

August 2024

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# Call for Proposals: Research Paper on Gulf States' Relations with Lebanon

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## Background

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. The KAS has more than 100 offices worldwide that run civic education programs aimed at promoting freedom, peace and justice based on the principles of liberal democracy and social market economy. The KAS Lebanon Office, founded in 2015 in Beirut, works on topics with political, social and economic relevance in Lebanon including political reforms and participation, transparency, accountability, socioeconomic development, entrepreneurship and innovation. In this regard, the KAS Lebanon Office conducts a diverse array of projects and commissions research papers and analyses about relevant and timely political topics concerning Lebanon and the wider MENA region.

## Research Context

Relations between Gulf states and Lebanon have experienced significant fluctuations in recent decades, shaped by a complex interplay of regional politics, economic interests and internal Lebanese dynamics. Historically, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has played a pivotal role as financial supporter of Lebanon, investing heavily in its economy and providing substantial aid after the end of the Lebanese civil war. However, the assassination of the KSA's Lebanese protégé, former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, as well as the growing influence of Iran through its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah have led to the gradual Saudi withdrawal from the Lebanese political and economic sphere. Recent key incidents such as the 2021 diplomatic fallout after a Lebanese minister's criticism of the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen highlighted political rifts and led to the temporary closing of the Saudi, Kuwaiti, Emirati and Bahraini embassies in Lebanon. Qatar, on the other hand, has taken a more neutral stance while quietly expanding its influence in Lebanon. It continued to host Lebanese leaders and provided tens of millions of dollars in aid since the 2019 economic meltdown in Lebanon. Limited trade engagement has also continued between Lebanon and other Gulf states, though hampered by the smuggling of drugs from Lebanon and the subsequent imposition of security restrictions on Lebanese exports to the Gulf. Meanwhile, the Lebanese diaspora in Gulf countries remains substantial, contributing significantly to Lebanon's economy through remittances while shaping cultural and economic ties between the two regions. Lastly, there have been recent surprising steps towards a possible engagement, such as the visit of a Hezbollah official to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which could indicate intensifying efforts by Gulf states to ease tensions despite long-standing animosities. These aspects paint a complex and non-homogeneous picture of Gulf-Lebanon relations, warranting further investigation amid a changing and multipolar regional environment.

## Objective

The commissioned research paper should explore the contemporary relations between Lebanon and Gulf countries (with focus on the KSA and Qatar but, where needed, making references to the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman as well). The study should shed light on relevant points including but not limited to:

- A brief historic recount of Gulf – Lebanon relations
- Gulf states' current interests and activities in Lebanon and, by extension, the region
- Potential points of contention and divergent Gulf states' stances on Lebanon
- The leverage Gulf states may or may not hold when it comes to influencing political/economic developments in Lebanon and resolving its manifold crises
- Future outlook and prospects

## Deliverables

A research paper with approximately **10,000 words** on the above-mentioned topic to be delivered until the **31<sup>th</sup> of October 2024**. The presumed total workload is anticipated to range between 15 to 17 working days.

Additionally, the author should be available to participate in and contribute to potential activities aimed at disseminating the research findings as needed.

## Submission

Interested candidates should send:

1. A four-page **research abstract** with a clearly formulated research structure, methodology, timeline and budget. The methodology should consist of an in-depth review of primary and secondary literature as well as interviews with experts, policy makers and other relevant actors to obtain novel information, ideally utilizing the author's own network as a primary source.
2. An up-to-date **curriculum vitae** showing the researcher's experience, track record and expertise on the mentioned topic as well as any other relevant information.

The application should be submitted by email to [anne.bauer@kas.de](mailto:anne.bauer@kas.de) . The deadline is **25<sup>th</sup> of August 2024**.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

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