

Building a new Middle East: Promoting tolerance through education

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

8:00 a.m.- 9:30 a.m. ET/ 2:00 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.
WEST/ 5:00 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. GST

Online event

Speaker Bios



H.E. Dr. Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi

Chairman, Hedayah

H.E. Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi currently serves as the first chairman of the International Steering Board of Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, based in Abu Dhabi. He is also the founder and chairman of the World Council of Muslim Communities. Furthermore, Al Nuaimi is a founding member of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies and the first secretary general of the Muslim Council of Elders. Al Nuaimi is also the founder and chairman of Al-Majal Media and the editor-in-chief of Al-Ain News Portal, a comprehensive Arab news portal. Additionally, he is the founder of 7D News based in London, covering international news. As a pioneer of educational reform and policy in the UAE, Al Nuaimi served as the chancellor of the United Arab Emirates University and the chairman of the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge in his capacity as a member of the Executive Council of the Government of Abu Dhabi.



El Mehdi Boudra

President, Association Mimouna

Mr. El Mehdi Boudra has a special interest in minorities rights and inter-cultural dialogue. In 2007, he founded and has since served as President of Association Mimouna, a Moroccan NGO that seeks to promote Moroccan Jewish Heritage and Muslim-Jewish Dialogue. In 2011 Mr. Boudra organized the first Holocaust Conference in the Arab world and in 2012, he brought the first Arab student seminar to Israel. In 2013, he joined the United Nations Holocaust Program to work on Holocaust education in the Arab World. In 2018, Mr. Boudra was among the Algemeiner's 'J100' list of the top one hundred individuals who have positively influenced Jewish life. In 2019, Mr. Boudra co-founded the Jewish Africa Conference. Mr. Boudra is associated with and serves on the boards of many civic and educational organizations in Morocco and the United States such as the American Sephardi Federation (ASF) and the International Advisory and Research Council in the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies (IUCTS). From 2015 to 2021, he joined the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies for which he serves as the head of its international relations program. El Mehdi Boudra is fluent in Arabic, French, and English and holds an MA from the Peace, Conflict, and Coexistence Studies Program at Brandeis University and a BA in International Studies from Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane.



Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers

United States Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers is Eastern Washington's chief advocate in Congress, serving as the representative for the state's 5th Congressional District. Since first being elected to the House in 2004, she has earned the trust of her constituents and praise on Capitol Hill for her hard work, conservative principles, bipartisan outreach, and leadership to get results for Eastern Washington. Cathy currently serves as the Republican Leader on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has broad jurisdiction over the issues that matter most to the people of Eastern Washington. As leader of this committee, Cathy is focused on delivering real results on everything from expanding access to rural broadband and improving healthcare to addressing climate change and securing America's energy independence. Prior to leading in this role, Cathy served as Chair of the House Republican Conference from 2012 to 2018. She was the 200th woman ever elected to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and the first woman to give birth three times while in office.



Congressman Bradley Schneider

United States Congress

Schneider represents Illinois's 10th District in the United States House of Representatives, where he is serving his fourth term. He is a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means and House Committee on Foreign Affairs. He has previously served on the House Judiciary and Small Business committees. As a member of Congress, Brad is focused on building a thriving economy that works for all Americans, and ensuring every family has affordable health care, quality education and a rising standard of living. He knows that our communities are stronger when small businesses invest and grow, our environment is healthy, and people are working together for a better future. Prior to being elected to Congress, Brad spent more than 20 years in business and management consulting, helping both large and family-owned businesses address the challenges of a changing economy and plan for the future. His professional experience has allowed him to see first-hand the challenges small businesses face when trying to hire new workers and grow their company, as well as the effect thriving small businesses can have on a community's overall well-being.



Marcus Sheff

President, IMPACT-se

Marcus Sheff is CEO of the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se), a Jerusalem-based nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that assesses educational efforts across the world to determine compliance with international standards derived from UNESCO. Its activities include encouraging the rejection of violence and advocating for change when necessary. Sheff was a political reporter at The Nation, an editor at The Jerusalem Post and a foreign correspondent before heading The Word Shop, a strategic communications firm, for a decade. He worked for Dow Jones International and Advanstar Inc. and was CEO at Intermedia, an international business development firm, before becoming Executive Director at The Israel Project. He has for two decades been involved in global healthcare. He has briefed world leaders, spoken at the United Nations and parliaments and appears regularly on media. He studied political science and international relations at Leeds University where he was an elected leader of the student union, and international relations at Tel Aviv University.

Moderator Bios



Melissa Weiss

Managing Editor, Jewish Insider

Melissa Weiss is the managing editor for Jewish Insider. Prior to joining JI, she spent nearly a decade doing strategic communications in the nonprofit sector. Following stints in Seoul and Washington, D.C., she currently lives in New York. Melissa is a graduate of the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism.



William F. Wechsler

Director, Rafik Hariri Center and Middle East Programs, Atlantic Council

William F. Wechsler is director of the Rafik Hariri Center and Middle East Programs at the Atlantic Council. Wechsler's most recent government position was deputy assistant secretary of defense for special operations and combatting terrorism. Previously Wechsler served as deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics and global threats. During the Clinton administration, Wechsler served as special advisor to the secretary of the treasury. He had previously served as director for transnational threats on the National Security Council staff, and prior to that was a special assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Wechsler is currently also president of the Center on Illicit Networks and Transnational Organized Crime and the treasurer of the American Historical Association. He was previously a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute and a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. Wechsler has also had a separate career in finance. He has been vice chairman of Capitol Peak Asset Management and managing director of Greenwich Associates. Wechsler is a graduate of Cornell University and received a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.