



INSTITUT DE HAUTES
ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT
GRADUATE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

IN HONOR OF PROFESSOR MAHMOUD MOHAMEDOU

PRESENTING HIS LAST AND POSTHUMOUS BOOK - A SEASON OF WOLVES

Speech of Marie-Laure Salles

16 September 2026

This event is very special. Two years ago, our dear colleague and friend, professor Mohamedou, left us. It was unbelievable, it was devastating to his family first and foremost but also to all of us. It felt unjust, impossible, much too early.

Over those two years his memory has not faded. Since I arrived at the institute and until he left us, I worked very closely with Mahmoud. Our professional collaboration quickly became a profound friendship — one of trust, sincerity, and shared purpose. Mahmoud was a brilliant mind, a generous mentor, and above all an exceptional human being. His intellectual energy was boundless, his curiosity tireless, and his commitment to truth and justice unwavering. Every conversation with him — whether about the Institute, our students, or the state of the world — was marked by integrity, courage, and an authenticity that is rare.

I have to say that still today, whenever I face a given situation or must make an important decision, I often find myself wondering what Mahmoud would have advised. When I get good news, I would like to be able to share it with him. He was so deeply involved in the transformations we have launched since 2020 at the institute that his thinking, his values, and his way of leading are in fact deeply woven into the very fabric of our institute.

Five days ago, and for the second time, we awarded the war and peace prize in honor of professor Mohamedou. This year's laureate is Ran Nur Aydin for his Master's thesis « *Reconfiguration of Humanitarian Space in Gaza Post October 2023* ».

Today, we gather to honor Mahmoud in a very special way. We will be presenting and discussing his last book, *Season of Wolves: A History of the Post-9/11 world*. This was a project of immense importance to him — I remember vividly the many conversations we had as he was conceiving it and later writing it, with a growing sense of urgency. The book remained unfinished at the time of his passing. Yet, under the coordination of his family and of his close friend and colleague, professor Davide Rodogno, and thanks to the remarkable dedication of his PhD students and former students, the manuscript was brought to completion.

I want to underscore how exceptional this endeavor was. Even when you are the student, former student, or close colleague of a thinker, stepping into his intellectual shoes, trying to find the words he might have chosen, the arguments he would have mobilized, the tone he would have adopted is anything but simple. Naturally, the book we have before us today is not exactly the book he would have produced had he had the time to finish it. And at the same time, it carries his voice – reflected through the voices of the many scholars he has strongly influenced and I include here his children. I am convinced that this is what he would have wanted and that in a very real sense he would feel that the book, completed in this collective way, is even more his own.

On behalf of the Institute, I would like to thank you all for having carried this project to completion. What you did for Mahmoud is simply exceptional.

Today, we honor the man, professor Mohamedou, and also the thinker. *Season of Wolves* is a book that carries Mahmoud's unmistakable voice: incisive, historically grounded, morally lucid. In this manuscript, he offers a sweeping and penetrating analysis of the post-9/11 world — a world shaped by fear, securitization, and the normalization of exceptional measures. He traces how the "Season of Wolves" that began in 2001 reshaped global politics, reconfigured power, and altered the very grammar through which states understand threats, violence, and legitimacy.

Mahmoud had long been one of the most perceptive analysts of the post-9/11 era. In this book, he goes further. He shows how the narratives born in the aftermath of 9/11 — narratives of danger, of civilizational confrontation, of permanent emergency — have seeped into our institutions, our public debates, and our collective imagination. He invites us to see how these narratives have justified wars, surveillance, and exclusions, and how they continue to reverberate today, shaping the world the new generations will inherit.

But Mahmoud never wrote only as a scholar. He wrote as a humanist. Even in this book, which deals with violence, fear, and the darker sides of political history, we feel his conviction that another world is possible — a world grounded in dignity, equality, and the refusal of fatalism. Mahmoud believed deeply in humanity, in peace, in collaboration, in the need to keep alive the flame of a better world. We have had so many conversations around this, reflecting there also a profound intellectual affinity between us – strongly informed in both cases by the deep love of our children and the preoccupation for their future. That belief runs through the pages of *Season of Wolves*, giving the book not only analytical strength but also moral depth.

This publication is therefore more than a scholarly contribution. It is an act of continuity and transmission in the deepest sense. Together, you have found a way of keeping Mahmoud's voice alive – a voice now woven into your own, giving rise to something greater than a book : the articulation of an intellectual but also of a moral legacy.

We are a fragile species — and that fragility is also our strength. Mahmoud understood that. He understood that what matters, ultimately, are the human connections that give meaning to our lives: family, love, joy, curiosity, friends, the small and big moments of happiness, the magic of nature, the power of art. Everything else is *vanitas*.

Today, as we present *Season of Wolves*, we celebrate Mahmoud's scholarship, but also his humanity. We keep missing him — and we keep living, acting, and doing our best to keep the flame of his vision alive. The best way to honor Mahmoud is to keep living fully, to keep fighting for the values and the world he believed in — in spite of and against the current *zeitgeist*.

Thank you to all of you for being here today.