

International Media Seminar on **Peace** in the **Middle East**



Geneva, Switzerland, 12-13 June 2012

Participants (In alphabetical order)



Sarah Ahmed is a Yemeni feminist, civic activist and social researcher. She is a member of the Free Independent Youth Coalition in Change Square, Yemen. Ms. Ahmed is also one of the founders of the *Support Yemen- Break the Silence* multi-platform campaign, working as a PR coordinator, script writer and spokesperson in the campaign. She is a member of the *Just Naïve Enough Global Capacity Initiative* of Northwestern University (Chicago). Ms. Ahmed has a BA in sociology from Sana'a University.

Amal Alqasem is a Palestinian community organizer from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. She has spearheaded the involvement of local women in non-violent activism against the forced eviction of Palestinian families from their homes, while facing the risk of losing her own home to settlers. Ms. Alqasem is Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Women Forum Sheikh Jarrah and also a board member of the *Forum of Intellectuals Maqdisi*.



Faten Alwan started working in the field of journalism at the age of 16. She has been a correspondent for *Bahrain TV*, *Nile TV* and reported on several conflicts in the West Bank and Gaza. She covered the Arab summits in Saudi Arabia and Syria. Ms. Alwan is an alumnus of the UN training programme for young Palestinian journalists, which is part of the UN Department of Public Information's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine. She is currently a senior correspondent at *Al-Hurra TV* station.

Zahia Al Zaeem works as a news anchor and reporter for the *Palestine Broadcasting Corporation (PBC)*, and as a reporter of the *World Stories-International Reporters* show which is produced by *Dutch Ville TV* in Germany. For more than three years, Ms. Al Zaeem has also worked for a number of different radio stations. She studied English and French literature at al-Azhar University in Gaza and was a media liaison officer in a programme implemented by the World Bank in Gaza immediately after the implementation of the unilateral disengagement plan in 2005. She is an alumnus of the UN training programme for young Palestinian journalists, which is part of the UN Department of Public Information's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine.



Gershon Baskin founded the Institute for Education for Jewish-Arab Coexistence. In 1988, he founded and co-directed the Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information or IPCRI. He is now the Co-Chairman of the Board of IPCRI. He has also served as an outside advisor for the peace process for two Israeli Prime Ministers - Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak. He has been a *Jerusalem Post* columnist since 2005 and hosts a radio talk show programme on *All for Peace Radio*. He has been awarded peace prizes from the President of Italy, the Turkish Foreign Policy Institute and the Israeli Histadrut Labor Federation. Dr. Baskin played a key role in the secret back channel between Israel and Hamas that successfully negotiated the release of the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit. @gershonbaskin



Wolfgang Amadeus Brühlhart has been Assistant State Secretary for Middle East and North Africa at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland since the beginning of March 2012. He joined the Department in 1993 as Private Secretary to Flavio Cotti, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, after a couple of years as the Private Secretary to Mr. Cotti when he was Minister of Home Affairs. His first overseas posting was to the Swiss Embassy in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 1996 to 1998, where he served as a counsellor. He then served the Head of the Cultural Section at the Swiss

Embassy in London from 1999 to 2002, before returning to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Berne to be the Head of the Human Rights Policy Section and Head of the task force for the Human Rights Council. Ambassador Brühlhart served as Switzerland's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates from 2008 to 2012, before taking up his current position.

Joseph Dana is a journalist based in Ramallah and Jerusalem. His print work has appeared in *The Nation*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *GQ (Germany)*, *London Review of Books*, *The National (UAE)*, *Monocle*, *Guernica*, *Tablet*, *The Forward*, and *The Mail & Guardian* among other international publications. Mr. Dana is the Israel/Palestine radio correspondent for *Monocle 24* covering business, culture, politics and urbanism in Israel and Palestine. He is an associate producer of the *Just Vision* documentary *Home Front: Portraits from Shiekh Jarrah* and the Tribeca Official Selection documentary *My Neighbourhood*. @ibnezra



Mira Edelstein works in the Tel-Aviv offices of *EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East*, a regional organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli environmentalists and works to promote sustainable development and advance peace efforts in the Middle East. *Friends of the Earth Middle East* is a member of *Friends of the Earth International*, the largest grassroots environmental organization in the world. Ms. Edelstein led an awareness campaign in Israel for the rehabilitation of the Jordan River Valley and has represented the organization in meetings and conferences both locally and in Europe and the USA.

Wessam Hammad is a Palestinian news producer at *Al Jazeera* for the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. He has been covering the conflict for the past seven years. He recently worked as a producer on the soon-to-be released documentary film *The War Around Us*, that recounts the experiences of two foreign journalists who covered Israel's military assault on Gaza in 2008-2009. He is also an alumnus of the UN training programme for young Palestinian journalists, which is part of the UN Department of Public Information's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine. @WessamH



Rula Jebreal was born in Haifa, Israel, and grew up in East Jerusalem, but started her career in journalism in Italy, working for newspapers. In 2000, she moved to television, initially becoming an on-air reporter and then an anchorwoman. Ms. Jebreal has worked with several television stations in Italy hosting her own political talk shows, including on *Rai 1*, *Rai 2* and *Rai News 24*. In 2004, Ms. Jebreal was awarded a prize from *Media Watch* for

her courage in covering the Iraqi war. In 2005, she received the International Ischia Award for Best Journalist of the Year. Among other achievements, she produced and hosted a TV show for Egyptian television in 2009. She has also has written three books, *Miral*, *La promise d'Aswan*, which was awarded the International Fenice Europe Prize, and *Divieto di soggiorno*, a study on the history of immigration in Europe. Her novel *Miral* has sold more than 2 million copies, and is published in 14 languages. Ms. Jebreal wrote the screenplay for the 2011 film, directed by Julian Schnabel. @rulajebreal

Ghassan Khatib is the current Director of the Palestinian Government Media Center. He served as the Palestinian Minister of Labour from 2002-2005, and Minister of Planning from 2005-2006. He was Vice-President for community outreach at Birzeit University from 2006-2009, and was founder and Director of the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center from 1988-2002. He was a member of the Palestinian delegation for the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference in 1991 and the subsequent bilateral negotiations in Washington from 1991-1993. Dr. Khatib co-founded and co-directed *bitterlemons.org*, a Palestinian-Israeli internet-based political magazine. He holds a PhD in Middle East politics from the University of Durham in the UK, and is the author of: *Palestinian Politics and Middle Peace Process: Consensus and Competition in the Palestinian Negotiating Team*. @Ghassankhatib



Daniel Levy is a Senior Research Fellow and Co-Director of the Middle East Task Force at the New America Foundation. He is also a senior fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. During the Barak Government of 1999-2001, Mr. Levy worked in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office as special adviser and head of Jerusalem Affairs, and then as senior policy adviser to the Israeli Minister of Justice, Yossi Beilin. In this capacity he coordinated policy on various issues including peace negotiations, civil and human rights, and the Palestinian minority in Israel. Mr. Levy was a member of the official Israeli delegation to the Taba negotiations with the Palestinians in January 2001, and previously served on the Israeli negotiating team to the "Oslo B" Agreement from May to September 1995, under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. He also served as the lead Israeli drafter of the Geneva Initiative. From 2003 to 2004, he worked as an analyst for the International Crisis Group Middle East Programme. He was a founder of J Street. He also serves as a board member of the New Israel Fund.

Riyad H. Mansour has been the Ambassador and Permanent Observer, Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, since September 2005. Also non-resident Ambassador of Palestine to Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, Ambassador Mansour served as the Deputy Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations from 1983-1988 and as Deputy Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN from 1988-1994. Since 2002, he has been an Adjunct Professor in the Political Science Department at the University of Central Florida. In addition, Ambassador Mansour is also the author of several publications. He obtained his Doctorate of Philosophy in 1977 from the University of Akron, Ohio.



Sharon Kalimi Misheiker is Website Director and Social Media Manager of the *Parents Circle - Family Forum (PCFF)* a joint Palestinian-Israeli organization of over 600 families, all of whom have lost a close family member as a result of the prolonged conflict. The long-term vision of the PCFF is to create a framework for a reconciliation process that will be in place when political agreements are signed. Ms. Misheiker participated in the establishment of the *Reconciliation Center* – an Internet centre that collects world-wide academic and cultural information on the subject of conflict resolution and on *Crack in the Wall*, an initiative to create an Israeli-Palestinian social network on Facebook. She is also studying film and media at the Open University. @ThePCFF

Maher Nasser has been the Acting Head of the United Nations Department of Public Information since March 2012, while at the same time serving as Director of its Outreach Division. Before assuming his current position, he was the Director of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna from July 2008. Mr. Nasser first joined the UN Department of Public Information in January 2006 as Director of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Cairo. From August 1987 to September 1991 and from July 1994 to December 2005, Mr. Nasser worked with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in various capacities in Gaza, Jerusalem, Vienna, Amman and New York. From 1992 to July 1994, Mr. Nasser worked as an Associate Information Officer for the United Nations Office of Drug and Crime in Vienna (UNODC).



Margaret Novicki is the Chief of the Communications Campaigns Service in the Strategic Communications Division of the UN Department of Public Information. Before assuming this post in June 2008, she served the UN for nearly 10 years in Africa: as Director of the UN Information Centres in South Africa and in Ghana, and as Chief of Public Information and Spokesperson for the UN peacekeeping missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. At UN Headquarters, Ms. Novicki was Chief of Outreach in the Office of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict and senior writer at *Africa Recovery*. Before joining the UN in 1995, she was for 13 years editor-in-chief of *Africa Report*, then the leading American magazine on African political and economic development. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and a Master's degree from Columbia University's School of International Affairs.

Mohammed Omer is a Palestinian journalist and the founder of the *Rafah Today* blog. He has reported for numerous media outlets, including: the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, *Al Jazeera*, *New Statesman*; *Electronic Intifada*; *The Nation*; *Inter Press Service*, the *Norwegian Morgenbladet* and *Dagsavisen*, the Swedish Magazine *Arbetaren* and the German daily *Junge Welt*. In 2008, he was awarded the 2007 Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism. In 2009, Mr Omer was awarded the Ossietzky Prize by Norwegian P.E.N, the worldwide association of writers. He was also given an honourable mention in Pulse Media's 20 Top Global Media Figures of 2009. @Mogaza



Courtney Radsch is the Senior Programme Manager for the Global Freedom of Expression Campaign for Freedom House. An international media expert with more than 10 years of journalism and new media experience in the U.S., Middle East and Europe, Ms. Radsch most recently worked for *Al Arabiya* news station in Dubai. She has also held positions at the *New York Times*, the *Daily Star*, and the *Development Executive Group* and her articles have been published in an array of media outlets and books. She has experience in media training, including for journalism, public relations, cross cultural communications and digital and social media, as well as international media development. Ms. Radsch is a doctoral candidate in international relations at American University writing her dissertation on cyber activism in Egypt. She holds a Masters degree from the Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and a Bachelors degree in Mass Communication from the University of California, Berkeley. @courtneyr

Omar Rahman is a journalist based in Palestine, covering issues across the Middle East. His work has appeared in *Foreign Policy*, *The Guardian*, *Rolling Stone (ME)*, *Al Jazeera English*, and *The National* among other publications. Before arriving in the Middle East, Mr. Rahman was a television correspondent on contract with the *Associated Press* in Washington D.C., where he covered American politics and society. He began his career in journalism as an intern for *Al Jazeera* in Washington D.C. Mr. Rahman continues to explore the field of journalism by engaging in all media platforms, including a growing interest in photography and new media. @omarrahman



Moriel Rothman is an American-Israeli activist and writer. He is active in East Jerusalem with *Rabbis for Human Rights* and the *Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement*. Recently, he has been involved in a campaign to prevent housing evictions in the neighbourhood of Silwan, and a campaign against the creation of a “national park” on the private lands of Issawiya and A-Tur. He is also involved in other non-violent struggles in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Israel proper. He is regular contributor to the *Huffington Post* and *+972 Magazine*, and he blogs independently at *theflefternwall.com*. @MorielRothman

Jean-Daniel Ruch has been the Special Representative for the Middle East of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs since 2008. He joined the Swiss Foreign Service in 1992 after three years in the Ministry of Defence. He was first assigned to the Swiss Delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna, an organisation which was presided by his country in 1996. In 1998, he was seconded to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw, and focused mainly on monitoring human rights and elections in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and the Balkans. In 2000, he was appointed Deputy Head of the Swiss Embassy in Belgrade, where he witnessed the fall of the Milosevic regime and the establishment of a democratic Serbia. He joined the United Nations in 2003 to advise the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. He left the UN in 2007 to supervise all civilian peace operations of Switzerland, before taking up his current position. @RuchJD



Hélène Sackstein is correspondent for *Reporters sans frontières* at the United Nations in Geneva. She has experience working on children’s protection and development projects and represented several NGOs dealing with human rights, and specifically women’s and children rights with the United Nations. Ms. Sackstein is currently involved in two evaluation projects: the European Commission’s *Daphne Programme* on violence against children and women, and the *OAK Foundation Programme* on children’s development issues. She is also Member of the Board of Advisors of the *International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism* (IMADR) a Japan-based International NGO.



Rula Salameh is *Just Vision*’s outreach liaison in Palestine. *Just Vision* is an organization aiming to increase media coverage and support for Palestinian and Israeli unarmed efforts to end the conflict. She spearheaded the creation of the *Encounter Point* Arabic screening guide, the first screening guide of its kind in Arabic and was one of the founders of the *Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation* in 1993, following the Oslo Agreement. She has served as the Middle East Liaison for the *Peace X Peace* organization, as the Project Coordinator for Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy. Ms. Salameh is a member of the *International Federation of Journalists* and sits on the Board of *Palestinian Friends Without Borders*. @JustVisionMedia

Robert Serry took up his functions as UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the Secretary-General's Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority four years ago. Before that, he served as Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ireland. His previous professional experience includes diplomatic postings in Bangkok, Kiev, Moscow, and the United Nations. He has also served at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – NATO. Mr. Serry led the Middle Eastern Affairs Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. In the framework of the Netherlands European Community Presidency, he participated in the events leading to the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid in November 1991. He is the author of numerous articles on political and peacekeeping issues, ranging from the Middle East to Eastern Europe. @RobertHSerry



Deborah Seward is the Director of the Strategic Communications Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information. Before joining the United Nations in 2011, Ms. Seward spent more than 20 years at the *Associated Press* (AP), serving in Moscow, Paris, Warsaw, Berlin and New York, where she was International Editor from 2003-2005. Her assignments have taken her to more than 30 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Latin America. She also served as Director of the Central Newsroom at *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* in Prague, Czech Republic in 2006-2007. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, studied at L'Institut d'études politiques de Paris and was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University.

Ahmed Shihab-Eldin is an Arab-American journalist, self-described 'social-media addict' and producer and host for the *Huffington Post Streaming Network*. In 2011, he created, produced and co-hosted *Al Jazeera English's* social media show *The Stream*, an interactive talk show that sources content from social networks, tapping into online communities to unearth underreported stories. Before joining *Al Jazeera English*, he worked as a reporter and producer for *The Doha Film Institute*, heading the online editorial efforts in the inaugural Doha Tribeca Film Festival. After graduating from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, he taught digital media as an adjunct professor, advising master's projects and serving as a consultant on *News21*, a collaboration of 12 journalism schools under the Carnegie-Knight initiative on the Future of Journalism Education. In 2008, his master's project earned him a Webby Award for "*Defining Middle Ground: The Next Generation of Muslim New Yorkers.*" @ASE



Eduardo Ulibarri-Bilbao is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations and Chairman of its Committee on Information. He has an extensive professional and academic career in communications, journalism, national and international political analysis, freedom of expression issues, public transparency and governability. Ambassador Ulibarri-Bilbao served for two decades as editor-in-chief of Costa Rica's main newspaper. Since 2003, he has devoted most of his time to teaching, consulting, participating in public and private organizations and company boards, and writing in the major media of his country and Latin America.

Mairav Zonszein is an Israeli-American writer, translator and editor based in Jaffa. Her research focuses on the "pro-Israel" discourse in media and politics. She has been politically active with the rural Palestinian communities of the South Hebron Hills, and has worked for several NGOs dedicated to challenging Israel's policy of occupation. She writes freelance for a variety of American and Israeli publications and is a contributing writer and editor with *+972mag.com*, a web-magazine collective of Israeli and Palestinian bloggers. @972mag

