

# **The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia**

## **CONFERENCE REPORT**

# **NON-VIOLENT PROTESTS AND THE FUTURE FOR MODERATE ISLAMIC REFORMERS POST-ARAB SPRING**

*26 April 2012*

*European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium*

The conference was organised by the offices of Niccolò Rinaldi, MEP and Metin Kazak, MEP, in collaboration with Mahatma Gandhi International, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) and the Nonviolent Radical Party Transnational and Transparty (PRNTT) on the initiative of Mahatma Gandhi International (MGI).

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## FOREWORD

Moderate Islamist reform movements are in transition across the world in the wake of the Arab Spring. Over a year since dictators were toppled by largely peaceful protests stretching across the littoral states of the Mediterranean, Islamist parties have gained new momentum and visibility.

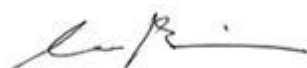
As Islamist movements enter new phases in their political transition, leaders such as British Prime Minister David Cameron have hailed South Asian countries like Indonesia as models for the Middle East and North Africa. What parallels can be drawn with the experience of South Asia? Similarly, what can moderate Islamist reformers in South Asia gain from the experience of parties in the Middle East and North Africa, and how does the international community really understand about the moderate Islamist parties that are in, and on the verge of, power?

Today political movements in both regions have been eyeing their respective developments, past and present, to chart possible future courses but little has been done to facilitate the face-to-face exchanges needed. This comes at the same time as the international community is re-evaluating its past policies, enquiring into the realities of Islamist political movements, and acknowledging the groundswell of popular support for the Islamist policies of political parties of differing hues.

Setting the experiences of the Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia in comparative context, the conference, **“The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia”**, the first of its kind to be held in the European Parliament, also drew upon the ongoing political evolution in countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia.

Multidisciplinary panels discussed the nonviolent mass movements in the Arab World and false ideas about Islam. Participants also touched upon the politics of democracy and moderate Islamism in South Asia and how these will intersect in the projects of state building, good governance and maturing civil society taking place from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The conference gathered activists, policy makers, intellectuals from the Arabic region and important members from the academic world who have contributed to a deep analysis of the current situation before and after the Arab Spring.

The conference concluded on the necessity of more European commitment to the Southern Mediterranean, a Europe that has remained largely passive in understanding the historical and cultural characteristics that influence the policies of contemporary Muslim parties. The event is only one of the practical steps that the European Union can take to help the Arab Spring in the near future.



Marino Busdachin,

UNPO Secretary General

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

**9:00h Registration**

**9:30 Opening Remarks**

**Niccolò Rinaldi** MEP, Vice-Chair, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe  
**Metin Kazak** MEP, Vice-Chair, Subcommittee on Human Rights  
**Marino Busdachin**, President, Mahatma Gandhi International  
**Niccolo' Figa-Talamanca**, General Secretary, No Peace Without Justice

**10:30 – 13h**

**Panel 1: The Nonviolent Mass Movements in the Arab World**

Moderator: **Mr. Niccolo' Figa-Talamanca** (No Peace Without Justice)

“Looking from Bahrain to Malaysia: Transnational Models for Constitutional Reform”

**Khalil Almarzooq**, *First Deputy Speaker (Resigned), Council of Representative of Bahrain*

“What a Billion Muslims Think in the Wake of the Arab Spring”

**Robert Manchin**, *GALLUP Europe*

“Nonviolent interventions: Lessons after the Arab Spring”

**Diego Checa Hidalgo**, *Marie Curie Research Fellow, Centre for Study of Peace & Reconciliation Studies*

“Applying the South East Asian Experience to the Evolving Situation in the Arab World”

**David Fouquet**, *European Institute for Asian Studies*

**Q&A**

**14:30 – 16:30h**

**Panel 2 : Democracy and Reformist Islamist Politics in South Asia**

Moderator: **Mr. Marino Busdachin** (Mahatma Gandhi International)

“Iraq's Transition and The New Challenges”

**Bakhtiar Amin**, *Former Minister of Human Rights (Iraq)*

“The Interplay of Culture, Identity and Political Structures in Shaping the Indonesian Democratization Process”

**Dr Carool Kersten**, *Senior Lecturer in the Study of Islam & the Muslim World*

“Between Tradition & Modernity: Islamist Reformers of Contemporary South Asia”

**Dr Tazeen Mahnaz Murshid**, *Director, Development Research and Cooperation*

“Participation in Contemporary Islamic Political Discourse”

**Ebtisam Hussein**, *Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies*

**Q&A**

**16:45**

**Panel 3: Politics and Islam: State-building, Good Governance and Civil Society**

Moderator: Mr. Andrew Swan, UNPO Programme Manager

“L’Impact du printemps arabe au Cambodge et en Asie du Sud-Est”

**Ong Thong Hoeung**, *Cambodian writer, former prisoner of the Khmer Rouge*

“Building International Dialogues With and Between Reformist Islamist Movements”

**Anas Altikriti**, *Founder, The Cordoba Foundation*

“Developing Common Actions to Promote Intercultural Dialogue from the National to the Grassroots Level”

**Gianluca Solera**, *Anna Lindh Foundation*

**Q&A**

**Closing Remarks**

**Conference Close**



## Speeches

## OPENING REMARKS

### **Speech by Marino Budaschin**

*President Mahatma Gandhi International*

First of all we have to thank within the European Parliament, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe, and in particular, its members Niccolò Rinaldi and Metin Kazak who are kindly sponsoring this events and whose collaboration we greatly value.

This is a conference that tries to compare what happened during the nonviolent protests in the Arab spring, the results of the elections in Tunisia and Egypt in which conservative, moderate and radicals, Islamic political parties, movements and forces, won the election with a consistent majority. To show and to find into themselves what kind of moderation, what kind of conservative political condition could emerge in the new presidential election and in the new government. And then to compare it to the success story of some secular countries like Turkey, India or countries who have a mix of political-religion government and institutions like Indonesia and Malaysia.

I think that if our friends, our activists for human rights and democracy in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and everywhere, have to look for an option which is not a failure but is combining the religious identity with a former liberal or even secular approach to the running state.

This is the reason why we are trying to put together two, apparently far, not only regionally arguments and experiences.

## Speech by Niccolò Rinaldi

*MEP, Vice-Chair, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe*

It has been about one year ago, January last year before the elections started in Egypt, when two political groups, the Greens and LD ask the EP to have a debate in plenary about what happened in Tunisia. Unfortunately the majority of the members rejected the proposition saying that it was not a priority for our agenda. The majority was composed of the Socialists and the Conservatives. Both of them had the wrong connections with the regime in Tunisia as much as with other regimes in the region. In the EP where we discuss and take position on many different issues, the start of the Arab spring went unnoticed. A month after, we finally started the debates and to pass resolutions because everybody had to admit that something was taking place in the region.

This was a reflection of European Institutions culture as they recognized very late the magnitude of what was taking place in the Arab region. I remember the EU minister of Foreign Affairs saying in a plenary session in February [2011] that "Syria is a solid and strong country where the needs of citizens for a modernized nation are fully met by the leadership". He also mentioned that "Kadhafi is a model of reformism for the rest of Africa". In a sense, these statements were legitimate because nobody from the European institutions, except from the Parliament, would try to prevent or sanction him for having such purpose. In the cacophony of the 27 members state and the very weak common foreign policy, these events have taken place.

Today, we found ourselves with a different mapping of the region and 3 major challenges:

- The need to shape a new trade policy with the Arab world, in particular with countries that have a new democratic

regime or in transition towards a democratic regime. In fact, trade is fully part of the nonviolent instruments to change society and essential to have different international and state-to-state relationships. As a member of the International Trade Committee, we had to acknowledge that we do have exactly the same kind of trade relationship with everybody, whether dictatorship or democracy, same model applied with no differentiation. There is a trade that we should support, which is the aim of the EP and the full package of proposals we are pushing, a trade in order to democratize the economic process. Generally, trade relationships have been at the top level from big companies to a restricted number of oligarchies in the South Mediterranean region, with very small benefit for the entire population, gas, infrastructure, raw materials, large agricultural production, etc. Therefore we emphasize on microcredits, Small and Medium Enterprises which account for 80% of jobs in South Mediterranean. Small businesses have been forgotten about in the Arab spring because they did not have openness in the economic process, they were neglected by their country but also by international aid, corporations, etc. . We also stressed the importance of more people-to-people connections. In fact it is amazing that we do not have any Euro-Tunisia, Euro-Egypt or Euro-Jordan Chamber of Commerce when we do have one with Ukraine, Moldavia or Kazakhstan. Also, we need to provide more EU fellowships for students from Arab countries. If they get a chance to be supported abroad, then they will go to Gulf countries, China or the United States but less and less to European countries because we cut off numbers.

- The need of institutional framework between Europe and the Mediterranean countries. We have the Barcelona process, Med Union but nothing such as the Council of Europe. In fact in Strasbourg at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, we even have people representing citizens living close to the borders with North Korea, it goes that far! There is no similar experience with the Arab countries which are closer. This is also true for the financial institutions. From the Liberal and Democrats perspective, I see the emerging of such institutions as a nonviolent approach of international relationships, an institutionalization of dialogue between people.

- Culture and mentality. There are still many people in Europe who do not fully recognize the magnitude of what is happening in some Arab countries and who think that these countries are not fully fit for democracy, that Islam is incompatible with full respect of human rights and that dictators will always exist one way or another. This is a very discriminatory approach since the basic line is that democracy is for our countries, for those countries not really. The focus of the conference on the nonviolent message of the Arab revolution is very important because it is against something which challenges a large number of stereotypes in Europe. Islam, Arab people, South Mediterranean countries equal terrorism, equal violence, equal problem and irrational reactions. This is changing but it is still a cultural challenge for our political establishment, media system and society.

Many things are happening, in Tunisia for instance, like the dialogue between religious and secular forces, between army and civil society, economical oligarchy and society.

Also, the use of new media has now become an important nonviolent tool. In fact, the strong pressure from bloggers and the larger internet community will probably impede the ratification of ACTA, international act against counterfeiting. One of the arguments of such constituencies, stresses that provisions, like ACTA has in one chapter, would have made the internet revolution in Arab countries impossible. It is also important that we pass a positive flavor of celebration; transition will be long but a lot has been achieved and a lot remains to learn. Will a pure nonviolent protest always be effective? In Syria it has been difficult. In Egypt or Tunisia the role of army has been crucial. The challenges are to get rid of the fatality of dictatorship, of violence as the way to liberate myself and my people.

I hope you will have an interesting day of reflection. There are many issues without answers but we are all convinced that nonviolence is a value always there to last, with permanent effect, consequences never to be underestimated. It does require, in order to be effective, a combination of different elements :

- Desperation. To be a rebel is to go to the streets with no weapon, under terrorist threats and risking its own life, this requires a lot of desperation.

- Networking to be an organized community.

- Passion or faith for what you do and the objectives you want to achieve.

- Good technical knowledge of new media to reach the global community.

Today you are reaching the European community, the European Parliament and you are the most welcome.

## PANEL 1:

### THE NONVIOLENT MASS MOVEMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD

Moderator: **Mr. Niccolo' Figa-Talamanca** (No Peace Without Justice)

#### **Looking from Bahrain to Malaysia: Transnational Models for Constitutional Reform**

**Khalil Almarzooq**, *First Deputy Speaker (Resigned), Council of Representative of Bahrain*

#### **What a Billion Muslims Think in the Wake of the Arab Spring**

**Robert Manchin**, *GALLUP Europe*

#### **Nonviolent interventions: Lessons after the Arab Spring**

**Diego Checa Hidalgo**, *Marie Curie Research Fellow, Centre for Study of Peace & Reconciliation Studies*

#### **Applying the South East Asian Experience to the Evolving Situation in the Arab World**

**David Fouquet**, *European Institute for Asian Studies*

#### **Question & Answer Session**



**DIEGO CHECA HIDALGO**



**KHALIL ALMARZOOQ**



**DAVID FOUQUET**



**ROBERT MANCHIN**

# Looking from Bahrain to Malaysia: Transnational Models for Constitutional Reform

Khalil Almarzooq

*First Deputy Speaker (Resigned), Council of Representative of Bahrain*

Good morning everyone, it is an honour to speak to you.

Let me start by introducing Bahrain to those who don't know much about it.

Bahrain is a very small state in the Gulf Region and it has a population of 1.2 million, and half of it or less even are citizens, so we are talking about a citizen population of less than 600,000. This is very important when it comes to measuring the magnitude of violence from either side. The regime itself [if] you compare it to other Arab Spring situations [is different]. In fact everyone will say : "But Bahrain is not Syria, Bahrain is not Libya, Bahrain is not whatever". One of the reasons for this is the population itself. We positioned a controversial struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia so we have this influence our situation a long time ago and specifically in this event that took place on 14 February 2012.

We also have demography of major sects of Islam, Sunni and Shia, and this is another influence that affected the perspective and views of others as to what is happening in Bahrain. But at the end, there are Bahrainis whether they are Sunni or Shia who are looking for a universal pride that is a citizen has the right to be in politics, whether we are talking about government, legislation, judicial, etc. So when we look at Bahrain from a perspective of citizenship, not looking into Bahrain as the geopolitics and not looking into Bahrain as the sectarian nature, then things would be totally different. Unfortunately lots of people are looking at Bahrain from other than citizenship, other than universal rights to these people and they will dig down.

Who are these people that are calling for democracy? Can we trust these people and do they have a genuine cause when they say we want an elected government? Or because of the split in the demography they wanted to have the majority and to rule the country and undermine the minorities. Are they looking for changing the country's strategic position within Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Front to change it to the Iranian Front or non-Arab Front? These are questions that have always been at the top of the agenda of several people looking into Bahrain, including other Arab Spring revolutionaries. So they are not looking into Bahrain specifically from a point of view of citizenship and this is really sad because when you have some sort of distinguishing pro-democracy seekers and just labeling them by their identity, not as citizens but as their identity whether they are from this ethnicity, this religion, this sect. This is one of the key challenges that kept coming and going into Bahrain; those who believed and those who did not believe in the genuineness of what is happening in Bahrain.

Let me emphasize that what is happening in Bahrain is a genuine cause for democracy and it has started since 1920 and every ten years, the people of Bahrain have been going into some kind of uprising or popular demand at least from the rulers that we want to have participation in ruling this country. This was happening even before Iran Revolution took place, and the rulers were always talking about somebody from an outside front to accuse; the Nasirists in the 50s and 60s, or later [Bahrain] columnists. So for every era

they have an outside enemy to accuse [in order to] not give the people their rights.

Why are the people of Bahrain uprising or demanding democracy? Because this regime is an elite trivial regime. The rule of this regime is inherited from the mentality that the king or the Sheikdom owns the land and the people. He only grants incentives to the people whenever he likes them. So this is the sort of things and if I talk about this terminology and constitutional framework, we have three main powers in any country: the executive, legislative and judicial and we have other powers like security, the media, decision making, etc. If we go to the constitution that came up in 2002, the monarch concentrated all the power in his own hands and the hands of his family, so the executive branch is completely controlled by the monarch. He appoints the prime minister and all other ministers, he acts directly and through his ministers. If he does not like a minister, he will not even tell him or her good bye; all of a sudden a decree will come and he or she will be replaced. So there is no sort of things that have some comfort to ministers that they will stay in their power if they say no or if they don't deliver what the monarch wants. Regarding the legislature, it is a bicameral system; 50% of this legislative authority is appointed by the King and these people are just going with the policies of the king. Even with the elected parliament which is [comprised of] forty members and forty members to the Consultative Council, there are gerrymandering in the district distribution so that even the real representation of the people cannot reach the legislation which is very important aspect of policy making and legal framework making. Judicial authority is headed by the King and he appoints the judge, he appoints the prosecution office, so the whole process of justice is in the hands of the King and the royal family.

From these and getting to the security: army and all the security aspects within Bahrain are controlled by the King and the royal family. From these they are getting into the media, they are getting into the wealth. 80% of the land of Bahrain is held by the royal family, so they control everything and that is why the people of Bahrain kept uprising and kept calling for democracy.

In our understanding of democracy and in our understanding to the state that we want to have, the institutions that are supposed to be representing the people, we have this terminology that the people are the source of all power and this has to come through a fair, just, transparent, electoral and district redistribution system so that principle of one person, one vote [I wouldn't say one man or one boy – I don't want to get into gender discrimination] that really represents the people of Bahrain in a single district or even if we go for a smaller district we have to have some kind of equality. This is the best line for the democracy and we have to have an elected government, directly or indirectly though the parliamentary presence which has to have full authorization to overturn this government, not to allow this government to, because it's a majority government, replace another dictatorship with an elected dictatorship. Like what happened in Tunisia and Egypt during the era of Ben Ali and Mubarak. There are elections, but these are not elections of free representation. So we do not want to replace one dictatorship with another dictatorship coming through elections. We have to have the segregation of power through the judicial, through the legislature, liberation of media, and security inclusive of everyone and every element of the country, not just the rulers controlling the security and using it as a tool to repress the people.

What happened after 14 February taking place in Bahrain? A massive number of people went to the streets and for less than a month, when they were demanding and trying to accumulate their presence in the street, monarchs called on Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) troops to come into Bahrain and they have been deployed in Bahrain and we didn't go into controversial of whether they have been used or not, they just provided some sort of psychological or trust building to the regime. But we have Marshall Law being implemented; 15 March until end of May, and with the pressure from the international community it has been lifted. Lots of violation, just to be credible not to talk about crimes against humanity or something like this, but lots of violations have been committed against Bahrainis and against members of the opposition. This is documented by an appointed commission by the King himself. He appointed a commission of credible, international judges and lawyers. The leaders of this is Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, Sir Nigel Rodley, Dr. Philippe Kirsch and two others [Dr Mahnoush Arsanjani and Dr Badria al 'Awadhi]. This Commission has been appointed by the king to document the severe violations and one of the statements by Cherif Bassiouni in front of the King and the whole royal family and the media was those attitudes of the security and the state's officials were to terrify the people of Bahrain and this just conclude how they dealt with the people during the uprising. From those documented violations, more than thirty Mosques being demolished in Bahrain and this is very precious to most Muslims and unacceptable for even non-Muslims like when President Obama was saying that this is not acceptable for a Mosque in Bahrain to be demolished and 4,400 employees being sacked from their jobs, now most of them have been reinstated but not in their position but have not taken their cut-off salaries. We

have thousands of people, 2,900 according to BICI, in what we call the Bahraini Independent Commission Inquiry Report being detained, most of them being severely tortured. We have trials of hundreds of people in what they call national safety courts, these are military courts; people being sentenced to death – 3; life imprisonment - around 20; 15, 10 years and all of this recommended to be in mala fide and retried for offences of crimes nonrelated to political opinion.

The King on 23 November has committed himself and his government to the BICI report to implement all the recommendations and now, almost six months after this commitment, no real progress [has been made]. When you benchmark what has happened before the BICI report and after the BICI report, you will see the same violations continuing with different tactics, like torture instead of happening within the interrogation department or within a prison, they are taking detainees outside to torture them, and bring them ready for investigation. This is the sort of continuation in Bahrain that is going ahead. We haven't gotten serious dialogue, although there were some sort of fake dialogues going on. I have led the delegation from the side of the opposition with the government, but they are not ready to compromise, they are not ready to lose any of their authority.

The other thing which I started with when the international community looked into Bahrain and separated the views on Bahrain; what is happening in Bahrain because of the strategic interest in the region, the oil, the arms deals, the foreign policy; that is why we don't have an assertive position from the international community. Yes, we have two resolutions thanks to the European Parliament, some good statements [that] Miss Ashton is delivering every now and then to Bahrain, President Obama delivered two speeches in the General Assembly in May addressing the



Middle East and something about Bahrain, Ms. Clinton, Cameron, Sarkozy and others. But we don't have an assertive position that transfers or translates these good positions into actions. Somebody told me that we have sympathy but we don't have someone to transfer this sympathy into actions so that is something happening underground.

To conclude and to link it with the title of the conference, I am coming from an Islamist political society. We don't have parties but this is the largest society or political presence in Bahrain and even in the region. Although we are Islamists, our future and vision to this country is a civilian state on democratic principles, and there are lots of reasons behind this. The demography in Bahrain and the split between Sunni and Shi'a means that if we go into religious state, then there will be a fight between religions, which version of religion is going to be the ideology for this state. The other thing is Bahrain is known to be very open and this has to continue its way and we believe we need to continue to separate when we are talking about state institutions, citizenship. We separate this from religion, ethnicity and so on. We have to have citizenship-centric country, principles, institutions that are looking at people not because they are Sunni, Shi'as, Muslims, non-Muslims, Bedouins, moderate, non-moderate. All of them are citizens. So we have to get into this principle and this is why we insist that even though we are Islamists, we are looking forward to the citizenship-centric state.

On universal democratic principles that are being practiced everywhere, we know that democracy is not something that you just buy or plug in and play; it needs to have some sort of customisation. But there are main principles within democracy that you cannot run away from. For example, fair elections,

separation of power, representation of people, citizenship, social justice and measures to be implemented. So we have to go and implement what has been implemented, practiced and evolved through time. We do not have to reinvent the wheel and come up with something that is so special for Bahrain and we always hear this from the rulers that Bahrain is different, Bahrain is special, Bahrain has geopolitics different from others, yes, we know, we want to go into democracy but we cannot. And this is my concluding remark; it is always a question to the Islamists: when you get into power, how are you going to deal with different issues? But we have not asked the dictators, the existing rulers, how are you going to change your attitude to these things. Always Islamists are asked about women and how are they going to deal with women's rights. If you go to Bahrain what happened to women: women being killed, women being tortured, women being sacked and nobody was asking and to be transparent with you when we were saying in our culture touching women is very sensitive, so what is happening to women is unacceptable. But Western countries kept saying, 'no but we don't distinguish between a man and woman,' so if this is happening to a man or if this is happening to a woman is the same. But when it comes to Islamists reaching to the governments, they will ask them 'how are you going to deal with women?' So this is to distinguish, when you look into different groups of people and question them on something that has been practiced badly with the current system and you are not questioning them 'why are you doing this' to these elements or these questions that you are talking about.

Thank you very much.

# What a Billion Muslims Think in the Wake of the Arab Spring

Robert Manchin

*Managing Director, GALLUP Europe*

Thank you very much. As you can see, I've changed the title, because I felt a little bit embarrassed. The title was given by the organizers and I was saying, "Well, I really don't know what they think, I know what some of them are thinking and even that one I don't know. I know what they tell me about what they think and there is always something more inside that they won't tell me.

But seriously, when we are talking about what we do, in order to get a sense of not only what some of the elites of the Muslim world or some of the activists who are expressing some movements are thinking but rather try to get a sense of what every society member thinks, we do something which we call survey sampling which is, trying to go there and give an equal voice an equal chance for everybody in a given society to express and give answers to our questions. This again is filled with conditions because people have opinions and what we are doing is trying to get their answers to only some predefined questions in order to be able to compare that and give a more systematic view. So, what I will talk about this morning more is based on a few countries and then in some cases I'm comparing it to something which I call Muslim majority countries, some 37 countries around the world to see whether I can find any change.

The title was: Was the Arab spring an Asian movement? Is there anything which can be seen there? Let me start right away with another title of a conference which is asking the question:

"Is peaceful social change possible?"

And of course it's possible if you believe but we don't really know what proportion of society thinks that making justice, getting rid of suffering from injustice and improving the situation can be done by peaceful means alone or sometimes you have to really rely on not just peaceful means. This is really a question for which I picked 3 Muslim majority countries and 3 moderate Christians you would say. I wouldn't necessarily call them moderate Christians but moderate Seculars I would rather call them, (maybe not the U.S) but what you see here is that the majority of those who are saying that peaceful means alone will not work are in France, they are close to half in the UK and also close to half in the U.S. And the peaceful means alone is even a minority in France. While the same question being asked in Egypt or Tunisia are overwhelmingly saying differently. The question asked was :

*"Some people believe that groups that are oppressed and are suffering from injustice can improve their situation by peaceful means alone others don't believe that peaceful means alone will work to improve the situation for such oppressed groups, which do you believe?"*

And what you see there is that in Saudi Arabia it's almost like 50-50, half of them believe this. Now, a slightly different question that we kept asking since 2006-2007 and some of the basic injustice which we sometimes don't speak about when we are talking about some of the feelings of oppression in the Muslim society is how Palestine is being treated. Looking at how Israelis and Palestinians are answering the question:

*“When it comes to achieving self-determination and security for my people, I believe mostly in nonviolent forms of resistance and negotiations, OR, I believe mostly in armed struggle and military solutions”,* and what you see there, that it’s almost a mirror image of each other, that these societies, both Israel and Palestinians at least went from 2008 to 2011 from around 50% to close to two thirds who believe that after the Arab springs that nonviolent actions can mean self-determination of security and correspondingly armed struggle went down but both societies have about the same proportions there.

Now, a little bit more on the difference between the West and some of the 3 societies I picked out there which were asked:

*“Some people think that for the military to target civilians is sometimes justified while others think that this kind of violence is never justified”.* Again you see that U.S, U.K, France had about half of the population who think that kind of military violence against civilians sometimes can be justified. [...]

#### **Did the Arab Spring bolster the possibility of nonviolent change?**

I would say that in Egypt clearly this is the case. You see that in 2010 when we asked the questions in September in Egypt, about 60% of the people believed that peaceful means alone will work, and in September last year it was close to 90%. In Tunisia it was not like that, from 2008, [...] you see that it clearly went down from 2008 to 2010, the proportion of those who said that peaceful means alone will work went from 68% to 52%. That’s the kind of background for belief in peaceful only solutions for social change.

#### **Sense of security**

There is another type of thing which is about what I would call a basic human security issue, and that’s a typical trade off from a kind of regime which is dictatorial, which is at the same time providing a sense of security for average people in a different sense. So if you ask people whether they feel safe to go to the streets of Alexandria during the night, people said Yes. If you ask the same question now, it’s a huge drop. Same thing in Tunisia, same thing in Bahrain! [...] in 2010, 90% of the people in Bahrain said that “the place where I live is safe”, and now it’s down to only 61%. Yemen was already relatively low in 2010 as well so there is not much change there.

#### **About social change**

Another view related to social change:

“Is this really peoples’ true desire for change, an internal change: is it the popular perception?” What percentage, what share of the society believes that this is really results of plotting of outside, block powers: is it a foreign influence? I would say that those who are saying both are altogether about one quarter of the society. They believe (this is in the Egyptian case) that this change has been incited from outside. This is really when you are talking about democracy and promoting democracy in the region. What you see there in Egypt is similar to number of other countries as well in that they are very suspicious of the intentions of course, and what you see there is that  $\frac{3}{4}$ , or over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the society don’t think that for example they were serious about their goal in the establishment of democratic systems.

#### **Refusing external economic aid**

And that has a direct effect on some of the actions that Americans and Europeans are trying to do in terms of helping the civil

society. What you see is not really the elite; it is a general population where even in a relatively short period between last December and the end of February, 85% of the Egyptians are opposing of any direct aid to civil society groups. Sometimes we are talking about only the government or their leaders but the general population itself is very suspicious of that kind of thing so they have been responding to that one as well. Even economic aid, just a year ago, April 2011 the Egyptians were sort of divided in favoring or opposing receiving economic aid. Today it's only 15% in favor of receiving economic aid and 52% are opposing. Now, you know what the economic situation in Egypt is like. But this kind of trade off which is saying "No thank you, even if we have to be without food and with grave economic situations we don't want to be influenced by the economic aid which is coming" is the same for IMF or for World Bank type of situations it's not specifically towards one particular country.

### **The question of respect**

Finally let me show a couple of things in which I will say in general how people in the Muslim world see the possibilities of change in terms of interactions with Western societies. We have picked 4 questions, in which 1 is a kind of personal priority whether you personally think it's very important to get along with western societies. We have a kind of mirror question which we have found in a lot of the research that one of the key issues is really the issue of respect, feeling that we are not being respected for who we are, for our culture, for our civilization and they are asking that:

*"Do you give respect to the Muslim societies as you give respect to Western societies?"* and vice versa whether Western societies respect Muslim societies. Finally the question of whether it is of interest at all to have a better

interaction. The way we deal with it is accumulating the "yes" answer of each of them and creating a kind of measure of where people are in these dimensions and in general what proportion of people are there. If everybody would say "no" to all four questions, then it would be 0. If everybody in a society would give yes and 1 to each of the questions it would be 100 so when you are looking at this one then you get a sort of rough proxy measure of how far there is openness. [...] From 2010 to after the summer of 2011, in most of the societies where we have done this measure, there is a kind of hope, there is a kind of increase for cooperation with the exception of Yemen and Afghanistan. That goes across not just in the region but also in Malaysia or Indonesia you have the same type of increase, a slightly better climate for cooperation. And the last question was:

*"Is there a kind of mutual benefit from increasing interaction?"*, and it is clear that each of these countries have really changed for the better.

Just a little bit more on this respect, respect is not a kind of verb only so we were asking:

*"If western societies were to take each of the following actions, how important would this be to you personally in terms of showing respect to Muslim societies?"*

Then we were asking about the secrets of Qu'ran and other Muslim religious symbols. They are symbolic items which signify respect that's why there is full consensus there. Only 55% said it's very important to treat Muslims as equal partners compared to the symbolic aspects but also close to 62% said that in policies you have to treat Muslims fairly.

### **Connecting trust and hope**

[...] what drives everyday quality of life or evolution of life situations and how has it been related to things which go beyond some of the issues of external relations but within the societies. So we asked questions on whether you trust your own government [...] from the lowest to the highest, so for example [...] in Pakistan less than 30% of the people trust their government. And then you have on the other end Malaysia, Bangladesh or Guinea, which have a very high trust of the population in their national government. So, that is really the left right and what you see from the epical is where we are asking people to evaluate on a 10 point scale like a ladder where they are in their own situation. The higher you are the better your life situation is. What you see is that there is some tendency that for example there is a big difference in Pakistan. Pakistanis are evaluating their own situation better than you would predict just from looking at their level of trust in their government there is no coherence in that sense having a direct effect in their life but that in general is a very important thing. But even more important is a much clearer relation here and that is about if you are asking whether: "Compared to today 5 years from now will you be in a better position in a better life", so it's a kind of proxy measure for hope in the future and what you see here is that those societies which are much higher in the horizontal dimensions and what we have put here is this perception index. Those who are thinking that it's low are on the left hand side and those who are very high are those who are much more open for Muslim-West society relations. So what you see here is [...] for example, if you see Iraq, Algeria. Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, they are in the middle somewhere between the 25-30 range. You have some of the Muslim African countries, Mauritania, Senegal, Mali and so

forth who don't expect any challenge on the cooperation towards the West and on the far left you have those who are the most suspicious and they are in Pakistan, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan. So the point is that the higher the openness to the West, the more they see the situation will change for the better in the future and the same is true in terms of expressing trust in national government by looking at higher trust levels in their own government, they are the ones who are more optimistic about the future.

Thank you very much.

## Nonviolent interventions: Lessons after the Arab Spring

Diego Checa Hidalgo

*Marie Curie Research Fellow, Centre for Study of Peace & Reconciliation Studies*

First of all I would like to thank Mahatma Gandhi International for the invitation to be here and to be part of this event. The phenomenon that makes me speak here today is this phenomenon called the Arab Spring that we have seen during the last two years.

We have seen a lot of different social mobilizations in the Arab world and we have also, from an European or Western perspective, been able to see that in some societies and countries in the Arab world, there are strong conflicts between the regimes and the societies. Civil societies in these countries are demanding many things, including democracy, freedom, human rights and the fight against corruption in front of those authoritarian regimes.

This phenomenon allows us to see two important points: The first one is that civil society in this part of the world is much more developed now than it was thirty years ago, and this is something that many places of the world were not aware of. The second point is the importance that nonviolence has for all of this movement, in different levels and with different development and implementation.

### **A new mechanism under construction**

Today, I would like to present a new concept which is a mechanism to deal with conflicts by nonviolent interventions and without the use of force. This new phenomenon has been implemented in different parts of the world, but in the Arab world and in Muslim countries it is not very well known and is not very [commonly] used yet.

The first thing that I would like to say is that when we talk about nonviolence, we have to distinguish between those who use it like a principle, an absolute principle, and the others who use it like a tactical tool. So in this case, in the Arab world, we have the sense that both cases of nonviolence are being used. But when I am going to talk about nonviolence, it is about the principle; people who are using nonviolence as a principle, not only as a tactic.

The idea of nonviolent intervention comes after much research and practice around how to deal with conflicts without [resorting to] violence. There is some literature about which methods we can use to promote social change or even political change through nonviolent methods. The most popular is probably a book by Gene Sharp, which talks about almost two hundred methods of nonviolent actions.

If we talk about nonviolent interventions, we should, and I am going to talk specifically about these nonviolent interventions, [...] state that they are international. This means it is [an initiative by] people from all parts of the world who want to address and deal with conflict across the borders; not in their countries, but in other places. This is something related to the idea of global civil society which we are now seeing in the international arena.

We can do this nonviolent international intervention through two ways: From a distance or on the ground. The first way is by sending in aid, materials, financial assistance or even by expressing solidarity with the local people who are dealing with conflicts in different parts of the world.

The second option, which is nonviolent international interventions on the ground, means you can send civilians to work with local groups to support them in their local processes and in their local empowerment process to promote social and political change.

As I told you, nonviolent international intervention is still a concept under construction; you can find people talking about nonviolent bodyguards and civilian peacekeepers because it is a recent phenomenon that started to be developed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, it was not until the end of the 1980s and 1990s that it started to grow. So the origins of this idea were taken by people from two different figures; one was William James, who thought that if states have the army to promote or do the work, then the peace movement shall also need a tool or instrument to promote peace. Then some years later, Gandhi also showed that it was possible to promote and achieve political goals, even in front of great powers, just through the development of nonviolent campaigns and through the use of nonviolence in any strategic way.

### **The “non-violent armies”**

When I am talking about nonviolent international interventions, I am talking about civilians who are working on the field. They are civilians, which is something very different to the international intervention that we are familiar with. They are not armies in battle. We are talking about international [interventions] because it is people from different countries who try to affect those conflicts in other places, but also because the people behind these interventions are in some way internationalists.

It is also based on nonviolent principles and the idea not to do any harm. But this

nonviolent intervention takes sides; they are not neutral. Of course where they are working, they respect the law of the countries where they are working, but they are supporting human rights activists, journalists, labor unions and leaders or communities that are facing violence in different places. So they take sides, but respect the law and the rules of the local places where they are working. The idea mainly is to work on promoting and building peace and on conflict transformation. That means they work on long term [goals], they try to affect those conflicts through the support of the local processes. So when they are working in different parts of the world, in Palestine, in Colombia, in Sri Lanka, etc., they ask for permission to work from the government where they want to go. But also, they usually can work through invitation from the local groups to work with them. This is the usual approach.

So we have many examples in the international civil society of people and organizations working on these things. Probably the most widely known example is Peace Builders International, because it is already working since 1981. But also, [there are] nonviolent Christian Peacemakers Teams working for peace or national solidarity movements in different parts of the world. In fact, some organizations come from, or are inspired by, the Gandhian example and principles. Others, like Christian Peacemakers Teams, come from religious approaches, so it is the religious belief that asks them or obliges them to work for peace and transform conflicts in the world.

So there are different approaches, but what these kinds of interventions are achieving is something very important. First, it is with nonviolent tools and strategies; they are able to protect people without arms. They are able to protect people not because they are very special men, but because they are allowed to

extend political protection over those groups and communities.

This protection that these organizations are able to provide allows the local empowerment processes. That means when a social organization like a human right committee or a labor union is facing repression and violence, direct violence in many instances, this protection first allows them to work in a safer atmosphere. It also not only protects them, but allows for them to continue their normal activities. They can present their demands in front of the local, regional or national authorities. So they can work in many cases if this kind of organization or NGO is there; if they suffer violence or threats against them because of the work they are doing, they have the legitimate to stop work because they fear for their lives and the lives of their families. This kind of protection allows for the continuation of these processes. It also keeps the political space open for this work.

Through these achievements, nonviolent international interventions also strengthen different levels of human security and also are able to do so in this conflict between big power and the parties. The nonviolent interventions provide a support to these local organizations to increase their power in front of the state. So they can present their demands and they can struggle in a nonviolent way in front of the government in a less unbalanced way.

#### **The case of the Arab Israeli conflict**

If we look at the Arab world, we find that their only nonviolent intervention on site or on the ground is probably in the Arab Israeli conflict. Why is this? A colleague of mine, Robert Manchin, points to one reason: that Arab civil society is very suspicious about the Western influence. Because the government or a

foreign influence could be behind these kinds of interventions, they don't trust them and they don't want to work with these kinds of methodologists. But this is also a problem in that these interventions are not known. So it's something that could be spread after the Arab Spring and after the significance of this nonviolent movement.

However, for instance, in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, there are organizations working mostly with Palestinians (there are some organizations working with Israeli NGOs and associations too) trying first to monitor human rights abuses and to help them [Palestinian NGOs and associations] to do it. Also, they are trying to protect Palestinians civilians mainly, who are suffering violence, direct and indirect from the Israeli government or others. So they try to prevent that violence, even though the initiatives are still very small and in this conflict there is a big imbalance of power between the parties. This makes it an ongoing process still with many things to be done. But they are already working and they are already having some successes. But the problem is that it's on a very small scale to affect the conflict in a bigger way.

#### **More examples in South Asia**

In South-East Asia, we have more examples because in India the ideas of Gandhi to create a kind of peace army, the Shanti Sena, were implemented by some of his disciples and they created this Shanti Sena in India. It worked to prevent communal violence between Muslims and Hindus in India. They tried not only to prevent violence and stop it when it was ongoing, to try to and solve it through peace making activities, but also to promote peace and to use a consultative programme to put both communities together in India. As you can see, the idea behind this intervention is to use those



nonviolent methodologies to address conflicts in the same way that the strategies of the United Nations' system is doing, i.e. preventing violence, stopping violence when it starts, trying to bring parties together through a peace making process and promoting peace.

There is also another example in South Asia, more close to the Pakistan area. It was the Khudai Khidmatgars, the Servants of God, and it was in the Pathans. They even supported Ghandi during the March of Salt.

Recently we have a couple of examples working on small scale interventions. Once is Peace Brigade International who have been working in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. They are another example that are now working in Sri Lanka with nonviolent peace force and also in the Philippines in Mindanao, where despite the cease-fire agreement (that the organization is monitoring), they still witness violence against displaced persons or communities in the area.

## **Conclusion**

I want to finish by making some general comments about the possibilities that this nonviolent intervention will have after the Arab Spring. Firstly, the Arab Spring has shown that it looks like people now believe that nonviolent campaigns can be successful. They are probably not more successful than before, and strictly nonviolent campaigns have probably not been very successful until now in the Arab World. But the perception of them has changed. That is important in order to embed in this kind of mechanism.

Also, it is important that it has been proved that nonviolence can also work in a Muslim context, because before it looked, from the Western perspective, like there was not a

clear sense that nonviolence could work in the Muslim world. It was not in the Muslim traditions. So this is also important. Then, related to this is the idea that when we see this development, it is an opportunity to break with this period linking Islam violence and terror.

I want to finish by saying that these kinds of interventions are a source of international support for local movements and international support provided by civil societies from different parts of the world. Now, after this Arab Spring experience, in the Arab World there are more people trained in nonviolent tactics and strategies. They have developed support networks, etc. and these people in the Arab world can be part of nonviolent interventions for other Muslims or Arab countries. This is also an important development after the Arab Spring.

# Applying the South East Asian Experience to the Evolving Situation in the Arab World

David Fouquet

*European Institute for Asian Studies*

Thank you very much for the introduction and to the organizers for allowing me to engage in a bit of a transnational comparative politics. The organizers are old friends, the liberal group of the European Parliament, and new friends of the Mahatma Gandhi foundation. I'm not per se a researcher on the Arab Spring. But perhaps the experience of other regions, the region of South East Asia, is not completely irrelevant, is not completely anecdotal. Three of the countries in the region in the Association of South East Asian Nations, ASEAN, are Muslim majority countries: Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

What you find in this whole, regional grouping, which after all is also quite interesting, because it is one of the more developed, more advanced regional cooperative and integration movements in the planet. In many ways it takes some examples from the European Union. But what you find in this ten nation group that we call ASEAN, is a wide variety of political models, economic models. You find what might be called, more developed or mature political systems. You also find different economic systems. All of them, as always everywhere, are in a process of transition. That is one thing that you have to be conscious of, whether you're dealing with western systems or emerging regions or regions in transition such as the Arab world; nothing remains the same. It's always in a period of flux and fluidity.

Looking at the ASEAN region, I'm tempted to put the stress on the more recent transitions. Some, as I say, have been independent or evolved their system of governance over a period of decades. I'm talking about Thailand,

Malaysia and Singapore. They are more or less in a stable situation, although you do have reverses, which I think provide some lessons. You have some that come out of military dictatorships that evolve into electoral democracies and yet sometimes, you have reverses. In Thailand you had a military coup about seven or eight years ago. It's trying to get back into the process of electoral governance with some difficulty.

## **Recent cases of political, economic transition or independence: Indonesia, Cambodia and Burma**

You can never be complacent about what exists now and how far you can project it in the future. I'm tempted to deal with the most recent cases of transition or independence, such as Indonesia, Myanmar and Cambodia. But I see we have another speaker on Indonesia, which is fascinating for many elements, and I can't resist touching on some of them.

Indonesia is the biggest Muslim majority country in the world. It has evolved in the last ten years from a military dictatorship, from one with rampant corruption to what is now labeled a success story, of having three reasonably successful, monitored by the EU and the international community, electoral processes. It has also adopted a system which is strange to some of us in that it reserved a number of parliamentary seats, 25%, to the military. As I said, it was transitioning from a military dictatorship, which had been the source of some stability and economic development for decades at a price. It has evolved reasonably successfully, has good

growth rates of approaching 6%. But as I said, I'll try to resist the temptation to look at Indonesia too much, because another one of the speakers will dwell on it, and I'll try to limit my other observations on two others: Cambodia and Myanmar, Burma.

Both are fascinating. Cambodia, a relatively small country, in October marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace Accords that were being negotiated – I remember being there in Paris – between the different factions, to put an end to decades of traumatic and dramatic atrocities and conflict and turmoil. Since then the country has been trying to rebuild and stabilize. It is in a form of governance that can be characterized as a strong one-party state, with a constitutional monarchy. It's experiencing as a result of that, a sense of stability and economic development, although beginning from a low base after decades of conflict and turmoil and virtual anarchy. But its institutions are evolving to a certain degree. I interact a bit with civil society, think tanks, and the government, address the parliament. It's a slow process. I think, getting back to one of my original points, you have different models of economic or political systems. Just as in economic models, the World Bank, the IMF, the Asian Development Bank, talk about getting into economic development traps; you can also do it politically. The World Bank talks about the middle income trap, where countries develop a certain degree of economic stability and affluence. They move from the subsistence level, agricultural dominance, to some degree of industrialization, a middle class. They can also get frozen and trapped in a political process, because they have some degree of stability, as was remarked by some of the previous speakers. It may be a military dictatorship; it may be some sort of strong authoritarian regime. It at least delivers and acquires some sense of legitimacy by

delivering stability and economic development. But the institutions, some of them, and an independent judiciary, a really deliberative national assembly, a free press, civil society, are different levels of development or paralysis or constraint. You see this in the region; you have virtual one-party states in one of the more stable states in the region. You have one in Cambodia. You had one in Burma.

It's a fascinating transition that we're living really day to day. It goes back, because it was a process that took several years under the military regime, under the very rigid authoritarian regime in the country. You had a process of drafting a constitution, which very few people took seriously. I remember being in the country in 2006-2007, and we spoke to people who were drafting that constitution. Many of them were part of the elite, of the establishment. I considered them to be people of good will, good intentions, because they really wanted to move the country. When we talked about what their inspiration was, they look at constitutions in the west, the European constitution or charter, the U.S., and individual constitutions. Some of them were taking their job seriously. We asked them questions about relationships between the central government, the provinces, the education, trade, etc., the country was completely lacking in credible economic statistics. It was really ad hoc opportunism, really. Now it's developing a statistical base, it has a constitution, it has a functioning parliament, we had new elections in which Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel peace prize winner and a symbol of democracy for the world, was elected. Her party won 40-43 of the seats.

### **Social change**

There seems to be willingness, even in a government largely made up of people with a

background in the military or in authoritarianism, to open, to change. People referred to it as the Burmese Perestroika, a sort of a self-generated opening as we had in the Soviet Union. It is still too early to tell however. I have a lot of contacts there in the civil society. Many of them have spent years, even decades in prison, but they wanted to take part in this transition and election process, because it was their only hope. Perhaps there is some lesson there. It still has to deal with a lot of complex issues, even once with significant ethnic minorities. There's a large Muslim minority in part of the country. There are guerilla movements, insurgencies, rebellions, in many parts of the country among the different ethnic groups in Burma, which still are a significant problem. Economic development is a major issue, but it has resources. It has a patient, a hard working population. I think, it could have a good, strong future.

Let me turn to some of the other elements. I've talked about the institutional development process. In Cambodia and Myanmar, there's a developing process of acquiring some of these institutions. Civil society developed in Myanmar as a result of the cyclone that hit there a few years ago, when the government proved to be completely incapable of providing services. There was sort of a spontaneous reaction of different elements of the community, to deliver food, medicine, etc. . It created an opening, a new space for internet, elections. The press is still very rudimentary, shall we say, but it is also developing as a result of the new media. There are a lot of gaps to fill in this country, in some of the other countries of the region.

#### **The importance of regional context : ASEAN**

One of the important elements that I don't want to neglect is the regional context. The

ASEAN group of nations is characterized by a more laissez-faire kind of governance, they believe in non-interference in other countries, and yet they talk about the 'ASEAN way', which is perhaps providing examples or models to each other. I think ASEAN is quite pleased with what has happened in the last decade or so. Although none of the countries, or what we might characterize, are not complete democracies, they are moving. There is constant movement and experimentation in a way with different systems of governance. I cited the examples of Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, but there are many others. I think the ASEAN group at a regional level is interesting. I don't know what examples it can give to the Arab, Mediterranean or Middle Eastern Region. But for example, the ASEAN, after many years of hesitating, created an official human rights commission, where the representatives from each country are appointed by each government. But some of the governments have appointed representatives from the civil society, and lawyers, not just people from the establishment or former ministers. It is interesting. And quickly they established contact with the EU, the whole commission visited here, spoke to a number of us, came to the EP, went to the US. Sometimes, there is sort of a natural inclination by, as I said, people from within the establishment that might be considered to be people of good intentions or modernists, move into.

I think there is also a sense of community and solidarity, although not completely developed. We see the strains, even here in Europe, where it is mostly everyone from himself. But there is still an understanding, that together you may constitute a more functional, operational, successful model of development. I know that, together, the countries are conscious of the fact that they need to develop supply chains, economic

cooperation and integration, to face their bigger neighbors from China or India. They do recognize the need for cooperation, collaboration, even integration, and that means not only economically, but to a certain degree, taking into account the political processes. They learn from each other.

**Conclusion: Multiculturalism, source of flexibility in the ASEAN region**

Another point I would like to make is that many of these societies, states, are multi-cultural, multi-religious. I mentioned the fact that some of them have Muslim majorities, some of them have significant Muslim minorities. But they also have large, either Buddhist, Confucian, Christian communities. They have to deal with this mosaic of cultural or ethnic differences. It is not unknown that other regions or countries have to cope with the difficult or complex realities of living together. It is not easy. Some of them have developed these models where the majority rules with the consent of the minorities. In some of them, the local majority gets all the government jobs, for example, or the military positions, whereas some of the other ethnic majorities take a preponderant role in the economy or education. They develop their own pattern, and I think that's one of the examples for other regions, that you need to come up with your own resolutions or even accommodation. As I previously said, they are fluid, they need to adapt constantly, and there is no room for complacency.

Thank you.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

### **The sectarian segregation approach in Bahrain**

Mr Manchin raised some questions regarding the existence and visibility of solidarity between Shia and Sunni community. In fact, during the days of the revolution which Mr Manchin witnessed, both communities were showing signs of unity, using nonviolent techniques during the demonstrations to be visible to the external media. For instance, Christians were holding hands to protect Muslims prayers and vice versa during the holy mess in the Church.

Mr Almarzooq re-affirmed the unity of Bahrain people as one community. He urges the international community to change their view on Bahrain when looking at internal conflict. It is not Sunni against Shia, it is democrats and anti-democrats. But he also denounced this sectarian segregation approach to be used by dictatorships as a peaceful way of combating revolutions!

### **The effectiveness of nonviolence**

Then Mr Manchin touched upon the different perception of the effectiveness of nonviolence looking at Syria. Several activists in Turkey, mainly in refugee camps near the border with Syria, and even teenagers, who experienced the repression, had to flee and considers themselves as normal activists, are strongly seeking for external intervention. In a context of divergence and confusion in the international community, how can we still defend nonviolent actions?

Mr Hidalgo stated that countries which have successfully change culture of fear and repression, had to work on it for years. Time, effort and resources are needed to build a culture of nonviolence. He stresses that it is important to choose the right time to face the challenge otherwise it could be the gate of failure meaning suffering from more repression. According to the last survey about resistance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, comparing violent and nonviolent campaigns in authoritarian, Muslim

regimes, nonviolent campaigns are more likely to be successful because they can attract more supporters to the fight, especially if they are part of this authoritarian regime as their chance of survival is remote in a context of violent campaigns.

Also, Mr Hidalgo added that the quality of achievement of nonviolent campaigns is better, especially regarding the transitional period which is more positive and peaceful. For instance, in Palestine, during the first Intifada in the 80s, the campaign was nonviolent and able to stop some Arab Palestinian which used to bomb the Israeli embassy or planes, which in turn changed the external view on Palestine and even generated some concern about the people of Palestine. But the 2nd Intifada was violent and brought to the international scene the image of Palestinians as terrorists. Opting for nonviolence interventions is a strategical choice of surviving the conflict. In fact, it is the solution which minimizes the risks of being killed and maximizes one's influence during the campaign.

## PICTURES PANEL 1



NICCOLO' FIGA-TALAMANCA (NPWJ)



DAVID FOUQUET, GIANLUCA SOLERA





## **PANEL 2:**

### **DEMOCRACY AND REFORMIST ISLAMIST POLITICS IN SOUTH ASIA**

Moderator: **Marino Busdachin** (Mahatma Gandhi International)

#### **Iraq's Transition and The New Challenges**

**Bakhtiar Amin**

Former Minister of Human Rights (Iraq)

#### **The Interplay of Culture, Identity and Political Structures in Shaping the Indonesian Democratization Process**

**Dr Carool Kersten**

Senior Lecturer in the Study of Islam & the Muslim World

#### **Between Tradition & Modernity: Islamist Reformers of Contemporary South Asia**

**Dr Tazeen Mahnaz Murshid**

Director, Development Research and Cooperation

#### **Participation in Contemporary Islamic Political Discourse**

**Ebtisam Hussein**

Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies



**EBTISAM HUSSEIN**



**DR TAZEEN MAHNAZ**



**BAKHTIAR AMIN**



**DR CAROOL KERSTEN**



# Iraq's Transition and The New Challenges

**Bakhtiar Amin**

*Former Minister of Human Rights (Iraq)*

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, distinguished assemblies. It is a privilege to address you in this room of the European Parliament. First I would like to express my profound gratitude, both to the member of the European Parliament, Mr. Niccolò Rinaldi and Mr. Metin Kazak, along with Mahatma Gandhi International, our friends at No Peace without Justice, UNPO and NRPTT. I know that these two distinguished members of the Parliament, as I am reading in my invitation letter, are members of ALDE. I'm very honoured to be with you here coming from Baghdad and going back again, this afternoon.

## **Some statistics about Iraq**

Your subject of preaching non-violence in a very violent part of the world is in itself advocacy for a wonderful principle that I profoundly believe in. We, in the Middle-East, that in its broader term includes Asia-minor, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan all the way to Mauritania. We represent about 7 % of the world's population, but prior to the Arab spring we represented about 40% of world's violence. If compare it to any other parts of the world, by all measures, we hold the record in this field, unfortunately. Most of this violence, by 90%, is domestic. When you dig into the root causes of this violence, you find the failure, absence or mismanagement of diversity and pluralism whether ethnic diversity, religious, sectarian or political diversity. Instead of turning diversity and pluralistic nature of a society into enhancing national cohesion and unity, we turn it into a source of disputes, conflicts and a machinery of hatred. Based on principles that the British call "me, myself and I"; either me, my family, my clan, my tribe, my party, my sect in power,

or I will kill you all, [it is] the non-acceptance of the other, not just intolerance. If I don't put my deodorant today, maybe Marino will be kind and respectful and not say anything about it, but he will accept me as I am, with my language, culture, religion, belief, sect, political view, etc. This is the 'mother' of all problems in our regions. If you look into the wars that took place in Iraq, Sudan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, Iran, Turkey, you name it. This is a number one challenge that our region faces. How can we best manage this diversity and pluralism of our societies? This goes into the essence of the nature of political systems that we have in our region, that are not based on fair power-sharing and resource-sharing in our region.

Our region represents about 47% of the world's despotic and totalitarian regimes. And this is a region with a long list of deficiencies. 70 million of illiterate people in Baghdad which makes it number one again in the field of illiteracy unfortunately. 25% of our Phd holders are leaving the region for the OECD countries and beyond. We have about 47 000 doctors from the Middle East (11 Arab countries) working in OECD countries. Of course, a long list includes 12 million IDP's and refugees, 11 million street children, etc.

Terrorist groups or terrorism is also a major challenge. Obscurantism and radicalism of all kinds as well, whether it is from nationalistic, religious our sectarian forces is also benefiting from this brain-drain that exists in our region. It is easier to recruit in an environment of ignorance. The educational system in our region has had various types of deficiencies for a long time. We are hoping that the educational system will be reformed. I was

recently in South-Korea and I saw they have over 400 universities. If I count the number of universities of the Gulf Countries all together, we probably won't have half of it. What I am trying to say here is that the reform needs to be in the field of education, with economic, political reform. Political reform is essential and should be the heart of all reform.

#### **Iraq today : "everything except a state"**

Unfortunately the reform movement in our region after what has happened in certain countries feels somehow disappointing about the outcome of the efforts done by millions of young people on the streets of Tunisia, Cairo, Manama, Damascus, Tripoli, etc. They know that there were people who tried to hijack their efforts and others who were unfortunately not lucky enough because of the sectarian division in the region. They turn their back to the suffering of certain people like in Bahrain. Others also turned their back to the suffering of the Syrian people in other countries and they were silent about the on-going slaughter of the Syrian people in their struggle for a better life and to get rid of the rule of an autocratic regime that has been in power for the last four decades.

I will say without exaggeration that most of the states in our region look like everything except like a state. Modern states are usually built on two major pillars. One is called the supreme national interest. That does not exist, including in my country. All interests are family, tribe, clan, party, individuals, etc. It is very factional. The second pillar of building moderate nation states is the concept of human security, which is derivate from national security concepts, that have changed after WWII until today by including components of individual, collective, politics, economic, food, health, environment or security. This should reflect on the institutions you build. Unfortunately, the concept of

security, where the society and the people are not in the equation and are not counted by greedy politicians who build armies of 1 million, or according to their size, big armies, police forces and security apparatus, just to protect the privileges of the ruling elite, whether they are a family, party or group. They are not there to protect the concept of human security, neither of the society nor of the individual.

That is why I am saying they look like everything except for states. We signed beautiful conventions and treaties, but if we translate them into the reality, we see failure and deficiency as well. Many human rights conventions were signed by the states in our region, but the human rights record of countries in that region are terrible. Most of those countries have created museums of crime, and on an almost industrial level, they are producing thieves and suffering to their own people on a daily basis. There is no need to mention examples to anyone, since we hear them on a daily basis on radio, television, newspaper. Nowadays we live in a digital era with Twitter, Facebook and Youtube. We see all these images and cries of the population of our region.

Businesses continue as usual with many of them. Some changes here and there, some reluctance and conservatism; sometimes we have seen chattering between autocrats and theocrats. Democrats are orphans, nobody cares about them in the international community when it comes to *raison d'état*. Civil society organisations, parliamentarians, good willing people here and there, you see that there are people of conscious defending these people and supporting them. As a human rights activist I highly appreciate highly any support to my people or other people in the region and elsewhere in the world. We have seen certain that there is certain support somewhere and certain reserve elsewhere.

We know the difficulties and each country has its particularity, no need to go into these issues.

### **Human rights violations and democracy**

I will say something about the challenges Iraq is facing. Iraq was one of the most extraordinary types of dictatorship that the world has seen since WWII. Three and a half decade of terrible rule of Saddam Hussein, over 3 million people killed. I used to call my country a 'museum of crime'. Post Saddam Hussein widened and deepened as well, adding figures to human rights violations. Unfortunately the human suffering continues in my country. The dictatorship is no longer there as a system. We established a so-called democratic regime, pluralistic and parliamentary in nature through elections every four year, not through tanks and coup d'états. We produced a constitution, with which nobody is perfectly happy and nobody is perfectly unhappy. It was a compromise between the Islamists and the non-Islamists. We said that the country is an Islamic country, and the Sharia is one of the sources of jurisdiction, but the principles of human rights and democracy need to be respected. We decided in a referendum that the country had to be democratic and federal. The only federal region is in the north, the Kurdish region, a de facto state before toppling Hussein's regime. Sometimes politicians, who are centralised in their mind-set, accept federalism when they are weak. When they are strong they back out of it. This is a challenge in our political system, a dispute in power and resource sharing. This is also the case for most of the countries of the region actually. The power and the resources are in the hand of few people.

### **Sunnis and Shia regional conflict**

The wealth we have is oil; we don't have a strong industry or a strong agriculture these

days, and we even import to Iraq, which was the food basket of the region with the Tigris and the Euphrates, cucumber, tomato, onion, everything we need to eat. Nothing is made in my country, except maybe car bombs and explosive devices, sent by some neighbouring countries as well. We have two countries in our region; Iran thinks that it is the protector of Shia Islamists, and the other, Turkey, thinks it is the protector of Sunnis. We become a sandwich in the rival area as well. Sunni Islam is also present in the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia. Today Iran goes with Syria. From Syria we also had terrorists coming in and exploding themselves for many years, those who had their rendez-vous with the Prophet Mohammed and the seventy Virgins and exploded themselves amongst the poor Iraqis, often mostly Shias, but also Sunnis, Kurds, Christians, etc. The population paid heavy prices for this. On-going competition and rivalry in the region, due to the presence of the American forces as well, which was seen negatively by neighbouring countries. They wanted Iraq to become a country in constant crisis with a bloody political scene, continuously from time to time. We have ten, twenty, thirty, forty explosions a day.

Despite all of that, we see that there is an improvement, and a lot of positive things have happened in the country as well. I give you the example of the Kurdish region; 4 500 destroyed villages were mostly reconstructed, the cities are developed, the economy is booming, 2 airports, over 15 universities, roads, bridges and schools have been build, the average revenue of the people has improved in all of Iraq and in the Kurdish region. During Saddam's time it was 365 dollar. Today this is almost 4 350 dollar.

There are good things and there are bad things. Some in the neighbouring countries are treating the Kurds of Iraq as good Kurds, and their own Kurds are bad Kurds. Turkey

sees their own Kurds as bad Kurds and Iraqi Kurds as good Kurds. Iranians see their Kurds as bad Kurds, and they see the Iraqi Kurds as good Kurds for their own interest and business. In reality, they are regimes that turn their back to their own population and citizens coming from a particular ethnic minority. However, they are citizens of these countries so they should be treated equally and respected as they are, and they should solve their own problems within their own boundaries.

### **Challenge of corruption**

I think that the biggest challenge that our region, including my country, is facing is the issue of corruption and the lack of principles of good governance in the management business of everything, from politics, to economy, administration, culture and everything else. Another challenge that I see is the neglect and ignorance of a forgotten generation; the youth. They are the majority of the population and they should have better chances and opportunities for better lives in their countries. It is not a dream, with all due respect, to military forces, military police, of every young man to become a soldier or a militia man or a terrorist. They want something else. We should concentrate more on education, education and education, and provide them tools and resources for that. Our countries are rich, not poor. There are means to empower the youth.

### **Empowering women**

And we need to empower women. In Iraq we had a quota system of 25% on parliamentary and provincial levels, but not on an executive level. This is needed. Political party laws should include certain quota for women to be in a leadership position, as an emergency remedy method to an approach to raise the status of women and to create a participatory

type of political system and society, because the exclusion and regression are there. Whenever they have the chance, men will not share the power with women. That is why you need to empower more women, so they are not just getting 'soft' posts. They should be in the core of the decision making process and getting important positions, as they say in French, "regalia" positions; minister of Interior, Defense, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Prime Ministers, Presidents, speakers. Why should women just have the right to get a job as minister of state without the portfolio of Women Affairs? Go and beg from UNIFEM or UNWomen or international institutions in order to help the millions of women who are excluded and suffer. Iraq is called the Republic of widows and orphans, millions of them are in our country. A women minister of state would perhaps solve the magnitude of problems and challenges.

### **New anti-discriminatory committees**

Another issue that I think should be addressed is the issue of discrimination based on affiliation. Our countries in our region need anti-discriminatory committees on municipal, provincial and federal level. We need anti-discriminatory committees against those who are recruiting people just based on affiliation to their parties, to their sects, to their religion, to their families, etc. and also against gender, disabled people and aged people discriminations. The UN says that 10% of the world's population is disabled. In Iraq, due to wars, 25% of world's landmines are located in Iraq. 15% of world's landmines is implanted in Iraqi Kurdistan. Thousands of people died or became disabled. Explosive devices used in terrorist acts also created many disabled people, who suffer enormously; they are an army of people. You cannot imagine the challenges they face. When they have to go for paperwork in a building with four or five floors, there is no electricity. In Iraq there is,

except for the north that has 20 hours electricity, 6 to 10 hours electricity per day. Imagine what this means year after year.

### **A growing population, natural resources and global security**

We have a problem with services, another challenge in our societies, and with potable water and desertification. I came from Baghdad and 5 consecutive days there were dust storms. You need extra lungs to be able to breathe. We had so many crises in this country, and now we even have an oxygen crisis. If we each planted a tree per year, thirty million inhabitants, thirty million trees, in ten years, 300 million trees. Each tree gives oxygen to 15 persons. Then we will compensate what we pollute through our cars. Many have beautiful and big cars in the Arab world. We don't pollute through industry, but through our cars. We are quite responsible in contributing to our universe and our environment to make it cleaner and healthier for us and for the generations to come. We are facing environmental challenges; desertification, climate change, global warming. The water problem with the increase of population is another thing.

The Middle East will double by 2050. Its population will go from 350 million inhabitants to 700 million inhabitants. Iraq will be 70 million inhabitants. We will have problems with water and food. Egypt will be 150 million inhabitants. We need to create millions of jobs, let's say 5 million new jobs in the Middle East per year. If we do not turn these young societies, which are mostly composed out of the youth, which is positive and their positive energy should be used positively, I am afraid that it will turn out to be something very negative. Not just for our own societies, but also for the global security in terms of migration, refugees and radicalisation.

We need supranational strategies to deal with many issues, such as the environment or the issue of residential units that need to be built for millions of homeless people or people living in terrible conditions in the entire region, for example among many others..

### **A multicultural police and army**

We also need to create security forces and armies that are balanced in countries that are multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-sectarian and multi-cultural. We shouldn't bring people from outside the region to turn them to become policemen or soldiers, depriving our own citizens from that opportunity, and allowing foreigners to bring over people and give them citizenship in our countries, when our people is denied citizenship in our region, like in Bahrain and Syria. Syrian Kurds are deprived from their citizenship; hundreds of thousands of people are living in prison or are not able to travel inside of their country from one city to another, besides from being deprived from their linguistic-cultural and political rights. Their region is underdeveloped and there are no economic investments either. In Bahrain they bring Baluchis, Pakistanis or Yemenis, people from other Arab countries and integrate them into the security forces there when the Shias are deprived from this right. There is also the issue of political naturalization.

### **Conclusion: the example of the Kurdish struggle**

I should maybe stop there, because there are many things to say about this part of the region of the world. I would say something about identity and conclude with this. When I was a child, we were being told that historically speaking, Sunnis were obedient to their rulers. Shias were waiting for the Mahdi to come to appearance; they were not so much oriented towards power. In my country,

the Sunnis lost the power, and the Shias were in power. The Sunnis are disobedient, they want power. The Shias who grabbed the power, they wanted to stick to it. Even the concept of Islam has changed when it comes to power. Power, greed does not know any religion, any sect. It has its own dynamics. Persians have a saying: "Beneath the chair there is fire. The fire might warm you gently, but when you are not careful it might burn you and your turban and your beard as well".

Thank you, dear distinguished assembly. I will end with a couple of Kurdish proverbs that my mother, God blesses her soul, used to tell me when she was a women activist and politician. "The world is a rose, smell it and pass it to your next. If you are not a rose, please do not be a thorn". I see a friend of mine who is present here, who is a Kurd from Turkey, whose parents were slaughtered by these obscure forces, death squads of the government. I haven't seen him in a long time, his hair is grey today, greyer than before. He works for cultural identity and the rights of his own people as a poet from a Kurdish institute. I'm very happy to see him here in the audience today. The Kurds in Turkey started their Spring before anybody else in the region, and still they are continuing with their Spring, hunger strikes and demonstrations, whether it is in Brussels, Strasbourg, in the Kurdish cities of Turkey or the cities of Turkey. Kurds of Syria, Iran and Iraq still continue to struggle to get their rights enshrined in the constitutional and lawful process and hoping for a peaceful, democratic and federal Iraq that embraces everybody. Iraq and its people need your support. Iraqi elected institutions need your support. They have been through a lot of challenges and this society still faces many societies. There are people who struggle on a daily basis for a better life. This is the brighter side of our societies; the dynamics of life is

stronger than that of death, despite the many apocalyptic situations we have been in and many evil that are the gut of death and are threatening our children who go to school. We don't know if they will come back after school, or if they will be blown up on the road. Terrorism again and again in my country is the challenge number one, but also democracy needs democrats. The non-democrats are also the major challenge to a better life, prosperity, stable societies in my country and in the countries of the region. I hope all the democrats will stand up with the democrats, and will not chattel between autocrats and theocrats, and hoping that they will build up democracy through that.

Thank you.

# The Interplay of Culture, Identity and Political Structures in Shaping the Indonesian Democratization Process

Dr Carool Kersten

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Together with Turkey, Indonesia is held up to the Arabic-speaking parts of the Muslim world as an optimistic example for post-2011 political trajectories offering an alternative to the binary choice between secular (often military dominated) authoritarianism or its religious alternative: a take-over of the state by Islamists – which is too often presented by so-called pundits as the only available future options.

## The Fall of the New Order

Some caution is advised, because the Indonesian experience also shows that it will not be an easy ride. The vibrancy and precariousness of Indonesia's democratization process since the fall of the New Order regime in 1999, following the resignation of President Suharto a year earlier, can be illustrated with two incidents occurring in 2005 and 2006.

In late July 2005, Indonesia's Council of Religious Scholars (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* or MUI) issued Fatwa Nr. VII condemning as 'un-Islamic' the principles of secularism, pluralism and liberalism advocated by liberal Muslims. It was directed in particular against the ailing intellectual Nurcholish Madjid, who would succumb a month later to liver failure in a Singapore hospital and a younger generation of liberal Muslims inspired by his legacy. Their detractors began referring to these principles by the vicious acronym '*sipilis*'. Within a year the moderates responded with the second event I want to highlight: the 'Declaration of Indonesia' – *Maklumat Keindonesiaan* – on occasion of Pancasila Day on 1 June 2006, which reaffirmed that the five principles of the

Pancasila doctrine, remain the foundation of the Indonesian Republic.

## Pancasila: State Doctrine

This was the fourth time that Pancasila was explicitly proclaimed as what can only be called a state doctrine:

- 1) It provided the basis for the embryonic independent republic in 1945,
- 2) It was again invoked by President Sukarno in the years of Guided Democracy (1959-1965) against Muslim renegades in West Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi, and to vindicate the banning of the country's main Islamic party, *Masyumi* in 1960.
- 3) Under New Order it was first implicitly employed against communists and then explicitly reintroduced as the guiding tenets of statehood in 1984 as a weapon against those campaigning for the introduction of Sharia and other 'non-Pancasila' ideologies.

Thus Pancasila can be considered the key to Indonesia's political structures since it declared independence in 1945 – or gained in 1949-- as Dutch history books (used to) have it. Moreover, Pancasila is an outflow of a phenomenon that can be traced back to colonial times, when a defining aspect of politics at the metropole became also part of the political landscape of the Dutch East Indies and subsequently of postcolonial Indonesia. Those familiar with Dutch history will know that since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Dutch politics was defined by pillarization – *verzuiling* – in which not just political life, but also the religious, social cultural activities of its citizenry were

segmented into discrete pillars: Protestant, Catholic, Conservative, Liberal, Socialist and Communist. Similarly, Indonesia's post-independence political landscape was divided in various *aliran*: nationalist, socialist, communist, Catholic, Protestant, Hindu and Muslim.

### **Controlling Religion**

As for identity and culture as the other components shaping the Indonesian democratization process; this is closely tied up with the place of the majority religion in Indonesian politics, and the role it is allowed to play. Again, like Turkey – and in spite of first face appearance – constitutional principles of secularity are not about abolishing religion but controlling it. In Turkey, the Kemalist doctrine tried to do this through a 'hard' secularist model which proscribed a political role for religion (read Islam). In the case of Indonesia, the Pancasila doctrine introduced a form of 'soft secularism', with the first principle insisting on the belief in one God but refusing to make any specific identification, employing the neutral *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* – which is difficult to translate, but it means something like 'Supreme Being'.

### **The Emergence of a Cultural-Religious Muslim Identity**

To understand the formation of this Muslim cultural-religious identity and its relevance for Indonesia's current experimentation with democracy, I will briefly sketch the historical trajectory up to the introduction of Pancasila and then sketch the route taken from there in terms of to what extent religion was allowed to function in the public sphere and help define Indonesian political and cultural identity.

First of all, I must mention the unusual pattern of the Islamization of South East Asia (SEA): (1) Late: 13<sup>th</sup> c. onwards; (2) Peaceful, not by conquest: trade routes connecting SEA with India, Middle East acted as conduits for spread of Islam by Sufis and professional propagators, but also through the active involvement of Indonesian converts, who entered Sufi and scholarly networks with the Indian Ocean basin acting as a contact zone. They began visiting centers of Islamic learning, such as Mecca and Medina, thus making SEA, including what is now Indonesia, an integral part of the Muslim world.

Later, the introduction of the steamship and construction of the Suez Canal led to intensified maritime traffic, with also increasing numbers of pious Indonesian Muslims traveling to the Middle East where they come into contact with ideas of Islamic reformism and Islamic modernism of figures like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. Along with this, during heyday of imperialism in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, colonial administrations became very concerned over Pan-Islamism. In the Dutch case this meant that the key architect of Dutch policy towards Muslims, the scholar Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje advised the Dutch Indies government in Batavia (now Jakarta) and the central government in the Netherlands to clamp down on any political expression of Islam.

However, what was permitted was the emancipation of the Dutch Indies Muslim population through educational initiatives. Among these, were the formation of two organizations, one established in 1912 called *Muhammadiyah* representing modernist Muslims, the other one was founded in a response to this modernist initiative, in 1926 by traditionalist rural Muslim leaders and named *Nahdlatul Ulama* or NU. Both have



survived into the present-day and constitute mass organizations which have no parallel anywhere else in the Muslim world, also in terms of followers. Both movements claim 30-40 million adherents each – thus even dwarfing the much better known Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which was also only founded in 1928.

### **“Islam Yes! Islamic Party No!”**

Does this mean there was no Islamic political activism at all: No, but Islamism only manifested itself properly in the aftermath of WWII in the form of the Masyumi Party led by Muhammad Natsir. He and his party had campaigned for the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter into the Indonesian constitution, which would have obliged Indonesian Muslims -- whether nominal or practicing -- to adhere to the prescriptions of Islamic law. These now so-called notorious ‘Seven Words’ were rejected by Sukarno in favour of the more neutral Pancasila. In the ensuing decades Islamist politicians, such as Natsir, but also the diplomat and scholar Rasjidi, and the writer HAMKA continued to campaign for the Jakarta charter. But all in vain, and because of his continuing agitation against the state, Masyumi was eventually banned by Sukarno in 1960.

After ousting Sukarno in a military coup, General Suharto’s New Order regime took a different approach, by trying to involve Muslim technocrats in the government’s economic development efforts. This policy was coordinated by a newly appointed minister of religion, Mukti Ali. Aside from the government, also the Muslim student movement HMI led by Nurcholish Madjid (a.k.a. Cak Nur) began exploring new ways for giving Islam a place in the public sphere. This initiative became known as the Renewal of Islamic Thinking which Cak Nur laid out in two speeches. With these addresses, he shocked

the old Masyumi establishment. In particular by introducing a slogan that meant a clear goodbye to the Jakarta Charter: Islam Yes! Islamic Party No! A position he never gave up, also in his later life as the country’s leading Muslim intellectual.

New Order kept a tight control over political Islam, carefully orchestrating an Islamic “opposition”, by uniting existing Islamic parties into *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* – the United Development Party – which, as election results from 1977 to 1992 show, quickly lost its appeal. Disgruntled Muslims found an outlet in so-called *Tarbiya* movement, coordinated by student activists on university campuses and through an umbrella organization *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, led by the old Masyumi leader Natsir. These movements focused on religious propaganda rather than open Islamist political activism, and were thus tolerated by the government.

### **The Urban Muslims : the New Trend**

However, there was also another trend. Thanks to the undeniably successful economic development of Indonesia during New Order, also helped by the oil boom of the 1970s and 1980s, an increasingly more prosperous and better educated urban Muslim middle class became ever more influential. Whereas the rest of the Muslim world began to radicalize, these Muslim urbanites became increasingly comfortable with Liberal Cosmopolitanism, but combining it with personal religious piety. We have now arrived at a critical juncture in recent Indonesian history. The government was forced to cater to the needs of these urban Muslims. It did this by introducing the so-called ‘Reactualization Agenda’ (1983-1993), designed by the then serving minister of religious affairs, Munawir Sjadzali. This new policy laid emphasis on expanding the provision of tertiary religious education

opportunities for Indonesian Muslims, both at home and abroad.

Again government policies were complemented by civil society initiatives, such as Nurcholish Madjid's Paramadina foundation, a think tank and training institute for upper middle class Muslims, and eventually also the Muslim elite. Established after his return from the USA where he had obtained a PhD in Islamic Studies in Chicago, the foundation also established a university. Both initiatives have had a lasting influence on public Islam in the last three decades or so.

### **The Emergence of Cosmopolitan Islam**

These government and civil society initiatives provide not only new structures with undeniable political significance, but also lead to a new Islamic discourse for Muslim identity formation which is known in Indonesia as either Cultural, Civil or Cosmopolitan Islam. During the late New Order years, even the top of the regime was affected by what is called the *penghijauan* or 'greening' (green being the symbolic colour of Islam) of Indonesian Society: With eventually General Suharto himself making the pilgrimage to Mecca and becoming thus Hajji Muhammad Suharto.

Personal piety aside, the government also tries to capture this Islamic discourse of cultural Islam, by establishing the All-Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals, ICMI. ICMI has Suharto's personal patronage and is led by his protégé, technology minister B.J. Habibie, thus drawing Islam closer into the political structure.

But we all know the history. It was a little too late. Suharto was forced to step down in 1998 and, after Habibie's interim presidency; we see the rise of leading Muslim activists to the top public offices in the land. The Progressive liberal-minded chairman of the traditionalist NU, Abdurrahman Wahid, became the first

democratically elected president and former Muhammadiyah chairman Amien Rais was elected Speaker of the Consultative Assembly.

### **In the Aftermath of Democracy: Upsides and Downsides**

However, with liberalization came initially also political instability, more political openness also meant antagonism and polarization between moderate Muslims and radical Islamists. The breakdown of law and order following the political demise of the armed forces led to the rise of vigilante movements such as *Laskar Jihad* and *Front Pembela Islam* or Islamic Defense Front. These turned against Christian minorities and Muslim groups they disagree with – such as most recently the Ahmadiyyah. It is not inconceivable that many of the Arab countries which have achieved regime change in the course of 2011 will face similar instability. It is certainly advisable for the international community to brace itself for this. Things may even turn ugly, as it did in Indonesia with bomb attacks in Jakarta and Bali leading to speculations over Islamic terrorist networks.

A counterweight, a challenge even, of such radicalism and militancy are new civil society initiatives such as the Liberal Islam Network (*Jaringan Islam Liberal* or JIL) founded by Ulil Abshar-Abdalla and Luthfy Assyauckanie in 1998. More recently JIL has been restructured -- with extensive foreign funding -- into the Freedom Institute. Moderate and liberal interpretations of Islam were also otherwise institutionalized, in the form of human rights organizations such as the National commission on Human Rights and The Wahid Institute.

### **The Return of the Military**

As another caveat against presenting too rosy a picture, or project an overly optimistic future, it is also necessary to another

potentially worrying aspect of the democratization process in Indonesia: the stealthy return of the military. After two civilian presidents, in 2004, Indonesians elected a retired general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (nick-named SBY). Although he is considered an intellectual general who spent his career in administrative positions, he is part and parcel of the New Order legacy, even though he tried to reinvent himself now as a party politician by establishing the *Partai Demokrat* (Democratic Party). Against the background of the rise of SBY and the success of his party, explicit Islamic parties have not fared so well during the post-1998 elections.

### **Conclusion**

Indonesia's history of Islamization, postcolonial experimentation with political Islam soft secularism, military-led developmentalism, and now almost fifteen years of democratization all contribute to a cultural identity and political structuring that manages to combine Islam's universal doctrinal trends with Indonesian cultural specificities, and common standards of human rights. It offers an option for the Arab world to consider, one that is not locked up within the repressive binary of military dictatorship or Islamism.

Thank you.

# Between Tradition & Modernity: Islamist Reformers of Contemporary South Asia

Dr Tazeen Mahnaz Murshid

*Director, Development Research and Cooperation*

Thank you very much. I am indeed honored to have been asked to speak to you today. I must confess the notice has been rather short and I would have of course preferred to have had longer to think through some of the issues, because I think the subject is very important. Nevertheless, I will try to put together a few ideas that have immediately crossed my mind.

The topic I was given is entitled *Between Tradition and Modernity: Islamist Reformers of Contemporary South Asia*. I think I am going to beat around the topic a little bit because the dichotomy between tradition and modernity is artificial. Modernity has not always brought enlightenment and good governance. Tradition often carries values well worth preserving, so we should not see them in terms of polar opposites.

Having said that, I take issue also with the term Islamist Reformers, which I think is a misnomer. Social reformers in South Asia who sought to reform practices that required a reanalysis of texts and scriptures were not Islamist reformers, in that they were not trying to reform Islam. Tautologically speaking, Islam can be interpreted, not reformed.

Sometimes such reform requires justification in religious terms. For example, it requires to be demonstrated that a particular reform or reformative idea is not the haram that is somehow not seen to be unacceptable within the Islamic terminology.

Syed Ahmed Khan, considered a modernist reformer among 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian Muslims, had argued for the acceptance of Western education in a bid to

ensure that Muslims participated in national life, albeit under colonial rule. There were other tendencies in Indian Islam that found cooperation with the colonizers to be unacceptable. The Wahhabi and the Faraizi of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for example, who were eventually marginalized. Their influence however remained with periodic attempts to ensure that Islam is not corrupted.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the polarization of religion in the rise of nationalist struggles to oust colonialism, both by Gandhi, the Swadeshi movement and the Muslim League. Subsequently the Muslim League in Pakistan and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India used religion to build constituencies and mobilize the masses usually at great cost to national cohesion. Their impact was contained within national boundaries.

Once the Cold War was brought to bear on South Asian regional polities in the guise of the Taliban, breed by the U.S. and the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to fight Soviet occupation in Afghanistan in the 1980s, a distortion was introduced in the way Muslims handled their disempowerment. They took the fight to the enemy without and the enemy within, and courted martyrdom. They were not part of the mainstream politicized group that engaged in politics using the mechanisms of the modern political process to establish an Islamic state, Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh. They lost support in Pakistan, as a right wing military coup under Zia-ul-Haq led to it becoming an Islamic state that introduced Hudood laws in 1984.

In Bangladesh, Jamaat-e-Islami was brought into mainstream electoral politics but never

won more than 3-4% of the votes. It participated in coalition governments and cultivated a clean public image, although its stalwarts were accused of war crimes in 1971. For those of you who do not know, India divided into India and Pakistan in 1947 and later in 1971, Pakistan divided into Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The influence of [Abul A'la] Maududi on the Jamaat-e-Islami did carry a radical strain. He too propagated the need to strike the enemy within, when the enemy was one with a different ideology. He articulated the idea that Islam was a complete code of conduct and a complete way of life. He retained for himself, the right to determine what that code or way was, and associated in terms of articulation to achieve a position of power for himself. This posed a major problem in formulating or interpreting the nature of Islam, its codes and meanings. When the state of Pakistan set up an institution to analyze the issues Maududi cried foul, claiming that the state had no authority to engage in this discourse. That is he alone could.

Today, although the Jamaat-e-Islami is beset with problems such as facing war crimes trials in Bangladesh, its influence remains strong at a cultural level. The Bangladesh government is unable to flag its women's policy boldly. Nor is India able to ensure a uniform civil code. These existing laws favor men and they are yet to come out to make common cause for women.

Reform in the application of religious ideas and principles increasingly come through court rulings in Bangladesh. In so doing, the judges draw from deliberations of the courts in India and Pakistan. Principles of the best interests of the child are increasingly accepted to give custody to mothers. After a period of laxity, judges are again pronouncing judgments after providing their analysis of

social problems. This is a move in the right direction, provided they continue to be vigilant and keep abreast of the changes in legal thinking and play a deliberate reformist role.

An engaged and active civil society can also participate in the reform process through dissemination of ideas in their constituencies. Here I have civil society organizations in mind, even individuals, who have a considerable constituency throughout countries in the local rural levels. While Imams may be trained to be more circumspect in their Friday sermons, their influence on the flock need not be overrated. Listening to them is like uttering Sunday confessions to be forgotten soon after.

Coming to the question of lessons learned from the experience of reformers from the Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia, I think it is a bit too soon to assess the lessons from the Arab Spring. The impact of policies adopted today will be felt in the years to come. But parts of South Asia have experienced their own Spring that led to fundamental changes in those regions. These hold clear lessons for the Arabs, and may be worth examining, notably the experience of Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Nonviolent protests have overthrown dictatorships twice in South Asia. Student led youth movements forced Pakistan's Ayub Khan to step down in 1969 or 1970 and Bangladesh's General Ershad was forced to step down in 1990 and call off the army from attacking the population. In 1970, Ayub Khan had handed over power to the army, Yahya Khan and General Niazi. Elections were held but democracy was not restored. Instead a civil war followed that became a war of liberation. The fault lines were drawn on ethnic and economic lines, and you had the birth of Bangladesh in 1971.

In 1990, General Ershad was forced to hand over power to a hastily constituted interim government, faced with total noncooperation from the administration. To use Spanish terminology, it was a 'no pasa' situation where the whole country came to a standstill in an attempt not to cooperate with this interim government. Democracy was restored, however flawed. Growth continues in Bangladesh today, despite inflation and massive underemployment and a democracy that doesn't always seem to function too well.

The different outcomes of the two nonviolent movements owed to external factors. In the 1970s, the U.S. continued to support Pakistan and its final solution to rid it of Bengali nationalist aspirations. Interestingly, nationalist movements in those days used to be considered to be communist inspired, as today they tend to be considered as terrorist inspired. By 1990, the U.S. had learned its lesson. It threatened to withdraw support from the army if Ershad chose to crack down on the population. The lessons are clear. Use of brutal force will lead to further bloodshed and losses. A negotiated settlement is likely to lead to democratization and political stability. What people require is hope and a little push that helps unleash their own creative genius. Bangladesh faces many problems but it always finds its own solutions; saline solution to fight diarrhea, microcredit to fight poverty, social business to give impetus to small businesses. The people crave for accountable, democratic governance, which too may happen.

The history of South Asia, the history of Bengal shows that the youth have always been attracted to ideas of liberalism, freedom and tolerance to the pull of equality and the equal distribution of wealth. Some went into the Marxist fold, others to the Islamic one. Most joined the mainstream as they entered their professions and started family life. Their ideological stirrings were a phase in their step

to adulthood. The pulls of secular and religious orientations did not necessarily translate into political action among the masses, except in moments of perceived crisis.

That Muslims have felt threatened since the rise of colonialism and their loss of control over their destinies is well known, but acknowledged as if it were an anomaly, as if they were expected to accept their enchainment with resignation. Colonial literature resounds with ridicule of Muslim aspirations for a continuation of their pan Islamic identity and heritage. This ties in with the last presentation and the Dutch fear of pan Islamic ideas among Indonesian Muslims, as it was with the British in the Indian context. This may have served to confuse many Muslims who began to look inwards at their local predicament. Others in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century sought to keep the caliphate intact. The British, however, were not too keen to permit a Muslim center that endows legitimacy to Muslim rulers and governments to continue to exist. Atatürk was persuaded to abolish it. The loss of a center caused psychological disarray and further fragmented the Muslim world. But opposition to colonial rule continued, not just among those that espoused religious ideology, but also the secular oriented. The widespread appeal of Gandhi's nonviolent movement cut across religious and ethnic boundaries. Politicians did not however agree on the strategies adopted. When Gandhi announced that Indians will only wear homegrown *khadi*, the *Krishak Praja Party* -People's Worker Party- was worried about the livelihood of poor weavers who used Manchester cotton. While his nonviolent protest shook the foundations of British rule, the heaviest price of occupation was paid by locals.

The key to political success and negotiating strategies is to avoid dichotomies that polarize. If Arab youths have revolted, it is not

because they were failed by their religion, but because they were failed by their society, their system of administration, their system of governance and the international system that sustained it. Religion can only play a marginal role in implicating values of tolerance.

The youths in Pakistan protested in the 60s and in Bangladesh in the 90s. Their demands were simple: Our right to live. A military or army backed regime or dictatorship that owes its force to external powers cannot and will not fulfill the wishes of its population, since it is not accountable to its people.

There is an unhealthy focus on so-called religious extremism, which ignores the real problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The bombers of 9/11 did not do so to save Islam, but to demand a more equitable world order. Osama Bin Laden fought to drive out the occupiers of the Holy Lands. He used the resources created by those occupiers. Since then, the world has been fighting Islamic terrorism. The power of propaganda and the media has totally wiped out the content of what the original protests were about. Ten years on, Arab youths have immolated themselves from sheer desperation. They are forcing their governments to hold elections, transfer power or transform themselves. They are not doing so to save Islam either; their motives are entirely secular – to establish good governance. If they had failed in the past, it is because the world had failed them. If they fail now, it is because the world is failing them. The role of Islamic reformers in contemporary South Asia is to ensure that religion is not

misused to misguide young minds as a general principle. In the same way, the state should not mix religion with politics if it is to ensure that others do not.

Similarly, the international community should wake up and rethink its policy to support tyrants and dictators, simply because they are easy allies in their quest to exploit the riches of the globe. It should also rethink its strategy to employ imams to mind the faithful and steer them in specific directions. In Islam, no intermediary is required to reach God.

Arab youths revolted against their states and governments which failed them, which took away their hope of a decent future. These were no protests against a secular order, but against repressive regimes that had stopped listening to their people.

There is no role for Islamist reformers here, except to be vigilant that radical groups do not take away the initiative. But that will only be possible if the conditions for radicalization are neutralized: poverty, violence, misgovernance. Some commentators hear that the Arab Uprising poses a security threat to Europe [in the form of] chaos, resurgence of terrorism, the rise of radical Islamism and perhaps massive waves of immigration. Such threats may come to pass, only if Arab concerns are not handled with care and sympathy.

Thank you.

# Participation in Contemporary Islamic Political Discourse

Ebtisam Hussein

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## The Revolution, a short introduction

After more than a year, the achievements of the Egyptian revolution are still blurred. Aside from the ousting of former President Mubarak and the arrest of a few of his direct associates and party members; the fruits of the popular rise are not ripe at all. Even the 'successes', relating to Mubarak's arrest and jailing of many of his government top figures, are yet to be doubted by large segments of Egyptians, as being fake.

After long months of government promises of a better life for ordinary citizens, economic and political challenges seem to persist and the country is struggling in every sense to regain its general 'on the street' sense of security, missed by millions of Egyptians, since the early days of the revolution. Prices soared and economic security deteriorated for hundreds of thousands of craftsmen, taxi drivers and other low-paid labor groups earning their living on a day-to-day basis.

Out of all this apparent misery appears the Islamists' experience to be a blend of continuities and changes, with much to 'teach' Islamist movements around the world.

## Egyptian Islamists before the Revolution

Before going through what Egyptian Islamist have for other Islamic movements in other countries, and towards a somehow clear and objective assessment of Egyptian Islamists' performance after the revolution, one need to stop at some introductory notes that help better understand the aspects of change and continuity in Islamists' reality in Egypt.

One, Islamists in Egypt are not one single unified group. This was clear to many ordinary citizens inside Egypt, who were interested in Islamic movements, but only to specialists outside it. The Islamists being confined to the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is certainly a false, reductionist view of Egyptian Islamists; and of

the country's political Islam in more general terms.

Yes, the MB was the most renowned, most politically-active and the most efficiently-organized and the most connected to nationalist and Islamist movements outside Egypt for long decades, but this does not negate the fact that Sufists and Salafists, to name a couple, were also existent; enjoying on the ground presence, activities, tenets and followers.

Two, before the 25th of revolution, Egypt's Islamists could be largely classified into four groups, according to two different criteria.

The first, is political engagement, that usually led to state hunting active members of the respective Islamist groups showing willingness to have an active role in the country's politics. According to this criterion, the MB tops the list of formal active political engagement, with attempts to enter Parliament several times; high level of communication and even some few times of cooperation with government top figures, including the late Presidents Abd al-Nassir and Sadat respectively.

Whereas the MB, throughout most of the eighties and nineties, showed great keenness to having an active role in shaping Egypt's political life; Sufists and Salafists did not generally possess a similar interest in Egypt's political life.

To make things a bit more accurate, with the terms 'politics' and 'political life', I refer mainly to the formal and informal channels of political socialization, mobilization and decision-making, but not to the 'outside the law' actions, literally-labeled as political violence.

A remark that brings us to the second criterion; which is adopting violence, as a means of action. Although political violence is, by no means, accepted, it is one way endorsed by many activists, Islamic or else, to express their views and to affect politics at various levels.



As we all know, not all Egyptian Islamists opted for peaceful engagement. Rather, some endorsed violence and subsequently lost the popular sympathy many of the non-violent Islamists enjoyed, when the state persecuted the latter.

But here, the distinctions are quite hazy. The MB, for instance, endorsed violence, through its secret apparatus (*an-nizām al-khāṣ*), against British soldiers and Israelis in the 1940s. However, it totally abandoned violence later on, to the extent that when some violence-oriented theoretical contributions were inspired from the writings of its own prominent intellectual sheikh Sayyid Qutb, the proponents of violence among the MB had to split into different other Islamist groups with various namings: (*at-Takfīr wal-Hijra*), (*al-Jamā'a al-Islāmiyya*), or (*al-Jihād*), because the MB insisted, back then, not to endorse violence.

Other groups, however, maintained their line of non-violence all the way long, no swinging, like Sufis and Salafists. Why they did it is a totally different story with lots of possible explanations, prominent among which is a general apathy towards political engagement on the part of these groups.

Three, although Islamists differed in many aspects, including organizational competence; major tenets; stances from the state and its powers; interest in politics and means of political participation, they all came to be recognized as Islamists, with differing degrees of popular knowledge about the distinctive features of each of them and an equally varying degree of popular appeal.

Fourth and last, while acknowledging their own points of divergence, communication, at the top level of these groups, normally took place, and in many cases, were regular in nature.

### **Egyptian Islamists since the outbreak of the Revolution on**

The features detected until this moment assert dramatic changes regarding some but not all Islamists' political behavior, when compared to the after 25th of January revolution Islamist reality. This is mainly detected in the sudden, and in many ways the

unexpected, active political participation of the Salafists a few days after the revolution began; establishing a political party 'al-Nūr'; their willingness not only to run for Parliament but also for Presidency are just to name a few manifestations.

Here it is very risky to assume Salafists had a pre-set agenda to get engaged that only the former Mubarak regime obstructed. While this might be the case, it can also be a misleading assumption to embark upon, if the revolution actually sparked a genuine sense of engagement on their part, that did not exist before.

The expected aspects of the Islamists' reality had to do with the MB more open claims for participation and running for elections, a greater representation in Parliament, and even Presidency, although the movement was not really prone, or at least this is what it claimed, to nominate a candidate for Presidency right after the revolution. Later on, again as we all know, the movement presented Khairat al-Shātir as a possible runner, who lost his nomination because of his political sentence, during the time of Mubarak.

The reality is then, one of a mixed nature. One that reflects continuity and change. Islamist groups, who already had political inclinations and tried for long years to have a role in the decision making process; and others who surprised the whole world with such an engagement. While Salafist intensive political engagement is, without a doubt, a main change, the active engagement and competition for power by the MB are a continuity. Ironically, the biggest continuity actually emanates more from the context more than of the Islamist groups themselves. The large scale appeal of Islamists and generally of Islam in society augmented the chances of Islamist groups for political engagement; this appeal was in fact some good reason why the Mubarak regime kept a close eye on Islamic groups and nailed them down, whenever it had a chance.

Speaking of context, the thing that should not be overlooked at this moment is the role of the broader context, creating new opportunities and challenges for Egyptian Islamists. An empirical example might be of

some benefit at this point. The MB, did have considerable political existence, that was largely hindered by the authoritarian regime of former president Mubarak. So, everyone expected, and probably the MBs themselves, that the removal of that obstacle would give the movement a big share of seats in Parliament, if not a sweeping majority.

But the MBs, and certainly most of Egyptians; observers and even experts inside and outside Egypt, did not expect that the 'Islamic vote', if we may call it, would get split between the MBs and Salafists, because the latter were not even existent as an Islamist movement engaged, or even showing interest in engaging, in Egyptian politics, before the revolution. So, while getting rid of an oppressor, the MB came to face a hard and unexpected rival. While the toppling of Mubarak and his close associates allowed them to breath out, the MB had to work harder to reserve a pioneering position in the rally, due to this new challenge.

#### **What Islamists got out of the Revolution**

Egyptian Islamists benefited from this context. They profited heavily from the massive wave of political activism sweeping the country, since the revolution on. We all know, Islamists did not take the lead in mobilizing towards the 25th of January. Many of them did not take a clear stance until a few days after the first spark and only when the revolution seemed to have some sense of serious effect.

Even worse, Salafist even denied the demonstrators their gathering and revolt against the ruler in the early phase of the revolution. But this does not mean Islamists did not 'learn' anything from the political activism, including demonstrations; protests; establishing forums; launching initiatives and holding conferences. They did all that and definitely with much success.

No one may claim Islamists in Egypt, and may be also elsewhere in the Arab world, did not commit mistakes, during or after the so-called 'Arab Spring'; sometimes grave ones indeed; excessively using Islamic terms in political campaigning and perhaps going as far as instrumentalizing religion in attaining better

positions vis-a-vis their political rivals. But this does not diminish the value of their political engagement. Yes, the revolution offered them a new momentum, and certainly a brighter horizon, but they were there to take the chance, ready to compete and mobilize; committing themselves to peaceful political action.

#### **What Egyptian Islamists have to present to the world**

Finally, and based on all the above, Islamists in Egypt present us today a model for active peaceful organized political engagement, one that is professionally carried out, with lots of patience, persistence and devotion.

It 'teaches' other political movements around the globe the value of commitment to peaceful political action. It shows them how authoritarian regimes can be ousted through the latter, and not through impulsive irrational violent adventures. The violence which at one point of time brought many of them to lose sympathy among ordinary citizens and gave the state a free hand in persecuting them. Accordingly, No regional or international actor would have had any good incentive to defend them against state persecution. To the contrary, the global fear against their reaching of power made them tolerate, if not help, the oppressors.

Many Islamists in Egypt learned it the hard way. They went through violence for decades and then realized it is not getting them anywhere. So, they stopped, but did not lose interest in public life and that was the cornerstone to their active engagement right after the revolution.

Hence, the revolution gave them the chance they long awaited, to have a say, to sense their popular support and translate all that into political power. They invested the openness of Egyptian politics after the revolution, allowing some of them a surprising political rise many other long established political groups and parties envied them and never dreamt of having it themselves. And this is the major lesson Egyptian Islamists offers other Islamists around the world.

Thank you very much.

## PICTURES PANEL 2



EBTISAM HUSSEIN



MARINO BUSDACHIN (MGI)



## **PANEL 3:**

### **POLITICS AND ISLAM: STATE-BUILDING, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

Moderator: **Andrew Swan**, UNPO Programme Manager

**L'Impact du printemps arabe au Cambodge et en Asie du Sud-Est**

**Ong Thong Hoeung**

Cambodian writer, former prisoner of the Khmer Rouge

**Building International Dialogues With and Between Reformist Islamist Movements**

**Anas Altikriti**

Founder, The Cordoba Foundation

**Developing Common Actions to Promote Intercultural Dialogue from the National to the**

**Grassroots Level**

**Gianluca Solera**

Anna Lindh Foundation



## **L'impact du printemps arabe au Cambodge et en Asie du Sud-Est**

**Ong Thong Hoeung**

*Cambodian writer, former prisoner of the Khmer Rouge*

Thank you. I want to first thank the Liberal Group of the European Parliament, and particularly Mr. Niccolò Rinaldi. I would also like to thank Mahatma Gandhi International and the organisers for having invited me here.

Revolutions are already over in many countries in Southeast Asia. Often, its history has not met the expectations of the people and we can see this very clearly in Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia. Therefore, it is very difficult to efficiently measure the impact of the Arab Spring in Southeast Asia.[...] To say it was very strong would be a bit exaggerated, but to say it was negligible would also be. In this field we have to let time go by and we cannot be adamant about things too soon.

The position seems to be very diverse here; from Burma to Malaysia and from Vietnam to Cambodia, political instability has blown hot and cold. There are systematic challenges to democracy in Southeast Asia; we have many different religions. The largest numbers of Muslims are in Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar, making this a very diverse region. We have several languages, unlike in Northern Africa it is not Arabic as a single language; every country has its own language or several. Southeast Asia is not like in Europe. This is a highly diversified region in language, culture and traditions. So we cannot compare it with the Middle East or Europe. Nevertheless in Southeast Asia we were able to create Asian which has worked fairly well.

Consequently what impact do the Arab countries have on the models that are being used to construct democratic societies? In Indonesia for example, could the Indonesian

model inspire the Arab countries because there is a rule of law and good governance so we can compare the orient? [...] Democracy in India has taken a route as it has in Malaysia and Indonesia. But it has not taken root in the Middle East. I have thought about it for some time and I still do not understand why. It is true that no culture is violent in itself, and no religion is violent in itself; Cambodia is a Buddhist country, with 80% of the population Buddhist. Cambodia is also a fairly consistent country with small minorities. But nevertheless, Cambodia went through a genocide and in four years the Khmer Rouge massacred more than a quarter of the Cambodian population; about 2 million out of 7 million. I heard from a speaker earlier, there is no genocide in the Middle East, so why in Cambodia which has one language, one culture and nevertheless, did we have a genocide? The reason is not culture and it certainly is not Buddhism, as Buddhism is a totally peaceful religion. So what is it?

The problem in Asia, like elsewhere in the world, is crucial. Because firstly, Asia consists of China, India and Indonesia; all of these countries are trying to find a solution to keep their societies making progress. But today we have no model. If you travel in China, you will hear what the Chinese officials have to say, but you will know that in other provinces, officials do not say the same things as they do in Beijing.

As a Cambodian, the most crucial problem for Cambodia is to know how to get out of the genocide thirty years later. Cambodia is in the most prosperous region in the world, the fastest growing region in the world. For the

last ten years we have had growth of seven or eight percent per year, so it seems like we have no problem, but it's still there because there is a major difference between towns and rural areas. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, and young people don't have work. This creates an enormous problem in Cambodian society; there is fear and desperation. But with international aid, and particularly the help of China, a number of speakers have already mentioned [...] that Cambodia, compared to other countries, is a country where stability is beginning to take hold. Now there are other problems and I would like to say a word about why the Khmer Rouge took power in Cambodia.

A lot of Cambodians wonder about this question. The most complicated thing for me is that since our independence, Cambodia is a prisoner of our past. Cambodia was the biggest country in Asia from the 10th to 13th centuries, and Cambodians still think they are in this period of power and they do not see Cambodia the way they see Belgium as compared to France or Germany; a lot of Cambodians still think the country is as powerful as it was in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and this is another fundamental problem for us. So the thing that is most troublesome for us is nationalism, and I think all Cambodians were afraid, and they are still afraid that their country is going to disappear. In the 1960s, Pol Pot said he would be the savior of Cambodia to ensure that it would last forever and recover its power and splendor, and all Cambodians, because they were afraid of losing their country, were willing to sacrifice their lives for Pol Pot. He told them that for our country to have its independence and dignity as it was in the past; we had to give our friends, we had to give up our personal liberty and simply work towards the immortality of my country.

As I was listening to you [sic], I was convinced that this is a fundamental problem for all of our countries. It is the correlation between the community and the individual. If we cannot make a distinction between personal interest and community interest, then I do not think we are going to be able to build a country based on the rule of law because people will immediately say 'I defend my community', like a lot of immigrants here. They want to defend their community and the family and the clan takes over and becomes fundamental. I think this was really what happened with the Khmer Rouge; we were so afraid that our nation would simply disappear because our neighbours had been annexing our territory regularly to the point where our country was very small. Therefore, we were always afraid that they were going to try to take out the rest. We felt that to defend what was left, we had to be united and we had to get rid of everything that was not truly Cambodian; those who did not agree with me, and I think you are also going to see this in the African countries, anyone who was not my own religion, my own techniques, and so forth, we simply would just get rid of it. Now this problem arose in Cambodia. The thought was that if someone did not think like me or did not have the same line of thinking, then he was going to weaken the strong country that we were trying to build up. People who are going to school were people that have been contaminated by Western customs and so forth. So when speaking with young Arabs in Africa, I think we have to tell them that the cause of ethnic cleansing is always the same – it is a question of maintaining an open mind or a question of looking inward. It is the question of opening up or closing down the thought process, and this is what happened with the Khmer Rouge. Now I think that in Middle Eastern and North African countries this is the same thing; we still have this conflict between opening up and narrow mindedness, and I



would like to say a word on education because I think this is really the fundamental question.

Education is the key and lessons have been poorly learned. When we talk about democracy here in Europe, we say that Europe could help underdeveloped countries to progress. But we know that the Westerners themselves do not have solutions, so the fundamental problem in countries like Cambodia lies in education. The history of Cambodia has always been that twenty percent of people control the country and eighty percent live in rural areas and live the way they did hundreds of years ago to date. If you go one day to Cambodia you will see that people are still using the same agricultural tools and equipment that were used back in the tenth century. Now I would like to say that [...] for example textiles, they are very important in Asian countries like Singapore, South Korea and others and all the Asian countries started with textiles 30, 40 years ago. All of these countries have a fairly high level of education, for example they have baccalaureate. For the last twenty years the textile industry has been bringing money into Cambodia, but this money does not filter down to most of the everyday Cambodians. In fact why is it that still the average Cambodian is somebody who barely knows how to read or write? Why has their lifestyle not change like in Singapore or Hong Kong?

I will stop here, but I do want to repeat the fundamental problem. It is education. If we don't give the tools that individuals need to develop their understanding, to develop their lives, then I think we will always have these

kinds of problems arising. I will stop there. Thank you.

# Building International Dialogues With and Between Reformist Islamist Movements

Anas Altikriti

*Founder, The Cordoba Foundation*

Thank you very much. I would like to very briefly repeat everyone's thanks and appreciation to the organizers and everyone who has come together and brought this event together. This discussion, I think, is extremely timely and very important. [...]

In the next few minutes what I would like to do is essentially talk about three main elements of this topic and go through points, rather than actually give a long thesis about what the title represents. The very first thing I would like to talk about, are some general points that pertain to the theme of today.

## **'The beginning of the Arab Spring is not even over'**

The first is that the title reads 'the Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Moderate Islamist Reformers Post-Arab Spring'. We are far from being anywhere close to post-Arab Spring. The Arab Spring is still not even beyond its first phase. We are still very heavily, in the very midst and the very epicenter of the Arab Spring. We have not seen the end of the beginning of it, we definitely have not seen the end of it and what promises, and I am an optimist when it comes to this, despite obviously there will be problems but I am optimistic but come 2013, maybe 2014, we will be talking about a region that only a year ago would have been unrecognizable. So that is one thing that I would like to talk about. That we are still talking about something, and I totally welcome Mr. Ong's assertion that sometimes you need a passage of time to happen so that you can actually analyze what has happened, you can understand and you can then forecast and build. So it's important that whilst we are talking today, whether

about specific elements in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen or wherever, or about the general theme of the Arab Spring, that we are still talking about an ongoing process. That is one thing.

The other thing is that it's important as we are discussing this to appreciate the historical significance of what we are in the middle of. Unless we recognize the historical moment, the significance of all this, it's going to be extremely difficult for us to then appreciate the outcomes and the underlying elements of this particular process.

## **Nonviolent actions : a surprise for the West and the Arab world**

Coming back to a very important term of what we have been talking about, and that's the 'nonviolent protest,' that was bar none the most remarkable element of the Arab Spring. The fact that not only did it happen to be nonviolent, but the fact is that the people who took it to the streets actually made the strategic decision that it was going to be nonviolent. There is a major difference between something that just simply happened to be nonviolent and the people in the streets deciding that it was going to be nonviolent. And by the way, this took everyone by surprise. It surprised the regimes themselves because they are used to dealing with trouble makers and people who explode things and bomb things and such; they are not used to dealing with masses of people who are basically going to stand there armless and just sit and not go home. That is something that they are not used to. They are used to combat, they are used to conflict, they are used to violence, but they are not used to



nonviolent manifestations of protest. It also took the West by surprise. I was summoned in quite early on after the Tunisian revolution by one of the government departments and I was asked about what was happening and why the people were not resorting to arms or weapons. It actually took many Western countries by surprise. It took everyone by surprise, because how do you deal with that? All the time for the past few decades those regimes have been telling their friends and allies in the Western world and beyond that if they were to be removed, it would only be by a bloody coupe d'état, revolution, by a very violent incident rather than by anything peaceful which led many to think that the best thing was to maintain the status quo so this actually took everyone by surprise.

Getting into the subject I'd like to talk about three elements. First of all about the protests themselves and the people because I think this is extremely important.

#### **A new reading of Arab people**

The very first point is the people of those regions, call them the Arab people, call them Middle Eastern people, call them what you may, call them Muslim people if you wish also although all of them are not Muslim, they proved that if they had their way, several things would happen. First of all, and this pertains also to our reading, and I include myself as an Arab Westerner in this, our reading for so long of the map and the people, for so long we had believed that if the people had their way, first of all they would have absolutely no appreciation of democracy and how democracy worked. That if they had their way they would choose violence, that if they had their way they would choose al-Qaeda, they would actually choose Osama Bin Laden as their icon figure in shaping the post-Arab regimes and building their future. If they had their way women and minorities of all shapes

and sizes would be subjugated, would be targeted and would be oppressed. Actually none of that happened, in fact if anything on many levels the actual opposite happened. So all of a sudden, not only did we discover that our reading of the Arab world and the Arab people was entirely wrong but actually, and this is the most interesting thing in my discussions when I travel through the region and talked to people in various countries, they themselves discovered themselves as a result of the Arab Spring. They came to discover that whilst they among themselves said that 'we want to get rid of Mubarak but what's going to happen afterwards, we're just going to kill and slaughter each other'. Actually they came to realise they were far better if given the time and the space.

#### **Voting to get rid of corruption**

In terms of the peoples' voting for Islamic parties, I think this is a very important point and we must not just brush over it. This is not because of religion. Once again we often use the very simplistic tool of blaming everything back to religion; if it's violence, it's religion; if it's division, then it's religion; if it's voting patterns, then it's religion – it's not. A very important point that Bakhtiar Amin spoke about was that the real problem was corruption, and essentially what people voted for was the opposite of corruption. The people who promise and in terms of the kind of experiences that civil society had in the past proved to be non-corrupt. So what they voted for wasn't religion, it wasn't Islamism – whatever that means-, it wasn't political Islam –whatever that means-, it was actually to get rid of corruption. That was essentially what everyone cared about. We must read that well; otherwise we won't understand the voting patterns in the future. And by the way, because this is important, we must also realise, and I am going to mention this when I talk about the Islamic movements themselves,

because they voted them in on the basis that they speak about non-corruption and they have proven in some area or another to be non-corrupt, that if they fail that test, then they will be voted out. This is again a very important maxim. People, not just because they are the Muslim Brotherhood, Muslims or Islamists, they will vote them in regardless. People are actually watching them. They voted them in on the premise of something and they will vote them out if they fail the test. Very important that we are talking about an area, whether the countries that we speak about quite positively, Tunisia, Egypt, those less so because the waters are still extremely muddied such as in Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Yeman, we don't have the full picture or other countries that have been effected, and every single country has been effected, including Morocco, Jordan, Algeria and various other countries.

**“[...]we have now learned our way to the streets.”**

Now what is happening is actually the development of a narrative. These are people that have been disenfranchised for generations. In fact the people who took to the streets have known nothing but this particular regime. All their lives the Egyptians who removed Mubarak knew nothing but Mubarak. The people who removed al-Gaddafi knew nothing but al-Gaddafi and the same goes for virtually every other country. This is a very significant point that we must take into consideration; that these people are developing their own narratives, they are building their futures and the very first part about building your future is to find the right terms, it's to find the discourse that describes exactly what it is that you are aspiring to. What is your project? What is your dream at this moment in time?

Also we have seen, and I think we have spoken about this, a shift in the dynamics of power. Whilst before the people were totally away from the arena where decisions were made and futures were built, at this moment in time they see themselves and believe that they are very much part and parcel of the decision making process, and this is very important. That gives a very important signal and a very important warning to any government that comes, Islamist or otherwise. And that is that the people now, as one young Egyptian commented on the most prominent Arab media channels, they said that if the next government failed then we have now learned our way to the streets and we know what to do and we can mobilise again and we will remove any government that fails our aspirations.

Also very important, and this pertains to ourselves here in the West, is that there also emerged a realisation that the people's destiny and ultimate fate is not in the hands of the decision makers in Washington, London, Paris or Brussels. But actually it is in their own hands. This is a very important development in the whole power dynamics, not only the local or regional level but also on the international level. All of a sudden whilst people recognised or knew or thought that whatever America wants it was proven to them that no, it was actually what they want and that is a very important development.

### **The new position of youth and the women**

The final point in this particular part of what I am talking about is that we have seen quite a prominent role for both the youth and the women. These two elements that in the past were side-lined and marginalised, not because they were ruled by an Islamic government, but because they were ruled by a secular regime, those people are not only finding their own positions, capacities and capabilities within

their new realities but they are also talking to their counterparts across the world. This is the new development and it is not a local issue anymore. What is happening in Egypt touched on the Occupy Movement in America and Europe; what happened in Tunisia touched shores across the world and so on.

### **The pluralism of Islamist parties**

The second part of what I want to talk about is the Islamic movements themselves. First of all, and I think this has been repeated time and again, they are not a monolithic entity. As we often in a blasé way talk about the West for instance, which we all recognise as being far from a monolithic entity, the same goes for the Islamic movements. Part of how they are different and varied is that first of all they are highly localised. I am talking now not about the government that will receive matters or receive government in Egypt or Tunisia; I am talking about the Islamic movements since they first came into being, from the past three or four decades when we have literature that tells us about these people. Because they never came to rule, we don't know their faces, we don't know their real structures. We have stories and myths that are going around and people use for their own political gains. But from their literature and materials, what we find is that first of all they are highly localised. We have been often talking about this global network, this hotline from Japan to Cairo asking the Supreme Guide about what they should do here or there and how people take their instructions from this part of not. When you go through the material it actually turns out to be an aspirational dream rather than a reality. In reality these movements are highly localised and concerned with their localities. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood for instance, they are very concerned with what is happening in Egypt. They make comments, as anyone would, on issues regarding as Palestine as a neighbouring country, regarding

the region, international affairs; of course they have the right to so. But actually 99% of their efforts and resources go on Egyptian matters. The same goes for virtually every single country where there is an Islamic Movement. This is very important.

### **Contradictory political stances**

The second point is they are highly pragmatic. We take them to be ideologues and people incapable of moving, shifting or going beyond of what are written in the books sixty or seventy years ago. Actually we find them time and again, not just now but in the past also, to be extremely pragmatic. Very politically suave, very clever and on many occasions actually contradicting each other and fighting amongst each other – fighting in terms of having a discussions or a heated debate with one another – and on many occasions, their political stance contradicts each other. For example, we have the case of Syria and the events taking place there. Syria for the past fifteen or twenty years has been the host of Hamas, whilst at the same time Syria pursues the Muslim Brotherhood with Law No. 49, in which anyone who is suspect of being a member of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood shall be executed. So whilst the Syrian Muslim Brothers are scattered around the world as refugees, they can't reach their families, they can't have access to their properties or lands, they can't return to their countries, they can't visit their loved ones. At the same time their Palestinian Brothers from the very same movement are actually living fairly safely and comfortably within the protection of the regime.

The same thing, almost identical, happened during the time of Saddam Hussein. For political expediency Saddam Hussein played host to the Syrian Muslim Brothers, whilst at the same time pursuing the Iraqi Muslim Brothers.

### **Conclusion : time and space for governing Islamic parties**

Ultimately what we have to understand is that the Islamic parties that are now governing, first of all we have to allow them the time and the space after being deprived of the opportunity to contribute and to learn and to discuss and to share ideas with others, we have to allow them the time and the space to make their own decisions and to make mistakes. That is part of the process. We are not talking about a continuous structure; we are talking about something that we starting afresh. Everyone must be allowed to make mistakes, but they must be allowed to be their own people. Because ultimately when the people who come to judge the Muslim Brotherhoods in Egypt in the next elections, they must have been given the opportunity to rule and to show their true colours. If we prevent them from ruling then we won't know and democracy will have failed at the very first post.

## Developing Common Actions to Promote Intercultural Dialogue from the National to the Grassroots Level

Gianluca Solera

*Anna Lindh Foundation*

Thank you Chairman.

It seems that I am the last one, so I have the privilege to close this long day. I can tell you that I am working for a foundation which is focusing on improving dialogue between cultures; it is a Euro-Mediterranean institution, based in Egypt and working with more than 40 countries of the region.

### **Dialogue between cultures : identities and opportunities**

But I also would like to say that, for me, dialogue between cultures was conceived at the beginning of this millennium in ideological terms, and it was given a specific political mandate following the terrorist attacks that we all know between New York, London, Madrid and other cities; the political mandate was to increase mutual tolerance and understanding based on the assumptions that our different identities are at the source of our problems. This political mandate of dialogue between cultures died on 14 January 2011, when the first Arab dictator fell, and the Arab Spring started. Talking now about dialogue between different cultures as it was defined by the political leaders of the past decade is just a fake representation of the reality. It would even be considered in my view a conspiracy. At that time, the problems in the region seemed to be that there are Muslims and Christians. The problem seemed to be that there are different identities and we do not understand each other because we have different values. So the problem seemed to be the persons in themselves, in their stories, in their traditions, in their inheritance,

in their culture. You all remember this word 'clash' – there is a clash of identities, not of civilization. I am living in Egypt since 2005 and in the last 5 years even talking about the issue of diversity, social and cultural diversity, was a taboo and we were not allowed to work with the local civil society on social and cultural diversity. So it was a problem of identities and suddenly we realized, after the 14 January 2011, I am referring to the departure of Ben Ali to Riyadh for a long vacation, after that date all this construction has collapsed and we ourselves who were supposed to work on dialogue and culture have realized that we were mistaken because that was not exactly the problem – the problem was not the clash of identities, the problem was the clash of opportunities; a clash of opportunities between those who have certain opportunities, rights and freedoms and between those who do not have them. I don't know if you remember the last dark side of the story on New Year's Eve 2010 when a car bomb exploded in front of al-Qiddissin, a Coptic Church in Alexandria. Suddenly the propaganda of the regime were saying that again al-Qaeda were back or they mentioned the Army of Islam coming from the Gaza Strip and they mentioned the case of three ladies who converted to Coptic from Islam and al-Qaeda wanted to avenge these happenings and so on and so forth. Then, after 25 January, everyone was saying that it was the same Minister of Interior who put the bomb in front of the church. In what is probably the last act of that season, they showed that dialogue between cultures was a tool in the hands of regimes to distort the attentions from a clash

of opportunities into the clash of identities. There is the analysis of a French sociologist Alain Touraine that I would like to remind [the audience of]. Basically he is saying that the world is divided between markets and identities. Why? Because if you go back to the identities, mainly because you don't have access anymore, you cannot decide anymore about your own social, economic or cultural framework; you cannot take a decision about your own future or destiny. Maybe then identities become a sub product of this structure of our society. The real crisis is where culture does not play its essential role of a tool to interpret and build a vision of how you want your society, how you want your economy, how you want your communities to be governed and managed. This is in fact the reason why as operators who try to promote and facilitate the meeting between people from different cultures and backgrounds, and this is what we are trying to do as the Anna Lindh Foundation, that we should try to merge now and to see dialogue as a process first of all; as a process where you have to deal with diversity, democracy and development. If there is a reason for inter-cultural effort to make people understand each other, that must be through dialogue. An effort to bring people together so they can discuss about their own lives and their own common issues.

#### **Making our differences a strength and creating regional alliances**

So I believe that we need to go for regional alliances in the region. By regional alliances I mean that we should bring people together to address common challenges. The fact that we are different and have different backgrounds which are cultural, religious but which are also related to how we build our own lifestyle, the fact that we have differences is an added value to address these problems together and to get rid of the ideology of a clash of identities. The list is very long. We can start

with migration flows, financial instability, military insecurity and so on. It is through a multicultural approach where communities with different backgrounds work together that I believe we give a meaning to what intercultural actions should be.

But we also need civic engagement. We need to empower civil societies to become something different from the institutions or state or apparatuses that have been pretending to represent them. This requires a very strong political stand and a very effective policy to make civil society as a political player in the region, worldwide throughout an intercultural approach. In addition, if we aspire to living together then we also need coexistence. Not just between human beings, but also between communities and nature.

#### **The environmental nature of the Arab Spring**

I have recently read a very interesting analysis of Thomas Friedman about the other view of the Arab Spring where he was analyzing the data on climate change in Syria on the drop of agricultural production in the last 5 years as one of the factors that could have promoted or contributed to the destabilization in the region, as well as the robbery of water in Yemen, as one of the other factors, led by the elite which has further impoverished the countryside, villages, farmers and communities. Therefore, and this is a very important point for me, if we need an intercultural approach to solve the problems in the region, this must also go towards bringing together an environmental dimension in our attempt to create or establish foundations for peace, stability and coexistence. Of course this is a theoretical discourse; the situation on the ground is much more difficult. But I believe that it should be taken in a strategically way. It should be recognised as a choice in our actions which

are social actions and also institutional actions.

### **Political courage**

In my experience, having dealt with intercultural affairs for a while now, the first element that we need to set is political courage. That was an element already identified by a high level group set up by the former President of the European Commission Romano Prodi. This happened after the season of the large terrorist attacks which prepared the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation where political courage was a strong element. You need political commitment to go down this road. Then you need independence; we all know what it means to be independent in the action, but we also need funding and resources to be an effective civil society player in the region. Then we also need advocacy on policy making. We also need to help civil society to have an impact on their own institutions, to learn how to lobby, how to influence decision makers, governments, institutions, local and regional authorities, in the process of designing and then adopting decisions. This is something new for many of the activists or CSO players that have re-joined the scene after the fall of several despotic regimes in the Arab region and the Mediterranean. We need networking; networking is very important. We have experienced that the added value of intercultural action is in fact bringing people together, because when you bring people together you bring different perspectives together, we bring different resources together, and we bring different expertise together. Somehow this is the exercise that we have been trying to do today by trying to compare South East Asia with the Arab Spring.

### **Transmitting lessons from the past**

We also need a network of centers for critical empowerment. We like to talk about civil society but in fact we should create an infrastructure that allows all these new organisations and associations that are emerging in the region, especially in the Arab Spring area, to learn from the past, from mistakes and successes. But we have to do it in a strategic and consistent way. [...] Sometimes I think about the idea of a network of museums of the history of civil society locally and regionally. Because at the end we have to learn a lot from past experiences and we should avoid mistakes. The dynamics between people and power are similar worldwide. What we have to learn is how to address them, given the different contexts.

### **Taking back their space**

And finally another element I would like to stress is, and maybe not many people are addressing it, there are two Springs in the region. There is the Arab Spring, these vague marches against austerity which have especially shaken Europe. Everything has started by seeing those people in Tahrir Square planting a tent on the main square downtown in Cairo and then going into Tel Aviv, from Tel Aviv to Madrid, from Madrid to Greece and then from Greece to America, etc. We should try, with an intercultural approach, to bring together these different movements because I believe there are common routes and reasons for the crisis we are experiencing in the region which are of a political nature, but also economic, social and environmental. What I believe is a common element in all these uprisings [...] is the fact of feeling that you can become the owner of your own space. Re-appropriating the public space – it is amazing. I was there for the revolution in Alexandria, and the scene I will never forget in my life was on 28<sup>th</sup> [October 2012]. The

Corniche of Alexandria which is normally the highway collapsed with traffic [was] empty with people marching, and I don't think that will ever happen again unless there is an eclipse and everyone has to stay at home for safety reasons. These people had this feeling, that they wanted to take back their space.

### **A 3-million euro program to promote intercultural citizenship and arts of change**

This is why we have been starting to work on a 3-million euro program, specifically on the countries in democratic transition in the region working with the civil society. What the program would like to do is two things: first of all, working on capacity building and advocacy in the area of local public policies and local governance, in the area of education for intercultural citizenship and in the area of arts for change. We also want to facilitate networking between activist organisations, associations, NGOs, movements, etc. Also, we could work on twinning programs between CSO organisations in the north and the south and create a forum where best practices, at a regional level, could be exchanged. We could also experiment the Citizen Routes in some Arab countries, a model of itinerating or even maybe [using] a citizenship bus moving from village to village, a concept coming from the different civil society contacts that we have; these Routes need to go beyond the cities and the urban areas.

### **Conclusion : More education on nonviolence philosophy**

My last word is about nonviolence. I just want to give you an image which is also in my mind from this year. On 25 January [2012], in Tahrir Square, for the first anniversary of the Egyptian revolution, there were thousands of people and it was very difficult to move even inside the square. There was one single man who had a sign with the image of Gandhi and

his words. Of course this is not common. Nobody knew Gandhi; they had seen this small man with glasses and it reminded them of something. So many people went to see that man and everybody was asking me 'who is this man?' and 'what does it mean?' .Why am I saying this? Because it is true that nonviolence was a strategic choice but it was also something that came spontaneously, somehow by human strength, involving kids, women and seniors in the streets. But there is still a need to understand what the philosophy of nonviolence means. It is maybe our role to help to understand it in order to strengthen the Arab Spring and other movements. We should work on the theory and on the principle of nonviolence to raise awareness among those people. As a result they can learn for the next round, when eventually they are not happy with the decisions of the governing party, to use nonviolent actions.



## PICTURES PANEL 3



NICCOLÒ RINALDI MEP



ANDREW SWAN (UNPO)

## **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

### **ALTIKRITI, Anas**

*Founder of the Cordoba Foundation*

In 2005 Mr. Altikriti established the Cordoba Foundation. He is a former President of the Muslim Association of Britain and post-Graduate Lecturer in the fields of Translation and Interpreting studies and Political sciences. In addition to role as President of the Cordoba Foundation, Mr. Altikriti is advisor to a number of governments as well as numerous NGO organisations, bodies and groups. He was also special envoy to Iraq to negotiate the release of Western hostages and a commentator in the international and Arab media.

### **AL-MARZOOQ, Khalil**

*Council of Representatives of Bahrain*

Khalil Al-Marzooq is a Bahraini Shi'a politician and former member of the Council of Representatives. Mr. Al-Marzooq and 17 other MPs from Al Wefaq, the main Shi'a Islamist opposition party, resigned from their seats in parliament. Mr. Al-Marzooq led negotiations with the government in the Bahrain national dialogue, but he and the four other delegates from Al Wefaq withdrew from negotiations on July 17, 2011.

### **AMIN, Bakhtiar**

*Former Minister of Human Rights (Iraq)*

Mr. Amin went to university in Sweden and to the Sorbonne in France, where he obtained a Master's degree in International Affairs and a PhD in Political Geography. He was the secretary general of the Kurdish Institute in France and active in the International Alliance for Justice group that campaigned against Saddam Hussein's human rights violations. He called for the creation of an International Court for Iraq, along the lines of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Mr. Amin returned to Iraq following the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. He was appointed as the Human Rights Minister in the Iraqi Interim Government from June 2004 to May 2005. He has 20 years of experience in the field of international human rights and humanitarian work and has worked extensively on issues involving minorities, indigenous peoples, women's rights, land mines, the International Criminal Court, freedom of expression, and conflict resolution.

### **BUSDACHI, Marino**

*President of Mahatma Gandhi International*

After serving as UNPO Executive Director from 2003-2005, Mr Busdachin was elected as UNPO General Secretary in 2005. He was a member of the Extra-ordinary executive Board of the Transnational Radical Party (2000-2002), and is currently a member of the General Council of TRP. He led the TRP to recognition by the UN as an NGO of the first category, and led and coordinated the TRP in the former Yugoslavia (1991-1993) and in the Soviet Union (1989-1993). He founded the NGO "Non c'e' Pace Senza Giustizia" in Italy (1994- 1999), as well as founding and serving as President of No Peace Without Justice USA (1995-2000). Mr Busdachin campaigned for the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

### **FIGÀ-TALAMANCA, Niccolò A.**

*Secretary General of No Peace Without Justice*

Niccolò Figa-Talamanca has worked for Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (Human Rights First) as their International Criminal Court consultant. He also spent two years working at the International Crimes Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. Mr. Figà-Talamanca has extensive field experience in human rights documentation and has led conflict mapping operations in various conflict and post-conflict countries, as well as publishing material on the democratic transformation of the Arab Spring countries.

**FOUQUET, David***European Institute for Asian Studies*

David Fouquet had a long career as a journalist covering foreign, security and economic relations for leading publications, such as The Washington Post, Newsweek and Jane's Defence Weekly in Washington, London and Brussels. He then became a consultant for major international companies, lecturer and writer concentrating on European-Asian relations since the mid-1990s. He has been involved in EU-sponsored international projects, lectured and participated in conferences throughout Asia and Europe. He has written and contributed to books on NATO and Asia and presented papers on various subjects revolving around EU-Asia relations and China's foreign and security relations and policy. He has been active for many years as a board member, secretary general and other positions with the European Institute for Asian Studies based in Brussels, a lecturer on Asian issues with the Centre Européen de Recherches Internationales et Stratégiques (CERIS) in Brussels, and as director of the Asia-Europe Project. He also collaborates with a number of European and Asian think tanks, universities and media organisations.

**HIDALGO, Diego Checa***Centre for Study of Peace & Reconciliation Studies*

Mr. Checa Hidalgo obtained a PhD in Contemporary History at the University of Granada. He is a Marie Curie Research Fellow at the Centre for Study of Peace and Reconciliation Studies in Coventry and a researcher at the Peace and Conflict Institute in Granada. Mr. Checa Hidalgo is specialized in international conflicts and undertakes research on nonviolent intervention for conflict transformation, Mediterranean contemporary history and the European Union External Action.

**HOEUNG, Ong Thong***Cambodian writer, former prisoner of the Khmer Rouge*

Mr. Ong Thong Hoeung was born in Cambodia and left for Paris in 1965. In 1970, he joined the United National Front of Kampuchea. From 1974 on, he served the Mission of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, whose members included the Khmers Rouges, who would take over in April, 1975. Having returned to his homeland in July, 1976, he was taken prisoners by the Khmer Rouge until their overthrow. From June to October, 1979, he worked as an archivist in the museum of Tuol Sleng, formerly a detention, torture and extermination center under Pol Pot's regime. He fled to Thailand in November, 1979. In 1982, he arrived in Belgium, and settled permanently in Brussels. In 2003 he published "I believed the Khmer Rouge".

**HUSSEIN, Ebtisam***Researcher at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies*

Ms. Hussein obtained a Master degree of Political Science with honors at Caïro University. During her PhD on Political Participation in Contemporary Islamic Political Discourse, she examined different islamist conceptions of political participation. Ms. Ebtisam Hussein lectures at the American University of Caïro and does research on Middle East politics, democratization processes and Islamic political discourse.

**KERSTEN, Carool, Dr.***Senior Lecturer in the Study of Islam & the Muslim World*

Dr. Carool Kersten is Senior Lecturer in the study of Islam and the Muslim World at King's College London and a Research Associate of the Centre for South East Asian Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Dr. Kersten is the author of three books, the latest, "Cosmopolitans and Heretics", has been nominated for the Bernard Schwartz Book Award of the Asia Society. A co-edited volume called "Demystifying the Caliphate" will be released this fall. Currently, Dr. Kersten is working on two new books about Islam in Indonesia. Aside from Southeast Asian Islam, his key research areas include the intellectual history of the modern Muslim world, contemporary Muslim thinkers, and modern Islam in transnational and global contexts. Dr Kersten is also editor-in-chief of the book series "Contemporary Thought in the Islamic World" for Ashgate Publishing. He is a Fellow of the

Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Higher Education Academy of the UK, and a Member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists in the UK. In addition, he serves on the international advisory boards of the Journal of Global and International Studies, Sociology of Islam Journal, and the Journal of Contemporary Islam in Indonesia.

**MANCHIN, Robert**

*GALLUP Europe*

Robert Manchin is Managing Director of The Gallup Organisation Europe. He is also a professor at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium and is actively involved in a number of graduate university programs in Europe. At present, Mr. Manchin is leading the European Commission Flash Eurobarometer, Europe's largest on-going survey measurement project, serving the information needs of European public policy-makers. He is also the Coordinator of the International Consortium for the European Crime, Safety and Well-being Survey and the Head of the European Observatory of Human Safety and Security. He was responsible for carrying-out the last wave of the European Working Conditions Survey, a 33-country face-to-face survey. Robert Manchin is a Trustee of the Brussels-based think-tank "Friends of Europe", the President of a Hungarian NGO for a Smoke-free Environment and Chairperson of the Europa Nova Foundation.

**MURSHID, Tazeen Mahnaz, Dr.**

*Director, Development Research and Cooperation*

Dr. Murshid obtained her PhD in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford, where she was awarded the Frere Exhibition for Indian Studies. She has worked as an academic at universities in London, Oxford, Belgium, France and Bangladesh where she taught courses on human rights, electoral politics, democratisation, Islam, secularism and gender. She was a Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin in 1999-2000 and a Visiting Professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales at Paris in 2003, researching and lecturing on gender and law in colonial India. Previously, she worked on ethnicity, conflict and nationalism as a Visiting Scholar to the Modern Asia Research Centre in Geneva, on race relations as a Research Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford and on education, identity and community formation as a Research Fellow at Homerton College, Cambridge, which followed several years of action research in the field of education service delivery in the UK. She has worked as a political analyst for the media, including the BBC and as an expert on Asian culture for various UK based law firms. Presently, she works as an independent researcher for the EU and other international organizations. In 2005, she set up a research network called DRC – Global Development Research Cooperation to engage in policy studies. Apart from being an associate of Human Rights Without Frontiers and of the Centre for European Policy Studies she belongs to a number of international networks, NGOs and community based organisations on human rights including women's rights, South Asian Studies, and sustainable development.

**SOLERA, Gianluca**

*Anna Lindh Foundation*

Gianluca Solera spent many years in Brussels as political adviser to the European Parliament. In the summer of 2004 he travelled to the Middle East and stayed in the Palestinian Territories for two years studying Arabic at Bir Zeit University. He recounted his experiences in the volume "Muri, Lacrime, Za'tar" (Walls, Tears, Za'tar), with a prologue by Archbishop Michel Sabbah, retired Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. He also published "Di città in città" (From Town to Town) and "Poesie sull'Europa" (Poems on Europe). He is currently coordinator of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, based in Alexandria, Egypt.

## **ABOUT THE ORGANISERS OF THE CONFERENCE**

### **Mahatma Gandhi International**

Mahatma Gandhi International (MGI) is a peace organization founded on the principle that, now more than ever, the promotion and maintenance of non-violence and tolerance is necessary to peacefully address the common challenges and conflicts facing the global community. Through platforms aimed at fostering cultural exchange and dialogue between peoples, MGI seeks to bring new thinking and perspectives to conflict resolution around the world. With its progressive and responsive approach, MGI believes in giving non-violence new relevance to international problems with results that can resonate around the world. It is in this belief that MGI aims to raise international understanding through conferences and fact-finding missions whilst building the capacity of those affected by conflict to identify, debate, and implement the solutions most suited to their situations. Through these activities we aim to develop sustainable collaborations between government and civil society actors.

Mahatma Gandhi, the architect of the modern non-violent resistance movement, envisioned a global society wherein the peoples of the world could be guaranteed the full spectrum of civil rights. Only by pledging to uphold and protect these rights around the world can the international community ensure they are respected. Mahatma Gandhi International was founded on the basis of this vision and belief. We are thus dedicated to combating oppression in all its forms in order to secure permanent social, political, and religious freedom for peoples around the world.

Founded in 2011, Mahatma Gandhi International has grown from a network of influential individuals and organizations committed to upholding human rights, the implementation of international law, and the value of non-violent approaches to preventing, mediating, and resolving contemporary conflicts. MGI seeks to achieve this by drawing upon a team whose expertise ranges from international human rights advocacy to international justice advancement within the key fora of the world.

MGI therefore works to further initiatives that emphasize non-violent methodologies around the world. Through the promotion of stable, vibrant democracies and rule of law, MGI is committed to finding and supporting innovative approaches to the violence that continues to needlessly plague men, women, and children all over the world.

### **The Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty**

The Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty (PRNTT) is a nonviolent organization following Gandhian principles. Its symbol is a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi constructed from the words "Radical Party" written in over 50 languages. In its campaigns PRNTT seeks to achieve, raise awareness about and engage different political policies, by encouraging its members to pursue nonviolent actions that induce cross-border national and international institutions to comply with their laws and principles. The party does not participate in national, regional or local elections.

The Radical Party has been registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with general category consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1995. In this framework, the PRNTT has made it possible for a large number of people and organizations working in the field of democracy and human rights to be represented at the UN Human Rights Commission and to present their claims in that forum to diplomats, international media and other NGOs..

Since obtaining consultative status with ECOSOC, the PRNTT has participated in the work of various UN bodies on matters relating to the promotion of civil and political rights; the support of bilateral and multilateral actions for the promotion of democracy in the world; the support of the activities of

the ad hoc Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda; the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the statute of which was voted on in Rome in 1998 following a long campaign by the Radicals; the adoption of the resolution for a moratorium on executions by the UN General Assembly; the global use of internet technologies to extend civil liberties and democracy; for freedom of scientific research and for the transfer of military expenditure to civil means.

During this time the PRNTT has sustained relationships with various international NGOs such as Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, the World Federalist Movement, Amnesty International, the Democratic Coalition Project and Parliamentarians for Global Action, as well as unrepresented peoples and those in political exile to help them publicize their cases and to keep decision-making bodies informed. These groups include, for example, Tibetans, Uighurs, Degar (also known as Montagnards), Kosovar Albanians, Chechens, as well as political dissidents from south-east Asia, the Balkans and Cuba.

### **No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ)**

No Peace Without Justice is an international non-profit organisation founded by Emma Bonino and born of a 1993 campaign of the Transnational Radical Party that works for the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and international justice, and undertakes its work within three main thematic programs : International Criminal Justice, Female Genital Mutilation and Middle East and North Africa Democracy, including specific work on Iraq.

Priorities for action for all programs are selected on the basis of the needs as determined on the ground, involving all stakeholders in the design and implementation of activities. In advocacy activities, NPWJ raises awareness and fosters public debate through explicitly political campaigns and the implementation of key programs, such as international and regional meetings, often co-hosted and co-organised with Government of the country in which they are held, fostering partnerships between public institutions, non-governmental organisations and other actors in society, to attain stakeholders' ownership both of the political drive and of the results. NPWJ also undertakes wide-ranging technical assistance, through the secondment of legal experts to governments for the drafting of legislation and to assist in negotiations on international human rights instruments. Finally, NPWJ has acquired unique field experience in "conflict mapping" and wide-scale documentation of violations of international humanitarian law in areas affected by conflicts and in implementing outreach programs engaging local communities in conflict and post-conflict areas on issues of international criminal justice.

### **Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)**

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) is an international, nonviolent, and democratic membership organisation. Its members are indigenous peoples, minorities, and unrecognised or occupied territories who have joined together to protect and promote their human and cultural rights, to preserve their environments, and to find nonviolent solutions to conflicts which affect them.

Although the aspirations of UNPO Members differ greatly, they are all united by one shared condition – they are not adequately represented at major international fora, such as the United Nations. As a consequence, their opportunity to participate on the international stage is significantly limited, as is their ability to access and draw upon the support of the global bodies mandated to defend their rights, protect their environments, and mitigate the effects of conflict.

In today's world where over 90 percent of conflicts are intra-state, UNPO has been established to fill this gap, providing an international forum through which its Members can become effective participants and contributors to the international community. In an increasingly interdependent world it is ever more important that those who continue to be denied their rights or remain excluded

be given an opportunity to present their case. UNPO works therefore to address the consequences of marginalisation, working with its Members to promote their democratic causes, to provide information, and to articulate creative and nonviolent strategies for progress, above all however, UNPO works to ensure their voices are heard.

Founded in 1991 at the Peace Palace in The Hague, UNPO is unique as an international organisation in that it is built entirely by its Members. Through this strong connection to those suffering the consequences of the exclusion the organisation seeks to address, UNPO has since grown into a prominent and respected international forum.

UNPO's membership has also grown steadily from its original fifteen founders, representing now almost 50 Members worldwide. Although the work of UNPO adapts continually to meet the challenges of its Members and the nature of the international political climate, each Member remains committed to respecting the five principles enshrined in the UNPO Covenant: nonviolence, human rights, democracy and self-determination, environmental protection, and tolerance.

UNPO remains committed to offering an increasing number of nations and peoples an entry point into the international community, enabling its Members also to learn from one another; lending their support where there are setbacks and sharing their experiences in success.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

### 26 April 2012- Homepage Mr. Metin Kazak, MEP: Arab Spring Conference

<http://metinkazak.eu/index.php/en/arhive-news/272-2012-04-26-185120.html>

Метин Казак инициира първия дебат в Европейския парламент след събитията от Арабската пролет

PDF PRINT EMAIL

Thursday, 26 April 2012 18:51

There are no translations available.



На 26 април, 2012 г. в сградата на Европейския парламент в Брюксел се организира конференция "Арабската пролет: мирните протести и бъдещето за лидерите-реформатори в Югоизточна Азия". Форумът се инициира от евродепутатите Метин Казак, зам.-председател на подкомисията по човешки права и Николо Риналди от групата на Алианс на либералите и демократите за Европа (АЛДЕ).

Участниците в конференцията обсъдиха предизвикателствата и предстоящите действия след мирните протести в Близкия Изток и Северна Африка, с които започна нов период на преход от авторитарни режими към млади демократични процеси. Това е първият дебат в Европейския парламент, който в сравнителен контекст разгледа и настъпващите политически промени в страни като Малайзия и Индонезия и събра на едно място представители, ангажирани с вземането на решения, коментатори и активистите, които обмениха своя опит и възгледи за политическата ситуация и провеждащите се реформи в арабския свят.

### 26 April 2012 No Peace Without Justice : The Arab Spring Conference

<http://www.npwj.org/MENA/European-Parliament-%E2%80%9CThe-Arab-Spring-Nonviolent-Protests-and-Future-Islamist-Reformers-South-As>



NO  
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Promotion of  
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### Middle East and North Africa Democracy program

#### European Parliament: "The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia"

Brussels, 26 April 2012






No Peace Without Justice will contribute to the conference on "The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia", to be held at the European Parliament, in Brussels, on 26 April 2012. The meeting is organised by Niccolò Rinaldi MEP and Metin Kazak MEP, in collaboration between the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe





## 26 April 2012 Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe : the Arab Spring Conference


<http://www.alde.eu/event-seminar/events-details/article/non-violent-protests-and-the-future-for-moderate-islamic-reformers-post-arab-spring-39001/>


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**Non-violent protests and the future for Moderate Islamic Reformers post-Arab Spring.**

Focus on North Africa and South Asia

26/04/2012

Event date: **Thursday 26 April 2012 09:00 to 18:30**

Location: **BRUSSELS EP Room ASP 5G3**



Moderate Islamists are getting majorities in states throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

Change has already been taking place from Indonesia to Turkey and the conference will consider existing moderate Islamist movements, how the EU can help moderate groups, and how to build the capacity of moderate movements.


This conference will foresee the participation of several intellectuals coming from the Arabic region and of important members from the academic world who have contributed with their studies to a deep analysis of the current situation before and after the Arab Spring.

**Event Summary**

- Focus on North Africa and South Asia
- Registration & Contacts
- Documents
- Poster & Photos

**MEPs in this event**

**KAZAK Metin**  
Movement for Rights and Freedoms

**RINALDI Niccolò**  
Italia dei Valori - Lista Di Pietro

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Conference Poster

**THE ARAB SPRING NONVIOLENT PROTESTS**  
and the future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia

Thursday, 26 April 2012  
Room A5G3  
European Parliament, Brussels

To register, please send by Friday, 20 April 2012 your full name, date of birth, place of residence, organisation, nationality, and ID/passport number to:  
aswan@mahatmagandhiinternational.com  
Tel: +32 251 31459



**Convened by** Rinaldi MEP & Metin Kazak MEP

**In collaboration with:** Mahatma Gandhi International

 Alliance of **LIBERALS and DEMOCRATS** for Europe

No Peace Without Justice

Nonviolent Radical Party  
Transnational Transparency

 Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization

## From Agadir to Manila: Drawing a New Line of Reform?

### *The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Islamist Reformers in South East Asia*

5 April 2012, Brussels - One year after the nonviolent protests that swept the Middle East and North Africa, a new phase is being entered in the transition from authoritarian regimes to fledgling democratic institutions and the myriad challenges facing reformers, from reactionary crackdowns to balancing budgets.

But possible models for the consolidation of democracy, human rights, and good governance and the inclusion of moderate Islamist movements in the political process have been found in South East Asia and may prove crucial to the success of grassroots reform in the Arab world.

Setting the experiences of the Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia in comparative context, the conference, **"The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Islamist Reformers in South East Asia"** will be the first to draw upon the ongoing political evolution in countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia and bring together decision makers, commentators, and activists in discussions to inform, deepen understanding, and exchange perspectives.

Niccolò Rinaldi MEP, rapporteur of the report, 'Trade for Change,' and co-convenor of the conference noted that to support the Arab Spring "practical steps are needed...South East Asia has experienced the trials of transition and now is the time to examine what can be applied to support reform."

Melin Kazak MEP, vice-chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, sees in the conference the opportunity to "ensure Europe's response to regional reform - both underway and under threat - supports long-term, sustainable good governance and democracy, and that we in turn learn from our past engagement with Asia's reformers."

The conference is being realised by collaboration between the **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)** and **Mahatma Gandhi International** in partnership with **NPWJ**, the **UNPO**, and the **NRPTT**.

**"The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Islamist Reformers in South East Asia"** will be held from 09h00-18h30 on 26 April 2012 in Room A5G3 of the European Parliament, Brussels.

For more information please contact: **Andrew Swan** | +32 472 577 518

**Mahatma Gandhi International** Avenue Louise 52 | Brussels | 1050 | Belgium  
Tel: +32 251 31459 | Fax: +32 251 31495



— [Mahatma Gandhi International] —

### A New Chapter for Moderate Islamist Reformers in South Asia: Taking Lessons from the Arab Spring

\* \* \*

**"The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the  
Future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia"**  
will be held from 09h00-18h30 on 24 April 2012 in  
Room A5G3 of the European Parliament, Brussels.

Entry is by registration only. To register for the conference, please  
contact [aswan@mahatmagandhiinternational.com](mailto:aswan@mahatmagandhiinternational.com) providing full  
name, date of birth, organisation, passport/ID number by 20 April 2012.

19 April 2012, Brussels – Moderate Islamist reform movements are in transition across the world in the wake of the Arab Spring. Over a year since dictators were toppled by largely peaceful protests stretching across the littoral states of the Mediterranean, Islamist parties have gained new momentum and visibility.

As Islamist movements enter new phases in their political transition, what parallels can be drawn with the experience of South Asia? Similarly, what can moderate Islamist reformers in South Asia gain from the experience of parties in the Middle East and North Africa, and how does the international community really understand about the moderate Islamist parties that are in, and on the verge of, power?

Today political movements in both regions have been eyeing their respective developments, past and present, to chart possible future courses but little has been done to facilitate the face-to-face exchanges needed. This comes at the same time as the international community is re-evaluating its past policies, enquiring into the realities of Islamist political movements, and acknowledging the groundswell of popular support for the Islamist policies of political parties of differing hues.

In the first conference of its kind to be held in the European Parliament, multidisciplinary panels will discuss the nonviolent mass movements in the Arab World, the politics of democracy and moderate Islamism in South Asia and how these will intersect in the projects of state building, good governance and maturing civil society taking place from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Discussing these issues will be **Saad Eddin Ibrahim** (noted Egyptian writer, human rights advocate and founder of the Arab Organization for Human Rights), **Bakhtiar Amin** (former

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Tel: +32 251 31459 | Fax: +32 251 31495

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## Appendix 2.3 – Press Release (24 April 2012)

# PRESS RELEASE

— [Mahatma Gandhi International] —

### PRESS REMINDER

## The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the Future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia

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**"The Arab Spring Nonviolent Protests and the  
Future for Islamist Reformers in South Asia"**  
will be held from 09h00-18h30 on 26 April 2012 in  
Room A5G3 of the European Parliament, Brussels.

24 April 2012, Brussels - In the wake of the Arab Spring revolts new debates surround the emerging Islamist political parties and their agendas, particularly in the shadow of forthcoming elections in Egypt. At the same time leaders such as British Prime Minister David Cameron have hailed South Asian countries like Indonesia as models for the Middle East and North Africa.

As these new synergies emerge between the two geographically distant regions, a reassessment of Islamist reformers or moderates is required. To support ongoing policy debates, discuss questions of terminology and interpretation, activists, policy makers and academics will gather on 26 April 2012 in the European Parliament, Brussels to provide a fresh perspective to such discussions.

Driving these discussions will be **Bakhtiar Amin** (former minister of Iraq), **Khalil Almarzooq** (former First Deputy Speaker of the Bahrain Representative Council), **Slaheddinne Jourchi** (respected Tunisian intellectual and commentator), **Carol Kersten** (Senior Lecturer in the Study of Islam and the Muslim World), **Eblisam Hussein** (Berlin Graduate School), **Gianluca Solera** (Anna Lindh Foundation), and **Robert Manchin** (Gallup Europe), **Tazeen Mahnaz Murshid** (Development Research and Cooperation), **Ong Thong Hoeung** (Cambodian writer, former prisoner of the Khmer Rouge).

Discussants will draw upon different disciplines to provide insights into the development and success of Islamist movements, current issues and dynamics, and posit the future for both South Asian democracy and political Islam and the effect of change in the Middle East and North Africa will affect the future trajectory of reformist Islamist movements around the world.

Organised by **Niccolò Rinaldi MEP** and **Melin Kazak MEP**, the conference will convene in **Room A5G3 of the European Parliament** on 26 April 2012 from 09h00-18h30 and is being realised by collaboration between the **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)** and **Mahatma Gandhi International** in partnership with **NPWJ**, the **UNPO**, and **NRPTT**.

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