist



**Razan Al Zharani**  
HR Admin



**Ruza Sinan Hamu A**  
Multimedia Producer



**Riyam Abdullah Alharthi**  
Web Developer



**Fatemah S BaSunbul**  
Senior Web Developer

## Non-Resident Research Fellows



**Emil Avdaliani**

Professor of International Relations at the  
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**Hubert Kinkoh**

Analyst - Governance of Peace and Security in  
Africa



**Robert Mason**

Non-Resident Fellow at the Arab Gulf States  
Institute in Washington

## Resident Research fellows



**Laura Schunn**

FAU Erlangen-Nurnberg  
Germany



**Tine Gade**

Norwegian Institute of International Affairs  
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# 2024

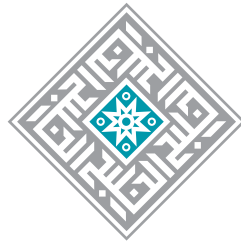
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## ANNUAL REPORT

GRC FINANCIALS







**Gulf Research Center**  
K n o w l e d g e   f o r   A l l

**The Gulf Research Center Financials**  
**Jeddah – Geneva – Brussels – Cambridge– Dubai(2000-2010)**  
**For the Period of 25 Years**  
**2000 - 2024**

## Financials

The GRC financials have been compiled for the period 2000-2024. The consolidated financial statement is a compilation of financial data from the following GRC entities:

Gulf Research Center Foundation, Geneva  
Gulf Research Center Foundation, Brussels  
Gulf Research Centre Cambridge, UK  
Gulf Research Center, Jeddah  
Gulf Research Center, Dubai (2000-2010)

The consolidated statement presents a summarized view of information abstracted from the annual financials of the individual GRC entities.

The primary source of GRC funding is Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, GRC Founder and Chairman.

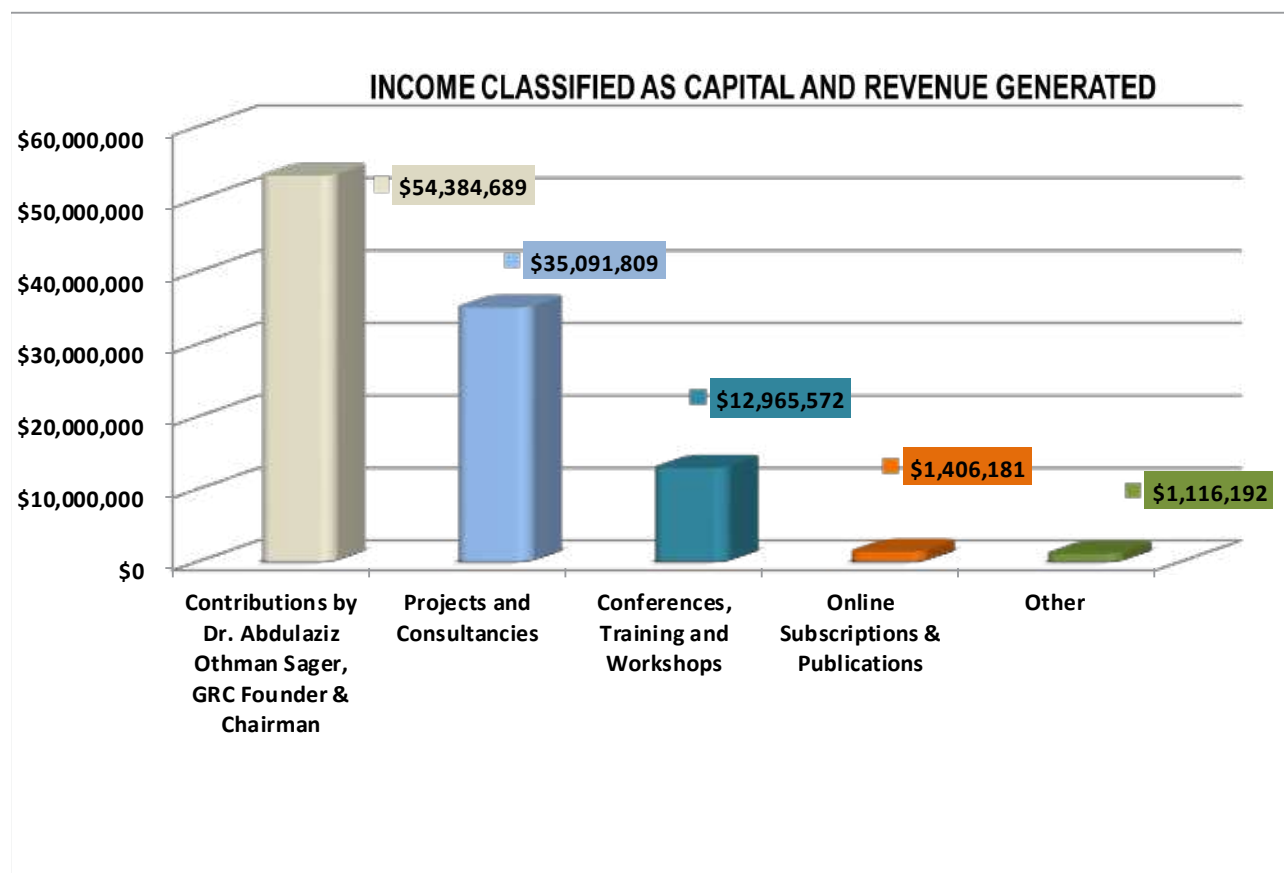
## Consolidated GRC Financial Statements -- (Unaudited)

Consolidated Statement of Activities for

Period - 01 Jan 2000 to 31 Dec 2024

Description	Total
	All amounts in USD

<b>Revenues</b>	
Contributions by Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Sager, GRC Founder & Chairman	\$53,263,041
Projects and Consultancies	\$35,091,809
Conferences, Training and Workshops	\$12,965,572
Online Subscriptions & Publications	\$1,406,181
Other	\$1,116,192
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$103,842,795</b>

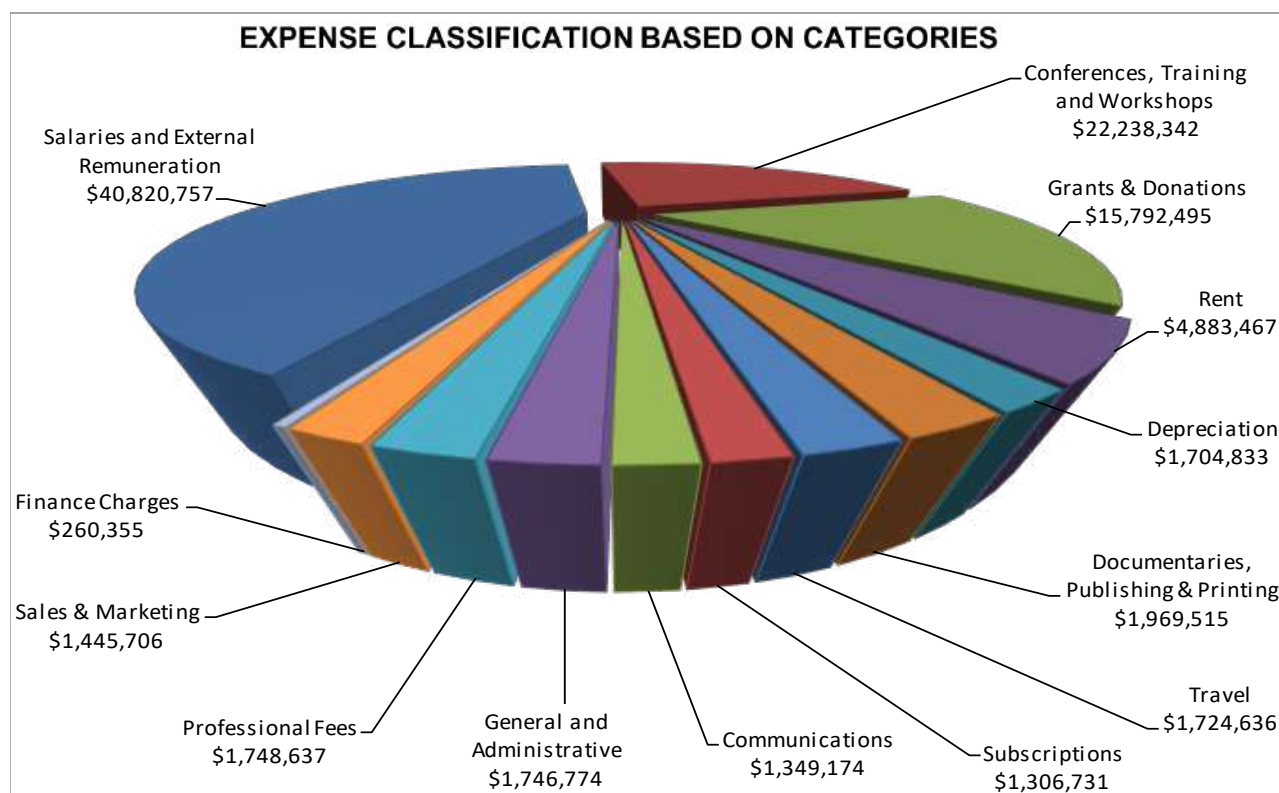




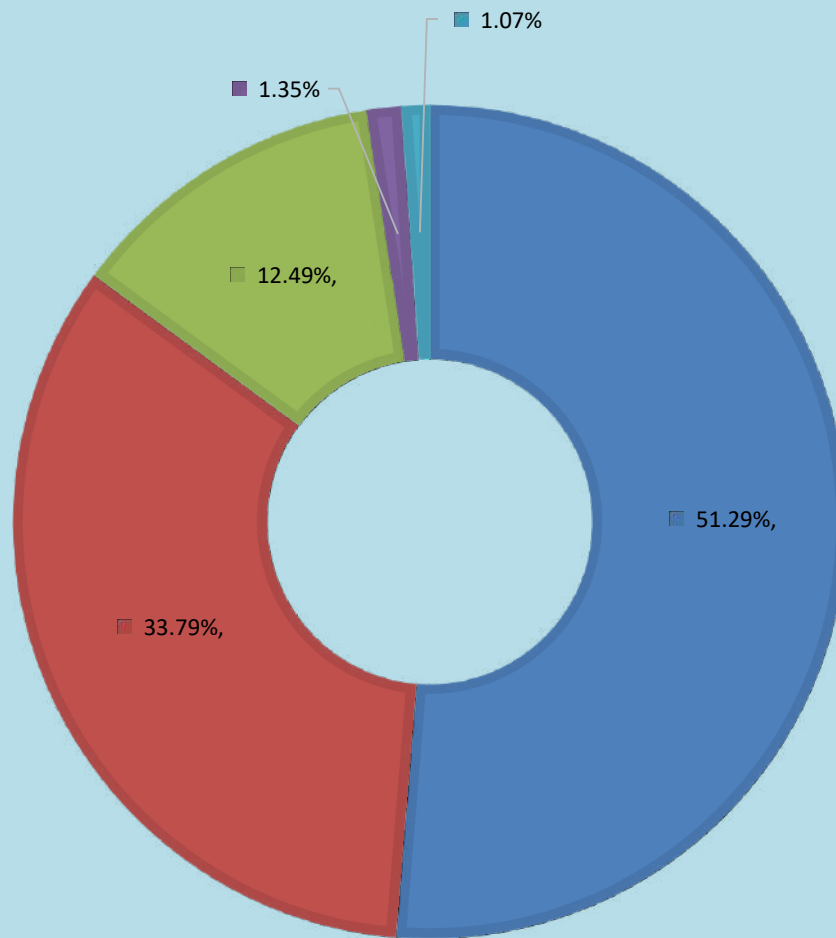
## Consolidated GRC Financial Statements -- (Unaudited)

Consolidated Statement of Activities for  
Period - 01 Jan 2000 to 31 Dec 2024

<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>All Amount in USD</b>
Salaries and External Remuneration	\$40,820,757
Conferences, Training and Workshops	\$22,238,342
Grants & Donations	\$15,792,495
Rent	\$4,883,467
Depreciation	\$1,704,833
Documentaries, Publishing & Printing	\$1,969,515
Travel	\$1,724,636
Subscriptions	\$1,306,731
Communications	\$1,349,174
General and Administrative	\$1,746,774
Professional Fees	\$1,748,637
Sales & Marketing	\$1,445,706
Finance Charges	\$260,355
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$96,991,423</b>



**SOURCES OF INCOME IN PERCENTAGE**



- Contributions by Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Sager, GRC Founder & Chairman
- Projects and Consultancies
- Conferences, Training and Workshops
- Online Subscriptions & Publications
- Other

## Consolidated GRC Financial Statements -- (Unaudited)

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position

01 July 2000 to 31 Dec 2024

Particulars	Total
	All amounts in USD
<b>Assets:</b>	
<b>Long-term assets</b>	
Property and equipment net	\$97,573
<b>Total long-term assets</b>	<b>\$97,573</b>
<b>Current assets</b>	
Trade and other receivables	\$126,758
Prepayments / advances	\$42,025
Investments	\$1,082,525
Deposits	\$25,835
Cash in hand and at bank	\$936,075
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>\$2,213,218</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$2,310,791</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>	
<b>Current liabilities</b>	
Trade and other payables	\$2,221
Advance Income	\$606,208
Accrued expenses	\$88,415
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>\$696,844</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,613,947</b>
<b>Net Equities/Reserves and Surplus</b>	<b>\$1,613,947</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equities</b>	<b>\$2,310,791</b>

NOTE:

**This is a consolidated financial statement for the following GRC entities:**

Gulf Research Center Foundation Geneva ----- Gulf Reserch Center Foundation Brussels

Gulf Research Centre Cambridge ----- Gulf Research Center – Jeddah ----- Gulf Research Center – Dubai

This statement is a compilation of the financial activities of the individual GRC entities.

The primary source of GRC funding is Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, GRC Founder and Chairman





**Gulf Research Center**  
K n o w l e d g e   f o r   A l l



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