



Egypt's Challenge: Balancing Borders and Stability Amid Gaza War

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Since October, Gaza has faced an unrelenting Israeli offensive, and there regrettably seems to be no end in sight. This protracted war has left millions of Palestinians in dire circumstances, with humanitarian aid struggling to meet their needs. Tragically, the death toll in Gaza has surpassed 34,000, as of May 2024.¹ There's a grim possibility that the genocide could continue for months, forcing many Palestinians to flee Gaza. This exacerbates the humanitarian crisis and complicates relief efforts due to insecurity, damaged infrastructure, and restricted access to aid.²

Over 1.93 million individuals, constituting 85% of Gaza's population, have been forcibly displaced. Most have been pushed southward by Israel's war, leading them to crowd into Rafah, a town originally home to 250,000 people, located right at Egypt's border. Living conditions in Rafah are appalling, with residents lacking basic necessities and facing hunger, disease, and death.³ Egypt has consistently opposed calls to accept a mass exodus of Palestinians, maintaining a stance that aligns with its opposition to a comprehensive military operation in Rafah that might jeopardize the 1979 Camp David Accords with Israel.⁴

This memo unpacks the Egyptian government's rationale and narrative supporting its dual strategy of safeguarding national interests and securing borders, involving intensified border militarization but also active diplomatic efforts to mediate ceasefire negotiations. This memo, showcasing reasonings that many governments bring forth to support their militarized foreign policies, explores how Egypt's dual approach underscores its commitment to regional stability while aligning with its national security imperatives.

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- 1 Quillen, Stephen. "Israel War on Gaza: Live Updates: Today's Latest from Al Jazeera." Al Jazeera, www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/5/10/israels-war-on-gaza-live-aid-operation-completely-crippled-amid-attacks. Accessed May 2024.
 - 2 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. "UNRWA Gaza Situation Report 86." 06 March 2024 Accessed 08 March, 2024. https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_gaza_sitrep_86_6march_2024_eng.pdf. On how militarized foreign policy contributes to patterns of dehumanization, the reader might want to read Rachid Benharrouse's SALAM essay, tracing Iraqis' depersonalization from infrastructural destruction to militarized borders.
 - 3 "UN Relief Chief: Crisis Enters Fifth Month, Further Fighting in Rafah Risks Claiming More Lives." UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 07 February 2024. Accessed February, 2024. URL: <https://www.unocha.org/news/un-relief-chief-crisis-enters-fifth-month-further-fighting-rafah-risks-claiming-more-lives-and>.
 - 4 Magdy, Samy, and Melanie Lidman. "Israel vows to fight Hamas all the way to Gaza's southern border. That's fueling tension with Egypt." Associated Press, January 26, 2024. Accessed February 2024. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/israel-egypt-gaza-war-border-philadelphia-corridor-2b8c101ef0cb591552e264f11b1e99f8>.



Forced Displacement and Sinai

In past conflicts within the region, Egypt has welcomed refugees from Syria, Yemen, and neighboring Sudan. However, the current conflict has elicited a notably different response from Egypt towards the plight of its Arab neighbors. This shift is driven by a combination of concerns over its own security and the apprehension that the displacement might become permanent, thereby undermining Palestinian aspirations for statehood.⁵

Since early October, Israel's clear intent to relocate Palestinians from Gaza has been evident. A leaked report from the Israeli Ministry of Intelligence on October 13 proposed evacuating Gaza's civilians to Sinai. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unsuccessfully sought support from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to pressure Egypt into accepting Gazan refugees. Prominent figures in Israel's far-right, including Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, former Intelligence Minister Gila Gamliel, former United States Ambassador Danny Ayalon, and former National Security Head Giora Eiland, have advocated for these measures, including settling Palestinians in Egypt and beyond.⁶

However, Egypt has vehemently opposed these calls for a mass exodus of Palestinians. It fears that Israel may prevent their return to Gaza and refuses to be complicit in what it views as ethnic cleansing. Additionally, Egypt has cautioned about the potential infiltration of militants from Gaza into the Sinai alongside fleeing civilians, which could jeopardize the peace accord with Israel.⁷

1. Echoes of the Nakba

Primarily, Egypt's staunch resistance stems from deep-rooted political and security concerns. The government fears a significant backlash if it is perceived as facilitating another Nakba. The wounds of 1948, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced during the war surrounding Israel's establishment, remain raw. This chapter in history, known as the Nakba, symbolizes an enduring injustice within the Arab world's collective memory. Thus any attempt by Israel to force Gazans from their homes during this conflict is viewed as a confirmed repetition of this catastrophe.⁸ Moreover, the endorsement of expulsion by right-wing Israeli government ministers and open calls to rebuild Jewish settlements in Gaza exacerbate Arab anxieties. The prospect of Gazans being unable to return post-conflict further undermines hopes for a future Palestinian state, resonating deeply within Egypt and across the Middle East.⁹

5 Yee, Vivian. "Egypt-Gaza-Israel War Intensifies Amidst Rising Tensions." *The New York Times*, February 10, 2024. Accessed March 2024. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/world/middleeast/egypt-gaza-israel-war.html>.

6 Petillo, Kelly. "Tipping Point: The Risks of Palestinian Displacement for Egypt." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, December 14, 2023. Accessed January 2024. URL: <https://ecfr.eu/article/tipping-point-the-risks-of-palestinian-displacement-for-egypt/>.

7 Magdy, Samy, and Melanie Lidman. "Israel vows to fight Hamas all the way to Gaza's southern border," art. cit..

8 Palestinians already compare "this Nakba" to "the first one", deeming the current catastrophe as even worse. See Salem, Mohammad, and James Mackenzie, "Palestinians mark 1948 Nakba in the shadow of war in Gaza", *Reuters*, May 16, 2024. Accessed May 2024. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/palestinians-mark-1948-nakba-shadow-war-gaza-2024-05-15/>

9 Yee, Vivian. "Egypt-Gaza-Israel War Intensifies Amidst Rising Tensions," art. cit.



Echoing sentiments expressed during the joint press conference in Cairo with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi affirmed that Egypt rejects any attempt to resolve the Palestinian issue through the forced displacement of Palestinians from their land, which would come at the expense of the countries of the region. He asserts that “any transfer of Palestinians to Sinai would mean that we move the idea of resistance, and of combat, from the Gaza Strip to Sinai, and so Sinai would become the base for launching operations against Israel.”¹⁰ Moreover, during his address to the nation on Sinai Liberation Day, el-Sisi reiterated Egypt’s firm rejection of the forced displacement of Palestinians to Egyptian lands in Sinai.¹¹ He has also repeatedly stated that displacing Palestinians from Gaza would hinder the path towards peace envisioned by the two-state solution, stating that “this is nothing but a final liquidation of the Palestinian cause.”¹²

2. Sinai's Security Risks

Secondly, the potential influx of millions of Palestinians poses a significant threat to the stability of the Sinai Peninsula, where the Egyptian army has been locked in combat with armed groups affiliated with the Islamic State since 2013. A sizable refugee population, lacking socio-economic and political prospects, would undoubtedly become a fertile recruiting ground for these armed factions, exacerbating insurgencies not only in the Sinai but also in Gaza and along the Egyptian-Israeli border. However, Cairo's concerns extend beyond mere destabilization. The Egyptian government harbors profound apprehensions regarding the implications of hosting Palestinian refugees in Sinai for its national security. The prospect of restless and embittered armed groups launching attacks on Israel from Egyptian territory could provoke retaliatory measures from the Israeli military. Additionally, there's a genuine fear that these armed groups might be co-opted into the existing local insurgency in Sinai, thereby escalating the security challenges that Egypt has grappled with for years.¹³

3. Egypt's Economic Struggles Amidst Regional Unrest

Amid Egypt's strong opposition to Palestinian displacement lies a deeper economic context. Even before the Gaza conflict's destabilizing effects, Egypt faced its own economic crisis, rooted in heavy reliance on imports and expensive short-term financing. Now, the shockwaves from Gaza and Russia's conflict in Ukraine have worsened Egypt's challenges. The loss of revenue from decreased tourism in Sinai and diminished Suez Canal fees compound existing issues such as unsustainable debt and a deepening cost-of-living crisis.

10 Abdallah, Nayera, Nadine Awadalla, and Mohamed Wali. "Egypt Rejects Any Displacement of Palestinians into Sinai, Says Sisi." Reuters, October 19, 2023. Accessed February 2024. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/egypt-rejects-any-displacement-palestinians-into-sinai-says-sisi-2023-10-18/>.

11 “Sinai Liberation Day: Sisi Stresses Egypt Rejection of Palestinian Displacement - Politics - Egypt.” Ahram Online, 25 Apr. 2024, english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/522552/Egypt/Politics-/Sinai-Liberation-Day-Sisi-stresses-egypt-rejection.aspx.

12 "President El-Sisi's Speech at the Cairo Peace Summit." State Information Service (SIS) of Egypt. October 21, 2023. Accessed February 2024. URL: <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/187442/President-El-Sisi's-Speech-at-the-Cairo-Peace-Summit?lang=en-us>.

13 Yee, Vivian. "Egypt-Gaza-Israel War Intensifies Amidst Rising Tensions," art. cit.



Any unrest could jeopardize Cairo's reliability in maintaining the vital Suez Canal trade route.¹⁴

Additionally, a substantial influx of Palestinian refugees would pose economic and humanitarian challenges amidst Egypt's severe economic downturn. With nearly 300,000 refugees already, expanding intake risks destabilizing a nation where over half the population lives near or below the poverty line.¹⁵ Egypt is cautious, mindful of Lebanon and Jordan's experiences, aware that admitting refugees could lead to permanent settlement.¹⁶

4. Refugees Contingency Plans

Legal principles assert that states cannot selectively adhere to the right to asylum, requiring both Israel and Egypt to accept Palestinian refugees despite Israel's lack of adherence to the law. This principle is unambiguous and apolitical; however, the Middle East's political complexities often exacerbate refugee crises. Israel's historical policy of not readmitting Palestinians who have fled has consistently complicated regional relations. This was underscored by past actions such as Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's initial refusal to dismantle Israeli settlements in Sinai during the Camp David Accords, only later conceding to let the Knesset determine the fate of these settlements.¹⁷ Such precedents are likely to influence Egyptian strategies and considerations regarding the Gaza border.

Arab leaders, aware of the implications, are cautious about actions that might be perceived as supporting a mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza—a scenario King Abdullah II of Jordan has labeled a “red line.”¹⁸ Similarly, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry has pointed out to CNBC the significant burden Egypt already bears, hosting 9 million refugees at a great economic cost, and stated that Egypt should not be expected to solely manage an additional influx from Gaza.¹⁹

Against the backdrop of these economic constraints and their prevailing reluctance to welcome more refugees, the Egyptian authorities have constructed an 8-square-mile walled enclosure in the Sinai Desert near the border, in anticipation of a potential refugee crisis stemming from Israeli military assaults in Rafah. Designed to accommodate over 100,000 people, the facility is initially planned for a capacity of 50,000 to 60,000 to mitigate overcrowding.²⁰ Its strategic purpose is to serve as a buffer zone, controlling

14 "Helping Egypt Weather Gaza Wars' Impact." International Crisis Group. Accessed March 2024. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/helping-egypt-weather-gaza-wars-impact>.

15 Amin, Shahira. "Gaza, Israel, and Sisi: Egypt at the Rafah Border." Atlantic Council, November 3, 2023. Accessed January 2024. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/gaza-israel-sisi-egypt-rafah-border/>.

16 Ibid.

17 Mason, Robert. "The End of De-Escalation in the Middle East?" Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1 Dec. 2023, www.fpri.org/article/2023/11/the-end-of-de-escalation-in-the-middle-east/.

18 Quillen, Stephen. "Israel War on Gaza," art. cit.

19 Ibid.

20 Said, Summer, and Jared Malsin. "Egypt Builds Walled Enclosure on Border as Israeli Offensive Looms." The Wall Street Journal, February 15, 2024. Accessed March 2024. URL: <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/egypt-builds-walled-enclosure-on-border-as-israeli-offensive-looms-e5c12043>.



border crossings and effectively managing Palestinian movement in direct response to the unfolding situation prompted by Israeli military activities.²¹ Moreover, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have collaborated to establish large tent shelters between Rafah and Khan Yunis, as well as in the Muassi area along the northwest coast of Rafah. These efforts represent a coordinated regional response to manage the humanitarian aspects of the crisis while ensuring security and border control.²²

Militarized Response

Considering that it lacks viable alternatives, Egypt undertakes a military response as a means of deterrence in reaction to the current Israeli assault on Rafah, the southernmost city in Gaza. This presents a clear and imminent danger of escalation, potentially leading to direct engagements between Israeli soldiers and their Egyptian counterparts. Such an event would be significant, marking the first direct military confrontation between the two nations since the hostilities of October 1973.²³

1. Upholding Sovereignty

Egypt's unwavering stance regarding potential Israeli actions towards Gaza signifies a deeply rooted commitment to regional stability and the preservation of established diplomatic frameworks. Diaa Rashwan, head of Egypt's State Information Service, issued a stern warning, emphasizing the grave implications of any Israeli incursion on Egyptian-Israeli relations.²⁴ He dismissed Israeli assertions of ongoing smuggling activities as baseless fabrications designed to justify encroachments into the region. Rashwan's assertion that Egypt has achieved "complete control" over the border, following the destruction of 1,500 tunnels, underscores Egypt's determination to maintain sovereignty over its territory.²⁵

Moreover, Egyptian officials have actively engaged with Western counterparts, conveying unequivocal messages regarding the consequences of any attempt to push Gazans into Sinai. The threat of suspension of the 1979 peace treaty looms as a potential deterrent against Israeli actions deemed as violations.²⁶ Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly's categorical statement in Parliament, affirming Egypt's readiness to employ all necessary measures, including military force if required, highlights the seriousness with which Egypt regards its border security.²⁷ Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry further accentuated the gravity of the situation by warning of the catastrophic repercussions of an

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ravid, Barak. Top Israeli and Egyptian Officials Secretly Meet to Discuss Possible Rafah Invasion, Axios, 24 Apr. 2024, www.axios.com/2024/04/24/israel-gaza-rafah-operation-egypt. On Egypt's and the UAE's militarized foreign policies, the reader might also want to read Robert Mason's SALAM essay, focused on their role in an emerging Arab military ecosystem.

²³ Farid, Mohamed, and Mohamed Maher. "Cairo's Fears: It Faces Israeli Incursion, Rafah Confrontation, and Radicalization." Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 23, 2024. Accessed March 2024. URL: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/cairos-fears-it-faces-israeli-incursion-rafah-confrontation-and-radicalization>.

²⁴ Magdy, Samy, and Melanie Lidman. "Israel vows to fight Hamas all the way to Gaza's southern border," art. cit.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Yee, Vivian. "Egypt-Gaza-Israel War Intensifies Amidst Rising Tensions," art. cit.



Israeli ground invasion of Rafah.²⁸ Shoukry's call for an immediate ceasefire underscores Egypt's urgency in resolving the crisis and preventing further escalation.²⁹

2. Preserving Stability in the Philadelphi Corridor

Prime Minister Netanyahu's proposal to perpetually control security in Gaza, particularly regarding the Philadelphi Corridor, underscores Israel's strategic aims to thwart future attacks. Egypt's reservations about potential Israeli military interventions in the corridor reflect broader concerns about regional stability and bilateral relations. The corridor's significance transcends mere security; it serves as a vital conduit beyond Israeli jurisdiction and embodies a cornerstone of the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, establishing a demilitarized zone along their shared border.³⁰ Any disruption to this delicate arrangement risks straining bilateral ties and undoing decades of peace-building efforts. Egypt's caution against mass displacement of Palestinians and the potential suspension of the Camp David Accords underscores the gravity of the situation, posing threats to regional stability and the significant security cooperation established between Egypt and Israel since President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's ascent to power in 2013. Despite these tensions, Egypt remains committed to upholding the peace treaty with Israel, emphasizing its pivotal role in maintaining regional stability amid complex diplomatic challenges.³¹

3. Reinforcing Border Security Amidst Escalating Crisis

As part of its efforts to safeguard its territory, Egypt has recently taken significant steps to reinforce security along its border with Gaza. Approximately 40 tanks and armored personnel carriers were notably dispatched to northeastern Sinai in February 2024,³² underscoring heightened Egyptian concerns about the potential mass displacement of Palestinians from the enclave.³³ Egyptian authorities confirmed the redeployment of numerous M60A3 Patton main battle tanks and YPR-765 infantry fighting vehicles in the vicinity of the Rafah border crossing, underscoring Egypt's proactive efforts to bolster its border defenses.³⁴

27 "Live updates | An Israel-Hamas deal for hostages and a four-day cease-fire has been approved." Associated Press. November 21, 2023. Accessed March 2024. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-live-updates-11-21-2023-8db6dafbe39830c907f7c2db258c9875>.

28 AFP - Agence France Presse. "Egypt Warns of Catastrophic Repercussions if Israeli Attacks Rafah." Barron's, February 27, 2024. Accessed March 2024. URL: <https://www.barrons.com/news/egypt-warns-of-catastrophic-repercussions-if-israeli-attacks-rafah-030f6d2c>.

29 Ibid.

30 Magdy, Samy, and Melanie Lidman. "Israel vows to fight Hamas all the way to Gaza's southern border," art. cit.

31 Amin, Shahira. "Sisi's Egypt Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place as Rafah, Israel, and Hamas Assault." Atlantic Council, February 18, 2024. Accessed February 2024. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/sisi-egypt-rafah-israel-hamas-assault/>.

32 Hassan, Ahmed Mohamed, and Aidan Lewis. "Egypt Steps Up Security on Border as Israeli Offensive on Gaza Nears." Reuters, February 10, 2024. Accessed March 2024. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/egypt-steps-up-security-border-israeli-offensive-gaza-nears-2024-02-09/>.

33 Ibid.



On October 25, the Egyptian President Abdel-fatah el-Sisi attended a readiness inspection of the Fourth Armored Division of the Third Field Army in Suez, not far from the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip, as part of ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1973 October war. He praised the Armed Forces for their role in both war and peace, emphasizing their duty to protect Egyptian soil and national interests. El-Sisi highlighted Egypt's efforts to broker a ceasefire and address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, stressing the importance of a two-state solution for lasting peace.³⁵

Moreover, he convened with top military officials on February 27 to address Egypt's support for Palestinians amidst the Gaza crisis. Discussions at the State Strategic Command Centre included efforts to alleviate humanitarian conditions in Gaza, while also reviewing regional security concerns. President El-Sisi commended the Armed Forces for their role in safeguarding national interests amidst the escalating crisis.³⁶

Egypt's Dual Strategy

Although Egypt appears to have adopted a more militarized approach in responding to the Gaza war, it has not forsaken diplomatic channels. Cairo has prominently served as a mediator alongside Qatar and the US in various negotiation rounds, striving to broker a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel. Despite repeated attempts, these negotiations on Egyptian soil have remained at an impasse, notably after Israel withdrew its representatives. However, Egypt's government has continued to engage with senior Hamas and Israeli figures, as well as other mediators.

After a period of stalemate, Egypt has ramped up efforts to start another round of ceasefire talks, as Israel approved and started a military operation in Rafah.³⁷ According to the Associated Press, Cairo has expressed concerns to Israel, the US, and European nations regarding the jeopardy posed to the Egypt-Israel peace treaty by the Israeli offensive. Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry reiterated the treaty's strategic significance, affirming Egypt's dedication to it and its willingness to activate protocols to handle violations within a technical framework.³⁸ Egyptian officials, speaking anonymously, stressed the treaty's longstanding importance and proposed utilizing mechanisms such as the Military Liaison Committee to address any breaches and uphold the treaty's stability.³⁹

34 Ayyoub, Abeer, Carrie Keller-Lynn, and Thomas Grove. "Palestinians Brace for Fresh Israeli Offensive in Southern Gaza." Wall Street Journal, February 10, 2024. Accessed February 2024. URL: <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/palestinians-brace-for-fresh-israeli-offensive-in-southern-gaza-26a8e8ec>.

35 "President Sisi during War Inspection of 3rd Army's 4th Armoured Division." State Information Service (SIS) of Egypt. Accessed January 2024. URL: <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/189505/President-Sisi-during-war-inspection-of-3rd-Army's-4th-Armoured-Division?lang=en-us>.

36 "Sisi Reviews Gaza Support Efforts, Egypt's National Security with Minister of Defence, Chief of Staff." Al-Ahram English. February 27, 2024. Accessed March 2024. <https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/518496.aspx>

37 "Israel Begins Military Operation in Rafah, Hours after Hamas Agrees to a Cease-Fire." AP News, 7AD, apnews.com/live/cease-fire-israel-hamas-updates.

38 "Sisi Closely Following up on Developments in Gaza." Ahram, 12 May 2024, english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/1/511228/Egypt/Sisi,-Biden-probe-developments-of-Gaza-escalation,.aspx.

39 Shurafa, Wafaa, et al. "Israel Moves Deeper into Rafah and Fights Hamas Militants Regrouping in Northern Gaza." AP News, AP News, 13 May 2024, apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-news-05-12-2024-c61fbc06bc5c1a7c85ac18a542e8776e.



Opting for direct confrontation between Egypt and Israel would pose significant challenges for all parties involved, including the US. For Israel, the challenge stems from reluctance to jeopardize its peace treaty with Egypt, especially amid escalating tensions with Hezbollah in the north. This hesitancy is evident in the Israeli military's rejection of Netanyahu's proposal for a comprehensive ground offensive in Rafah, a move opposed by Egypt. Washington, meanwhile, openly opposes an Israeli incursion into Rafah. The US also aims to maintain its relations with Egypt without undermining its ties with Israel, particularly in light of Russia and China's support for Arab positions in the conflict. Egypt, on its part, endeavors to avoid being drawn into broader regional entanglements due to its economic woes and ongoing border tensions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Egypt's multifaceted approach, blending militarization with diplomatic endeavors, illustrates its complex role in regional dynamics. Despite active engagement as a mediator, the effectiveness of these efforts remains uncertain due to frequent impasses and geopolitical complexities. Meanwhile, Egypt has increased border securitization, presenting it as a deterrent against potential escalation. The country faces significant challenges in balancing its internal security needs with its diplomatic ambitions. Egypt's strategic decisions reflect an attempt to manage both immediate border concerns and broader regional relations amid ongoing economic strains and external pressures. This strategy underscores the ongoing struggle to maintain stability and peace in a volatile regional context.



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Pathways to Renewed and Inclusive
Security in the Middle East



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Pathways to Renewed and Inclusive
Security in the Middle East

PRISME Initiative

PRISME aims to redefine the conception of “security” in the Middle East and North Africa, as the starting point for strategic relations between MENA countries and their European and North American partners. It does so in pursuit of effective, collaborative approaches to ensuring a more peaceful and stable future. To this end, PRISME sponsors dialogue and debate between foreign policy professionals across diverse backgrounds and perspectives. These include individuals in governments, thinktanks and academic institutions located in the MENA region, Europe and North America, with a specific focus on engaging young and emerging thinkers and practitioners. Its goal is to re-define security in the Middle East, broadening the definitions of what it looks like, for whom, how it can be achieved, and how outside actors can contribute to it.

SALAM Project

SALAM (Sustaining Alternative Links beyond Arms and the Military) proposes to rethink the centrality of the arms trade in international relations with and among Middle East & North Africa (MENA) countries.

It fosters and amplifies ideas from a network of scholars and practitioners working in and with the Middle East. Issues they will address include the arms trade’s advertised role in cementing bilateral and multilateral ties between North America, Europe and the MENA region; the opportunity costs of over- or sole reliance on weaponry as security; and alternative modes of engagement that might redefine a shared strategic agenda.