

The Advisory Committee  
of the  
Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa



**Advisory  
Committee**



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The Advisory Committee of the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa is a distinguished group of leaders from the MENA region and Europe, identified by the Institute to guide and support its work, and advice on activities and programmes.

## *Members of the Committee from the MENA-region*



**Dr. Rola A. A. H. Dashti, Executive Secretary UN ESCWA (Kuwait)**

Dr. Rola Dashti of Kuwait was appointed Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in 2019. Dashti is a leading Kuwaiti economist and long-time champion of women's rights and gender equality. From 2012 to 2014, she was Minister for Planning and Development and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs. She played a pivotal role in advocating for the decree to allow Kuwaiti women to vote and run for parliamentary elections. She has also held key positions in research and development institutions such as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and worked for major local and international financial and development institutions such as the National Bank of Kuwait and the World Bank. She won the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe for 2010 together with Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev. She also received the Clinton Global Citizens Award for 2009, the Vital Voices Global Leadership Award for 2006, and the King Hussein Humanitarian award for 2005. Dashti holds a PhD in population dynamics from Johns Hopkins University-Baltimore and a master's degree in economics and finance from California State University-Sacramento.



**Hafsa Halawa, analyst/development expert (Egypt/Iraq/UK)**

Ms. Hafsa Halawa is an independent consultant working on political, social and economic affairs and development goals. She has previously held positions in government, the UN, INGOs/NGOs, corporate multinationals, private firms and think tanks, including ICG, ECFR, and MEI. Halawa has expertise on conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict analysis, development proposals, analysis and programming, democratisation, domestic politics, economy, trade and investment, gender equality, policy planning, political risk, regional and geopolitical dynamics, reconciliation, security, social cohesion, transitional politics including: constitutional affairs, electoral programming, and judicial independence, water security amid broader climate change.



**Dr. Nassif Hitti, former Foreign Minister of Lebanon (LEB)**

Dr Nassif Hitti is Former Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (2020). He served in the League of Arab States for several decades, incl. as the League of Arab States Ambassador to France, UNESCO, Italy, and The Holy See, as well as the Diplomatic Advisor to the Secretary General of the Arab League. Hitti also has extensive experience as a university professor and has published several books, articles and essays on international relations, foreign policies, and issues related to the Middle East and is the author of regular articles for Lebanese and Egyptian newspapers, and a frequent visiting lecturer at universities, research centers, and conferences. Professor Hitti holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Southern California.



**Nadim Houry, Executive Director Arab Reform Initiative (LEB/FR)**

Mr. Nadim Houry is the executive director of the [Arab Reform Initiative](#) (ARI). Prior to ARI, Houry was at Human Rights Watch (HRW) for 13 years where he started and ran HRW's Beirut office for a decade before taking on the role of director of HRW's Terrorism and Counterterrorism Program. During his time at HRW, he worked across the MENA region, particularly on Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan on a range of human rights issues ranging from freedom of expression to abuses by security forces to labour rights. He has conducted extensive research in conflict zones and his writing often focuses on the themes of governance and accountability. A passionate advocate for change in the region, he has addressed the Security Council and the European Parliament on challenges in the Arab world. A lawyer by training, Nadim worked in the UN as Deputy Counsel for the Volcker Commission (investigations Oil-for-Food Program in Iraq).



**Asma Khalifa, co-founder of Khalifa Ihler Institute (Libya)**

Ms Asma Khalifa is a Libyan activist and researcher who has worked on human rights, women's rights, and youth empowerment since 2011. She has spent her career contributing to the building of Libya's civil society and has worked on peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the country. For her efforts, Khalifa received the 2016 Luxembourg Peace Prize during the World Peace Forum in the European Parliament and, in 2017, she was named one of the "100 Most Influential Young Africans" by the Africa Youth Awards. Khalifa is also the co-founder of Tamazight Women's Movement, a think/do tank that is working on gender equality and research on the indigenous women of Libya and North Africa. She is also the co-founder of Khalifa Ihler Institute.



**Dr. Noha al-Mikawy, Dean of the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy AUC (EG)**

Dr. Noha El-Mikawy was recently appointed Dean of the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the American University of Cairo (AUC). Prior to this she was for 10 years Director of the Ford Foundation's Middle East and North Africa office and 2005-2012 she served as team leader for governance at the UNDP regional centre in the Arab region and as policy adviser at UNDP' Oslo Governance Centre in Norway. El-Mikawy has also held several academic research and lecturing positions, incl. at the University of Bonn in Germany AUC, Free University of Berlin and Erlangen-Nuremberg University. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles in Political Science and published three books and multiple articles.

**Members of the Committee from Sweden/Europe**



**Noura Berrouba, President National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations/LSU (SE)**

Ms. Noura Berrouba is the President of the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations since 2022. She was previously working for the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa as a programme officer and interned at the Sweden's Permanent Representation to the EU. Berrouba has also been a Member of the Governing Body of the European Youth Parliament (EYP) and served as Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos in 2019. She also serves on several boards, incl. CONCORD Sweden, Høj Røsten School of Politics, and the foundation Biskops Arnö and in 2016 she was the official Swedish Youth Delegate to the United Nations.



**Dr. Rouzbeh Parsi, Head of MENA Program, Swedish Institute of International Affairs (SE)**

Since 2018 Dr. Rouzbeh Parsi is the Programme head of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (Utrikespolitiska institutet/UI). He is also the co-founder of the European Middle East Research Group, a network of Middle East scholars and policy experts in Europe. He has previously served as Senior Research Fellow at the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) in Paris (2009-2013) and as Senior Lecturer in Human Rights and History at Lund University in Sweden (2013-2018). He holds a Ph.D. from Lund University and M.A. from Uppsala University. His research is primarily focused on the modern history of Iran and societal developments in the Gulf countries.



**Magnus Schöldtz, Senior Advisor at Wallenberg Office, Former Ambassador (SE)**

Amb. Magnus Schöldtz is Senior Advisor at the Wallenberg Foundations AB, a former Swedish Ambassador to the UAE and a board member of the Middle East Institute (MEI). He has served in various diplomatic functions in relation to EU, NATO, and the Middle East. Schöldtz also held positions within United Nations in Lebanon and Somalia, and the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters. He is a member of the Board of Business Sweden, the European Executive Board of the Trilateral Commission, the Expert Group at the Swedish Centre of Eastern European Studies and is associated with the Brookings Institution International Advisory Council. He is a graduate of Lund University and a Stanford Executive Program Alumni.



**Baroness Simone Susskind, Belgian politician and human and women's rights advocate (BE)**

Baroness Simone Susskind-Weinberger worked for decades on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, with focus on gender equality and women's political participation. She was President of the Jewish Secular Community Center (1985-1995); Woman of the Year in 1991; Founding President of Actions in the Mediterranean for the dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians as well as exchanges between European and South Mediterranean societies (1995). She was part of the High-Level Advisory Group formed by Romano Prodi in 2002, to explore the roots of polarization between societies, taking into account the impact of conflicts in the Mediterranean and the broader context of economic globalization, immigration and "identity". She was a member of the Brussels Parliament and the Belgian federal Senate (2014-2019).



**Dr. Nathalie Tocci, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali/IAI (IT)**

Dr. Nathalie Tocci is Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Honorary Professor at the University of Tübingen and independent and non-executive board member of the energy company Eni. She has been Special Advisor to EU High Representatives Federica Mogherini and Josep Borrell. In that capacity, she wrote the [European Global Strategy](#) and worked on its implementation. Tocci has also been Pierre Keller Visiting Professor at the Harvard Kennedy School and has held research positions at the Centre for European Policy Studies, the Transatlantic Academy, the European University Institute, and has taught at the College of Europe, Bruges.

*Ex officio:*



**Maria Sargren Ambassador of Sweden to Jordan (SE)**

Maria Sargren is the Ambassador of Sweden to Jordan since October 2024. She has over thirty years of experience in diplomacy, with a special focus on Development Policy, Multilateral organisations and the European Union (EU). She has previously served as Ambassador of Sweden to Burkina Faso and Cambodia. Her diplomatic career has spanned from the Swedish Permanent Representations to the UN in New York and then Geneva, the Embassy to Zimbabwe, the Swedish Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels in a variety of positions and the European Commission as a seconded national expert. She is a graduate from the University of Goteborg and from the Amsterdam School of International Relations.