

Middle Eastern and North African Studies Colloquium Series

“An Iron Fist in a Velvet Glove”: Afterlives of Police Reforms in Turkey



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This talk will discuss how police reforms, which were expected to reduce police violence, have instead strengthened the state's and the police's grip on social life in Turkey. Supported by international organizations such as the EU, the Turkish National Police has invested heavily in police reforms over the last 15 years. An ethnography of these emerging policing practices and expertise reveals how necessary but inadequate it is to study policing by focusing on brute force alone. The talk theorizes forms of police power that unfold through reforms. It shows how the alignment of liberal policy objectives with decidedly discriminatory and authoritarian policing practices in non-Western contexts is not another sign of failed reforms. Instead, these realignments reveal the violent undercurrents of liberal reforms, and foreground the contradictions deeply embedded in modern policing.

Friday, February 5th, 2021 at 3pm

Zoom registration: cmes.arizona.edu/colloquium

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