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Libya: Youth transition to adulthood amid the conflict

→ Arab Reform Initiative



Libyan youth with a precarious truck on a sand dune. © Aydoğan Kalabalık/AA



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(Paris/Tunis/Beirut, 15 February 2022) – The Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) launched today its latest research on Libya called “[Libyan Youth in Limbo: Coming of Age in Conflict](#)”. The study focuses on Libyan youth and the impact of a decade of conflict on their transition to adulthood.

The report, authored by ARI’s non-resident fellow, [Asma Khalifa](#), explores the decision-making processes of youth through in-depth qualitative research carried out with 75 Libyan youth in the regions of Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Cyrenaica. It looks at the types of opportunities and constraints that youth face in terms of education and livelihood, the impact of war on their political beliefs and participation, their understandings of peace and security, and how war has changed gender norms and relations.

“In the process of transcribing interviews and drafting the report, I was overwhelmed with the richness of young people's minds and experiences. The loss of hope is acute in many of the stories but still there is strength of will, awareness and an independence that is inspiring,” said Asma Khalifa

The report is part of ARI’s [Youth Trajectories in Contexts of Conflict Project](#) that aims to understand the impact of conflict and political transitions on youth in Syria, Libya and Iraq. Specifically, it explores how conflict has impacted their visions for political participation and aspirations for their future as well as expectations for livelihood.

“In publishing this study, ARI is contributing new knowledge on Libyan youth in the context of post-2011 that takes as its point of departure how youth themselves narrate and navigate their trajectories, choices, aspirations, and interpretations of the heterogeneity of the youth lived experience,” said Sarah Anne Rennick, ARI deputy director. “This ground-up, evidence-based research can be utilized by relevant stakeholders to adapt policies, programs, and responses designed for, with, and by youth to ensure that they account for the diverse realities of Libyan youth today, and to ensure that they are not left behind in the post-conflict period.”

The report highlights the fact that, after a decade of instability, Libyan youth are no longer concerned solely with the conflict but also with fundamental and more



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historic issues such as tolerance of differences.

Through the in-depth interviews, youth expressed feelings of instability and insecurity that prevent them from building their lives and being more politically engaged. This can be achieved by empowering MENA's new generation of political and social actors in their pursuit of participatory politics, social justice, accountability, equal citizenship, and representation, as well as by engaging in programming in the region that is for and by the youth.



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About the author



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The Arab Reform Initiative is the leading independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality and social justice.

- We produce original research informed by local experiences and partner with institutions to achieve impact across the Arab world and globally
- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region.

Founded in 2005, the Arab Reform Initiative is governed by a Plenary of its members and an Executive Committee.

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