

OCTOBER 1973 - 2023

# FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE OIL CRISIS

CONSEQUENCES, ANALYSES, PERSPECTIVES

17 October 2023, Kuwait National Library

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

*“October 1973: missing and conflicting views on a historic moment” conference*

7:00 pm

*Exhibition opening*



مكتبة الكويت الوطنية  
National Library of Kuwait



Fifty years ago, the oil ministers of the OPEC Gulf States met in Kuwait to make a series of decisions which led to outcomes that are still shaping our world today. On 16 October 1973, they decided to increase oil prices, thereby taking back the power of setting these prices from the American and European oil companies that were still exploiting the region's oil fields. On 17 October 1973, in response to the October War, the ministers of the Arab countries implemented an embargo on oil intended for countries allied to Israel.

Beyond its economic and geopolitical origins, this event was to have far-reaching consequences for the societies of the Gulf, which were modernizing at great speed, and would become after 50 years the nerve center of the Arab world and the major global players in the fields of energy and finance, as well as heritage and urban planning.

The French Research Centre of the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA), located in Kuwait City and covering 7 countries (the GCC countries and Yemen) in the domains of the Humanities and Social Sciences, is dedicating two unprecedented events to this historic subject:

- 1) An International conference titled "October 1973: missing and conflicting views on a decisive historic moment" featuring the best specialists on the subject at the National Library of Kuwait on October 17, 2023, 9am-2pm.
- 2) An original exhibition showcasing textual and video archives gathered from French institutions, and which will be presented for the first time in Kuwait; opening at 7pm, at the National Library.

The activities organized by the CEFREPA are some of the few global events devoted to these historic decisions which triggered what importing countries called the oil 'shock' and what producing countries experienced as a fundamental stage in their development.

These scientific events retrace an important part of the contemporary history of the Middle East and the rest of the world from a local and global perspective. They also shed light on the many discussions that surrounded the measures taken in Kuwait and their consequences for the development of the Gulf States. Bringing together academic experts and researchers, they focus in particular on the economic, social and cultural effects of these decisions, and the way in which these decisions ushered in a new form of globalization that we are still experiencing today.

# Program

## First session: Historical & political perspective

9:30 - 10:00: “An insider’s view of October 1973: ‘Abdullah al-Tariqi and Arab oil affairs”  
Philippe Pétriat, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University

10:00 - 10:30: “Reviewing the regional consequences of October 1973 on development patterns: beyond recycling petrodollars”.  
Massimiliano Trentin, Associate Professor of History and International Relations of Western Asia, University of Bologna.

10:30 - 11:00: Discussion & break coffee

## Second Session: Diplomatic & Military dimensions

11:00-11:30: “How the Kuwaiti press covered the most crucial event in the global economy in the 20th century”  
Hamza Olayyan, Al-Jarida Newspaper

11:30-12:00: “Kuwait and the 1973 October War”  
Suliman Al-Atiqi, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Kuwait University

12:00 -12:30: Discussion & break coffee

## Third Session: Economic & Social aspects

12h30-13h00: “Oil, the dollar and Gulf currencies in the wake of 1973”  
Omar AlShehabi, Lecturer in Global Political Economy, University of Leeds

13h00-13h30: “The Myth of the ‘OPEC Embargo’ and the Real 1973 ‘Oil Revolution”  
Giuliano Garavini, Associate Professor of International History at Roma Tre University in Rome

13h30-14h Discussion & Conclusion of the Workshop

19:00 Opening of the Expo, in presence of the French Ambassador, Her Excellency Mrs. Claire LE FLECHER

# Participants

Philippe Pétriat

“An insider’s view of October 1973: ‘Abdullah al-Tariqi and Arab oil affairs”

Dr. Philippe Pétriat is an Assistant Professor of Modern History of the Middle East, a researcher at the Institut d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine (CNRS), and an associated research to the CEFREPA. He has published several articles on the history of trade and mobility in the Ottoman and post-Ottoman Middle East, as well as books on the economic and social history of the Hejaz and Saudi Arabia (*Le négoce des Lieux Saints*, 2016), Kuwait (*A Global History of Kuwait*, with Julie Bonnéric, 2022), and the history of oil through the vantage of Arabic sources (*Une histoire arabe du pétrole*, 2021). He is currently working on the history of the desert regions and food production in the Middle East.

Massimiliano Trentin

“Reviewing the regional consequences of October 1973 on development patterns: beyond recycling petrodollars”.

Dr. Massimiliano Trentin, Ph.D, works on the International History of Western Asia and North Africa with a special focus on the interplay between diplomacy, economics and development. He edited volumes like *The Middle East and the Cold War* (CSP, 2012), *Linee di conflitto. Il mondo arabo in trasformazione* (*Afriche e Orienti*, 2013) and he published articles on academic journals (*Diplomatic History*, *Cold War History*, *Foro Internacional*, *Phoenix*, *Afriche e Orienti*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, *Contemporary European History*). More recently, he has focused on the international history of the “debt crisis” of the 1980s in the region, also as Principal Investigator of the research project “*The Making of the Washington Consensus. Negotiating international assets, debts and power (1979-91)*” (2015).

Hamza Olayyan

“How the Kuwaiti press covered the most crucial event in the global economy in the 20th century”

Hamza Olayyan is a Lebanese researcher and journalist who worked in the

Lebanese press and later on in the Kuwaiti press for 47 years. He has published several books and dozens of research papers and is the founder of the Center for Information and Studies in Al-Qabas newspaper. He is currently a media consultant at Al-Jarida newspaper. He recently Published My journey with journalism. 57 years between Beirut and Kuwait (2023).

Suliman Al-Atiqi

“Kuwait and the 1973 October War”

Dr. Suliman Al-Atiqi is specializing in Kuwaiti foreign policy and diplomatic history. He holds a PhD from the University of Oxford and was previously a program analyst for the United Nations Development Programme.

Omar AlShehabi

“Oil, the dollar and Gulf currencies in the wake of 1973”

Dr. Omar AlShehabi has published extensively on the history and politics of migration and labour movements, colonialism and the British Empire in the Gulf and in the Middle East, oil and energy. His books include Contested Modernity: Sectarianism, Nationalism and Colonialism in Bahrain (2019), and Tasdir al-Tharwa wa Ightirab al-Insan (2018).

Giuliano Garavini

“The Myth of the ‘OPEC Embargo’ and the Real 1973 ‘Oil Revolution’”

Associate Professor of International History at Roma Tre University in Rome  
Dr. Giuliano Garavini has taught classes at various universities and institutions, including the Graduate Institute in Geneva, the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, and NYU Abu Dhabi. He has published on the interconnection between European integration and decolonization (After Empires, 2012), and on the global history of petroleum and of energy, in particular on the origins and significance of the 1973 ‘oil shock’ (Oil Shock: The 1973 Crisis and its Economic Legacy, 2016) and on the ‘counter-shock’ in 1986 (Counter-Shock: The Oil Counter-Revolution of the 1980s, 2018). His last book is The Rise and Fall of OPEC in the Twentieth Century (OUP; 2019).