



*Call for Papers:*

# The Long Twentieth Century of *Kurds and Kurdistan*

March 31 – April 1, 2024, Yale University



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Yale University's Council on Middle East Studies (CMES) kindly welcomes you to submit abstracts to present your research at an international conference on *The Long Twentieth Century of Kurds and Kurdistan*. 2023 marks the centenary of the Treaty of Lausanne, the agreement that brought an end to hostilities between the Allied Powers and the Turkish Republic. The Treaty of Lausanne eventually established new borders and recognized the sovereignty of the Turkish state, shaping the geopolitical landscape of the region for decades to come. As we commemorate this centenary, it is essential to reflect on the historical significance and lasting impact of this pivotal agreement on Kurds and Kurdistan.

The Treaty of Lausanne holds particular importance for two reasons within the context of post-World War I treaties. Firstly, it solidified the emerging international order after the war, which was founded on the principle (though only partially observed) of self-determination and the recognition of sovereignty in the form of nation-states. Secondly, and directly relevant to the conference's theme, the treaty exclusively granted international recognition to the Turkish nation-state, effectively rendering the aspirations for Kurdish self-determination nearly impossible. Consequently, the Kurds persist as the largest ethnic group in the Middle East devoid of a sovereign state to present day.

The 1923 treaty was the culmination of a series of historical milestones related to the fall of the Ottoman Empire. These milestones include the Great War, the Paris Peace Conference, and the 1920 Sèvres Treaty. Throughout these critical junctures, Kurdish political elites actively pursued various political agendas in their efforts to secure a dignified political existence for the Kurds amidst shifting borders, alliances, and identities. However, beyond the realm of elite politics and high-level diplomacy, Kurdish society bore the brunt of the devastating social costs resulting from World War I and the post-war policies of the ethnonational states that emerged in the 1920s and beyond in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.



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**Against this backdrop, this conference aims to use the centenary of the Treaty of Lausanne as a historical reflection and inflection point, focusing on two primary objectives:**

**(1)** Placing Kurds and Kurdistan at the center of an interdisciplinary examination of the post-imperial world order in the Middle East.

**(2)** Moving beyond a narrow focus on political history and creating space for various social, economic, cultural, and ecological perspectives to understand the complex ways in which these macro-political processes have affected Kurdish lives in the past century.

With these objectives in mind, the conference aims to provide an interdisciplinary scholarly platform to examine the experiences of Kurds during a time of profound changes that accompanied total war, colonial occupations, shifting territorial borders, and the emergence of new nation-states.

**Potential themes include but are not limited to:**

- Kurdish political elites' ideologies, strategies, and discourses
- Intra-elite conflicts, negotiations, and alliances
- British, French, Turkish, and Iranian state formation enterprises in Kurdistan
- Changing economic structures within the context of territorialization
- Forced migrations, exile, and diaspora
- Kurdish women's changing lives during the war and its aftermath
- Kurdish children, childhood, and youth
- Environmental impact of wars and territorialization
- Religious institutions, elites, and politics
- Intercommunal relations
- Socio-economic and cultural history
- Oral history methodologies
- Sources, archives, and methodology

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Application should include a short abstract (400 words) and a short bio (300 words). Applications should be sent to the following email address:  
**yale.kurdish.lausanne@gmail.com**

### Important Dates:

Deadline for submitting abstracts: September 15, 2023  
Notification of accepted papers: November 1, 2023  
Conference dates: March 31 – April 1, 2024

### Funding for Travel and Accommodation:

We highly encourage applicants to use their research funding to participate in the conference. However, we do have funding for accepted scholars who do not have any funding for conference participation. Please indicate if you require funding for conference participation in your application. Priority will be given to early career scholars and those on temporary academic contracts. We may be able to fund your travel and accommodation partially or fully, depending on the number of participants and their origin of travel.

### Acknowledgement:

This conference is sponsored by the Serbest Foundation & with support from the Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Memorial Fund and Council on Middle East Studies at the Yale MacMillan Center

### Organizers:

Jonathan Wyrzten (Yale University, Sociology)  
Mashuq Kurt (Royal Holloway, University of London, Law and Criminology)  
Nilay Özok-Gündoğan (Florida State University, History)



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