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# GULF RESEARCH CENTER

## Newsletter

August 2022

### GRC Events & Activities

#### GRC Policy Forum 2022



H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, the secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council, addresses participants of the GRC Policy Forum 2022.

The Gulf Research Center organized a policy forum at the Royal Society in London, England, on July 12, 2022, to address a range of policy issues related to the Gulf region. More than 60 participants including academics and members of think tanks attended the event.

The forum began with the welcoming remarks by H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, the secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council, virtually. His welcoming address can be found [here](#).

The forum was then followed by a presentation of the Gulf Research Center Annual Strategic Review 2022, which outlined key regional developments of last year. The report's results were discussed in two panel sessions focusing on the current policy issues pertaining to the Gulf region. The GRC Annual Strategic Review can be found [here](#).

The first panel, titled "Gulf Regional Politics, Security, and IR," was moderated by Dr. Sanam Vakil, deputy director and senior research

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# GRC Events & Activities

fellows in the Middle East and North Africa Programme in Chatham House. Speakers of the first panel included Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Mustafa Alani, the head of GRC's Defense and Security Program, and Dr. Christian Koch, the director of Research at the Gulf Research Center.

The experts discussed the regional security challenges and stressed the need to address those issues holistically. They were unanimous in their view that despite several difficulties, communication

channels are needed for conflict management and de-escalation efforts to move the region out of crisis.

Moderated by Dr. Christian Koch, the director of Research at the GRC, the second panel was titled "Gulf Economics, Energy, and the Environment." Speakers at the second panel were: Dr. John Sfakianakis, the head of Economic Research and Chief Economist at the GRC. Prof. Giacomo Luciani, member of the board of trustees at the Gulf Research Center Foundation, and Dr. Mohammed

Abdelraouf, head of the Environment Security and Sustainability Research Program at the GRC.

The second panel highlighted the Gulf countries' awakening to the realities of a global energy economy that is sensitive to climate change and focuses on decarbonization. The experts emphasized how the Gulf economies will have to find new sources of revenue or change their existing structures to boost productivity and less hydrocarbon intensive.



Panel Session 1: Gulf Regional Politics, Security, and International Relations



Panel Session 2: Gulf Economics, Energy, and the Environment





## Annual Gulf Research Meeting 2022



Participants of the 2022 Gulf Research Meeting

The Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted its 12th Annual Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) in Cambridge on July 14-16, 2022. More than 150 experts attended the conference in person and more than 80 participants joined them online. The event's participants were divided into 10 workshops overseen by 25 workshop directors. The workshops covered a host of issues related to the Gulf region ranging from international issues such as the role of the GCC countries and the Indo-Pacific to economic matters such as migration, tourism, energy transition, carbon neutrality and economic statecraft. The workshops also discussed social issues, education, role of women and humanitarian and development priorities. 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.E. Mr. Amin Awad, UN assistant secretary-general and UN crisis coordinator for Ukraine, and H.E. Prof. Einas Al-Eisa, president of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University.

Mr. Awad outlined the effects of the Ukraine crisis, explaining that the crisis did not impact Ukraine alone but

had a global impact, particularly on food, energy, economics, and security, specifically regarding the deployment of weapons of mass destruction. He suggested contingencies such as creating an alliance for food with countries that have the ability to produce food such as grains.

Prof. Al-Eisa explained how the Saudi Vision 2030 was transforming the lives of Saudi women and empowering them across all sectors, specifically health, education, sports, and politics. The academic also explained the impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector.

The opening ceremony concluded with a panel discussion of the keynote speakers and a Q&A session.

## GRM 2022 Opening Ceremony



Dr. Christian Koch, GRC Director of Research, master of the GRM 2022 opening ceremony, speaks at the event.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, chairman of the GRC, delivers a welcome speech at the GRM 2022 opening ceremony.



H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council, participates in the opening ceremony online.



H.E. Mr. Amin Awad, UN assistant secretary-general and UN crisis coordinator for Ukraine outlined the Ukraine crisis's effects in the opening ceremony online.



H.E. Prof. Einas S. Al-Eisa, president of the Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, delivers a keynote speech at the GRM 2022 opening ceremony. She highlighted the importance of women's involvement in education in Saudi Arabia.



GRM 2022 opening ceremony panel discussion in progress with Dr. Christian Koch (far left) as moderator, Prof. Einas S. Al-Eisa, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, and Dr. John Sfakianakis (far right).

## GRM 2022 Workshops

Over the following two days, the Gulf Research Meeting conducted 10 parallel workshops. The following workshops were held:



**Workshop 1:** Carbon Neutrality in the GCC: Between Good-Intentioned Pledges and the Harsh Reality.



**Workshop 2:** The Gulf States and the Indo-Pacific: Agents or Objects of Geopolitical Competition?



# GRC Events & Activities



**Workshop 3:** The Dimensions of Saudi Arabia's Soft Power.



**Workshop 4:** Economic Statecraft, Coercion, and Resilience in the Gulf.



**Workshop 5:** Women in the GCC Socio-Economic Contributions to the Urbanisation of Gulf Countries: Status, Challenges, Aspirations.



**Workshop 6:** Challenges of Change and Transformation in the Gulf During COVID Times: Social, Economic and Political Dimensions.



**Workshop 7:** Living Together Separately: Social and Cultural Implications of Migration to the GCC Countries.



**Workshop 8:** The Tourism, Economic Diversification, and Economic Diplomacy: Lessons from the Arabian Gulf.



**Workshop 9:** Challenges in the COVID Environment: Lessons for Higher Education Reform in the Gulf.



**Workshop 10:** Gulf State Donors Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.



## GRM 2022 Photo Gallery



2022 GRM Participant Reception.



GRCC Council Meeting.



GRCC Council Meeting.



GRM 2022 Workshop Directors.



H.E. Prof. Einas S. Al-Eisa, president of the Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, at the GRM Opening Ceremony reception.



GRM 2022 director and participants gather in Kings College for the GRM opening gala dinner.



GRM 2022 director and participants gather in Kings College for the GRM opening gala dinner.



Guests at the GRM 2022 opening ceremony gala dinner.



# GRC Events & Activities



Lama Khaiyat and Dr. Neil Quilliam from Saudi Soft Power Workshop making their way to the lunch at Kings College.



GRM Participants making their way to Kings College.

## GRC Webinars

### Evaluating the Impact of President Biden's Visit to the Middle East

July 22, 2022

Organizers:



### Evaluating the Impact of President Biden's Visit to the Middle East



On July 22, 2022, the National Council and the Gulf Research Center hosted an online briefing program looking back at US President Joe Biden's visit to the Middle East with stops in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Saudi Arabia. The Saudi and US analysts, scholars, and former diplomats assessed the impact of the trip on near-term developments

as well as longer-term strategic trends. The program's featured specialists were Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Gulf Research Center founder and chairman, former US diplomat Ambassador (Retd) Michael Gfoeller, and Mr. David H. Rundell. Col. (Retd) Abbas K. Dahouk and Dr. John Duke Anthony joined them for the proceedings as moderator and context provider, respectively.



Dr. Sager stated that President Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia was "successful for the purpose and the mission of the visit," which includes restoring ties between the two countries, strengthening and continuing the 80-year relationship between the US and the GCC, and reemphasizing and recommitting the US' role in the region.

The recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

## Gulf Research Center Foundation MoU with the Osaka School of International Public

### Policy - Osaka University



Osaka University's campus

OSSIP Osaka School of International Public Policy building

The Gulf Research Center signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University, Japan. The objective of the MoU is to promote cooperation in the fields of education and academic research, including a) activities such as collaborative research, lectures, symposiums, and the associated exchange of researchers; and b) exchange of information and materials in a variety of fields, including sustainable development goals (SDGs) and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) integration research and education.

### GRC Japan Branch

In addition to the MoU signed with Osaka University, which will enable progress on a variety of joint projects, especially SDGs and NPT-related (Non-Proliferation Treaty) issues between Japan/East Asia and the Gulf states, the GRC's Japan branch continued work on several other initiatives. One of those projects is the development of a Japanese company database in the UAE and Saudi Arabia to enhance the GCC and East Asia relations. In connection, GRC's recently appointed summer intern, Ms. Shahad Turkistani, focused her efforts on examining potential opportunities in the new era of Saudi-Japan relations in the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

On behalf of GRC, Ms. Noriko Suzuki attended two Japanese semi-governmental study groups as a speaker at specialized group sessions. The key topics covered Japan's national security, particularly with

regards to future defense requirements in the light of the perception of growing China/Russia threats. On July 21, Ms. Suzuki attended a panel discussion focusing on the Japanese media security. The participants discussed ways to prevent the spread of disinformation within Japanese communities. It was led by Mr. Michiro Kato, who is a journalist and policy analyst. This monthly seminar is called "Shoheijyuku" and is funded and chaired by Japanese businessman Mr. Toshiya Motoya. On July 25, Ms. Suzuki also participated in a sub-committee of the National Security and Crisis Management national defense security council. The main subjects discussed included the expanding threat of China and Russia's collaboration in both military and economic fields and a possible China-Taiwan conflict and its implications for the South Pacific Ocean region.

## Dr. Abdulaziz Sager Awarded Guest Professorship at Osaka University



Dr. Abdulaziz O. Sager, chairman of GRC, GRCF, has been appointed as a Guest Professor of OSSIP (Osaka School of International Public Policy), the graduate school of Osaka University- OSIPP.

OSIPP was established in 1994 as a place where various public policy issues can be addressed through interdisciplinary research, education, and social contribution. It aims to engage in state-of-the-art research on the global and strategic implications of a wide range of public policy areas and provide appropriate training for international leaders dedicated to working for the public good. With the recent establishment of the ESG Integration Research and Education Center (ESG-IREC), we are expanding the scope of our research and education to include identifying innovative solutions to public policy issues to build a more peaceful and sustainable future.

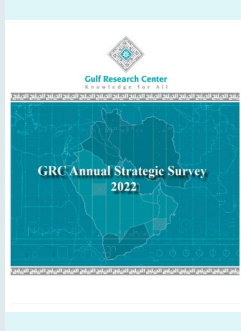
This guest professorship is internationally recognized as a prestigious position. Osaka University only appoints high achievers within the academic world and those individuals who have contributed significantly to global politics, economics, peace, human rights, and SDG's humanitarian activities. As a "goodwill" position, the role does not carry any specific commitments or obligations, and it takes a maximum term of 3 years, being reviewed by both parties annually.

Given the current economic and political challenges facing many countries, the relationship between Japan and the Gulf Region has become increasingly important. Therefore, Osaka University and OSIPP look forward to enhancing their collaborative academic activities and achievements in the many fields where their interests overlap.



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

## GRC Annual Strategic Review

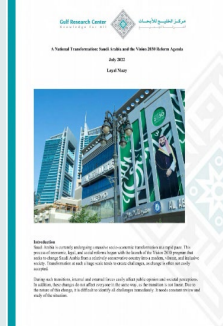


**GRC Annual Strategic Review**  
July 2022  
Gulf Research Center

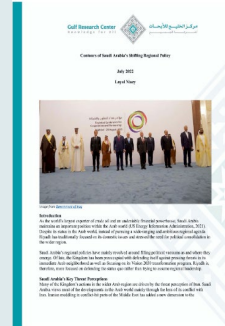
## GRC Commentary and Analysis



**Jeddah Security and Development Summit Boosts US-GCC Strategic Relations**  
August 2022  
Amnah Mosly



**A National Transformation: Saudi Arabia and the Vision 2030 Reform Agenda**  
July 2022  
Layal Niazy

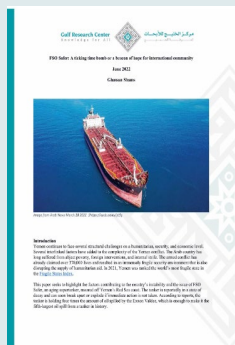


**Contours of Saudi Arabia's Shifting Regional Policy**  
July 2022  
Layal Niazy



**Sports Diplomacy in the GCC**  
July 2022  
Amnah Mosly

## GRC GCC-Country Updates



**FSO Safer: A ticking time bomb or a beacon of hope for international community**  
June 2022  
Ghassan Shams



**US-GCC Relations**  
August 2022



**# 176 (August 2022): Enhancing U.S.-Gulf Relations and the Results of the Jeddah Security and Development Summit**



**# 175 (July 2022): Parliamentary Politics in the Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Roots and Ambitions**

# GRC Participations

Between July and August 2022, the GRC participated in numerous international — both online and in-person — events tackling issues pertaining to the developments in the Gulf region and its wider neighborhood. The GRC lays great emphasis on participating in such events, as it allows for the inclusion of a regional perspective in the debate. The following is an overview of the key events that the GRC participated in.

## August 24-25, 2022

Under the patronage of HRH Prince Faisal bin Salman bin Abdulaziz - Governor of Madinah Region, and in the presence and participation of HRH Prince Saud bin Khalid Al-Faisal, Deputy Governor of the region, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated as a speaker in the Madinah Conference for Awqaf. The conference focused on endowments and the regulatory environment, development and sustainability, finance and investment, and modern technologies for the endowment sector.



## August 9, 2022

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, chairman of the GRC, received Mr. Mark Donovan, ambassador of Australia to Saudi Arabia, and his colleagues at the GRC headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. They discussed Saudi-Australian relations and the ongoing activities of the GRC.



## July 19, 2022

Dr. Mohamed Raouf facilitated a monthly call in July and August for UNEP Major Groups as part of GRC's capacity of being a co-chair of the Major Groups facilitating committee at UNEP.



## August 10, 2022

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, chairman of the GRC, received Mr. Chen Weiqing, ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and his colleagues at the GRC headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. During the meeting, both sides discussed Saudi-China relations, and the ongoing activities of the GRC in various fields.



## July 21, 2022

Dr. Noriko participated in a seminar and panel discussion at Shohei Jyuku (勝兵塾) with Michito Kato, a leading policy analyst and famous journalist.



## July 18, 2022

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager's Op-Ed titled "Constants of the Saudi-American relations are unchangeable" was published in "Okaz."





# GRC Participations

**July 15, 2022**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, discussed with “Asharq Bloomberg” the implications of the visit of President Biden on the Middle East in a program titled: “Biden’s visit to the Middle East ... What do Arabs want from America?”



**July 15, 2022**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager wrote an article for “Asharq Al-Awsat” titled: “Washington needs a ‘radical change’ in its policies toward redrawing the region’s alliances.” He concluded that the formation of “A Middle Eastern NATO” may take decades.



**July 5, 2022**

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research, held a meeting at the German Federal Foreign Office to discuss the ongoing Tafahum wa Tabadul Project on regional security process. This was followed by a meeting with the team of the Berghof Foundation in Berlin, including their program director for the Middle East, Oliver Wils, and with Nora Rathje, project manager in the Middle East and North Africa Unit.

**July 4, 2022**

Dr. Christian Koch met with H.E. Yousuf Khalifa Alsada, GCC envoy to the EU. They discussed common projects, including following up on the EU communication on a strategic partnership with the Gulf region released in May 2022.

## GRC in the Media



GRC media participation can be accessed at [the following link](#), which leads to the GRC official YouTube channel.

### Recent Media Participations



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in a program on Al-Arabiya titled “Nuclear Negotiations – Will Iran get their guarantees or not?”



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the program “Here is Riyadh” aired on Al-Ekhabariya news channel in an episode titled “Renouncing aggression and respecting religions.”



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the program “ALRAABIT” on Asharq news channel about the visit of HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to France.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the program “Panorama” on Al-Arabiya news channel and discussed the visit of HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to France.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the program “Situation” on the Saudi Channel. The program discussed HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s trip to Greece and France, among other topics.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the program (Here is Riyadh) on Al-Ekhbariya channel, about the visit of the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Greece.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in a Russia Today’s (RT) program in an episode titled “A Turbulent Bay in the Realm of Confrontation.” The program dealt with how the GCC countries deal with regional tensions and the confrontation between Russia and the West, and the extent to which the Gulf can compensate for Russian energy exports.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in an Al-Arabiya news channel program to discuss the Jeddah Summit for Security and Development.

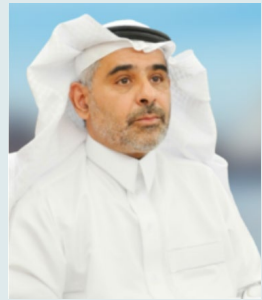




## **Dr. Abdulaqir Amir**

**Director of Urban Development & Engineering Studies**

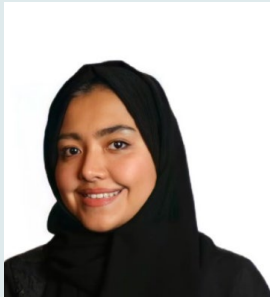
Dr. Abdulgader Amir is an urban planning and development expert with 35 years of experience in the academic, government and private sectors, occupying high-level and senior positions such as the dean of the College of Engineering, vice mayor of planning for Jeddah municipality, and deputy minister for technical affairs in MOMRA.



## **Professor Saleh M. Alkhatlan**

**Senior Adviser**

Prof. Alkhatlan has a bachelor's degree in political science from King Saud University, a master's degree and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Kansas.



## **Shahad Turkistani**

**Research Fellow**

Shahad Turkistani is an MA student of international relations at the Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies. Shahad serves as a teaching assistant at the Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies. Her research interests revolve around East Asia-GCC Relations, Japan's foreign policy, and energy security.



## **Hashim Nadhim**

**Researcher**

Hashim Nadhim studied and graduated in the field of international relations. His main areas of focus and interest include Iraq and the Middle East and the critical role Iraq plays in shaping the current geopolitical power structures and the current internal affairs of the region.



## **Youssef Ghazoli**

**Researcher**

Youssef Ghazoli studied and received his bachelor's degree in political science in Global Political Economy from King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In addition, Youssef received 4-months of training at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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