

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SEMINAR ON PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Vienna, Austria



UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL INFORMATION PROGRAMME ON **THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

The Question of Palestine:
**MEDIA NARRATIVES
AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS**

Contributing Participants

Organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information
in cooperation with the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue



DR. AHMED ABU-AKEL

A cognitive and social neuroscientist, currently a Research Fellow at the Institute of Psychology, University of Lausanne, Switzerland. Dr. Abu-Akel is also a board director of Empathy for Peace in Toronto, Canada. A Palestinian, originally from the Wadi Ara region of Israel, his interest and involvement in peace building began at age 15 when he started volunteer work as a lecturer and coordinator at the Givaat Haviva Center for Peace. A focus of his academic research is understanding the role of social cognition in intergroup conflicts and dynamics, work that is motivated by his personal experiences as a Palestinian growing up in Israel. Dr. Abu-Akel is the author and co-author of a number of scientific papers including: "Giving peace a chance: Oxytocin increases empathy to pain in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."



MR. STEPHEN APKON

Filmmaker and social entrepreneur. He is the Founder and former Executive Director of the Jacob Burns Film Center (JBFC), a non-profit film and education center located in Pleasantville, New York. Opened in 2001, the JBFC has become one of the premier film institutions in the United States, with a Board of Directors that includes Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard, and the late Jonathan Demme, among others. *Disturbing the Peace* is his directorial debut. He is a Co-Producer of *Presenting Princess Shaw*, directed by Ido Haar (distributed by Magnolia Pictures and Participant Media), Producer of *I'm Carolyn Parker*, directed by Jonathan Demme and *Enlistment Days*, also directed by Haar, and Executive Producer of *Planetary*. Mr. Apkon is the author of *The Age of the Image: Redefining Literacy in a World of Screens*, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in April 2013 - foreword by Martin Scorsese.



PROFESSOR SIMON BARON-COHEN

Professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the University of Cambridge and Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge. Mr. Baron-Cohen is also Director of the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge and author of "Mindblindness, The Essential Difference, Prenatal Testosterone in Mind, and Zero Degrees of



MS. GERTRAUD BOREA D'OLMO

The Secretary General of the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue in Vienna, since 2005. The Bruno Kreisky Forum is one of Austria's leading think tanks, with an international reputation far beyond its size. Named for Austria's eminent post WWII Chancellor, the Kreisky Forum is dedicated to carrying forward the ideas and activities Bruno Kreisky most cared about over the course of his long political life. To this end, Ms. Borea d'Olmo gathers politicians, academics and critical minds from across the world for an exchange of ideas and possible solutions to complex problems that call for a global response. She also served as an Advisor to the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture from (1991 - 1995), among other senior positions.



MR. AVRAHAM BURG

An Israeli statesman, author, and currently Chairman of Mifalot, the largest organization in the Middle East that uses sports as a platform for social change. Mr. Burg is also an International Fellow with the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue in Vienna and Founder of Molad - The Center for Renewal of Democracy. He was the Speaker of the Knesset from 1999 to 2003, a former Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization. Mr. Burg was an activist in the Peace Now movement. He was injured in a grenade attack on a Peace Now demonstration in Jerusalem in February 1983. Mr. Burg has also written blogs for *Haaretz*, *I24 Shvoong*, to name a few.



MR. JOSEPH DANA

Editor-in-Chief of emerge85, a lab exploring the geopolitical, geo-economic and geocultural shifts taking place in emerging markets, co-located in Abu Dhabi and Washington, D.C. He is also a columnist at *The National* newspaper in Abu Dhabi and was previously *Monocle's* Istanbul bureau chief as well as the magazine's Eastern Mediterranean correspondent based in Ramallah. His print work has appeared in *GQ*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Tablet*, *Salon*, *Slate*, and the German edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Mr. Dana was a founding contributing editor of *+972 Magazine* and an associate producer of the Just Vision documentary "Home Front: Portraits from Sheikh Jarrah" and the Tribeca Official Selection documentary "My Neighbourhood." @ibnezra



MS. TAGHREED ELKHODARY

Senior Editor of Fanack, a chronicle on the Middle East and North Africa. Before moving to the Netherlands, Ms. Elkhodary was the *New York Times* correspondent in Gaza from 2001 to 2009. She was also an analyst for the International Crisis Group and a TV reporter for Al-Hayat-LBC. She covered the second Intifada, Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian civil war in 2007 and the war in Gaza in 2008-2009.



MS. ALLYN FISHER-ILAN

News Editor at *The Jerusalem Post*, where she supervises the news pages of the daily print edition. Born in New York, Ms. Fisher-Ilan worked as a journalist in Israel, and parts of the United States for more than 35 years, with a special interest in the Palestinian and Arab world conflict with Israel, and Israeli politics. In both print and new media work she has covered some of the major conflicts and milestones of the past several decades, notably Israel's two wars in Lebanon, two Palestinian uprisings against Israeli occupation, the events leading up to these outbreaks, and the Oslo Accords, among others. A graduate of Cornell University's College of Arts and Sciences, Ms. Fisher-Ilan has worked for the *New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, the Associated Press, and Reuters News Agency, as well as two Israeli media outlets, *Haaretz* and *The Jerusalem Post*.



DR. EDMUND GHAREEB

A renowned authority on the Middle East as well as U.S. media coverage of the Arab world, Dr. Ghareeb has written a number of articles and eleven books including "Split Vision: The Portrayal of Arabs in the American Media and The Information Technology Revolution in the Arab World" (in Arabic), among others. He also taught at Georgetown University, the University of Virginia and McGill University. Dr. Ghareeb has been a journalist, a media consultant and a frequent commentator for the BBC Arabic Radio and TV, Al-Jazeera Arabic and English channels and for Abu Dhabi TV, NPR, France 24, Al-Arabiya, NBC, ABC, CNN and CNNI, CCTV and RT, the NewsHour on Public TV, and France 24. He has lectured widely at a number of colleges and universities in the United States and overseas.



MS. GABY GOLDMAN

Director of Communications at Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education, an NGO that promotes shared society through a network of bilingual schools and shared communities. She previously had a distinguished career as a journalist for international and Israeli media outlets, and covered many aspects of the Middle East related issues, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ms. Goldman is a keen advocate of human and worker's rights and was among the founding members of the union of journalists in Israel. She is also a trained art therapist.



DR. RIYAD H. MANSOUR

Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations since 29 November 2012, and before that Ambassador and Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations since 2005. He is also the non-resident Ambassador of the State 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 to 1988 and as Deputy Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN from 1988 to 1994. Since 2002, he has been an Adjunct Professor in the Political Science Department at the University of Central Florida. Ambassador Mansour is also the author of several publications. He obtained his Doctorate of Philosophy in 1977 from the University of Akron, Ohio. @Palestine_UN



MS. AMIRA HANANIA

Ramallah-based journalist and political analyst specializing in Palestine-Israeli affairs. Currently she serves as the host and producer of Palestine TV's programme "Hal al Siasa," where she interviews key figures from across the region's political landscape. Ms. Hanania also serves as the Director of the Higher Presidential Committee of Churches Affairs in Palestine. A graduate of Bethlehem University (Sociology, Business Administration), she has worked for a variety of major Middle Eastern media outlets, including the Ma'an Network and Lebanon's Future TV. During her career, Ms. Hanania has interviewed numerous world leaders, including President Mahmoud Abbas, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, and former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In addition to her media career, she is an educator and government administrator, having taught at Modern University College for five years.



MS. ZAHA HASSAN

Human rights attorney and Middle East Fellow at New America, a nonpartisan think tank based in Washington, D.C. Ms. Hassan was formerly the coordinator and senior legal advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team from 2010 to 2012, during Palestine's bid for United Nations membership. She is completing a novel, a mother-daughter story, dealing with the toll that the prolonged conflict and military occupation has had on families across generations. Her political essays and commentary have been published in the *New York Times*, *Haaretz*, *CNN*, *Salon*, *The Hill* and other outlets. @ZahaHassan



MR. DAOUK KUTTAB

Palestinian journalist since 1980, media activist and currently the Director General of Community Media Network (CMN), which administers Radio al Balad in Amman, and www.ammannet.net, Mr. Kuttab is also the former Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University. He established and presided over the Jerusalem Film Institute in the 1990s and co-produced a number of award winning documentaries. His op-ed columns have appeared in *The Jordan Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Huffington Post*, *Palestine News Network*, *Al Arrabiya.Net* among others. He has received a number of international awards including the CPJ Freedom of Expression Award. @daoukuttab



MS. TALA HALAWA

Journalist based in Palestine and a published media researcher covering issues related to media ethics and citizen journalism, Ms. Halawa has worked with different local and international news and reporting agencies covering Palestinian and regional subjects focusing on women, refugees and culture. She holds a master's degree in International Communications from the University of Leeds and her dissertation "Between virtual space and territorial place, Palestinian online activism" discussed social media trends in the Palestinian society. She is an alumni of the Training Programme for Palestinian Journalists, which is administrated by the United Nations Department of Public Information.



MS. GUDRUN HARRER

Senior Editor of Austria's national daily broadsheet newspaper *Der Standard*. She is a lecturer in modern history and politics of the Middle East at the University of Vienna, and at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. She holds an MA in Islamic and Arabic Studies and a PhD in International Relation Studies. She was Special Envoy of the Austrian government to Iraq and Chargé d'Affaires of the Austrian Embassy in Baghdad (2006). Ms. Harrer is board member of the Austrian Orient Society (ÖOG) and the Austrian Institute for International Affairs. She has numerous publications, including her recent book "Nahöstlicher Irrgarten: Analysen abseits des Mainstreams" (Kremayr & Scheriau 2014). In 2015, Ms. Harrer was also awarded the prestigious "Bruno Kreisky Award for the political book" for her publications on the Middle East.



DR. TONY KLUG

Special Advisor on the Middle East to the Oxford Research Group as well as a consultant to the Palestine Strategy Group and the Israeli Strategic Forum. Dr. Klug has written extensively about Israel-Palestine issues and is a long-standing international board member of the Palestine-Israel Journal. Over the past 45 years, he has made a series of proposals for resolving the conflict, based on the two-state concept which he first advocated in the early 1970s. For many years, Dr. Klug was a senior official at Amnesty International, where he headed the International Development programme.



DR. YONATAN MENDEL

Director of the Jewish-Arab Center at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and a lecturer at the Middle Eastern Studies Department at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He is also a Research Fellow of The Forum for Regional Thinking and a regular contributor on Israel-Palestine to leading journals and newspapers, including the *London Review of Books* and *Haaretz*. Dr. Mendel completed his doctoral studies in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge and his doctoral thesis focused on the political history of the Arabic language in the Jewish community in Palestine-Israel. His book, “The Creation of Israeli Arabic: Political and Security Considerations in the Making of Arabic Language Studies in Jewish Schools” was published by Palgrave Macmillan.



MR. MAHER NASSER

Director of the United Nations Department of Public Information’s Outreach Division, Mr. Nasser has over 30 years of work experience in the United Nations System, most of which has been in the field of communications, advocacy and public information. He has served in various capacities with DPI, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Gaza, Jerusalem, Amman, Cairo, Vienna and New York. He joined DPI in 2006 as Director of the UN Information Centre in Cairo and then served as Director of the UN Information Service in Vienna from 2008 to 2011. From April to August 2012, and from August 2014 to February 2015, he was Acting Head of the Department, and from April to August 2017 he was the Acting Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications. @MaherNasserUN



MS. BARBARA PLETT-USHER

The BBC’s U.S. State Department Correspondent since August 2014. A Canadian national, she has worked in foreign news for 23 years, reporting from postings in the Middle East, South Asia, and at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Ms. Plett-Usher has covered the death of the Syrian President Hafez al Assad, the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, the second Palestinian intifadah, among other key historical events. She was born in 1967 and completed a Bachelor of Journalism at Carleton University in



DR. VIOLA RAHEB

Senior Fellow at the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue, she is also a senior researcher the University of Vienna, Faculty of Protestant Theology, Department of the Studies of Religions. Dr. Raheb is an independent consultant for various organizations and curator of various programs and initiatives focusing on inter-cultural dialogue, integration and women, peace and security. She is a member of numerous organizations and committees on intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Born in 1969, in Bethlehem, Dr. Raheb has a Master’s Degree in Education and Evangelical Theology from the Ruprecht-Karl-University in Heidelberg, Germany and a PhD in Advanced Theological Studies from the University of Vienna. From 1998 to 2002, Ms. Raheb headed the educational work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Palestine. She has published numerous books, articles and research projects.



MS. ALEXANDRA ROJKOV

Currently freelance journalist focusing on long-form journalism. She was born in 1988 in then Leningrad, Soviet Union but grew up in Germany. Ms. Rojkov has lived and worked in Riga, Cairo, Paris and Jerusalem. At the age of 25, she became a Middle East Correspondent for Germany’s leading news agency, DPA, in Tel Aviv. Her reporting has won several awards, including a CNN Journalist Award for outstanding international coverage. In 2015, *Forbes Magazine* named her one of Europe’s best journalists under 30 years old. @aRojki



MR. NOAM SHEIZAF

Journalist, co-founder of the online +972 Magazine, and the site’s first Editor-in-Chief. After completing his mandatory military service, Mr. Sheizaf worked for the Tel Aviv based paper *Ha-ir*, for the daily paper *Maariv*, and for Ynet News (Israel’s most popular news site). His work has been published in *Haaretz*, *The Nation*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Vox.com*, and other publications. Mr. Sheizaf lives in Tel Aviv with his family. @nsheizaf

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