



منتدى قطر للوساطة
Qatar Mediation Forum

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Booklet

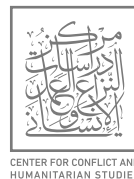
7-8 December 2025

Doha
منتدى الدوحة



The Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS)

The Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS) is one of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies Programs. It was established in 2016. The Center focuses on producing in-depth research, building specialized capacities, and guiding policies aimed at promoting peace and resolving conflicts through diverse and multi-track dialogues. The Center aspires to become one of the leading research institutions in the Global South, dedicated to addressing issues of conflict and humanitarian response from a critical and forward-looking perspective.



CENTER FOR CONFLICT AND
HUMANITARIAN STUDIES

Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies
Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies



منتدى قطر للوساطة

Qatar Mediation Forum

7-8 December 2025

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About the Forum



Background

The global governance and multilateral conflict management system that has shaped peace mediation for the past three decades is undergoing a fundamental transformation. The emergence of a multipolar world, the return of great power competition, and the erosion of multilateral consensus are reshaping the conditions under which mediation is conceptualized, legitimized, and practiced. The challenges facing mediators have been compounded by a marked shift away from international cooperation assistance and a sharp contraction in funding for conflict prevention and peacebuilding as donors pivot to defence priorities and increased military spending. At the same time, geo-economics and technology have re-emerged as key drivers of conflict and peace, and the private sector is becoming an increasingly important player in conflict management, bringing both risks and opportunities. Local, national, and regional actors are asserting their agency, but reduced international support raises increasing risks of capacity collapse in an already under-resourced sector.

The 2025 Qatar Mediation Forum (QMF) convenes at a critical juncture, where the practice of mediation demands urgent analytical appraisal and innovation. Organized by the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS) under the auspices of the Doha Forum, the QMF will bring together a diverse array of mediators, policymakers, scholar practitioners, and institutional actors for critical reflection and informed dialogue. It will examine the shifting norms and structural realignments reshaping mediation globally, the dilemmas mediators face in frontline contexts, and the challenges of navigating between principles, power, and pragmatism.

Objectives

The QMF aims to:

- Examine how the retreat from multilateralism and the increasingly transactional nature of peacemaking effect the legitimacy, scope, and form of contemporary mediation.
- Assess the increasing role of mediation actors from the Global South and the implications for norm development and geopolitical competition.
- Explore the operational and ethical complexities of mediation in active conflict zones.
- Evaluate the prospects, limitations, and structural requirements for locally led mediation in settings marked by external disengagement and governance collapse.
- Contribute to a forward-looking discourse on principled, context-responsive mediation in an increasingly fragmented international system.

Structure and Format

The QMF will take place over two days, on 7 and 8 December, and will follow a hybrid structure, convening four roundtable dialogues and five high-level panels. Roundtables are designed to facilitate off-the-record, practice-oriented dialogue among key stakeholders. Panels will bring together prominent figures and experts to debate key themes from diverse perspectives, generating policy momentum to address the most pressing challenges facing peace mediation.

Panels

Panel 1: Peace Mediation in a Transforming Order

This panel debates the changes in the international order that are driving a shift from norms-based to a more transactional form of peacemaking. Panellists will explore the diminishing normative consensus that historically underpinned multilateral peacemaking, and examine the emerging landscape in which security competition, relative gains, and transactionalism increasingly govern the terms of engagement. Panellists will reflect critically on the consequences for mediation design, including elite bargains, legitimacy deficits, and the erosion of inclusive frameworks, and consider how mediators should respond.

Panel 2: Gulf States in Mediation: Pathways to Strategic Cooperation

Over the past two decades, the Gulf states – notably Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, and Kuwait – have emerged to become prominent diplomatic players in regional and global mediation. Their approaches draw on a blend of cultural diplomacy, strategic investment, and adaptive soft power tools, including humanitarian aid, diaspora connections, and media influence. This panel discussion explores the evolving mediation roles of Gulf actors, examining their recent experiences and the challenges and opportunities that arise in an increasingly multipolar world. It assesses whether patterns of rivalry are giving way to strategic coordination, and what such collaboration would entail for regional and international peace efforts.

Panel 3: Mediation in an Era of Great Power Competition and Nuclear Risk

With the return of great power rivalry, nuclear risks are mounting, arms control is collapsing, and policy debates focus almost exclusively on military and security options—while mediation is nearly absent from the conversation. Could mediation provide a meaningful tool to manage these rivalries, and if so, how? This roundtable brings together US, Russian, and Chinese perspectives to assess today's great power tensions and their implications for global security. It will explore the risks of leaving rivalry unchecked and highlight the often-overlooked role of third parties in diffusing tensions, preventing escalation, and sustaining dialogue when official channels break down.

Panel 4: What Frontline Conflicts Reveal about Mediation Practice

This panel interrogates the contradictions of mediation in environments of extreme volatility. It reflects on the challenges faced by mediators working to resolve conflicts in Palestine, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. How are they coping with the erosion of international norms and standards? How are they dealing with operational insecurity, constrained access, and the challenge of navigating proximity to violence without compromising ethical and professional standards?

Panel 5: The Future of Mediation in a Transforming Global System

This panel addresses strategic questions about the future of mediation within global peace architectures. It offers critical reflections on agency, resilience, and structural inclusion, and proposes paths for embedding local leadership in the evolving mediation ecosystem. Can international organizations develop equitable partnerships with local and regional actors across multiple mediation tracks? Can partnerships be designed to work with fragmentation, ensuring alignment of objectives while respecting diversity in approaches, actors, and priorities?

Roundtables

Roundtable 1: Mediating in a Multipolar World - Beyond Neutrality: Legitimacy and Effectiveness (in partnership with Middle East Council on Global Affairs)

As geopolitical divisions deepen, the role of mediation – long anchored in ideals of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality – is being fundamentally transformed. Mediators are increasingly seen not as neutral facilitators but as actors with embedded interests, allegiances, or regional stakes. Once accepted norms and mechanisms for conflict resolution are now viewed through filters of alignment and strategic calculation. This roundtable will consider how these principles can be upheld or reimagined within current constraints.

Roundtable 2: Mediation Under Fire: Protecting Peace Processes and Peacemakers

Israel's 9 September airstrike targeting Hamas political bureau leaders during negotiations in Doha highlighted the vulnerability of peace processes to direct attack and political disruption. This roundtable explores how mediation can be safeguarded amid escalating conflict and growing disregard for international law. It asks how negotiations can be shielded from military escalation and external interference, and what mechanisms can safeguard mediators, host states, and guarantors.

Roundtable 3: Peace Mediation and the Crisis of Multilateralism (in partnership with Geneva Graduate Institute)

The global architecture for peace mediation is weakening. Institutions once charged with resolving conflict – the United Nations, regional bodies, and international legal mechanisms – are now frequently paralysed, politically contested, and facing significant criticism that questions their normative legitimacy. This roundtable dialogue will examine the implications of the crisis of multilateralism for peace mediation and conflict resolution and explore how new models of diplomacy and peacebuilding might respond to these emerging challenges.

Roundtable 4: Enabling Locally Led Mediation (in partnership with Conciliation Resources)

This roundtable examines the renewed international emphasis on local leadership in mediation processes. It critically assesses whether this shift marks a substantive transformation or simply a rhetorical adaptation to external disengagement. The discussion addresses the risks of instrumentalization, the uneven distribution of resources and power, and the structural reforms required for authentic global-local partnership.

Timetable



Day One: Sunday, 7 December 2025

Al Majlis Hall – Sheraton Grand Hotel – Doha

08:00 – 08:45	Registration
08:45 – 09:30	<p>Opening Session</p> <p>Welcome Remarks</p> <p>Ghassan Elkahlout, Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies</p> <p>Keynote Address</p> <p>H.E. Dr. Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al-Misnad, Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Head of Advisory Board of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies)</p>
09:30 – 11:00	<p>Panel 1: Peace Mediation in a Transforming Order</p> <p><i>Mohamad Hamas Elmasry (moderator), Professor of Media Studies - Doha Institute for Graduate Studies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Atwood, Executive Vice President - International Crisis Group Alex de Waal, Executive Director - World Peace Foundation Pierre Krahenbühl, Director General - ICRC Erin McCandless, Director of the Qatar-South Africa Centre for Peace and Intercultural Understanding
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 13:00	<p>Panel 2: Gulf States in Mediation: Pathways to Strategic Cooperation</p> <p><i>Yasmine Farouk (moderator), Gulf & Arabian Peninsula Project Director - ICG</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Khalid Abdulaziz Alkhulaifi, Office of the Special Envoy - Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs H.E. Manal Radwan, Senior Advisor, Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Bader Al Saif, Assistant Professor, Kuwait University Elham Fakhro, Senior Fellow - Harvard University Belfer Center
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Panel 3: Mediation in an Era of Great Power Competition and Nuclear Risk</p> <p><i>Karim Haggag (moderator), Director - SIPRI</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christopher Ford, Professor - Missouri State University Dmitry Suslov, Deputy Director - CCE Moscow Wu Chunsi, Director of Center for American Studies, and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of International Strategic and Security Studies
15:30 – 16:00	<p>Launching The Humanitarian Diplomacy Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Dr. Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al-Misnad, Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar H.E. Yousef Bin Ali Al-Khater, the President of Qatar Red Crescent Ghassan Elkahlout, Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies

Day Two: Monday, 8 December 2025

Al Majlis Hall – Sheraton Grand Hotel – Doha

08:30 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Keynote Address Alex de Waal, Executive director of the World Peace Foundation
09:30 – 11:00	Parallel Roundtables – Session One Roundtable 1: Mediating in a Multipolar World - Beyond Neutrality: Legitimacy and Effectiveness (in partnership with the Middle East Council on Global Affairs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marwan Kabalan (Co-Chair), Director of the Unit for Political Studies - Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies Dalia Ghanem (Co-Chair), Director Conflict & Security Program - Middle East Council on Global Affairs Roundtable 2: Mediation Under Fire: Protecting Peace Processes and Peacemakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sultan Al-Khulaifi (Chair), Senior Fellow - Center for Conflict & Humanitarian Studies
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 13:00	Panel 4: What Frontline Conflicts Reveal about Mediation Practice <i>Randa Slim (moderator), Non-resident Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Institute, School of Advanced and International Studies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya Abdul Mohammed, Former IGAD and United Nations Mediation Advisor H.E. Hind Aboud Kabawat, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Syria Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director - World Food Programme
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Parallel Roundtables – Session Two Roundtable 3: Peace Mediation and the Crisis of Multilateralism (in partnership with Geneva Graduate Institute) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achim Wennmann (Co-Chair), Professor - Geneva Graduate Institute Aicha Elbasri (Co-Chair), Researcher - Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies Roundtable 4: Enabling Locally Led Mediation (in partnership with Conciliation Resources) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonathan Cohen (Chair), Executive Director - Conciliation Resources
15:30 – 16:00	Break

16:00 – 17:15	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel 5: The Future of Mediation in a Transforming Global System</p> <p><i>Sara Hellmüller (moderator), Research Professor - Geneva Graduate Institute</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Coulter, Executive Director - Berghof Foundation • Akok Madut, Head - African Union Mediation Division • Martin Griffiths, Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mediation Group International • H.E. Dr. Majed Al Ansari, Advisor to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
17:15 – 18:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Closing Session</p> <p>Final Remarks</p> <p>Ghassan Elkahlout, Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies</p>

19:00 – 20:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Sudan: State Collapse and Pathways to Peace</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Conversation with Alex De Waal and Comfort Ero</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex de Waal, Executive Director of the World Peace Foundation • Comfort Ero, President & CEO of International Crisis Group
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Keynote Speakers



H.E. Dr. Maryam Bint Ali Bin Nasser Al-Misnad

Her Excellency Dr. Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al-Misnad was appointed Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2024. Before that, Her Excellency was appointed Minister of Social Development and Family in 2021. Throughout her career, she has held various prominent positions, including Executive Director of the Administrative and Financial Sector at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and Executive Director of the Orphan Care Center (Dreama). Her Excellency has also served as Executive Director of the Center for Protection and Rehabilitation from Violence Against Women and Children (AMAN), Regional Director of Communication and Awareness Campaigns at the Education Above All Foundation, Director of the Media and Communication Department at the Social Rehabilitation Center (Al-Aween), and Executive Director of Childhood Cultural Center. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Humanities and English Literature from Qatar University, as well as an Executive Master's degree in Strategic Planning and Business Administration from HEC Paris.



H.E. Yousef Bin Ali Al-Khater

H.E. Yousef Bin Ali Al-Khater is the President of Qatar Red Crescent Society. He has been member of the Shura Council since 2021. As a diplomat, he worked at the Office of the State Minister for Foreign Affairs (2006-2008). He served as a consul in Houston, Texas, the United States (2008-2011) and as an ambassador in many countries — Australia and New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Iceland (2012-2021).

He holds Bachelor of Education from Qatar University (1992) and Master of Public Administration from the American University – Washington, D.C. (2001). Over the period 1992-1996, he worked at the Ministry of Education (MOE) as an education researcher at the Department of Research, then as Manager of Educational Planning Unity at the Office of the Minister of Education. During the period 2002-2005, he worked as Secretary-General of MOE Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science, and he represented the State of Qatar as member of the Executive Councils of the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ICESCO). During the period 2003-2005, he was member of the country's first National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) as representative of MOE. He attended numerous regional and international conferences.



Alex de Waal

Alex de Waal is the Executive Director of the World Peace Foundation and research professor at the Fletcher School, Tufts University. He has worked on famine, humanitarianism, and conflict, since the 1980s as a researcher and practitioner, focusing on the Horn of Africa. He has spent decades arguing that famine needs to be considered a political act and a crime. He served as a senior advisor to the African Union on Sudan and South Sudan in various capacities. He was named among Foreign Policy's 100 most influential international intellectuals (2008) and Atlantic's 29 "brave thinkers" (2009). He received the Royal Anthropological Institute's Huxley Award in 2024.



Ghassan Elkahlout

Ghassan Elkahlout is the Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS) in Doha, Qatar, and an Associate Professor of Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. His work focuses on peacebuilding, humanitarian diplomacy, and mediation, with a particular emphasis on the MENA region and Palestine. He is the Chief Editor of the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development and has contributed to leading academic journals, including Third World Quarterly and the Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction. He has also edited key volumes such as Gaza's Cycle of Destruction and Rebuilding and Forced Migration in the Arab World. His Arabic-language book on humanitarian action provides a critical analysis of the sector's challenges and evolving role in conflict settings. His forthcoming book with Hurst, *From Gulf to Global: Qatar's Rising Role in Conflict Mediation*, explores Qatar's expanding influence in international diplomacy and crisis resolution. Through his work, Dr. Elkahlout remains committed to bridging academic research with policy and practice, contributing to global debates on humanitarian action, mediation, and peacebuilding in conflict zones.

Panellists





Akok Madut

Ambassador Akok Madut, is a conflict resolution practitioner (mediation and peacebuilding expert), diplomat, and academic. He is currently the Head of Mediation and Dialogue Division of the African Union Commission. In this capacity, he plays a pivotal role in facilitating preventive diplomacy, mediation, conflict management, and political dialogue across the African continent. He is currently leading the AU support to the peace processes in Sudan and DRC as well as countries going through complex transitions, such as South Sudan and Central Africa Republic. Ambassador Madut was a distinguished South Sudanese diplomat with postings to Washington, DC, Abuja, London, and Ethiopia, including the African Union, IGAD and UN Economic Commission for Africa. He holds a PhD in Politics and International Studies from SOAS, University of London and MA in Political Science from University of Missouri, USA. Dr. Madut is an Assistant Professor at the University of Juba.



Abdul Mohammed

Abdul Mohammed serves as chief of staff and senior political advisor of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan, chaired by Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa. He was previously the acting director of the A.U.-U.N. Hybrid Operation in Darfur's political department, chairperson of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation, and UNICEF's representative to the African Union. He was the founder and executive director of the Inter Africa Group, a center for dialogue on humanitarian, peace, and development issues in the Horn of Africa. Mohammed has worked in various capacities for the World Council of Churches and the Church World Service and served as director of relief and emergencies for the Sudan Council of Churches. He has also been an advisor to the prime minister of Ethiopia on peace and reconciliation issues in the Horn of Africa. Over the last 25 years Mohammed has worked in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Kenya.



Bader Mousa Al-Saif

Bader Mousa Al-Saif is a historian of the modern Middle East and Islamic thought, focusing on the Arabian Peninsula's geopolitics, public policy, culture, reform dynamics, and gender studies. He is the founding president of Al Saif Consulting, an assistant professor of history at Kuwait University, and a fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) and the Arab Gulf States Institute. With over two decades of experience in the Gulf region, he has served as deputy chief of staff to a former Kuwaiti prime minister and as senior vice president in the oil and gas sector.



Carl Skau

Carl Skau is WFP's deputy executive director and chief operating officer. He leads WFP's overall coordination, strategic direction, humanitarian diplomacy, and support for field operations. With over 20 years of experience in diplomacy, humanitarian affairs, peacebuilding, and development, he has forged strong bilateral and multilateral partnerships, mobilized resources, and led diverse teams. Before joining WFP, Skau headed the Department for Multilateral Partnerships at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, leading its response to global humanitarian crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. He previously served as Sweden's Ambassador and Special Envoy to Venezuela and Deputy Representative to the United Nations.



Chris Coulter

Chris Coulter is the executive director of the Berghof Foundation, bringing over 20 years of experience in conflict resolution across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and South America. She specializes in inclusive leadership, mediation, peace processes, and security policy. Before joining Berghof, she served as chief operating officer and director of programs at the Negotiation Strategies Institute in Jerusalem and led the Peace Process Support Unit at Sweden's Folke Bernadotte Academy. She was a Special Advisor on peace and security to Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, supporting numerous Track 1 and Track 2 peace negotiations. She holds a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Uppsala University.



Christopher Ford

Christopher Ford is a professor at Missouri State University's School of Defense and Strategic Studies and a senior associate with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. In 2018-21, he served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Non-proliferation, for the last 15 months of that period also performing the duties of the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security. In 2017, Dr. Ford served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for WMD and Counterproliferation at the U.S. National Security Council.



Comfort Ero

Comfort Ero was appointed Crisis Group's president & CEO in December 2021. She has spent her entire career working on or in conflict-affected countries. Dr Ero served as Deputy Africa Program Director for the International Centre for Transitional Justice (2008-2010) and Political Affairs Officer and Policy Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Mission in Liberia (2004-2007). She has a PhD from the London School of Economics, University of London. Dr Ero is also the Chair of the Board of the Rift Valley Institute and sits on the editorial board of various journals, including International Peacekeeping.



Dmitry V. Suslov

Dmitry V. Suslov is deputy director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies and senior lecturer of the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs of the National Research University – Higher School of Economics (HSE University). He is a member of the Valdai Discussion Club and the Russian International Affairs Council, and formerly a Foreign Affairs Staff Writer for Nezavisimaya Gazeta. At HSE, Suslov teaches courses on US and Russian foreign policy, international relations, and Eurasian security. He regularly consults Russian state institutions and business on US-Russia relations, EU-Russia relations, and security policy.



Elham Fakhro

Elham Fakhro is a research fellow at the Middle East Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School. She previously acted as senior analyst for the Gulf States with the International Crisis Group, and has held research and teaching roles at the University of Exeter and NYU Abu Dhabi. She holds a Master of Laws (LLM) from Harvard Law School and a Doctorate (DPhil) from St Antony's College, University of Oxford.



Erin McCandless

Erin McCandless is Professor of Politics and International Relations and Director of the Qatar-South Africa Centre for Peace and Intercultural Understanding (CPIU) at the University of Johannesburg, and a Senior Advisor at the Centre for Mediation in Africa at the University of Pretoria. In 2024, she served as Distinguished Visiting Professor of Public Value at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) in Doha, and she continues to serve as a non-resident fellow with the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies and a senior associate fellow at the Global Institute for Strategic Research, HBKU, in Doha.



H.E. Hanna Serwaa Tetteh

H.E. Hanna Serwaa Tetteh has been the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since January 2025. She previously served as Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa (2022–2024), and as Special Representative to the African Union and Head of the UN Office to the African Union (2018–2020). Before joining the UN, she was Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs (2013–2017) and Minister for Trade and Industry (2009–2013). Tetteh also held several senior government positions and parliamentary seats in Ghana, contributing extensively to regional peace and economic development.



H.E. Hind Aboud Kabawat

H.E. Hind Aboud Kabawat is the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor in the Syrian Arab Republic, known for her work in social justice, peacebuilding, and institutional reform. She holds a BA in Economics from the University of Damascus, a Certificate in Conflict Resolution and Arbitration from the University of Toronto, and an MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, and was a Visiting Fellow at Harvard Law School's Negotiation Program. She has led reforms to strengthen social protection systems, rehabilitate care institutions, and launched Syria's first national social protection strategy aligned with the SDGs. Her efforts include harmonizing labor laws with international standards, establishing the National Labor Market Information Platform, and supporting rural women and small enterprises. Previously, she served as Deputy Head of the Syrian Negotiation Commission (2015–2017), directed the Peacebuilding and Interfaith Dialogue Program, taught at George Mason University, and founded Tastakel, which has trained thousands across Syria.



Khalid Abdulaziz Alkhulaifi

Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi is a diplomat and academic specializing in international relations, with a particular focus on small state studies. He has served in various roles at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar. In parallel with his diplomatic career, he is a Senior Expert at the Center for International Policy Research. Dr. Al-Khulaifi holds a PhD in International Relations and Political Science from the Australian National University. He actively contributes to academic and policy discourse through his participation in international conferences and forums, where he presents and publishes research related to his areas of expertise. He is the author of “The Smart Power of Small States: An In-Depth Study of Qatar” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025), which explores how small states can effectively leverage smart power strategies.



H.E. Dr. Majed Mohammed Al-Ansari

H.E. Majed Mohammed Al-Ansari is advisor to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, appointed in 2022. He previously served as director of policy at the Institute of Social and Economic Survey Research at Qatar University, where he was also an assistant professor. Al-Ansari began his career in 2005 as a researcher in international relations at the office of Qatar’s First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He founded and leads the Center for International Policy Research, specializing in political risk analysis, conflict resolution, and Track Two diplomacy. He holds a BA in political science from Leeds University and an MA and PhD in social change from the University of Manchester. He frequently appears as a political commentator and contributes to academic and media outlets.



H.E. Manal Radwan

Manal Radwan is Senior Advisor, Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. She serves as the Head of the Kingdom’s Negotiation Team at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is a Senior Advisor in the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia. Her portfolio focuses on regional security, Iran, nuclear diplomacy, and the revival of peace efforts in the Middle East. A career diplomat, Ms. Radwan has held senior positions in several key diplomatic missions, including the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington, D.C., and the Permanent Missions of Saudi Arabia to both the League of Arab States in Cairo and the United Nations in New York. She previously served as Senior Advisor to the Minister of State for Foreign Relations and to the Minister of State for African Affairs.



Martin Griffiths

Martin Griffiths has fifty years of experience in humanitarian affairs and conflict mediation. He founded the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva in 1999, now the world’s leading private diplomacy institution. He served as the UN Special Envoy for Yemen from 2018 to 2021 and as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator from 2021 to 2024. Griffiths has worked as a frontline aid worker and led humanitarian negotiations, including the Black Sea Grain Initiative. He is renowned for global advocacy on humanitarian funding and rights, addressing crises affecting hundreds of millions worldwide.



Pierre Krähenbühl

Pierre Krähenbühl is Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in April 2024. He has dedicated more than 30 years to the humanitarian sector, including 25 years in prominent roles at the ICRC in delegations and at headquarters. His previous leadership appointments at the ICRC include director of operations (2002-2014) and personal adviser to the President of the ICRC (2000-2002). Prior holding the Director-General position, Mr Krähenbühl was secretary-general to the Assembly at the ICRC (2023-2024). He served as the personal envoy of the ICRC President to China and head of regional delegation for East Asia (2021 -2023). In 2014 he was appointed as commissioner-general and under-secretary general of the United Nations at UNWRA (2014-2019). He holds an MA in political science and international relations from the University of Geneva and Graduate Institute of International Relations.



Wu Chunsi

Wu Chunsi is the director of Center for American Studies, and senior research fellow of Institute of International Strategic and Security Studies, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS). Her research focuses on arms control, nonproliferation, Asia-Pacific security, and China-U.S. relations. She authored *Deterrence: Theories and Missile Defense* (2001) and co-authored *Deterrence and Stability: China-U.S. Nuclear Relationship* (2005), both in Chinese. Before joining SIIS in 2006, Dr. Wu was Associate Professor at Fudan University. She holds a Ph.D. in international relations from Fudan University and was a visiting fellow at The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Moderators & Chairs





Achim Wennmann

Achim Wennmann is the Director for Strategic Partnerships of the Geneva Graduate Institute, and Professor of Practice in the Institute's Interdisciplinary Programme where he holds the Nagulendran Chair in Peace Mediation. He is author of several books and over 100 publications on conflict, peace processes, and political transitions. He is Editor of the Geneva Policy Outlook and serves on the boards of Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships and the Geneva Water Hub. Previously, he was Executive Advisor at the Peace Dividend Initiative, mediation advisor to the EU on Yemen, and Executive Coordinator of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, where he co-founded Geneva Peace Week and the Peace Talks Initiative. His research focuses on mediation practice, post-conflict economic development, and global governance in times of uncertainty.



Aicha El Basri

Aicha El Basri is Researcher at the Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies and former United Nations international staff. From 2000 to 2014, she held various press and communications positions at the United Nations headquarters and in field missions in Sudan, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt. These include the post of Spokesperson for the African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur and Regional Communications Advisor for the UN Population Fund in Cairo. Former researcher at Le Centre de Recherche sur l'Imaginaire at the University of Savoie (1993–1998), France, where she earned a PhD in French Literature. Elbasri has published numerous peer-reviewed papers and a book titled *L'Imaginaire Carcéral de Jean Genet* (l'Harmattan, 2000). She is the lead editor of an upcoming collective volume on the overlooked contribution of Muslim Countries to the Allied Victory in World War II.



Dalia Ghanem

Dalia Ghanem is preeminent expert on Middle Eastern and North African politics, serving as Director of the Conflict and Security Program and a Senior Fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs, where she leads the council's mediation portfolio. Her research focuses on Middle Eastern and North African politics, including issues of political violence, radicalization, civil-military relations, and gender studies. She served as director of the MENA Program and senior analyst at the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). Also, she was a senior resident scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, where she worked extensively on Algeria's complex political, economic, and security landscape. Dr. Ghanem is a member of the Africa Board of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC). She is the author of *Understanding the Persistence of Competitive Authoritarianism in Algeria* (2024). She has also contributed to numerous scholarly publications.



Jonathan Cohen

Jonathan Cohen was appointed Executive Director of Conciliation Resources in 2016. He joined Conciliation Resources in 1997 and developed the South Caucasus programme focusing on dialogue and confidence building initiatives to promote peacebuilding in the South Caucasus. In September 2008 he became Director of Programmes overseeing Conciliation Resources' regional programmes in the South Caucasus, Colombia, West Africa, East and Central Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and India/Pakistan in relation to Kashmir. Jonathan is Chair of the Associates of the Imperial War Museum's Institute for Public Understanding of War and Conflict and is a Board Member of the Peace Dividend Initiative.



Karim Haggag

Karim Haggag is the Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) a leading global independent institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. He is a former career Egyptian diplomat with over 25 years of service in Egypt's diplomatic corps serving in numerous positions focusing Middle East regional security, arms control and non-proliferation, and Arab-Israeli diplomacy. Prior to joining SIPRI he was a Professor of Practice at the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy (GAPP) and Director of the Global Affairs program at the American University in Cairo, and a visiting professor at the Near East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies National Defense University in Washington DC (2011-2013). He is currently a non-resident fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School of Government.



Marwan Kabalan

Marwan Kabalan is the director of political studies at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS). He is also head of the Diplomatic Studies Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Dr. Kabalan chairs the Gulf Studies Forum (GSF) and is a board member of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies. Kabalan served as dean of the Faculty of International Relations and Diplomacy at Kalamoon University. He taught international political theory at the University of Manchester and at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Damascus University. He was also a member of the board of directors at the Damascus University Center for Strategic Studies and Research. His research interests include theory of international politics and foreign and security policy in the Middle East. He is the author of Qatar Foreign Policy: Geography, Politics and Strategy since 1971 (2024).





Mohamad Hamas Elmasry

Mohamad Hamas Elmasry is a Professor in the Media Studies program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He earned his PhD in Mass Communication from the University of Iowa, where he was a Presidential Fellow. Dr. Elmasry's research focuses on Arab media systems, news coverage of race, and the media and terrorism. His work has been published in respected peer-reviewed journals, including *Journalism*, *International Communication Gazette*, *Journalism Practice*, the *International Journal of Communication*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, the *Howard Journal of Communications*, and *Journalism Studies*, among others. Dr. Elmasry has authored numerous political and media analyses for outlets. He has also conducted hundreds of interviews on major television networks, including Al-Jazeera English, CNN, BBC World News.



Randa Slim

Randa Slim is senior fellow and director of the Conflict Resolution and Track II Dialogues program at the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC, and a non-resident fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins SAIS. Her work focuses on Middle East regional and international issues, emphasizing Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. A former vice president of the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, Slim has held senior advisory roles at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the United States Institute of Peace. Since 2004, she has convened Track 1.5 and 2.0 dialogues addressing conflicts, bilateral relations, and regional cooperation frameworks, including as a UN consultant on Yemen negotiations.



Sara Hellmüller

Sara Hellmüller is a research professor at the Geneva Graduate Institute. She is a peace researcher, focusing particularly on UN peace missions in different world orders, mediation and peace processes—especially in Syria and the DR Congo—and the production of knowledge on peace and conflict. Committed to transformative science, she combines in-depth empirical research with direct support for ongoing peace processes. Her previous positions and visiting fellowships include ETH Zurich, Swisspeace, Oxford University, University of Montreal, Bunia University, and Columbia University.



Sultan Al-Khulaifi

Sultan Al-Khulaifi is a senior researcher at the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies, where he focuses on issues of conflict mediation and resolution. He holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Glasgow. Dr. Al-Khulaifi's research primarily examines Qatari foreign policy, with a particular emphasis on its role in conflict mediation and peacebuilding. His work seeks to deepen understanding of Qatar's diplomatic strategies and its contributions to resolving regional and international disputes.



Yasmin Farouk

Yasmin Farouk joined Crisis Group in March 2025 as Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Project Director. She leads the organization's research, analysis, policy, and advocacy on Gulf countries and oversees its work on Yemen. With over 20 years of experience in research and policy on the Gulf region and Egypt, she previously served as senior adviser at the European Institute of Peace, visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and non-resident scholar at Rice University's Baker Institute. She also advised Egypt's Prime Minister's Office and led research at the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding.

