

Dr. Yohei KONDO of JaCMES Sought Out Cooperation with Dr. Guita Hourani

LERC Staff
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Dr. Yohei Kondo, Associate Researcher at the Japan Center for Middle Eastern Studies (JaCMES) in Lebanon, sought out Dr. Guita Hourani, Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS), Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) to join in a research project on minorities in the Middle East.



Dr. Kondo is leading a research project on religious and politico-social minority groups in the Middle Eastern societies. The project includes groups, such as the Christians, Yazidis, Kurds and Syrian refugees that have experienced or are currently facing threats to their existence, especially as a consequence of the challenges facing the nation-state to which they belong. The project will investigate the questions of diversity and coexistence in the present-day Middle East.

Dr. Kondo discussed the project with Dr. Hourani and shared with her the names and institutions of the various researchers nominated to participate in the project. He invited Dr. Hourani to join the group due to her work on the Kurds and on the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Dr. Hourani graciously accepted to participate and offered access to the Center's research infrastructure to any member of the research group.

Dr. Kondo obtained his PhD in Islamic Studies in 2013 from the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology at the University of Tokyo, Japan. His dissertation involved an analysis of the conceptions of association (*walāya*) and disassociation (*barā'a*) in Ibadism, an Islamic sect surviving presently in Oman, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, and Africa's eastern coast. His work shed light on the nature of Ibadi

community, including their understanding and practice of conversion and commitment, their worldview and their responses to deviation by Ibadi adherents. His most recent article titled, “*Ibadi Discussions on Conversion and Commitment*,” was published in *The Muslim World*, 105(2), 2015: pp. 224-235.

Workshops related to the proposed research project will take place in Beirut, Lebanon, and Tokyo, Japan throughout the duration of the three-year project (2015 to 2018).