

## [The International Conference on " The Conflicts of Powers in the Middle East: States and Non- States"](#)

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Call for Papers

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Poland

Subject Fields:

Islamic History / Studies, Middle East History / Studies, Political Science, Religious Studies and Theology, Social Sciences

In 2012, as part of a phenomena known as the 'Arab Spring', anti- government protests escalated into civil war in Syria. Like other countries such as Libya and Yemen, the domestic conflicts has widened to involve state and non-state actors on domestic, regional and international levels. The result has been a shift in the balance of powers in the region with new powers emerging. Syria predominates, as it is the battleground of the proxies of different states and non-states. To a lesser extent, focus is also on Yemen and Egypt, but with the same level of concern as ' Arab Spring' sentiments of democracy and a high influx of radicalism persist.

### State Powers

The main actor in the war is the Syrian government led by Alawi president Bashar Al-Assad. Assad, in conflict with the Sunni majority, has allegiances to the Iranian government. At the same time, other Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan, have been supporting opposition groups in Syria. Turkey, who has a border with Syria, supports opposition groups in Syria because of the Kurdish issue. The war moved into a new stage with the Russian military's involvement in support of Assad's government. Extra-regional forces, such as the United States, are also involved due to the presence of IS and its trans-national activities that also involve Iraq.

### Non- State Powers

It has been accepted that the concept of non-state actors includes organised opposition to government, some of which may be engaged in armed struggle; aid and development organisations; the media; religious institutions and organisations; people's tribunals; ad hoc and spontaneous groups; religious, ethnic and neighbourhood communities; street gangs and underground organisations such as the mafia, mercenaries, militia groups, etc.

These are also prevalent in the 'Arab Spring' states and predominate in the Yemen and Syrian civil wars. On the other hand, there are groups seeking for political reforms whilst there are also jihadists, especially IS. These have altered the course of the war in each state and the balance of power in the region. Besides these groups, international organizations, such as the UN Security Council and the EU, have also influenced the character of the war.

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Over seven years since the start of the 'Arab Spring' and six years after it spread to Syria, it would appear that Russia and Iran have been successful in propping up the government of President Assad in Syria in the face of strong opposition from many non-state groups, some of whom are also proxies of other states. Throughout this period, and despite many efforts, there has not been a visible improvement in finding a settlement to end the war. In addition, jihadist groups, such as IS, are still driving crises in the Middle East.

Given these facts, the conference welcomes papers that engage in the following subjects:

1. Analyzing the policies of states, be they regional (such as Iran and Saudi Arabia) or non-regional (such as Russia and the United States), in continuing or ending the war in the Middle East region and /or in specific states such as Iraq and Syria;
2. Evaluating the role of non-state actors, such as IS, in perpetuating the war and crisis in the region;
3. Reviewing the role of non-state organizations, such as the UN Security Council and the EU, in the war;
4. Analyzing the effects and repercussions of the current wars in the Middle East on the balance of power in the region;
5. Possible solutions for ending the wars.

Academics and students in their advanced doctoral stage are invited to submit an up to 500 words proposal by **1st September 2017** to the organizing committee.

Letters of acceptance will be delivered by **20th September 2017**.

The registration fee amount is 60 euro (250 PLN).

websites,

<http://www.iksioconference.pl/>

<http://www.iksiopan.pl/index.php/en/>

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