IDC HERZLIYA | Institute for Policy and Strategy IPS

כנס הרצליה HERZLIYA CONFERENCE

Cyclone

Journal for Policy and Strategic Affairs | Vol.1, 2021

Marking a decade to the Arab Spring:
The turmoil that changed the Middle East

Why have the Arab Monarchies in the Gulf Remained Unaffected by the Arab Spring?

Yoel Guzansky

A decade after the eruption of the Middle Eastern turmoil, the monarchies in the Gulf emerge as the most stable set of countries in the Arab sphere, and as entities with tremendous impact on the regional agenda. While key non-monarchial Arab regimes have collapsed, the Gulf monarchies, and even those outside the Gulf, such as Jordan and Morocco, have remained intact, even though some of them have been facing tremendous socio-economic pressures greatly enhanced by the COVID-19 crisis.

A decade after the eruption of the Middle Eastern turmoil, the monarchies in the Gulf emerge as the most stable set of countries in the Arab sphere, and as entities with tremendous impact on the regional agenda.

As the long-standing power hubs in the Arab world – namely Cairo, Baghdad and Damascus that are grappling with ongoing violent struggles and severe economic hardship – lose their strength, the status of the Gulf states as the new engine of the Arab world is on the rise. These countries have become more influential than ever, and are actively involved – on military, economic, and political levels – in various centers of struggle in the region, among them Yemen, Libya, and Syria.

However, the rising powers in the Middle East have distinctly different basic characteristics than the actors that have led this region in the past: the monarchies sanctify the status quo, and do not support any kind of revolutionary or radical idea; their strength is based on their economic standing, diplomacy, and, in recent years,