



A New Paradigm for the Middle East? Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Insights

Prof. Dr Lina KHATIB (Chatham House) & Dr Neil QUILLIAM (Chatham House)

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** hosted by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence** on **Thursday 23 October 2025** from **17:00 until 18:30**.

When Hamas launched its assault from Gaza on 7 October 2023, its strategic goals included derailing the normalisation of Arab-Israeli relations and putting the Palestinian cause back in the international spotlight. Two years later, the Palestinian movement finds itself militarily crushed and strategically responsible for the unprecedented weakening of its main backers: the Islamic Republic of Iran and its so-called 'Axis of Resistance' (Hezbollah in Lebanon, the former Assad regime in Syria etc.). To make matters worse, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) now control the majority of the devastated Gaza Strip, while the threat of annexation looms over the West Bank.

Besides, Israel is going through its worst crisis ever. Its political leadership, drunk on power and boasting radical ideology, is grappling with a growing domestic opposition (from families of hostages, ultraorthodox Jews refusing conscription etc.) and gambling with the risk of turning the country into a pariah state. Massive demonstrations, international warrants, economic sanctions: nothing seems to deter the current Israeli government from continuing its dangerous headlong flight. To paraphrase Prof. Dr Jean-Pierre Filiu – one of our previously invited experts on the matter –, it does indeed seem like Palestine has already been lost, while Israel has definitely not won.

What should we expect in the foreseeable future, for both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the broader region, taking into account the respective agendas at play? A profoundly modified Middle East? Or simply more of the same? Through which prism(s) should we monitor the events to improve our analysis? To address these timely issues through complementary lenses, we are delighted to welcome two associate fellows from Chatham House (UK): Prof. Dr Lina Khatib and Dr Neil Quilliam. Although they are currently sharing the same affiliation, our two guest speakers will provide us with their respective insights by drawing from geopolitical and geoeconomic perspectives.

This conference will be held **in English at the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**) on **Thursday 23 October 2025 at 17:00**. **Simultaneous interpretation in Dutch and French will be available on site**. Please note that online participation will not be possible.

Kindly register in advance at www.defence-institute.be. **Registration is required by Thursday 16 October 2025 at the latest.**

(Signed)

Baudouin COPPIETERS DE GIBSON, MSc Eng

Rear Admiral

Director-general

Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

16:30:	Welcome
17:00:	Conference and Q&A
18:30 – 19:30:	Reception