

## **International Conference**

### **“Global Patterns of Violence in Post Imperial Societies, 1914-1949”**

**May 9-10, 2025**

**University of Crete/ Rethymno**

**Conference Room Δ2-A**

This conference examines the transformative dimensions of mass violence committed against minorities during the long passage from empire to nation-state in the (post) imperial spaces of the Balkans, Caucasus, Anatolia, Iran, and the Arab Middle East and North Africa. In particular, it highlights the crucial role played by international, inter-state, central, and regional actors (militias, revolutionaries, regular armies, political parties and bureaucracies), who undertook critical roles in the downfall of imperial structures and the concomitant processes that resulted in the formation of new nation states in the region. In doing so it aims to rethink the classical historical narrative about the emergence of the nation-state in post-imperial societies in three crucial ways.

First, it moves beyond state-centric narratives by paying particular attention to the intersection between state and non-state armed actors in the making and implementation of these violent policies.

Second, it reconceptualizes and analyses this violence as a series of intersected civic, religious, and ethnic civil wars set in motion by political, economic, and social collapse. This approach challenges ethno-centric narratives by placing the story of nation-making and nation-breaking in the region as an integral part of a broader ‘European civil war’.

Finally, the conference ventures to understand violence as both a practice and process. In this respect we are equally interested in how different actors mobilized for and inflicted violence and how this violence impacted the social structures, norms and understanding of the societies affected by conflict. Violence has been analyzed as a singularly destructive force. Yet, conflict did not only upend the old order but also created new dynamics, imaginings, elites and institutions who regulated, administered and profited from violence. The conference explores these dynamics to understand how violence outlasted the war and shaped the policies, political economics, and identities of the new nation states. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of the civilian experience and social dynamics of violence and the long-lasting legacies of these practices and policies in the nation-building processes.

This conference will be of great benefit for our current understanding of conflicts in the Balkan region of Europe and the Near and Middle East. A better understanding of these conflicts is obviously of interest not only to academics and the wider public, but also to policy makers concerned with these regions of conflict. Too often history has been manipulated to serve revisionist nationalist agendas. The conference challenges such state and ethnic-centred arguments to rethink how the diverse populations of these imperial borderlands managed to coexist, and how

they eventually descended into, and became the perpetrators and objects of violence. In this way, it will shed light on the dissolution of the Empire, the disastrous repercussions for the minority groups living in it, and the events that laid the foundations of the conflicts in the region today, thereby benefiting end-users such as history educators, cultural institutions and the public more broadly.