

Shifting Alliances in the Middle East and Israel's Regional Policies A Global Conversation with Prof. Uzi Rabi

On the 30th of March the Global Conversation with Professor Uzi Rabi dedicated to geopolitical situation in the Middle East took place in the School of Economics of Tor Vergata University. It is very symbolic the fact that this conference, in which were discussed very serious and complicated problems for which was most evident how relevant is international involvement and, more recently, support in dealing with them, was held in Sala del Consiglio, the same auditorium where students of Global Governance program opened the academic year and declared why they have chosen this field of study.



The eminent speaker of this event was Professor Uzi Rabi, Director of Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies of Tel Aviv University, a center devoted to conduct and divulgate researches in the sphere of modern history and actual political situation in the Middle East and Africa. He focused on the always changing and dangerous situation in the Middle East, speaking at first of the aftermath of Arab Spring, on the reasons why the situation in those countries is so dramatic and finally on the hottest topic of the last period: ISIS.

Middle East countries have radically changed their and the prospective in the world framework, becoming a key part of International Politics in recent years. They have subverted the “one man show rule of the 21st century”, the dictatorship, since many voices has been raised as we can see nowadays in Tunisia, Lebanon and Egypt. Furthermore, Professor Rabi pointed out that the artificial creation of some states in the Middle East by western nations, ignoring the pre-state original identity, through the implementation of notions from other national traditions, such as the design of western democracy in a country with different development and heritage, has resulted in the absence of cohesion and common national identity, essential pillars for a nation. Another important issue is the instrumental use of religion as a tool of conflicts within and between the states, as for example in Iraq and Syria, with the result of the rise of Sunni radical groups as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Regarding ISIS, Professor Rabi's view is very clear: democratic countries have to fear this phenomenon, since they "are not to be talked with anyone because for them we don't even exist until we recognize the absolute supremacy of THEIR Islam, not Islam, their Islam", expressing the fact that "regional and International Force might not be feasible since everyone is thinking about its own destiny".

During the question-time some interesting issues were raised, and it was inevitable to speak about Israel-Palestine issue. One of our classmates ventured a comparison between the conduct of ISIS with the rest of the world and the conduct of the state of Israel with Palestine: Professor Rabi, while recognizing the many mistakes, have vigorously urged not to compare ISIS to nothing, "being it an event never seen before, and even less to a democratic country as Israel", affirming that in his opinion, in order to solve the situation is necessary that Palestinians and Israelites sit together to work out a two-state solution, also being aware of the now main threat for all the Middle East: nuclear Iran.

Finally, he concluded that it is necessary to enforce in all the Middle East an educational revolution "to accept and respect the otherness of the others" in order to achieve a peaceful coexistence and to overcome the main problem of the Middle east: "the twisted perception of what the other is up to". Even if the enforcement of this revolution will require some decades to be finalized, it will avoid many wars and conflicts in the years to come.

As for the impact that this conference had on Global Governance students, it can be said that in Europe there is always the conception that those problems are very far from us and from our daily lives. Due to this Global Conversation, we acknowledged that those issues are actual problems, much closer than we think. In fact it was very remarkable and, in a certain way, shocking to hear an "insider" as Professor Rabi is, affirming that ISIS is the biggest threat the democratic countries have ever tackled with and that is dramatically underestimated. As Global Governance students, on one hand we hope that this cultural and educational revolution "to accept the otherness of the others" occurs as soon as possible in the Middle East, and, on the other hand we hope to be able to help solving in the most pacific and less invasive way possible the dramatic issues in that part of the world.

Giulia Parenti, Ekaterina Lapteva