

## 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 'Religion, Society and Economic Issues in Islamic World' consist of 9 chapters: 1) OPEC in the turbulent times by Rafał Ulatowski; 2) The Paradoxical Nature and Religious Basis of Relations of Muslims and non-Muslims by Semsettin Ulusal; 3) Muslims in the

West: Assimilation or Integration. The dilemma of declining trust and rising populists by Wafaa Ali Dawoud; 4) National and cultural identity in Iraq in the face of the formation of the new post Sykes-Picot order in the Middle East. Philosophical reflection of contemporary Arab thinkers and the political reality by Paulina Jagoda Warsza; 5) Arab customary law in contemporary Palestine – remnant of the past or part of a modern Arab society? by Ewa Górska; 6) Role of Prophet of Islam Muhammad's (P.B.U.H.) Strategy of Dialogue in Conflict Management and Peace Building in New Millennium by Salma Naz; 7) Religious Pluralism and the State in Azerbaijan by Dobrosława Wiktor-Mach; 8) Islamic Revival in Indonesia: From Purification of Religion to Social Innovations by Muhammad Rahman, 9) The impact of the quality of internet banking on market share: Case Study on Jordanian commercial banks by Abedalfattah Zuhair Al-Abdallat, Abood Saleh Aladwan, Amjad Zuhair Alabdallat, Mohd Zuhair Abdallat.

Editors