

Call for Participants -

European Workshops in International Studies 2024 (Istanbul - Turkey, 3-5 July)

The Politics of Siege Warfare: Understanding Contemporary Forms of Violence and Resistance in the Middle East and North Africa

Conveners: Dr Una McGahern (Newcastle University) una.mcghern@ncl.ac.uk and Dr Polly Pallister-Wilkins (University of Amsterdam) p.e.pallister-wilkins@uva.nl

For many, a “siege” conjures ideas of medieval castles and catapults, of ramparts and military encampments at the foot of heavily fortified cities. But as recent global events have shown, siege warfare has not only shown itself to be long-lived and highly adaptable to time and space, but it has become a defining feature of modern warfare today. Across the Middle East and North Africa, and particularly in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria and Yemen, the modern siege has become associated with “shock and awe” tactics of massive aerial bombardments of urban areas reduced to rubble; of protracted blockades of ports, airports and cities; and the slow, annihilating violence of economic impoverishment, starvation, asphyxiation and disease inflicted on trapped civilian populations for periods of time ranging from days to years.

Despite its prevalence, contemporary forms of siege warfare vary so widely in appearance, duration, goals and purposes that analyses of its multiple forms and effects are few and far in between, and often regionally disjointed, demonstrating a preoccupation with certain cases, places and forms of siege over others as well as a lingering military-centred and -oriented approach to siege warfare that fails to take account of the impact of technological advances in changing the appearance, forms and tactics of siege warfare, as well as the ways in which direct and indirect tactics of siege warfare are deployed, encountered and resisted in practice.

To address these gaps, this cross-disciplinary workshop invites contributions from scholars whose research engages substantively with any aspect of contemporary siege warfare in the Middle East and North Africa. Contributions are invited to address, but are not limited to, the following:

- Material, legal, and bureaucratic forms of siege warfare;
- Sites and geographies of siege warfare (for example, cities, neighbourhoods, (air)ports, refugee camps, stadiums or university campuses);
- Offensive and defensive tactics and strategies (such as the use of explosive weapons, drones, surveillance, fortifications, walls, ditches or buildings);
- Impacts of siege (physical, environmental, health, wellbeing, psychological, educational, humanitarian, gendered effects).

Scholars from the Middle East and North Africa are particularly encouraged to apply.

Those interested in participating are invited to submit their abstract on the EISA submission system as well as to send their name, affiliation, and short biography to una.mcghern@ncl.ac.uk and/or p.e.pallister-wilkins@uva.nl by **5 February** 2024. Successful applicants will be notified by 4 March 2024.