



Security and Securitization in the Middle East and North Africa
ACW's Seventh Annual Conference
Speaker Biographies

Keynote Speakers

Hady Amr

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Israeli and Palestinian affairs, US Department of State

@HadyAmr

Hady Amr currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Israeli and Palestinian Affairs at the Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He previously served at the State Department from 2013-2017 on Secretary of State John Kerry's team working on Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. From 2010-2013, he served as Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Middle East at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) where he helped coordinate numerous assistance programs across the region during the Arab uprisings. He also previously held positions at the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security. During his career, he worked for or advised various international organizations including the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. Most recently he was a scholar with both the Brookings Institution and the Center for a New American Security where he focused on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and on human development in the region. He earned a Master's degree in economics and international affairs from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs and a Bachelor's degree in economics from Tufts University.

Kenneth Roth

Former Executive Director, Human Rights Watch

@KenRoth

Kenneth Roth is former Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, a position that he held from 1993 to 2022. Roth previously served as a United States Attorney in the Department of Justice, where he acted as a federal prosecutor for the Iran-Contra investigation in Washington, DC. Under Roth's tenure at Human Rights Watch, the organization expanded in both size and scope to become one of the world's most influential international human rights organizations. Human Rights Watch shared a Nobel Peace Prize under his leadership in 1997 for helping to establish the International Criminal Court and for working to ban children in the military. Roth has conducted and organized numerous human rights investigations and initiatives around the world, and has written extensively on counterterrorism, international justice, and the work of the United Nations. He holds a BA in History from Brown University and a JD from Yale Law School.

Panelists

Jean AbiNader

Middle East Analyst and Writer; Vice President for Policy, American Task Force on Lebanon

@jeanabinader

Jean AbiNader is Vice President for Policy at the American Task Force on Lebanon (ATFL) and is the Founder of AbiNader Advisory Services. He is a Middle East analyst and writer who produces blog posts, position papers, and policy studies related to US-Arab political, economic, and security issues. He is also the editor of several papers, including the Lebanon Policy Paper: Recommendations for a Sustainable Bilateral Relationship (2020), which was a joint project between ATFL and the Middle East Institute. AbiNader consults on strategic communications and organizational change for international and US clients, and has lectured and led seminars at Georgetown University, American University, and Al-Akhawayn University in Morocco. AbiNader holds a BA in Political Science from Saint Vincent College in Pennsylvania and a Master's of Public and International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh, and is ABD in a PhD in Organizational Communications at the University of Pittsburgh.

Aisha Al-Sarihi

Research Fellow, National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute

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Aisha Al-Sarihi is a Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute and a Non-resident Fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. She previously worked as a research associate at King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center and as a visiting scholar at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. She was also employed as a research officer at the London School of Economics Middle East Center. Al-Sarihi's research focuses on the political economy of environmental sustainability, energy policy, renewables, and climate policies in the Arab world. Her research has appeared in numerous media outlets, including Al Arabiya, Reuters, the Associated Press, the New Arab, Arab News, Asia Times, Earth Island Journal, and Oman Daily Observer. She holds a PhD from the Center for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London, and both an MS and a BS in Environmental Science from Sultan Qaboos University.

Victoria Araj

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Public History, Lincoln International Business School

Victoria Araj is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Public History at Lincoln International Business School at the University of Lincoln. Araj previously worked as the commissioning editor for the Program on Civil-Military Relations in Arab States at the Carnegie Middle East Center and as an advisor on governance and conflict at the Swedish Institute for Effective Governance and Stabilization. Her research focuses on civil-military relations in Turkey and the Middle East, Islamist political parties, authoritarianism, and security. Araj holds a PhD in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford, UK and an MA in International Development, Poverty, Conflict, and Reconstruction from the University of Manchester.

Omar Ashour

Founding Director of the Critical Security Studies Graduate Program and Director of the Strategic Studies Unit, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies

@DrOmarAshour

Omar Ashour is the Founding Director of the Critical Security Studies Graduate Program and Director of the Strategic Studies Unit at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Ashour is also Associate Professor of Security Studies at the Doha Institute, focusing on asymmetric warfare, insurgency and counterinsurgency, Islamist ideologies, and strategic military studies. His published works cover the Arab world, the post-Soviet Caucasus and Central Asia, and Western and Southern Europe, and have appeared in publications such as Foreign Affairs, International Affairs, and

the Middle East Journal. Ashour holds a PhD in Political Science from McGill University and a BA and MA in Political Science from the American University in Cairo.

Yara M. Asi

Non-Resident Fellow, Arab Center Washington DC

@Yara_M_Asi

Yara M. Asi is a Non-resident Fellow at Arab Center Washington DC. She is also a Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of Central Florida and a 2020-2021 Fulbright US Scholar to the West Bank. In addition to working at Florida Accountable Care Services (FACS), one of the first accountable care organizations in the United States that was created as a result of the Affordable Care Act, Asi has engaged in work on policy and outreach issues with Amnesty International, the Palestinian American Research Center, and Al-Shabaka, the Palestinian Policy Network. Asi's research focuses on global health, food security, women in healthcare, and health informatics. She has published extensively on health and development in fragile and conflict-affected populations in the form of journal articles, book chapters, and online publications. Asi holds a PhD in Public Affairs - Health Services Research and Management from the University of Central Florida.

Jessica Barnes

Associate Professor at the School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment, University of South Carolina

Jessica Barnes is Associate Professor in the School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment at the University of South Carolina. She previously held a postdoctoral fellowship with the Yale Climate and Energy Institute and the Yale School of the Environment. Barnes' research focuses on climate change, water, and the culture and politics of resource use and environmental change. Her most recent book, *Staple Security: Bread and Wheat in Egypt*, examines the central role these staples play in Egyptian daily life and the potential impact of their scarcity. Barnes also co-edited a collection of anthropological essays on climate change with Michael Dove, titled *Climate Cultures: Anthropological Perspectives on Climate*. Barnes received her PhD in Sustainable Development from Columbia University.

Marina Calculli

Lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Leiden

@marinacaculli

Marina Calculli is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities at University of Leiden and is currently on a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellowship at Columbia University in New York and Sciences Po Paris. Her research sits at the intersection between international relations, history, law, and political theory. Calculli's work focuses on political violence and the role of religious and secular ideologies in world politics. Her current project investigates how states negotiate their secular and religious visions at the United Nations and beyond. In her previous projects, Calculli has explored cooperation and rivalry between states and Islamist actors in the international system, the rise and role of non-state armed groups in the Middle East, and the moral justification of political violence.

Abdelwahab El-Affendi

Provost and Acting President, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

@wahabtweet

Abdelwahab El-Affendi is Provost and Acting President at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He previously served as dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Doha Institute and has been a visiting fellow and/or professor at the Christian Michelsen Institute, Northwestern University, and the International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilization. El-Affendi's research focuses on mass violence, democracy and Islam, Islam and the West, and Sudanese and Middle Eastern politics. He is the author of several books about Islam and politics, including *About Muhammad: The Other Western Perspective on the Prophet of Islam*. El-Affendi holds a PhD in

Political Science from the University of Reading, an MA from the University of Wales, and a BA from the University of Khartoum.

Nisreen Elsaim

Chair, UN Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change

@NisreenElsaim

Nisreen Elsaim is Chair of the UN Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. She is also the President of the Sudan Youth Organization for Climate Change, and was an organizer of the 2019 UN Youth Climate Summit. Elsaim is also a Junior Negotiator with the African Group of Negotiators, where she focuses on climate change and renewable energy policies, and is the General Coordinator for Youth and Environment Sudan (YES). She has written several papers on renewable energy, climate change, and gender and youth empowerment. She holds a BS in Physics and an MS in Renewable Energy from the University of Khartoum.

Imad K. Harb

Director of Research and Analysis, Arab Center Washington DC

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Imad K. Harb is Director of Research and Analysis at Arab Center Washington DC. He is also the Founder and Director of Quest for Middle East Analysis, a research and consulting firm. He previously worked as an adjunct professor of Middle East Studies at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University, and as a senior analyst at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research. Harb also taught political science and international relations at the University of Utah and San Francisco State University, and worked as a senior program officer at the United States Institute of Peace. He writes and publishes on civil-military relations, regional politics, and US policy in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Arabian Gulf, and is also the co-editor, with Zeina Azzam, of *The Arab World Beyond Conflict*. Harb earned a PhD in Political Science from the University of Utah.

Khalil E. Jahshan

Executive Director, Arab Center Washington DC

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Khalil E. Jahshan is Executive Director of Arab Center Washington DC. He has previously worked as a lecturer in International Studies and Languages at Pepperdine University and as executive director of Pepperdine's Seaver College Washington DC Internship Program. Jahshan also served as executive vice president of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and director of its government affairs affiliate, National Association of Arab Americans. Throughout his career, he has held numerous leadership positions in Arab American organizations, including vice president of the American Committee on Jerusalem, president of the National Association of Arab Americans, national director of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, and assistant director of the Palestine Research and Educational Center. Jahshan has also served on the boards of directors and advisory boards of several Middle East-oriented organizations including ANERA, MIFTAH, and Search for Common Ground. He regularly appears as a political commentator in Arab and American media outlets.

Mehran Kamrava

Head of the Iranian Studies Unit, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies; Professor of Government, Georgetown University in Qatar

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Mehran Kamrava is Professor of Government at Georgetown University in Qatar. He also directs the Iranian Studies Unit at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Kamrava is the author of many journal articles and books, including *A Dynastic History of Iran: From the Qajars to the Pahlavis* (2022); *Triumph and Despair: In Search of Iran's Islamic Republic* (2022); *A Concise History of Revolution* (2020); *Troubled Waters: Insecurity in the Persian Gulf* (2018); and *Inside the Arab State* (2018). Kamrava has also edited several volumes, and is the series editor for the

Contemporary Issues in the Middle East series at Syracuse University Press, and the *Iran and the World* series at Hurst Publishers and Oxford University Press. He received his PhD from the University of Cambridge.

Banafsheh Keynoush

Fellow, International Institute for Iranian Studies

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Banafsheh Keynoush is a Fellow at the International Institute for Iranian Studies and a team member of the Carnegie-funded Sectarianism, Proxies, and De-sectarianization Project. She was previously a visiting scholar at Princeton University and a visiting fellow at King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh. She has also advised and worked with the UN, the World Bank, and CNN International, and is an accredited interpreter at the European Commission. Her most recent book, *Iran's Interregional Dynamics in the Near East* (2021), discusses Iran's complex relationships with other states in the Near East, including, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Keynoush holds a PhD from Tufts University.

Tamara Kharroub

Deputy Executive Director and Senior Fellow, Arab Center Washington DC

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Tamara Kharroub is Deputy Executive Director and Senior Fellow at Arab Center Washington DC. Her research focuses on democracy, human rights, and women's rights in the Arab world. She publishes research and policy analysis papers, as well as editorials exploring issues of democratization, US foreign policy in the Middle East, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, identity politics, cyber geopolitics, and the role of media and communications technology in the political process. Prior to joining ACW, Dr. Kharroub was an associate instructor at Indiana University and directed human rights and democracy programs and communications campaigns in the Middle East. She holds a PhD from Indiana University Bloomington and an MA from the University of Westminster, and is the recipient of several awards and fellowships, including a Fulbright.

Laurie King

Member of the Board of Directors, Arab Center Washington DC

Laurie King is a Member of the Board of Directors at Arab Center Washington DC and a Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Georgetown University. She conducted her doctoral field research as a Fulbright Dissertation Fellow in Nazareth, Israel from 1991-93, focusing on political identity and the participation of Palestinian citizens of Israel in municipal governance. From 1993-1998 she taught and conducted research in Beirut, Lebanon on post-war reconciliation, post-war urban reconstruction, and debates over heritage, refugee issues, and international humanitarian law. She has published widely on the anthropology of human rights, urban anthropology, and political identity. King served as editor in chief of Middle East Report in Washington, DC and managing editor of the Journal of Palestine Studies, and was one of the four co-founders of award-winning alternative news website Electronic Intifada. King coordinated media and outreach for the International Committee for the Victims of Sabra and Shatila during the landmark legal attempt to bring the architects of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre to justice in Belgium, and is the author of *Universal Jurisdiction for Humanitarian Crimes*, a multi-site ethnographic account of Sabra and Shatila survivors' legal case. She holds a PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies from Indiana University Bloomington.

Bessma Momani

Professor of Political Science, University of Waterloo

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Bessma Momani is Professor of Political Science at the University of Waterloo and a Non-Resident Fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. She previously worked as a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and as a consultant to the International Monetary Fund. As an expert on Middle East economics and

international financial institutions, Momani is currently a member of the National Security Transparency Advisory Group to advise the Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada on improving transparency in Canada's national security and intelligence departments. She has authored and co-edited ten books and more than 80 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, which have examined international affairs, diversity and inclusion, Middle East affairs, and the global economy. Momani is a regular contributor to national and international media on global security and economic policy issues, and has written editorials for the New York Times, the Economist, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, Newsweek, and Time Magazine. She holds a PhD from University of Western Ontario.

Pete Moore

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Pete Moore is M.A. Hanna Associate Professor of Politics and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Political Science at Case Western Reserve University. His research interests focus on economic development and state-society relations in the Middle East and Africa, and specifically on Gulf Arab States and the Levant, business-state relations, privatization, decentralization, sub-state conflict, and regional security. Moore currently serves on the Editorial Committee of Middle East Report and is a Member of the Northeast Ohio Consortium for Middle East Studies. He holds a PhD from McGill University.

Yousef Munayyer

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Yousef Munayyer is a Non-resident Senior Fellow at Arab Center Washington DC, where he writes on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He also serves as a Member of the Editorial Committee of the Journal of Palestine Studies, and was previously executive director of the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights. Some of his published articles can be found in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Nation, Boston Globe, Foreign Policy, Journal of Palestine Studies, Middle East Policy, and others. Munayyer holds a PhD in International Relations and Comparative Politics from the University of Maryland.

Nancy Okail

President and CEO, Center for International Policy

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Nancy Okail is President and CEO of the Center for International Policy, and is a leading scholar, policy analyst, and advocate with more than 20 years of experience working on issues of human rights, democracy, and security in the Middle East and North Africa. She was previously a visiting scholar at the Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law at Stanford University and served as executive director of the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, which became an internationally renowned policy research organization under her leadership. Okail has also worked on, managed, and evaluated foreign aid programs for several international organizations, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program. Her policy analysis and political commentary have been featured in top media outlets, including the Washington Post, the New York Times, Foreign Affairs, and Lawfare. Okail holds a PhD from the University of Sussex.

Sarah Leah Whitson

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Sarah Leah Whitson is Executive Director of Democracy for the Arab World Now, and previously served as executive director of the Middle East and North Africa Division at Human Rights Watch. Whitson has led dozens of advocacy and investigative missions throughout the region, focusing on issues of armed conflict, accountability, legal reform, migrant workers, and human rights. She has published widely on human rights and foreign policy in the Middle East in both international and regional media, including the New York Times, Foreign Affairs, the Washington Post,

Foreign Policy, the Los Angeles Times, and CNN. Whitson is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is on the boards of the International Center of Justice for Palestinians, Artistic Freedom Initiative, Freedom Forward, ALQST for Human Rights, and Sinai Foundation for Human Rights. Whitson holds a BA from the University of California, Berkeley and a JD from Harvard Law School.