

Contact:

ACW Media Affairs

202-750-4000 Ext. 1007

press@arabcenterdc.org

ARAB CENTER WASHINGTON DC HOLDS EIGHTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Washington, DC, September 26, 2023 — Today, nonpartisan research organization Arab Center Washington DC held its eighth annual conference, “Democracy in Crisis: Geopolitical Shifts and US Challenges in MENA.” The hybrid full-day event, which took place at the National Press Club and online, provided substantial and thought-provoking discussions on both the status and future of democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, stretching across multiple panels and two keynote addresses, one with former Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki and the other with Palestinian political leader and chair of the Board of Trustees of Birzeit University Dr. Hanan Ashrawi.

On the state of democracy in Tunisia, former President Marzouki stated, “Our failure is part of the deep problem of democracy itself all over the world. That means that if we want to succeed in Tunisia, we have to have a new birth of democratic revolution in the whole region.”

On the current situation in the Middle East and North Africa, Dr. Ashrawi said, “The region is in a state of flux. [...] The Arab world is still in a state of disarray, it has been weakened. And unless it uses its own internal powers, own resources, and it relies democratically on its own people as a source of legitimacy, not on external powers or alliances as a source of legitimacy, then they can rise up again.”

Other speakers included a wide range of scholars and Middle East experts who touched on topics as diverse as grassroots democratic movements, climate change and environmental justice, economic crises, transnational repression, human insecurity, education and healthcare, armed conflicts, the 2024 US presidential election, and prospects for changes to US foreign and human rights policy. Video of the full conference can be found at <https://arabcenterdc.org/event/democracy-in-crisis-geopolitical-shifts-and-us-challenges-in-mena/>.

Arab Center Washington DC (ACW) is a nonprofit, independent, and nonpartisan research organization dedicated to furthering the political, economic, and social understanding of the Arab world in the United States and to providing insight on US policies and interests in the Middle East. As a Washington-based authoritative research center on the Arab world, ACW addresses fundamental aspects of US-Arab relations through timely and objective academic research, policy analysis, and educational exchange. Learn more at <https://arabcenterdc.org/> or follow @ArabCenterWDC on X/Twitter.

###