

Call for papers for the IACL conference on

**“The relationship between democracy
and systems of government”**

Conference conveners

The International Association of Constitutional law
Iraqia University
Doha Institute for Graduate Studies
The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Rule of Law Programme Middle East & North Africa
The Arab Association of Constitutional Law
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Baghdad, 19-20 January 2024

Conference theme

Against the backdrop of recent challenges that democratic systems have faced in different parts of the world, this conference will focus on the evolving relationship between democracy and systems of government. In particular, the conference will focus on how democratic institutions have performed when faced with recent challenges, and what can be learned from recent trends. The conference will explore a number of themes, including the following:

- (i) Many if not all constitutions include arrangements that control against majority rule (including for example constitutional courts that have the authority to strike down legislation). This has long been an accepted aspect of democracy. Today, the relationship between rights, systems of government and institutional arrangements is evolving because of the emergence of populism, as well as other challenges.¹ Examples can range from weakening checks and balances and the curtailing of basic rights. Participants will be encouraged to examine how this relationship is evolving and what impact it is likely to have on democracy.
- (ii) Faced with these challenges and evolving circumstances, participants will be encouraged to examine whether certain systems of government exhibit greater resilience in the face of populist movements, and whether specific constitutional arrangements can effectively counteract populist tendencies while upholding democratic values. Participants will also be involved to explore the role that populism is playing in upholding illiberal or undemocratic states and in preventing reform (for example in constitutionally captured states).

¹ For the sake of clarity, the organisers suggest Jan-Werner Müller’s definition of the term ‘populism’; see ‘What is populism?’, University of Pennsylvania Press (2017).

- (iii) The evolving nature of judicial institutions and their pivotal contribution to the overall health and vitality of democratic systems. Participants will be encouraged to closely examine the role played by courts in upholding the principles of democracy and combating corruption. Discussions will center around the effectiveness of constitutional frameworks, separation of powers, and accountability mechanisms in empowering courts to act as guardians of the rule of law, ensuring transparency, accountability, and the fair administration of justice.
- (iv) How systems of government are evolving or should evolve in response to the changing role of political parties. With a focus on both established and emerging democracies, participants will examine the challenges posed by shifting political landscapes, the influence of new political actors, and the potential reforms necessary to enhance the functioning of democratic institutions (including for example the regulation of political parties).

Conference venue

The conference will be organised in Baghdad and will take place at the Rotana Hotel, in central Baghdad. The conference will be the first international conference focusing on comparative constitutional law for many years to be held in Iraq.

Eligibility and submissions

The conveners encourage submissions from:

- (i) All interested scholars, from all parts of the world;
- (ii) Both PhD candidates and young scholars (post-docs; research fellows, assistant professors...) at the early stage of their academic careers (within 7 years from the accomplishment of their PhD); and
- (iii) Scholars from Iraq, from the Arab region and from other global south countries.

To submit an abstract

- (i) Interested scholars are invited to submit a CV and an abstract no longer than 500 words by **1 September 2023** to Contact@dustour.org (please use "Call for papers - The relationship between democracy and systems of government" as the subject line of your e-mail).
- (ii) Abstracts and papers must relate to the conference's general theme. Abstracts and papers may focus on the theoretical aspects of the questions set out above and may focus on any region or country or combination of countries. Abstracts may be submitted in Arabic, English or French.
- (iii) Applicants will be notified by **1 October 2023**.
- (iv) Full drafts of papers must be submitted no later than **1 December 2023**. Papers should be no longer than 10,000 words (footnotes included).

Conference language

The conference language will be Arabic, English and French.

Publication

Papers presented at the conference will be considered for publication in an edited volume.

Registration, travel and accommodation

There is no cost to participate in the conference. Funding will be available to cover some participants' travel and accommodation costs, especially from the Global South, according to the conveners' rules. Participants who wish to do so may apply for funding. Funding will be allocated by the organisers on a needs basis. In any case, funding is not guaranteed. Instructions on how to apply for funding will be communicated to participants after 1 September 2023.

Conference conveners

The International Association of Constitutional law

<http://iacl-aidc.org/index.php/en/>

Iraqia University

<https://aliraqia.edu.iq/>

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

<https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/EN/Pages/Default.aspx>

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Rule of Law Programme Middle East & North Africa

<https://www.kas.de/en/web/rspno/home>

The Arab Association of Constitutional Law

<https://www.aacl-mena.org/en/>

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

<https://www.idea.int/>

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