



**AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF BEIRUT**

**OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Addressing the Middle East Turmoil at AUB's  
Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs**

The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Regional Peace and Security Project, held the second edition of the Beirut Security Debates (BSD) at IFI. The event, titled "The Gaza War and the Regional Turmoil in the Middle East," gathered local, regional, and international scholars, experts, and policymakers to analyze, discuss, and debate critical questions on security-related and geopolitical issues at this critical juncture for the region.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Joseph Bahout, IFI director, noted that the initial focus of the conference was to address security and stability in the Middle East. However, unforeseen challenges, such as the Ukraine war and the ongoing conflict in Gaza, have significantly altered the international order and posed new threats to global stability that such a conference cannot ignore. This has also imposed the necessity of examining not only hard security, he noted, but also the intricate dynamics of soft and human security in comprehending the global system and its developments.

Meanwhile, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Regional Peace and Security Project Director Marcus Schneider emphasized the importance of engaging in dialogue through a platform like the Beirut Security Debates, particularly in such challenging times. While acknowledging the disconnect between political discourse in Europe and the Middle East, Schneider highlighted the responsibility to promote alternative voices and break one-sided discourses, a role that an institution like FES can play.

**American University of Beirut**

PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon  
T +961 1 35 00 00 – Ext 2650 | [communications@aub.edu.lb](mailto:communications@aub.edu.lb)

[aub.edu.lb](http://aub.edu.lb)

The conference featured panel discussions that dealt with the Middle East after October 7, whether the Middle East would set the stage for the next Cold War in a multipolar world, as well as re-visited the implications of Saudi Arabia's rapprochement with Iran and normalization with Israel given the current regional context. At the same time, a session was dedicated to the situation on Lebanon's southern border following the war in Gaza, with a focus on the humanitarian crisis and the question of human security.

The full recording of the conference and its report is available via IFI's YouTube channel.

**ENDS**

For more information please contact:

**Simon Kachar, PhD**

Executive Director of Communications  
Founding Director GGCO  
PSPA Lecturer, and IFI Fellow

T +961 1 37 43 74 - Ext: 2676 | M +961 3 42 70 24  
sk158@aub.edu.lb

**Note to Editors**

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 800 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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