

MECAM Newsletter (June–December 2025)

Imagining Futures – Dealing with Disparity

From the Team

Dear MECAM Community,

The past months have been marked by intense collaboration and exchange. In October, we hosted all five Merian Centres in Tunisia for the first time, alongside an international conference on postcolonial peace and conflict studies. This marked a significant milestone for both the Merian Centres Network and MECAM.

Throughout the year, our 2025–2026 fellows have contributed to our research and academic programme through their Study Day, blog contributions, and MECAM Papers. At the same time, research visits to Germany and participation in conferences across the region have further strengthened our transregional networks.

We are deeply grateful to our fellows, partners, and colleagues who make our work possible.



Highlights

Merian Family Meeting

Oct 9–14 – Tunis, Tunisia

MECAM hosted two major events funded by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR). The international conference “Re-thinking Peace and Conflict Studies in a Postcolonial World” brought together researchers and scholars to explore postcolonial dynamics of violence, security governance, and transformative justice.

This was followed by the Merian Family Meeting on “Knowledge Diplomacy and South–South–North Cooperation. Revitalizing Bandung for the 21st Century”, where all five Merian Centres gathered in Tunisia for the first time to exchange ideas and co-create equitable forms of knowledge production inspired by the historic 1955 Bandung Conference.



MECAM Fellows' Study Day

Dec 5 – Tunis, Tunisia

MECAM hosted its Fellows' Study Day, themed “Confronting Asymmetries in the Maghreb”, in Tunis. The 2025–2026 fellows explored historical, social, gendered, and political power imbalances through three interdisciplinary panels examining musical repertoires, cultural and political interventions, and state-building processes in the Maghreb.

The day concluded with a publication workshop guiding fellows in framing topics for MECAM working papers and peer-reviewed journal articles.



Events

Conferences and Workshops



Jun 12–14 – MIASA–PAPA Conference: Sustainable Governance in Africa. The Usefulness of the Concept of Crisis.

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Organized by the Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA)



Oct 10–11 – International Conference: Re-thinking Peace and Conflict Studies in a Postcolonial World. Tunis, Tunisia

Organized by the Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace and Conflict Network



Oct 12–13 – Merian Family Meeting: Knowledge Diplomacy and South–South–North Cooperation. Revitalizing Bandung for the 21st Century. Tunis, Tunisia

Organized by MECAM



Events

Conferences and Workshops



Oct 22–24 – *Techno-Ecologies and Bodies of Memory. The Environment as Battleground* Tunis, Tunisia

Organized by **Goethe-Institut Tunis**



Oct 29–30 – *Mobility, Exchanges and Cooperation between the Maghreb and the Socialist Countries during the Cold War* Tunis, Tunisia

Organized by MECAM in collaboration with the **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung** and the **Department of History of the European University Institute**



Nov 27 – *MECAM at the Journées Culturelles d'Automne de l'Université de Tunis* Tunis, Tunisia

Organized by the **University of Tunis**



Dec 11–13 – *MECILA Berlin Conference: Exploring the Conviviality–Inequality Nexus. Findings and Prospects* Berlin, Germany

Organized by the **Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality–Inequality in Latin America (MECILA)**

Rencontre Ibn Khaldoun (RIK) and Policy Talks



Jun 27 – *2nd MECAM Policy Talk* Berlin, Germany

Organized by **GIGA**



Oct 12 – *Keynote Session: Decolonizing Knowledge. Power, Epistemic Asymmetries, and Colonial Legacies* Tunis, Tunisia

Organized by **GIGA** as part of the **Merian Family Meeting Knowledge Diplomacy and South–South–North Cooperation**



Dec 3 – *Multilingual Roundtable: Global Solidarity with Palestine.*

Experiences from Tunisia and Germany Tunis, Tunisia

Organized by **GIGA**



Publications

Blog Series on TRAFO

MECAM Fellows continue to contribute cutting-edge reflections to the TRAFO Blog for Transregional Research, offering insights on memory, development, energy, and citizenship across the Maghreb and beyond:

- **Emile Van Ommeren** – *Between Trade-Based Food Security and Self-Sufficiency: Agricultural Policies and Sectors in Tunisia*
- **Mustapha Majidi** – *Bridging the Mediterranean: Collaborative Pathways or Power Struggles in Renewable Energy?*
- **Said Chemlal** – *A Reverse Shot of Migratory Narratives in Matteo Garrone's "Io Capitano" (2022)*
- **Ornella Modera** – *Sahel–North Africa Relations: Addressing Common Threats in a Fragmented Cooperation Landscape*
- **Rim Naguib** – *Solidarity against Empire in a Colonial Port City*
- **Idriss Jebari** – *"Is there a Moroccan Thought?"*

- **Clara-Auguste Süß** – *(De)colonizing the French Mediterranean: Connections and Power Relations*
- **Youssef Cherif** – *Southward Bound: Maghrebi Entrepreneurs and the Making of Real Intra-African Trade Corridors*
- **Hanan Natour** – *Precolonial Memory, Postcolonial Critique: Ibn Khaldun in Tunisian Arabic Fiction of the 21st Century*
- **Chika Mba** – *Academic Freedom and Knowledge Production in Ghana: An Interview with Chika C. Mba*
- **Clara-Auguste Süß** – *Bridging the Maghreb–Sahel Divide in Policy and Research: Take-aways from the MECAM Policy Talk 2025*
- **Annamaria Bianco** – *Displaced from the Future: Crossing the Sea Back to Syria in Nesrine Khoury's Speculative Novel Wadi Qandil*
- **Diana Abbani** – *The Hour of Absinthe: A Cultural History of France's Most Notorious Drink – A Conversation with Nina Studer*
- **Charlotte Fiedler** – *Kira Jumet & Merouan Mekouar's "Doing Research as a Native": Reflections from a MECAM Workshop*
- **Hayet Amamou** – *Reclaiming Movement: Hayet Amamou on the Maghreb's Mobile Past and Future*

MECAM Paper Series

The MECAM Papers series offers concise and well-founded analyses of the social, cultural, and political realities of the contemporary Maghreb:

- **MECAM Paper 17** – Youssef Cherif – *Tunisia and Ghana: parallel histories, diverging democracies.*
- **MECAM Paper 18** – Hend Guirat – *The Executioner's Office in Algeria and Tunisia (1842–1962).*
- **MECAM Paper 19** – Julius Dihstelhoff and Imad Alsoos – *Ghannouchi's concept of Hurriyya and its realisation in transitional Tunisia.*



Further Publications by MECAM Fellows / Alumni

MECAM is proud to showcase the ongoing research and reflections of our fellows and alumni, whose work continues to shape transregional dialogues on history, policy, and social justice.

- **Faouzia Zeraouia** – *Between Trade-Based Food Security and Self-Sufficiency: Agricultural Policies and Sectors in Tunisia*
- **Nora Lafi** – *Bridging the Mediterranean: Collaborative Pathways or Power Struggles in Renewable Energy?*
- **Mohamed Ismail Sabry** – *A Reverse Shot of Migratory Narratives in Matteo Garrone's "Io Capitano" (2022)*
- **Max Aji** – *Sahel-North Africa Relations: Addressing Common Threats in a Fragmented Cooperation Landscape*
- **Massensen Cherbi** – *Solidarity against Empire in a Colonial Port City* · Idriss Jebari – *"Is there a Moroccan Thought?"*
- **Jörg Gertel and Katharina Grüneisl** – *Inequality and Mobility – Capabilities and Aspirations in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia*

Academic Exchange and Mobility



May 1 – July 31 Imad Alsoos conducted a research visit at the GIGA Institute for Middle East Studies (Hamburg, Germany). During his stay, he presented the lecture "Genealogies of Muslim Political Thought in Mashreq and Maghreb: The Case of Ennahda's Muslim Democracy" as part of the IMES Colloquium



July 1 – July 16 Riadh Ben Khalifa visited the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin, Germany). He delivered the lecture "Historiography of Migration in Tunisia: The Case of Refugees" during the workshop "Diasporas, Exiles, Migrants, and Refugees from Europe in the Middle East and North Africa", organized in collaboration with the Centre Marc Bloch.



Nov 30 – Dec 8 Valerie Hänsch joined MECAM in Tunis, Tunisia, as a Visiting Scholar. She delivered the public lecture "Challenging the Invisibility of Sudan's War: Aesthetic Practices, Testimonies and the Co-Production of Solidarity", exploring the intersections of art, conflict, and collective memory.



Coming Soon

Stay tuned for upcoming events at MECAM, including our Event Week scheduled for 15–17 April 2026.