Dear colleagues, students and friends of CMES,

As the academic year comes to a close, I want to convey my gratitude to all of you with whom we have had the privilege of interacting and who have supported the Center for Middle East Studies (CMES). At times, we felt enlightened, inspired, enraged and saddened by our guest speakers, who covered a wide range of issues. We connected with audiences across the globe, achieving a viewership of over 20,000 people.

CMES partnered with colleagues at other centers, such as the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, featuring a panel on the struggle for reproductive rights in the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean; a panel organized in collaboration with Brown University Masters in Public Affairs Candidate Narjes Jafarian on access to abortion in the Middle East and North Africa; yet another one with the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies on the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria; as well as events on the twentieth anniversary of the 2003 American invasion of Iraq and its consequences, organized with the Costs of War project.

Under the umbrella research project on gender studies in the Middle East and its diasporas, we continued the series “Gender and Body Politics: Arts in the Middle East and its Diasporas,” organized jointly between Brown University CMES and the Columbia University Middle East Institute (MEI), which examines the intersections of inequalities and body politics in both visual and performance art. We held conversations with artists Tania El Khoury and Amitis Motevali, discussed gendered perspectives with Alia Al-Senussi and gender, body politics and authoritarianism as it related to the protests in Iran with Manijeh Nasrabadi.

CMES hosted a very interesting series of events marking the 60 years since the Algerian revolution, a project initiated by CMES associate Ph.D. student Adel Ben Bella. These included an exhibition of photography, film screenings and a one-day on-campus symposium featuring a conversation with two veteran Algerian female activists.

Another well-attended event was the Maghrebi micro-festival of Moroccan Gnawa music, culture and history, which included a concert and panel discussion featuring Club d’Elf musicians and Hassan Hakmoun.

I was particularly happy to welcome our Mahmoud Darwish Visiting Professor in Palestinian Studies, Abdel Razzaq Takriti, who infused Palestinian Studies programming with thought-provoking events. This year’s activities culminated in the successful New Directions in Palestinian Studies two-day workshop “The Palestinian Revolutionary Tradition and Global Anti-Colonialism.”

Next year, we will be joined by Mehrdad Babadi, our first Omar Khayyam Postdoctoral Research Associate in Iranian Studies, and Loubna Qutami, the new Postdoctoral Research Associate in Palestinian Studies.

As always, we wish you all peace and good health. We look forward to connecting with you in the next academic year.

Sincerely,
Nadj Al-Ali
Director, Center for Middle East Studies
Robert Family Professor of International Studies
Professor of Anthropology and Middle East Studies