
CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE ARAB WORLD

Identifying trends, practices
and opportunities to build a
shared regional narrative
around climate justice



Climate Vulnerability in the Arab World



Water Scarcity



Desertification



Floods, heat waves and extreme weather events



Pollution and water salinization



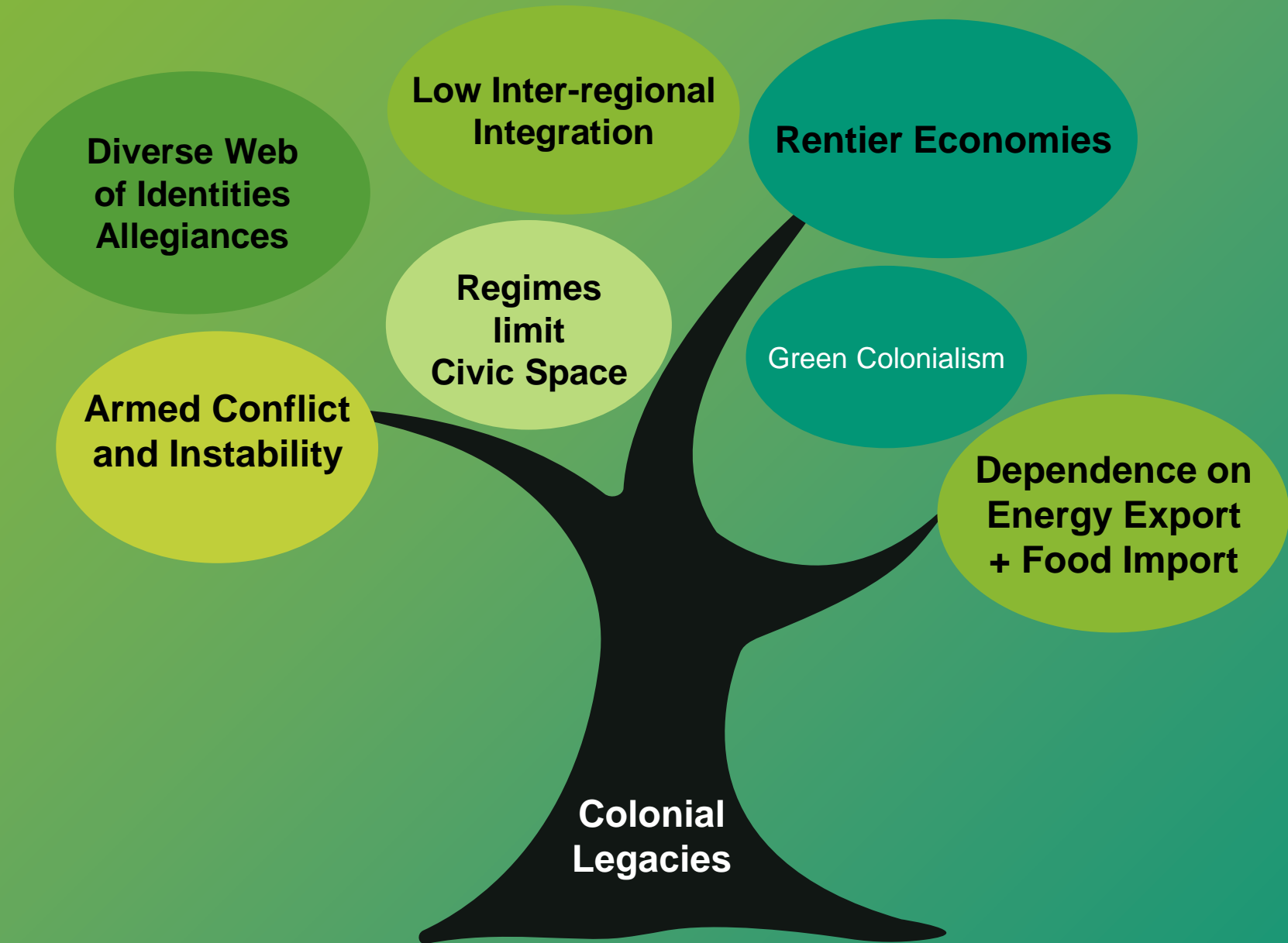
High impact on agricultural sector



Disproportionate effects on vulnerable communities



Political Context





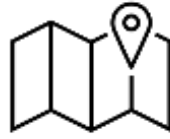
“From the River to The Sea”, Sliman Mansour, 2021

Why we need a shared regional narrative around climate justice



Understanding the current situation for CSOs in the 'Arab World'

Research objectives



Map existing ecosystems (networks, movements, CSOs/NGOs)



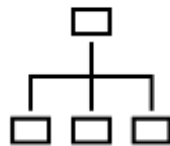
Identify trends and practices



Understand the relationships between local NGOs and foreign (and internal) powers



Understand the legal and political contexts in particular geographies



Identify power imbalances within the climate sector



Hypotheses

Internal Challenges

Shrinking Civic Space

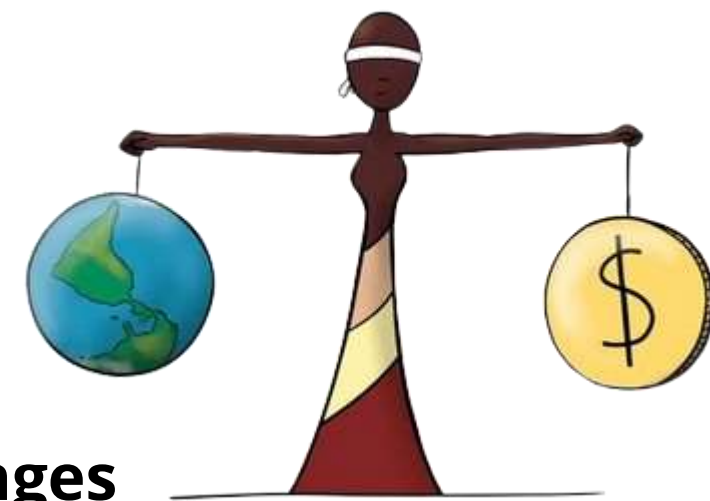
Political Instability

State Harassment

Demonization of human rights campaigns and activists

Restrictions on foreign funding and political watchdog organizations

Lack of tax incentives for giving



External Challenges

Most “development” activities are embracing a siloed approach while what is needed is a cross-country/regional agenda

Imposition of external narrative upon local communities and indigenous groups (e.g., UN narratives or EU policies)

Relation of dependency given funding dynamics (highly earmarked funds) e.g. lack of trust

Clash of priorities between foreign powers and MENA/SWANA communities (e.g. adaptation vs mitigation)

Methodology

Mapping



- Identifying NGOs and CSOs in the MENA / SWANA working at the intersection of climate change and human rights through desk review, networking and survey.
- Identifying trends and gathering contacts

Interviews



- Semi-structured key informant interviews with CSO representatives in the region
- Testing hypotheses regarding legal status, funding, cooperation, etc.

Gaps



- Unrepresentative sampling
- Neglecting other structures for grassroots action (SMEs, municipalities)
- Constraints of time and communication challenges

Organizations interviewed



Libya Youth Council for Climate Change
مجلس شباب ليبيا لتغير المناخ



مؤسسة روح
Rouh Foundation



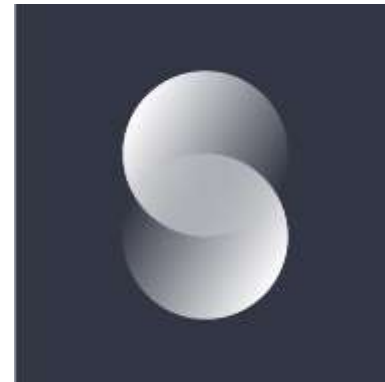
BASMEH & ZEITONEH
RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT



Syrian Women's Association



Jordan®
Environmental
Union






MAIN OUTCOMES

Panel Discussion

MAPPING FINDINGS





How do CSOs in the region fund their work and how do the funding structures affect outputs?

**HOW TO
MAINSTREAM
CLIMATE JUSTICE
ACROSS ALL
FIELDS,
ESPECIALLY THE
HUMANITARIAN
FIELD?**

“The Syrian crisis hit and most donors turned their funding to refugee + centered issues rather than agricultural ones. At that time [2012 - 2015] MIRRA almost shut down.” MIRRA - Jordan





What are the challenges that CSOs are facing in the region in scaling up for climate justice?

What could be done to center this issue within and across the region?

Climate activists at a rally in Doha on
December 1, 2012.
Karim Jaafar/AFP/Getty Images

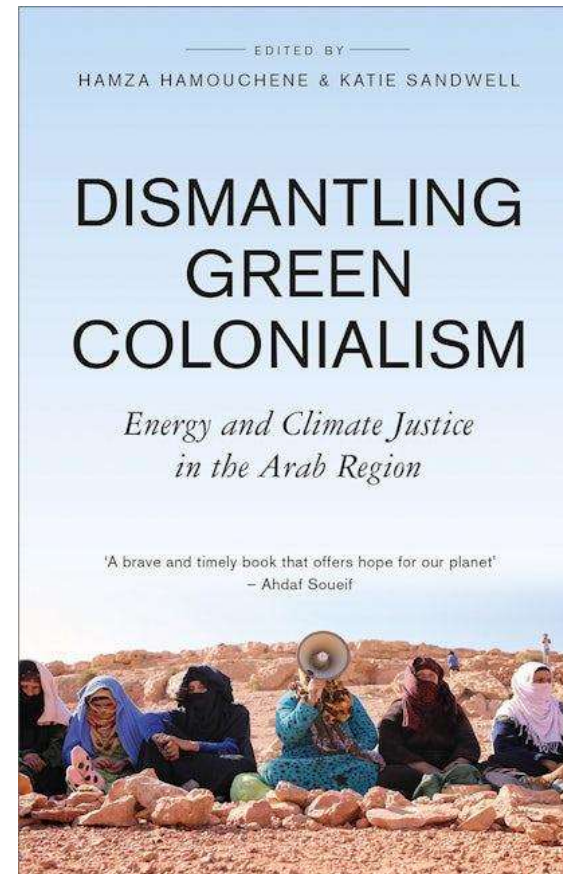
NAVIGATING THE POLITICAL CLIMATE





“A just transition means a transition from an economic system that is built around the extraction of resources and the exploitation of people, to one that is structured instead around the restoration and regeneration of territories and people's rights and dignity.”

Hamza Hamouchene



What did we learn from our research?



Need to move from theory to practice

A shared climate justice narrative is not a “nice to have”

Ecosystems and networks already exist

Indispensable to centre trust and respect

We cannot separate climate justice from the political situation in the region

The creation of a consortium on climate justice in the MENA



Step 1: Catalyst group to define values and principles of the consortium

Potential members: Nature Iraq, Associate Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc, Arab Youth Sustainable Development Network



Step 2: Workshops across the regions with funded participants

Aim: Work on a shared set of guidelines around membership and start defining climate justice in the region



Step 3: Exploring potential regranting opportunities and ecosystems strengthening

What could success look like?



Collective
solidarity across
the stakeholders
in the region

Regained sense
of ownership
and confidence

Channel funds
directly to
community-led
initiatives

Centering
people-powered
and people-
centered
solutions



**Question for the audience:
Greenwashing vs. Climate Change
Vulnerability**

The Line, NEOM - Saudi Arabia