Report of the 23rd Berlin Security Conference

5 DECEMBER 2024

Neele Seifert



Headline

Report of the 23rd Berlin Security Conference – Challenges of the Middle Eastern Conflict for European Security

Author

Neele Henry Seifert

Working Group

MENA

Overall Summary

Disinformation, migration, and societal tensions: Conference outlines Europe's key security challenges arising from the Middle East crisis.

One-Sentence Summary of Each Event You Report On

Key security challenges for Europe:

Here are the primary challenges the conflict is causing for European security:

Rising Antisemitism, Islamophobia and Social Tensions

The conflict has reignited deep societal divides within Europe, with a surge in antisemitic incidents reported across several EU member states. Large-scale pro-Palestinian protests, often marked by inflammatory rhetoric, have heightened tensions between communities, risking social unrest and potential radicalization. Combating this rise requires robust security measures and policies to foster community cohesion. Europe's large Muslim population—now the continent's second-largest religious group—has become a focal point in these debates. Many within this community, particularly those advocating for Palestinian rights, view the conflict as a matter of justice, contributing to rising social tensions. This has also sparked a backlash, fueling Islamophobia and further strengthening the appeal of far-right political movements.

Migration and Regional Instability

Escalating violence in Gaza and Lebanon has intensified humanitarian crises, raising fears of a new wave of migration toward Europe. The EU's already strained asylum systems face potential overload, threatening political stability within member states as migration policies remain a contentious issue.

Strengthened Iranian-Russian Ties

Iran's influence in the Middle East, coupled with its deepening military cooperation with Russia, poses dual security threats to Europe. Iranian drone technology used in the Ukraine war and its support for proxies like Hamas and Hezbollah reflect a troubling intersection of Middle Eastern conflicts with European security concerns.

Disinformation and Polarization

The conflict has become a hotbed for disinformation, particularly on social media platforms. Manipulated narratives surrounding the war exacerbate

polarization within European societies and undermine trust in democratic institutions. This presents a significant challenge for European policymakers tasked with maintaining societal resilience.

Political Struggles for a United Approach

Despite the EU's proactive humanitarian efforts in the region, its influence in brokering peace remains limited. Divisions within the EU on foreign policy approaches, particularly concerning Israel and Palestine, highlight the bloc's struggle to present a unified stance on such critical international issues.

The 23rd Berlin Security Conference underscored the importance of addressing these challenges through a coordinated European approach. Balancing humanitarian imperatives, countering disinformation, and managing migration while fostering social unity and geopolitical resilience is vital for the EU to effectively navigate the complexities of this and many other crises.

EPIS