



Arab Reform Initiative

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# New Collection of Essays on Environmental Politics in the Middle East and North Africa





## Arab Reform Initiative

(Paris/Tunis/Beirut, 23 September 2021) – The Arab Reform Initiative published a collection of essays written by environmental activists and researchers as part of its new program on Environmental Politics in the Middle East and North Africa.

The program aims to create a community of practice for activists, practitioners, and knowledge producers to share new ways of thinking and forms of action on the environment across the MENA region.

The collection, entitled [Environmental Politics in the Middle East and North Africa: Proceedings from First Inaugural Conference](#), is made of 16 essays and is structured around the program’s four main activity areas: analysing the institutional and political landscapes that govern the environment at the national level, highlighting local-level responses and initiatives, supporting environmental activism, and understanding the ecology of war-making and occupation.

“This collection offers a rich and sophisticated snapshot of the embattled ecologies in MENA. It is written by individuals who share a deep understanding and experience of environmental harms and challenges and a strong commitment to creating liveable and sustainable ecologies in the region,” said Nadim Houry, ARI’s Executive Director. “Its ultimate aim is to centre environmental challenges and questions in the region within a broader political framework.”

The essays are based on interventions made during ARI’s inaugural “Environmental Politics in MENA” conference held in June 2021 during which activists, scholars and journalists discussed environmental questions in MENA as they intersect with governance, activism, popular mobilization, local politics, and armed conflict.

The essays cover a wide array of issues, including state discourse about the environment and how it shapes policies, the models and strategies of resistance available to activists, as well as perspectives on the local and global environmental challenges the region faces. They also point to areas that need further research, including how periods of war and conflict (which outlast periods of acute fighting) reorganize political economies and ecologies in ways that harm human health and local/regional environments in understudied ways.

Following the inaugural conference, ARI’s Environmental Politics program will



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continue to generate knowledge to better understand how environmental groups establish new transnational networks within the MENA region. It will work to create coalitions and platforms of environmental groups with other international and regional allies who can carry out advocacy campaigns. The program provides a platform for environmental groups to produce knowledge and exchange experiences through roundtable discussions and convenings.



## About Arab Reform Initiative

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.

[arab-reform.net](http://arab-reform.net)

[contact@arab-reform.net](mailto:contact@arab-reform.net)



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