

From Torch to Tunis to El Alamein: The Most Important Forgotten Week in Modern Middle East History

by [Mehnaz Afridi \(/experts/mehnaz-afridi\)](#), [Aomar Boum \(/experts/aomar-boum\)](#), [Martin Cüppers \(/experts/martin-cuppers\)](#), [Haim Saadoun \(/experts/haim-saadoun\)](#)

November 7, 2022



Brief Analysis

Watch an expert conversation on the pivotal week in WWII whose events continue to shape the modern Middle East.

Many factors make the Middle East a fascinating, confounding, and strategically vital swath of territory. At a time when so many regional topics compete for our attention, it is appropriate to take a moment and reflect on a series of overlooked but seminal events that happened in a single week eighty years ago in November 1942, each helping to shape the Middle East we know today—Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa; the Nazi invasion and occupation of Tunisia; and the British defeat of German forces at the second Battle of El Alamein.

To discuss the history and legacy of these events, The Washington Institute hosted a virtual Policy Forum featuring the following speakers, with executive director Robert Satloff moderating:

- **Mehnaz Afridi**, professor of religious studies and director of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Interfaith Education Center at Manhattan College;
- **Aomar Boum**, professor of anthropology and the Maurice Amado chair in Sephardic studies at UCLA; editor, with Sarah Abrevaya Stein, of *The Holocaust and North Africa* (2018);
- **Martin Cüppers**, professor of history and director of the Ludwigsburg Research Center at the University of Stuttgart; coauthor, with Klaus-Michael Mallmann, of *Nazi Palestine: The Plans for the Extermination of the Jews in Palestine* (2010);
- **Haim Saadoun**, professor in the Department of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, Open University, Israel; former director of the Documentation Center of North African Jewry During World War II at the Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Mehnaz Afridi is professor of religious studies and director of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Interfaith Education Center at Manhattan College.



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Aomar Boum is professor of anthropology and the Maurice Amado chair in Sephardic studies at UCLA and the editor, with Sarah Abrevaya Stein, of *The Holocaust and North Africa* (2018).



[Martin Cüppers \(/experts/martin-cuppers\)](/experts/martin-cuppers)

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Haim Saadoun is professor in the Department of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies at Open University, Israel.

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