

## Two-Day Interactive Workshop on “Decolonising Water Diplomacy”

**Dates:** 12-13 November (followed by a wrap-up session on 14<sup>th</sup> November)

**Location:** Water Diplomacy Centre, Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), Irbid – Jordan

**Participants:** >20 professionals from the Middle East

### Background

The dominant wisdom in water diplomacy – i.e., States’ interactions concerning transboundary waters to transform inter-states water conflicts – has already failed to capture the painful reality of transboundary water conflicts particularly in the Global South, in many cases reflecting the history of past colonisation. While equity and the politics of identity sit at the heart of many (water) conflicts across the world, the language of water diplomacy either in policy or in academic literature – emerged after the Cold War in the 1990s – has been largely dominated by a narrow focus on security and peace. This has been mainly articulated as the dominion of the Westphalian views of the Global North. In response to such failure and introduce counter conventional wisdom, concept of decolonisation and water diplomacy is introduced. This project – awarded the Science Policy Incubator Grant on Water Diplomacy funded by the Geneva Water Hub – will be used to disseminate this concept in collaboration with the Centre of Water Diplomacy and the Blue Peace Middle East and produce a policy brief via roundtable discussion with scholars and diplomats. This project would contribute to broader relevant literature in global water and environmental politics and policy as well as ongoing movement campaigned for “decolonising research”.

الحكمة السائدة في دبلوماسية المياه، أي تفاعل الدول بشأن المياه العابرة للحدود بهدف تحويل النزاعات المائية بين الدول، قد فشلت بالفعل في فهم الواقع المؤلم للنزاعات المائية العابرة للحدود، خاصة في بلدان الجنوب العالمي، حيث تعكس في كثير من الأحيان تاريخ الاستعمار الماضي. ورغم أن العدالة وسياسة الهوية تكمن في قلب العديد من النزاعات (المائية) حول العالم، فإن لغة دبلوماسية المياه، سواء في السياسة أو الأدبيات الأكاديمية – التي نشأت بعد الحرب الباردة في التسعينات – تركزت بشكل كبير على الأمن والسلام. وقد تم ذلك بشكل رئيسي من خلال رؤية وستفالية منطلقة من الشمال العالمي. استجابة لهذا الفشل وتقديم حكمة بديلة، تم طرح مفهوم «إزالة الاستعمار في دبلوماسية المياه». هذا المشروع، الحاصل على منحة حاضنة السياسات العلمية في دبلوماسية المياه بتمويل من *Geneva Water Hub*، سيستخدم لنشر هذا المفهوم بالتعاون مع مركز دبلوماسية المياه و *Blue Peace Middle East*، وسيتم إنتاج موجز سياسات من خلال مناقشات مائدة مستديرة مع باحثين ودبلوماسيين. سيساهم هذا المشروع في إثراء الأدبيات العالمية حول سياسات المياه والبيئة، كما سيعزز الحركة الجارية التي تنادي بـ"إزالة الاستعمار في البحث".

### Workshop’s Guiding Questions:

The region and the world have been invented by the West (colonial past and contemporary neocolonialism):

1. In what ways has the colonial system entrenched modern-day inequalities and ecological crises in water resources, and how can we dismantle these inherited structures for a truly equitable future?
2. How should we, as people of the region, shape our future? Should we continue with a Western-oriented “security-peace” approach, or should we embrace an “equity-identity” framework that reflects our own values and aspirations?



## Workshop Program

### Day 1 – Tuesday, November, 12

Introduction, Conceptual Foundations, Global-Regional Scale	
<b>08:30 - 09:00</b>	<b>Registration and welcome coffee</b>
<b>09:00 - 09:30</b>	<b>Opening remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Mutawakil (tbc) – WDC (5 min)</li> <li>• The Swiss Embassy (tbc) – (5 min)</li> <li>• Prof. Mark Zeitoun – Director General of Geneva Water Hub (5 min)</li> <li>• Dr Laura Turley – Senior Science-Policy Manager at Geneva Water Hub (5 min)</li> <li>• Dr Mohsen Nagheeby – Newcastle University (5 min)</li> </ul>
<b>09:30 - 10:00</b>	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each participant to introduce themselves.</li> </ul>
<b>10:00 – 10:15</b>	<b>Scene setting: Getting into decolonising water diplomacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the workshop background, objectives and outline the agenda.</li> <li>• Overview of the draft policy brief.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Mohsen Nagheeby</p>
<b>10:15 – 10:45</b>	<b>GA1: Interactive activity: Symbols of resistance – connecting past to present</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore symbols of resistance and how they relate to decolonisation of water governance.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Mohsen Nagheeby ➤ Facilitators: MN, OM, MD, HH</p>
<b>10:45 – 11:00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	<b>GA2: Interactive activity: What does (de)colonisation mean?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming on the term of “decolonisation” and link to water diplomacy: views from different disciplines and context (region)</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Muna Dajan – The London School of Economics and Political Science &amp; Dr Olivia Mason – Newcastle University ➤ Facilitators: MN, HH</p>
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<b>Session 1: Decolonising water diplomacy: from security-peace to equity-identity</b>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitioning from security-focused water diplomacy to equity and identity frameworks</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Mohsen Nagheeby</p>
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>13:30 – 14:30</b>	<p><b>Session 2: An introduction to water politics and power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring water politics principles and how they can reshape current water diplomacy practices.</li> <li>• Political economy of the Jordanian water sector with discursive power as an entry point.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Hussam Hussein – Oxford University</p>
<b>14:30 – 15:30</b>	<p><b>Session 3: The risks of neo-colonialism in agri-business alliances and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developments in large-scale agriculture through global-to-local PPPs.</li> <li>• How networks of international financial institutions and multinational corporations are reshaping local water contexts through PPPs.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Alex Meland – IHE Delft</p>
<b>15:30 – 15:45</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>15:45 – 16:45</b> <b>(12:45 – 13:45 UK time)</b>	<p><b>Session 4: Whose Knowledge Counts? The coloniality of development and the implications for water (in)security (online)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically reflect on the relationship between (neo)colonialism, development and how we ‘know’ the world.</li> <li>• Why these reflections matter to the question of how we manage water.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Lata Narayanaswamy – University of Leeds</p>
<b>16:45 – 17:30</b>	<p><b>GA3: Interactive activity: Exploring colonisation in the region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming on “ghosts around the coasts” in regional contexts and comparing security-peace vs equity-identity water diplomacy within their region they observe, investigating the Colonial Black Hole.</li> <li>• Open discussion on its relevance and applicability in different regional contexts.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Dr Mohsen Nagheeby ➤ Facilitators: OM, MD, HH</p>



**Day 2 – Wednesday, November, 13**

<b>Local Sense, Practical Applications and Policy Development</b>	
<b>09:00 – 09:15</b>	Recap of Day 1 and introduction to Day 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief review of Day 1 discussions and activities.</li> <li>• Outline of Day 2 objectives and sessions.</li> </ul> ➤ Dr Mohsen Nagheeby
<b>09:15 – 10:15</b>	<b>Session 5: [Case study - decolonising water in Palestine</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed exploration of grassroots water management in Palestine.</li> <li>• Discussion on the impacts of Israeli occupation on water access and governance.]</li> </ul> ➤ Dr Muna Dajani
<b>10:15 – 10:30</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>10:30 – 11:30</b>	<b>Session 6: The role of ecological research in decolonising water diplomacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why we need to work with communities and integrate and value indigenous.</li> <li>• Some archival work to demonstrate how colonial practices continued in Jordan as later as the 1960s/70s.</li> </ul> ➤ Dr Olivia Mason
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<b>GA4: Exploring colonisation in the region</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local application to the policy brief ???</li> </ul> ➤ Dr Muna Dajani & Dr Olivia Mason ➤ Facilitators: MN, HH
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>13:30 – 15: 00</b>	<b>GA5: Policy lab: Testing and improving the Policy Brief: on Challenges of decolonising and recommendations.</b> <b>"Hack the Policy Brief"</b> - Interactive policy innovation lab <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Participants will be divided into different teams to focus on revising the Policy Brief: Challenges of decolonising and recommendations</li> <li>➤ <b>"Storyboarding the Future"</b></li> </ul> ➤ Facilitators: MN, OM, MD, HH



15:00 – 15:15	<b>Coffee Break</b>
15:00 – 15:30	<b>Presentation of Group Feedback</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each group will present their revised section and receive feedback from a mock panel of stakeholders.</li></ul> Facilitators: MN, OM, MD, HH
15:45 – 16:30	<b>Closing remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final reflections from speakers (how to deliver this to other parts of the region?).</li><li>• Closing words from WDC (?).</li></ul>