



ZMO-Kolloquium 2011/2012

Not all about Islam: Current Political Conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and Asia

Thursday, November 24th, 2011, 6 pm

Iraq: Dealing with a Violent Past Under Conditions of Continuing Violence – Conflicting Memories, Competing Narratives

Lecture by Karin Mlodoch

Venue:

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33

14129 Berlin

Since the fall of the Baath-regime in 2003, Iraqi society has faced the legacy of three decades of terror and violence against members of all different ethnic, religious and regional groups. Kurdish survivors of poison gas attacks and Anfal operations in the North, Shi'a survivors of massacres and mass deportations in the South, and relatives of disappeared and executed political opponents of the regime from all regions in Iraq demand the rapid opening of more than 300 mass graves found after 2003 and claim for evidence, justice and compensation. Yet new violence shattering Iraq after 2003 and increasing fragmentation of the Iraqi society along ethnic, religious and regional lines have pushed the debate on strategies for dealing with the past off the political agenda.

In addition, political instrumentalization of past and current violence and competition between different victims groups hamper a social and political discourse on how to deal with the various individual and collective traumatic experiences of violence. Based on the example and perspective of Kurdish women survivors of the Anfal operations in Kurdistan-Iraq in 1988, the lecture explores contrasting and conflicting individual, collective and regional/national narratives on victimhood and thus the difficulty of dealing with a violent past while political conflict and violence continue.

Karin Mlodoch is a psychologist and research fellow at Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin (Germany) with a research project on: "Violence, Memory and Dealing with the Past in Iraq: The perspective on women Anfal survivors in Kurdistan". She is currently preparing her PhD at the Institute of Social Psychology, Ethnopschoanalysis and Psychotraumatology at the University of Klagenfurt (Austria). Further she is founding member and project coordinator of the Germany based NGO HAUKARI e.V. supporting psychosocial and empowerment projects for women in Iraq. Her academic work draws on extensive field research with women Anfal survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq since 1991 as well as experiences in development projects in Afghanistan and Southern Africa.

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