Dr Felix Padel
Research Affiliate at the School of Anthropology, University of Oxford and Research Associate at the Centre for World Environment History, Sussex University

will give a talk titled:

“Decoding the war in Syria”

Abstract

The violence in Syria from 2011 is popularly blamed on the “Arab Spring” and “repression”, despite evidence that foreign fighters were funded to destabilise the country. The defence of Kobane against ISIS in 2014 brought Kurdish-led Rojava into being in north Syria soon after, embodying a radically new form of democracy. Kurds faced huge repression since the 1920s, in the four countries they were divided among Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, where repression was probably least. When Turkey threatened Syria with war in 1998, PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who was staying there, left it for Europe, searching a political solution. Invited to South Africa, he was abducted in Kenya in 1999, sent to Turkey in a complex, internationally orchestrated operation, and condemned to death. This sentence was commuted to life imprisonment; and in jail Ocalan has written several books - some of the most significant of any prison writings. His concepts of Jineology (women’s revolution) and democratic confederalism formed the basis of Rojava’s democratic system. Understanding this - including ‘water diplomacy’ from big dams on the Tigris and Euphrates in Turkey - opens possibilities for a fresh understanding of what is at stake in Syria right now.

Date: Wednesday, 04 December 2019; Time: 3 – 5 pm

Venue: CSSSC Seminar Room 2, Patuli Campus

Maidul Islam
(Convener, Seminar Committee)

All are welcome to attend.