



## 2025 INSTITUTE HIGHLIGHTS

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

While 2026 is already in full swing, we invite you to take a step back to revisit the Institute's 2025 highlights and look ahead to what will guide us in the year ahead.

As a policy institute attuned to developments in our country and region, our research and activities remained as diverse and dynamic as ever. From our sustained focus on **Lebanon** — particularly its economy and public finances and commemorating the 50th anniversary of **Lebanon's civil war** — to shifting geostrategic dynamics, **Syria, Palestine, migration**, and emerging questions around **AI**, our work sought to connect local and regional realities with debates of global significance.

Last year was a year of new beginnings, continuations, and culminations.

To start, we officially implemented our new internal structure organized around three clusters of focus — **Sustainability and Inclusive Development**; **Politics in the World: Regional and International Affairs**; and **Policy, Politics, and Governance** — to better reflect the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary nature of our work. Our new **logo** — symbolizing dialogue and exchange, connectivity, and the flow of ideas across diplomacy and the policy process — along with our **revamped website**, further testify to an evolving institutional identity designed to better support policy-relevant research, responsive engagement, and meaningful impact.

Meanwhile, many of the Institute's initiatives continued to gain depth and momentum. The 3rd edition of the **Beirut Security Debates**, held in partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), once again provided a key platform for dialogue on regional security, with preparations already underway for its 4th edition scheduled for March 24, 2026. The **Arab Think Tank Network**, co-founded with the Middle East Council on Global Affairs (ME Council), continued to grow and successfully convened the second **MENA Think Tank Forum** in Beirut in September. In parallel, the IFI-housed **WPS Regional Hub** marked the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda with activities in Beirut and New York, while the **Young Women Peacebuilders Program**, implemented with UN Women, entered its third edition. The **SWANA Future of Work Hub** sustained its research and advocacy on employment and labor dynamics in the region, launching a second call for research proposals aimed at advancing decent work, equity, and economic resilience.

2025 marked the culmination of two important projects, most notably **SHAPEDEM-EU**, in which IFI, as part of a multinational, multifaceted research consortium, set out to rethink, reshape, and review the EU's democracy support policies in its Neighborhood countries. Throughout its three years, the project focused primarily on examining local democratic politics in Lebanon, Palestine, and Tunisia, as well as the challenges of the EU's democratic support and contestation practices in the European southern and eastern neighborhoods. We also wrapped up a two-year **Chatham House MENA Programme** project on "Evolving social contracts in the MENA region," with a closed workshop and public event on reshaping global governance in the MENA region in November. Together, these initiatives reaffirm the Institute's role as a leading platform for policy-relevant research and dialogue in the region.

Beyond research and programming, 2025 was a year of expanding outreach and visibility. Our pool of **University and Associate Fellows** continued to expand, while our **Internship Program** consistently drew a diverse cohort of talented graduates from across Lebanon and the region. We concluded the first season of our short video series, **Institute Insights**, and are already preparing for season two. The Institute also maintained a strong presence in key regional and international fora, while growing social media engagement reflected a broader and more engaged audience.

Looking ahead, the Institute will continue to focus on critical developments shaping Lebanon and the region, including **Lebanon's upcoming elections**, **Syria's** evolving trajectory, and broader regional and global dynamics. At the same time, collaborations with our AUB community remain strong, as exemplified through the launch of our **IFI-PPIA Fellowship Program**. 2026 will also mark a significant milestone as we celebrate the **Institute's 20th anniversary** — an opportunity to reflect on two decades of research and public policy engagement.

On behalf of the Institute, its staff, experts, and researchers, we extend our sincere appreciation to our partners, supporters, and wider community for their continued trust and support of our mission. We look ahead to more fruitful engagement and meaningful impact in the year ahead.

Sincerely,  
 Joseph Bahout, PhD  
 Director



## INSTITUTE IN ACTION

From Washington, D.C. to Paris, Abu Dhabi to Bangkok, the Institute remained actively engaged in global policy conversations, participating in conferences, forums, and high-level discussions across the world.

Learn more about where we have been representing the Institute throughout the year [here](#).



## 19 PUBLICATIONS

### ANALYSIS

- [Beyond a Ceasefire: A Comparative Analysis of UNSCR 1701 and the 2024 Ceasefire Agreement](#)
- [قراءة في ما وراء وقف إطلاق النار: تحليل مقارن للقرار 1701 واتفاق وقف إطلاق النار 2024](#)
- [Against the Current: Reflections and Lessons on Service in Government](#)
- [On the Way Out of Lebanon's Triple Crisis](#)

### POLICY BRIEFS

- [From Exile to Uncertainty: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Consider Returning Home](#)
- [Mass Displacement Governance in Lebanon: Access To Rights Amidst War and Multileveled Crises](#)
- [The Impact of Displacement and War Threatens Lebanon's Already Fragile Socio-Economic Fabric](#)
- [Civil Society's Limitations in Leveraging Coherent & Efficient State Public Policies Addressing the Issues of Syrian Refugees In Lebanon](#)
- [Lebanon's Foreign Policy: Challenges and Recommendations](#)
- [سياسة لبنان الخارجية: التحديات والتوصيات](#)

### OP-ED

- [Lebanon Amidst the Spiral of a Middle East in Flames](#)

### WORKING PAPERS

- [Towards a Socio-technical and Responsible AI Transformation in Lebanon](#)
- [Lessons From The 2019 Social Movements of The MENA Region](#)

### RESEARCH REPORTS

- [Towards a Productive "New" Lebanon](#)
- [نحو لبنان «جديد» منتج](#)
- [اللامركزية والفيدرالية في الحالة اللبنانية: إزالة الغموض وتوضيح المفاهيم](#)
- [Demystifying Decentralization and Federalism: The Case of Lebanon](#)
- [Is the Banking Sector in Lebanon Salvageable?](#)

### CONFERENCE REPORT

- [BSD Report 2025: A New Era? Scenarios for the Middle East](#)



## 3 NEW FELLOWS

Three new Associate and University Fellows joined the Institute, further enriching our pool of expertise in a wide range of subject matters: [Fadi Jardali](#), [Zedoun AlZoubi](#), and [Saade Chami](#).

Visit our [Fellows Page](#) to learn more about all our fellows and their areas of expertise.

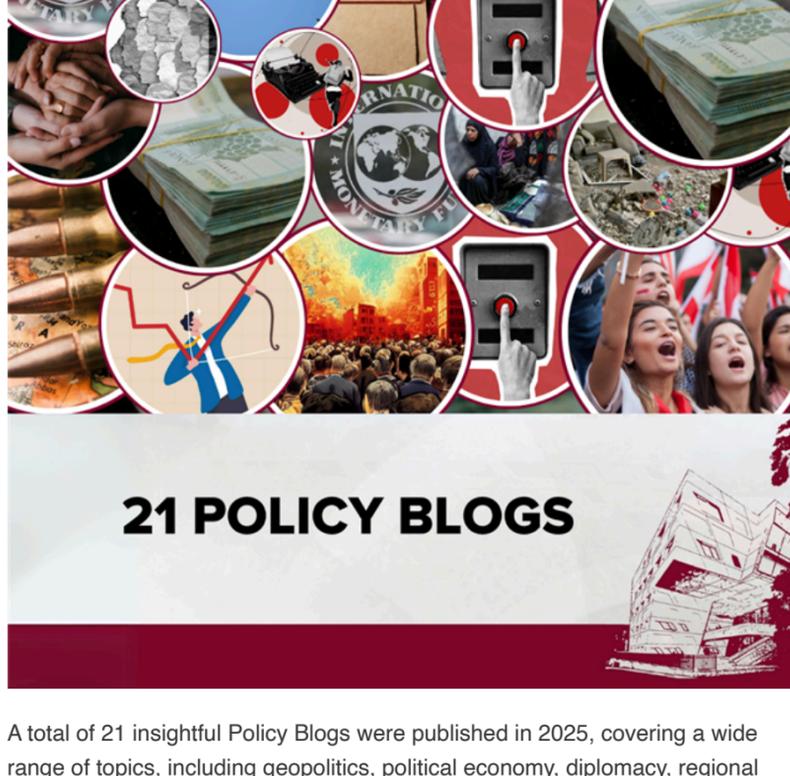
# INSTITUTE INSIGHTS

## SEASON 1



Launched in June 2024, Institute Insights is our short video series featuring subject-matter experts answering three questions on key regional and global public policy issues. In Season 1, our Fellows and AUB experts discussed topics ranging from Lebanon's economy and the Gaza War to war journalism and AI in policymaking.

Watch all episodes on our [YouTube Channel](#) and stay tuned for Season 2!



# 21 POLICY BLOGS

A total of 21 insightful Policy Blogs were published in 2025, covering a wide range of topics, including geopolitics, political economy, diplomacy, regional and international affairs, as well as climate change.

Reread these pieces on the [Policy Blog](#) and [Interns' Blog](#).



# 35 INTERNS

The Institute hosted 35 Interns as part of our Spring, Summer, and Fall cohorts, both undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in public policy and international affairs.

Read some of our Interns' blog posts [here](#) and listen directly from them about their experience in the program on our Instagram [page](#).



# 22 EVENTS

The Institute held 22 events in 2025, from conferences, closed meetings, roundtables, book discussions, webinars, and workshops. Our events provided a platform for scholars, policymakers, students, and practitioners to engage in meaningful discussions, share innovative ideas, and tackle pressing regional and global challenges.

Visit our [Events](#) page to know more about upcoming events and watch recordings or read recaps of previous ones.



		
20K+	10.7K+	4.5K+
		
8.3K+	5K+	300+

# INSTITUTE IN NUMBERS

Our digital and social media presence continues to grow, reflecting increased interest in our work and deeper engagement with our research and activities.

Follow us and subscribe to our mailing list via the links below!



# MEET THE TEAM

The Institute's team comprises 16 full-time members across the administration, communications, cluster and project coordinators, and researchers within each of our three main clusters.

Get to know more about them [here](#).

[Subscribe to our mailing list!](#)

