



## August 2018 Monthly Report

### NESA Region Trends

- Throughout many of NESA's August events, participants discussed the importance of integrating and/or empowering disenfranchised or fringe communities, including refugees, youth vulnerable to online radicalization, and terrorist fighters returning from the former ISIS caliphate to their home countries. Participants generally advocated for “whole of society” solutions leveraging state, civil, and nonprofit actors—for example, home and host countries engaging diaspora communities to stymie transnational radicalization, and governments working with NGOs to educate and employ refugees.
- NESA participants expressed the need for capacity building in the security realm to address a changing region and bevy of challenges. Further, this environment requires greater flexibility by governments to counter challenges which has been a complex issue in regional states.
- Socio-economically empowering youth was a recurring point of discussion, especially in conversations about countering violent extremism (CVE) (see pages 2-3 for NESA's August CVE programs). Given that the NESA region is host to one of the world's greatest youth bulges, participants stressed how critical it is that regional governments regard their youth populations as opportunities rather than challenges.
- The phenomena of bedroom radicalization was heavily discussed throughout the August programs. Participants agreed that robust solutions demand both public and private sector approaches, and creativity where needed—for example, to “reclaim” online spaces from jihadis, state and civil society could amplify positive, relatable role models to youth across the NESA region.
- Participants of NESA's recent events have expressed concern about perceived U.S. retrenchment from the global stage. Despite the shared sense among many of recent U.S. isolationism, the U.S. still enjoys a considerable reservoir of goodwill among the NESA region's military and diplomatic communities and can retain its leadership role. Notably, two of NESA's August events demonstrate the strength of the U.S.-Saudi military-to-military relationship: the NESA-Saudi Curriculum Development Workshop (page 6) and the NESA-Saudi Ministry of the Interior Workshop (to be featured in the forthcoming September Monthly Report).



## CVE in the Levant and Beyond & Refugees and State Capacity Workshops

31 July-3 August

From 30-31 July 2018 the NESACenter conducted a “Refugees and State Capacity” Workshop in Casablanca, Morocco, which convened approximately 20 senior security professionals and think tankers from the region for a dialogue about how the state and civil society can address the region’s influx of refugees without upsetting state stability.

Highlights of the workshop included discussions on challenges of providing education for refugee children and about how to enhance refugees’ entrepreneurial opportunities. One of the most hotly contested topics involved the relationship between refugees and host nations’ heightened security concerns, with some participants arguing that there is scant evidence indicating that refugees are inclined towards extremism, while others claimed a direct link.

From July 31 - 2 August, also in Casablanca, NESACenter conducted a “Countering Violent Extremism in the Levant and Beyond” Workshop attended by approximately 30 security professionals and think tankers from across the Middle East and Europe. The workshop focused

on identifying opportunities for collaboration between the diverse range of programs and people engaged in countering violent extremism (CVE), with an emphasis on linking credible counter-narratives with practical delivery of aid. By integrating efforts of government officials, non-profits, and religious scholars, the program allows regional governments to powerfully confront drivers of radicalism.

The program convened a diverse range of parties to discuss holistic approaches to CVE and was designed to encourage honest dialogue and innovative solutions utilizing all elements of society. Individuals were encouraged to share best practices and embrace cross border cooperation with counterparts from other NESACenter countries. Each session was moderated by a NESACenter faculty member and focused on participant speakers in roundtable discussions. Topics included but were not limited to: recent developments in CVE research and policy; religious freedom and CVE; youth engagement focused programs, innovation in social media and CVE; and the development of effective counter-messages.



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# Social Media Narratives and Countering Violent Extremism

31 July-2 August

From 31 July to 2 August 2018 in Casablanca, Morocco, the NESACenter, in partnership with US Africa Command (USAFRICOM), conducted a “Social Media Narratives and Countering Violent Extremism” Workshop. The event was designed to provide a venue for discussion and recommendations addressing the use of conventional and social media in extremists’ recruiting and radicalizing of North African youth, women, and disenfranchised communities. Also discussed were the new technologies facilitating and expanding terrorists’ reach both regionally and globally. Increasingly, NESACenter-region governments find themselves unable to match the pace and capability of terrorists in leveraging these new technologies. Participants were encouraged to candidly share knowledge of national-level initiatives, best practices, and lessons learned in countering the scourges of terrorism and extremism.

Forty eight participants from five North African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) attended, in addition to Spanish (IEMed) civil society moderators, and USAFRICOM and US presenters. There were numerous panels led by participants from the region, as well as presentations from the US and AFRICOM; including Dr. Elizabeth Bodine-Baron of RAND; Dr. Itamara Lochard of George Mason University; Mr. Austin Branch of COLSA; and AFRICOM’s COL Jason Wright, Director of Information Operations, J39, and LTC Jeffrey Souter, MISO Planner, J39. There was also a presentation by the Indian Acropolis Institute of Technology & Research on their Peer to Peer (P2P) Countering Extremism 2018 Program (“Reclaim Internet”), as well as a presentation on governments’ counter moves by Ms. Nazish Khan and Ms. Muna Adil from Quilliam. Professor Anne Moisan from NESACenter directed the workshop, supported by Mr. Fahad Malaikah.



Participants (l-r) Mohamed El Hachimi, Sahar Ben Younes, Ihab Youssef



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Participants & Dr. Jefferis

# Economic Development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workshop

3 August

**N**ESA Professor Anne Moisan, in partnership with Dr. Jennifer Jefferis, conducted a North Africa, Levant, Gulf, and Moroccan alumni workshop “Economic Development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Women, Youth and Entrepreneurs” August 3 in Casablanca. The event combined the “CVE in the Levant and Beyond” Workshop led by Dr. Jennifer Jefferis with Professor Anne Moisan’s North Africa-oriented “Social Media Narratives and Countering Violent Extremism” Workshop and was additionally joined by 12 Moroccan NESAs Alumni. The event focused on supporting economic development and entrepreneurship, especially among women and youth.

During the alumni workshop, Professor Kamal Ben Younes was recognized as NESAs’s 2018 Distinguished Alumnus (pictured at right with Professor Moisan). Professor Ben Younes is a Tunisian political analyst, Director of International Studies and Communication Institute (INCOME), and General Director of Tunisian Radio (Zaytouna Radio Company), which counters radical Islamist narratives. Professor Ben Younes was honored by NESAs with his family in attendance, including his wife, Souad, and his daughter, Sahar, also a NESAs alum.



Prof. Ben Younes & family with Prof. Moisan, second from left

Also recognized at the event were the Young Webmasters from Morocco and Algeria who supported an independent team sent to Burkina Faso in January 2018 to support CPT Siessan Ye and his Burkina Faso Gendarmerie Web initiative. The total Alumni group numbered about 75 participants from 14 countries. Professors Moisan and Jefferis were supported by Mr. Malaikah, the NESAs Alumni Coordinator.



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Participants & Dr. Bahgat, second row, r & Mr. Payne, top center

## 2018 Maritime Strategic Forum

13-16 August

From 13 August through 16 August, the Near East South Asia (NESAs) Center for Strategic Studies, in cooperation with the African Center for Strategic Studies and the Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, conducted the 2018 Strategic Forum.

Focusing on the issue of Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean, the program brought 37 participants together to discuss the evolving strategic environment on the waters of the Indian Ocean. Participants hailed from Eastern Africa, South Asia, the Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. The international participants included military officers, diplomats, subject matter experts, and international organization representatives. The United States participants included representatives from the Pacific Fleet, Naval Forces African Command, Naval Forces

Central Command, African Command J5, State Department, and the DAO US Embassy Abu Dhabi.

The event included a welcome reception and alumni reunion in the St. Regis Hotel, Abu Dhabi, presided over by Steven Bondy, Charge d'Affaires of the United States Embassy, and COL David Lamm, Deputy Director of NESAs. Over fifty individuals attended the reception, which also served as a way to reconnect with alumni and as a means to introduce the forum's participants to one another. The event began at 1900 and continued through 2100, with registration and logistics managed by Program Planner Nathan Turregano and Assistant Registrar Ainikki Riikonen. Mr. Jeffrey Payne, NESAs's Manager of Academic Affairs, acted as the event's course director, while NESAs faculty were represented by Dr. Gawdat Bahgat.



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# NESA-Saudi Curriculum Development Workshop

13-17 August



The NESA Center hosted approximately 20 officers from the Royal Saudi Arabian Armed Forces War College and Command and General Staff College for a workshop 13–17 August, 2018. The weeklong workshop was dedicated to developing an impactful teaching curriculum for use at the Armed Forces Command and Staff College in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The event gave participants unique access to the NESA Center’s resources and expertise, and lectures were led by NESA faculty experts Dr. Daniel Baltrusaitis (pictured above) and Professor Rich Wiersema. The workshop was organized by Professor David Des Roches

as part of the Advanced Professional Military Education Partnership Agreement between the SAAF National Defense University and the U.S. National Defense University, which the NESA Center implements.

Speakers and participants discussed topics including the importance of carefully choosing case studies for classes and examples of historic best practices, and applying lessons learned in military education. Lectures presented theories of andragogy, including discussions on how to facilitate comfortable, student-focused classroom environments, as well as developing a classroom culture of collaboration and

participation. Speakers and participants also discussed how to address challenges instructors face in assessing students and designing effective coursework.

A notable highlight of the workshop was a site visit to Baltimore, MD’s Fort McHenry, where a crucial battle in the War of 1812 inspired “The Star Spangled Banner”. Professor David DesRoches, who led the tour of the Fort, used the location’s distinctive history to enliven insights on military planning and coordination.

Images: top left: Dr. Baltrusaitis lectures; top right: BG Abdullah Hassan Alqahtani (KSA) & COL Kelly Rosenberger (USA); Prof. Des Roches & participants at Ft. McHenry



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Prof. Todd addresses participants

## Central Asia-Afghanistan Security Executive Seminar

20-24 August

From August 20-24, the NESAC Center hosted its annual Central Asia-Afghanistan Security Executive Seminar, which is designed for senior experts from Central Asia and Afghanistan. This year's seminar focused on the theme, "The Life Cycle of a Foreign Terrorist Fighter," and analyzed aspects of the evolution from radicalization to violent extremism. Professor Brianne Todd led the discussions, and 22 military officers and government officials from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated.

The seminar was designed to examine the ways in which policymakers and practitioners from Central Asia and Afghanistan can more effectively address the foreign and domestic aspects of violent extremism. To that end, participants "mapped" the extremist threat in Central Asia and Afghanistan, dissected the narratives of jihadist recruiters, and debated how regional governments can best address the challenges of former ISIS fighters returning to their home countries, among other activities. Subject matter experts from organizations including the Voice of America, the United States Institute of Peace, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) provided additional insights to further these critical discussions.

During their time in Washington, program participants visited the U.S. Capitol and the White House and attended a formal reception at which Lieutenant General (ret.) Terry Wolff, the NESAC Center Director and Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, engaged with participants and made remarks on the Counter ISIL mission.



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## faculty & alumni publications

**Dr. Gawdat Baghat: The Brewing War in the Middle East: Iran & Israel, Middle East Policy , XXV (3) (Fall 2018), 67-78. <<http://www.mepec.org/journal/brewing-war-between-iran-and-israel-strategic-implications>>.**

### **Alumni and Other:**

Mohammed Sinan Siyech, alumnus of NESA's 2017 "Next Generation" Forum: Sinan Siyech, Mohammed. "Majoritarian Insecurities in South Asia." South Asian Voices, 25 Aug. 2018, <[southasianvoices.org/majoritarian-insecurities-in-south-asia/](http://southasianvoices.org/majoritarian-insecurities-in-south-asia/)>.

Cadet Diana Myers, NESA Summer 2018 Intern: "The Importance of Educating Foreign Military Officers", Small Wars Journal, 21 Aug. 2018 <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/importance-educating-foreign-military-officers>>.

## alumni news

Amb. Mohamed al Busaidi, alumnus, was appointed Oman's new Ambassador to Japan.

Mr. Zhandos Imanaliyev, alumnus of NESA Executive Seminar 02-2015, was named one of 26 New Faces of Kazakh Diplomacy by Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Amb. Tchary Atayev, alumnus of NESA Executive Seminar 02-2015, was appointed Turkmenistan's new Ambassador to Belgium.



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[www.nesa-center.org](http://www.nesa-center.org)



## contact us

### **Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies**

Abraham Lincoln Hall, Fort Lesley J. McNair

300 5th Ave SW

Washington, DC 20319-5066

Phone: (202) 685-4131      Fax: (202) 685-4999

### **Media Requests:**

#### **Media and Communications Office**

Phone: (202) 685-9467      [NESA-communications@ndu.edu](mailto:NESA-communications@ndu.edu)



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