



37th Levantine Heritage Foundation hybrid presentation in London with guest speaker
Michael Vatikiotis, 29 July 2025 6 pm (UK time)
venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT
Lives Between the Lines: Reflections on Levantine culture and it's meaning today

For a hundred years starting with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and ending with the Anglo-French invasion of Suez in 1957, the Middle East enjoyed a remarkable period of growth and prosperity. It was an era marked by an influx of economic and political refugees from Europe, followed by a remarkable boom in commerce and industry, supported by relatively passive and tolerant Ottoman rule. My Greek Palestinian and Italian family were early beneficiaries of the first half century of this period, which marked the high point of Levantine cosmopolitan culture. In this talk I will describe the evolution of Levantine Culture through the history and experience of my family. I will reflect on the significance of Levantine culture as a binding agent in the old Levant and as a key to social harmony, describe how this culture was virtually extinguished after the Second World War, and finally consider how its legacy and traces of its DNA can once again contribute to regional stability and harmony in the Middle East.

Booking is essential: <https://37th-lhf-gathering.eventbrite.co.uk>



Michael Vatikiotis is Senior Advisor at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, a Swiss-based Private Foundation. He works on promoting dialogue and conflict resolution in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Formerly a BBC Correspondent and editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review, Vatikiotis has been a writer, broadcaster and journalist in Asia for almost forty years. With family origins in the Middle East, he has lived in Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand as well as Hong Kong. His latest book “Lives Between the Lines: A Journey in Search of the Lost Levant” (2022) explores the origins of his family in the Middle East. Vatikiotis is a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, earned his doctorate from Oxford University, and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Maryland.

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