

## INTRODUCTION

Muslim (Islamic) World comprises a variety of states and ethnic and religious communities. Yet due to geographical distance many of these states and communities have limited knowledge about each other and lack common interests or strategies. The only factor uniting them is the religion: Islam acts as a binder for all Muslim societies. This is the reason why it is justified to talk about the Islamic World as a whole. It has to be remembered though that the Muslim World is not a monolith, and the division between the Sunni and Shia has led to multiple wars and tensions within the Muslim area.

A crucial part of the Muslim World constitutes the Arab World (although not all Arabs are Muslims). This is due to the historical beginnings of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and the fact of the Arabian Peninsula remaining an important center of the Muslim World. Nowadays more and more researchers and policy-makers share the opinion that the Arab World might be facing a problem of state failure. It is because of the fact that since the year 2010 the Arab World is in a permanent turmoil leading to its weakening and disintegration. The already seven-year-long upheaval has undermined the model of a territorial nation-state. Especially such states like Yemen, Libya and Syria were affected. In these states civil wars continue

and central governments were forced to fight for their own existence. Terrorism, violent and criminal groups are also responsible for instability in the region. They are also among the biggest beneficiaries of these conflicts as they have managed to strengthen their position in the region in opposition to the weakened states. It has become a truism to say that the biggest victims of these clashes are ordinary people. Victims of the conflicts in the region include not only thousands of dead, but also millions of refugees who were forced to leave their homeland and seek asylum in Europe or neighbouring states of the Middle East. There are numerous causes of the current conflicts in the Arab World. They include: Sunni-Shia rift, rapid globalization, results of the September 2001 terrorist attack, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, just to name a few.

Weak states, weak national identities, as well as lack of legitimacy of regimes has resulted in regional tension and clashes. Strong ideologies and powerful dictators seem to be the only way to resist instability. Yet it is hard to be optimistic in regard to the future of Arab and Muslim world. Among many opinions on this issue there is the one stating that the instability would increase with its all consequences, and the Middle East would be the most affected region. The economy and prosperity would fall down bringing increase in unemployment and poverty rates. The vacuum of state authorities might be successfully taken over by terrorist and criminal organizations which might try to secure their positions and decompose nation-states.

The book ‘Political Dilemmas in the Arab and Muslim World’ consists of 10 chapters: 1) European Union and the Iranian Islamic Republic – opportunities and challenges by Radosław Fiedler; 2) The refugee crisis, its impact on MENA countries, and EU foreign policy by Yulia Ilina; 3) Reasons of the Youths of Western Europe Tendency to

ISIS by Hadi Ajili and Zahra Mobini Kashe; 4) A Threat of ISIS to the State-building Efforts in the Middle East in the Prism of Changing U.S. Strategic Objectives in the Region by Grzegorz Nycz; 5) The Meaning of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Regional Security Complex by Marcin Szydzisz; 6) United States foreign policy towards the Gulf Cooperation Council states by Wojciech Grabowski; 7) Foreign Policy of Lebanon towards Iran in the XXI Century by Rafał Ożarowski; 8) All the Money Can Buy – the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces by Jarosław Jarząbek; 9) Between Sectarianism and Ethnicity. Political Legalism of Ibadi Berbers in Contemporary North Africa by Rafał Kobis; and 10) The Impact of Ashura Rituals on the Shia-Sunni Relations in Iraq by Jafar Ahmad.

*Editors*