



Royal Higher Institute for Defence



The Post-Daesh Landscape across Syria and Iraq
General Overview and Focus on the Kurdish Actors

13 February 2020, 17:00 – 18:00



Prof Dr Fabrice Balanche, Université de Lyon 2
Dr Joost Hiltermann, International Crisis Group

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an evening conference, organised by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the Royal Higher Institute for Defence on **Thursday 13 February 2020**.

The turbulent current affairs in the Middle East have been dominated in recent years by the events related to the self-proclaimed “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria”. A local offshoot of Al-Qaeda, this militia phenomenon was able to take advantage of Saddam Hussein’s neutralisation in 2003, then of the destabilisation of Bashar al-Assad as of 2012, in order to occupy the empty space left by both the political and security vacuum. In the continuation of its meteoric territorial conquest, Daesh differentiated itself from other jihadist protagonists through among others proclaiming its “caliphate” in 2014 as well as leading an unprecedented campaign of attacks that raged all over the world, even hitting Brussels in 2016.

In view of these events, the international community has established a coalition gathering more than sixty nations, which led a bombing campaign that caused the collapse of the “centralised Daeshistan” in 2019. Since then, the new balances of power already show their extreme fragility, notably regarding the Kurdish actors. How to understand the new challenges and reconfigurations at work in the region, where – beyond the US-Russia trial of strength – the Turkish, Iranian and Saudi Arabian interests (among others) are interwoven?

In order to provide us with a well-informed state of affairs on this topic, we will be pleased to welcome two guests distinguishing themselves by their empirical knowledge of the situation on the ground. Fabrice Balanche, Professor at the Université de Lyon 2, will share his recent experience in Syria and, more specifically, in the “Rojava” Kurdish region. As for Joost Hiltermann, Director of the MENA programme within the International Crisis Group, he will share with us his perspectives vis-à-vis the recent developments in Iraq and the “Southern Kurdistan”.

This conference will take place on **Thursday 13 February 2020 at 17.00 hours** in the conference centre of the Campus Renaissance (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8, 1000 Brussels**). The lecture will be given in **French** and **English** with **simultaneous translation** into **Dutch, French** and **English**. We are looking forward to welcoming you and kindly ask you to confirm your participation by registering online on the RHID’s website: www.rhid.be. **Pre-registration is mandatory to access the premises and must reach us not later than Tuesday 11 February 2020.**

(Signed)

Filip BORREMANS, MSc Eng
Air Force Colonel GS
Director-general
Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

16.30 : Registration
17.00 : Conference and Q & A
18.30 – 19.30 : Reception