

Speaker Bios

Yana Abu Taleb serves as the Jordanian director of EcoPeace Middle East, a regional organization that brings together environmentalists from Jordan, Palestine and Israel to promote sustainable development and advance peace efforts in the Middle East. Abu Taleb serves as a liaison advocating for environmental protection and transboundary water issues while engaging with governmental and private sector figures and organizations. Since joining EcoPeace Middle East in 2000, she has held various positions, including deputy director and regional projects manager. She is a frequent speaker at international conferences, sharing her expertise and insights on environmental preservation, peacebuilding and promoting sustainable development and cooperation through education.

Dr. Thair Abu Ras is an academic who just completed his PhD at the University of Maryland specializing in identity politics, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israeli politics. Thair's dissertation "The Political Reorientation of a National Minority: The Palestinian-Israelis in the Israeli Political Crisis, 2019-2022" sheds light on the developments, mechanisms and apparatus that eventually led to the formation of the first Jewish-Arab government in Israel's history. Thair also has extensive experience in civil society in Israel, working for Mossawa – The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel, Sikkuy-Aufoq: a shared Jewish and Arab nonprofit organization that works to advance equality and partnership between the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel and Jewish citizens of Israel, and the European Union delegation to Israel working on employment equality for Palestinian citizens in Israel.

Yousef Bashir is an advisor and special assistant to the President & CEO of Anera, bringing a wealth of experience in diplomacy, humanitarian work and advocacy. A Palestinian-American author and speaker, he has dedicated his career to peacebuilding and supporting vulnerable communities. A native of Deir al-Balah, Yousef survived a near-fatal injury as a teenager and went on to become a vocal advocate for reconciliation. He holds a doctorate from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He has worked with US and international policymakers on Middle East issues, including posts at the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate and the Palestinian Mission to DC in 2017. Before joining Anera, Yousef authored *The Words of My Father: Love and Pain in Palestine*, a memoir chronicling his journey from war to peace. He is also the founder of the Saif Foundation, which supports children and vulnerable populations in Deir al-Balah. In his role at Anera, he helps expand partnerships and strengthen regional humanitarian efforts.

Jeremy Ben-Ami is the President of J Street, bringing to the role both deep experience in American politics and government and a passionate commitment to the state of Israel. His political resume includes serving in the mid-1990s as the Deputy Domestic Policy Advisor in the White House to President Bill Clinton and working on seven Presidential and numerous state and local campaigns. He was Howard Dean's National Policy Director in 2004 and helped manage a Mayoral campaign in New York City in 2001. For nearly three years in the late 90s, Jeremy lived in Israel, where he started a consulting firm working with Israeli non-profit organizations and politicians. He was chosen by America's weekly Jewish newspaper, *the Forward*, for three years as part of the Forward 50, their compilation of the most influential Jewish Americans. He was one of 50 "People of the Decade" selected by Ha'aretz, the influential Israeli daily newspaper, and the Jerusalem Post included him in its list of the 50 most influential Jews in the world. Ben-Ami received a law degree from New York University and is a graduate of the School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

Gidon Bromberg co-founded EcoPeace Middle East in 1994 and has served as its Israeli Director for three decades. Mr. Bromberg, an attorney by profession, is an alumni of Monash University in Australia, Washington College of Law at American University and Yale University's World Fellows program. Mr. Bromberg has been immersed in the environmental peacebuilding world for over 30 years and has written extensively on the relationship between water issues and Middle East peace. He has presented on these issues before the UN Climate Summit, UN Security Council, US Congress, European Parliament and in other local and international forums. Gidon is a member of the jury of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Award.

Elisa Catalano Ewers is a former senior professional staff member of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, focusing on Middle East policy, Nonproliferation, and Economic Statecraft. With over 20 years of experience, she held key roles in both the Obama and Bush administrations, including Director for Middle East and North Africa at the National Security Council and Senior Policy Advisor to the US Ambassador to the UN. Ewers was also Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. She served as an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security and contributed to major publications like *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, and *Foreign Affairs*. Ewers teaches at Johns Hopkins University and serves on the executive board of the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society. She lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband, Major General John Ewers, USMC (ret), and their children.

Andrew Cohen, originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, attended the University of Michigan from 2012 to 2016 and was a leader of J Street U on campus. After graduating, Andrew moved to Washington, DC, where he worked for Bay Area Congresswoman Anna Eshoo for seven years, most recently serving as a Senior Legislative Assistant specializing in foreign affairs. In this role, Andrew spearheaded Rep. Eshoo's efforts to support the Israeli pro-democracy protests and advised her on responses to the October 7 attacks and the Israel-Hamas War. Following Rep. Eshoo's retirement in January, Andrew was admitted to the University of Texas School of Law, where he will begin his legal studies in August.

Julie Cohen is an Academy Award nominated documentary filmmaker, and winner of the Jewish Film Institute's 2024 Freedom of Expression Award. *The Path Forward*, directed alongside Mo Hussein, takes a constructive approach to the conflict in the Middle East. Previous films include: the Oscar nominated, Emmy winning *RBC* and the Peabody winning *My Name is Pauli Murray*, both directed alongside Betsy West; the Emmy nominated *Every Body*; and the 10 time Audience Choice Award winning *The Sturgeon Queens*. Before becoming a filmmaker, Julie was a staff producer for NBC News.

Nomi Colton-Max is co-chair of the New Jewish Narrative. Previously, Nomi was the Executive Board Chair and Vice President of Ameinu. Nomi is also the Vice President for Programming for the American Zionist Movement. She is also a member of the World Zionist Organization Expanded Executive and involved in Brit Eytz – the World Union of the Labour Zionist Movement. Nomi grew up in Canada in the Habonim-Dror youth movement. She is currently co-chairing the Hatikvah Slate for the WZC elections. Trained as a foreign policy analyst specializing in the Arab World and the Persian Gulf, Nomi earned her undergraduate degree at McGill University and a master's degree from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Nomi has lived, worked and studied in the region and speaks Hebrew, Arabic and French. A past president of Congregation Beth El in South Orange, New Jersey, Nomi continues to be a lay service leader.

Emily Crerand is an experienced political operative with over a decade of expertise in fundraising, campaigns, management and paid communications. She has held several senior level positions in various capacities including at the League of Conservation Voters, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and as Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Chair of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, and Deputy Chief of Staff to US Senator Amy Klobuchar from Minnesota. She is currently serving as Chief of Staff to Rep. Andrea Salinas (OR-06).

Ambassador (ret.) Norman Eisen is the founder and executive chair of the State Democracy Defenders Fund, which has been helping lead the successful national court fights against the Trump Administration, helping secure multiple landmark orders against its authoritarian moves. His work in the courts of law is matched by his efforts in the court of public opinion as the co-founder and publisher of *The Contrarian*, a pro-democracy media platform which has been described as “the hottest new media outlet in America.” He is also the co-founder and former chair of other major non-profits including CREW and States United.

Jennifer Gavito is a nonresident senior fellow with the Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council. She is also a Senior Advisor at the Cohen Group, where she co-leads the firm’s Middle East practice. She has over 25 years of diplomatic experience across Washington, the Middle East and Europe, serving most recently as acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iraq, Iran and public diplomacy. Before retiring in 2024, Gavito was nominated as US ambassador to Libya. She served in diplomatic positions at the National Security Council, DOD, and as Minister-Counselor in London, US Consul General to Bavaria, and political counselor in Jerusalem, among others. She received the 2024 Presidential Rank Award for her contributions to public service, as well as the Joint Civilian Service Meritorious Commendation Medal from the Department of Defense and is a several time recipient of the State Department’s Superior Honor Award. She obtained a BA in economics and international service from American University.

Ilan Goldenberg is a foreign policy and defense expert specializing in the Middle East. With two decades of experience advising US leaders, he has served as Special Advisor to Vice President Kamala Harris on the Middle East during the October 7 Hamas attacks and the Gaza war. He later became the National Director for Jewish Outreach and Policy Advisor on Harris’s 2024 campaign, engaging Jewish voters nationwide on Israel and antisemitism. Previously, he was part of the State Department’s negotiating team for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks under Secretary John Kerry and served as the Iran Team Chief at the Department of Defense, where he developed strategies for potential US-Iran or Israel-Iran conflicts. He is also a prolific writer and commentator, with work appearing in *The Washington Post*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Politico*, *The Atlantic*, and *Haaretz*, and is a frequent guest on CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, and CBS.

Ran Goldstein has extensive work experience in human rights, humanitarian work and media. He is currently IsraAID’s Humanitarian Representative in Washington, DC,

while pursuing a Master's in Public Management at Georgetown University. He also holds a Master's in Political Communication from Tel Aviv University. Previously, he directed the Civil Society Protection Hub and served for eight years as Executive Director of Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI). He also led communications for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Israel and the Occupied Territories and has worked as a media consultant for major civil society organizations. Ran currently serves on the board of the NALA Foundation.

Dr. Hussein Ibish is a senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington and a weekly columnist for *The National* (UAE). He has contributed to *The Atlantic*, *The Daily Beast*, and many other publications. Previously, he was a columnist for *Bloomberg* and Washington, DC correspondent for *The Daily Star* (Beirut). Ibish is the author of *What's Wrong with the One-State Agenda?* (2009) and has edited several studies on Arab American civil rights. He has made thousands of media appearances and was featured in *Foreign Policy's* "Twitterati 100" (2011-2013). He previously served as a senior fellow at the American Task Force on Palestine and communications director for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. He holds a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Qutaiba Idlbi is the director of the Syria Initiative and resident senior fellow with the Rafik Hariri Center and Middle East Programs at the Atlantic Council. His experience includes researching the framework of political imprisonment in Syria, analyzing economic sanctions and forced displacement as a scholar at the Middle East Institute, profiling refugee entrepreneurship in Turkey and Jordan, analyzing security policy in Turkey and Syria and developing governance and security atmospheric reports for the US Joint Special Operations Command. He is a 2013 Leaders for Democracy fellow with the Middle East Partnership Initiative at the US Department of State and a 2016 peace exchange fellow with the Dalai Lama. Idlbi currently serves as a board member of multiple organizations advancing accelerated education and women's empowerment across refugee communities in the Middle East. He received his bachelor's degree in political science from Columbia University and an associate degree in finance and banking from Damascus University.

Christopher Le Mon served in the Biden Administration from 2021-25 as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, focused on human rights across the Middle East and North Africa and on human rights implications of US security assistance worldwide. He previously was Washington Director for Crisis Action and during the Obama Administration served on the National Security Council staff, in the White House Presidential Personnel Office, and

at the State Department. Christopher graduated from NYU Law and the University of California, Santa Cruz, and is a Life Member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Ben Linder was born in Jerusalem and emigrated to the US as a child. He serves as the J Street NYC Development Chair, as well as serving on the Executive Committee of the Silicon Valley chapter. His Israeli roots inspire his passion for J Street's mission. He spent over 3 decades in Silicon Valley in entrepreneurial innovation and leadership positions in software companies. His previous roles include being the founder and CEO of Scalent Systems (acquired by Dell), the SVP of Marketing for Phone.com and VP of Marketing for New Media at Oracle Corporation. Ben is a board member of American Friends of Combatants for Peace and the Groupmuse Foundation. Ben holds a BS in Computer Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Frank Lowenstein served as Special Envoy for Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations and Senior Advisor to Secretary of State John Kerry at the US Department of State from 2014-2017. He played a key role in the nine months of direct talks between the Israelis and Palestinians in 2013-2014 and the Gaza ceasefire negotiations in 2014. He is currently an internationally recognized expert on US foreign policy and Middle East issues, and a regular contributor to major international media outlets.

Nada Majdalani has been the Palestinian Director of EcoPeace Middle East since 2017. She holds a MSc. in Environmental Assessment and Management from Oxford Brookes University and is a PhD Candidate in Geography at the University of Hamburg. Specialized in the field of environmental management, she served in leading technical positions with several international agencies in the areas of infrastructure development, mainly water and sanitation, solid waste management, sustainable production as well as various tasks on institutional capacity building and policy advisory support. Mrs. Majdalani is a strong advocate for peace and reconciliation, regional development and integration. She presented before various prestigious international platforms, including the UN Security Council, NATO, Planetary Security Conference, Berlin Climate Security Conference and the Brookings Institute.

Dr. Gil Murciano is the CEO of Mitvim. Gil served as an expert on Israeli foreign and security policy at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. In collaboration with local partners, he founded the Techne Initiative, which aims to turn members of the Middle-Eastern diaspora in Europe into foreign policy advisers. Gil is a member of the adjunct Faculty of the Hertie School of Governance Berlin, where he serves as a lecturer on the International Politics of the Middle East. He

holds a PhD in International Relations from Freie Universität Berlin and served as Fox Fellow at the MacMillan Center/Yale University. His dissertation focuses on the role of honor in peace negotiations in the Middle East. Gil has also served as a senior foreign policy analyst at the Tel Aviv-based Reut Institute for Strategic Thinking. Additionally, he is a member of the Israeli-Arab forum of the London-based Atkin Foundation.

Shir Nosatzki was a leading figure in the 2011 social justice protests in Israel. In 2017, she founded “Have You Seen the Horizon Lately?”, an organization that promotes democracy and peace, focusing on Jewish-Arab partnership and strengthening the political legitimacy of the Arab community in Israel. During the historic protests against the judicial overhaul in 2023, Nosatzki was in charge of the main stage and speakers, playing a key role in the protests. Following October 7, she led a campaign to highlight stories of Jewish-Arab fellowship, including Arab citizens who risked their lives to save Israelis during the Hamas massacre. Nosatzki has received several awards, including the Dror Prize for Social Change, recognition as one of Israel’s most influential people on social media by The Marker and the 2023 Guardian of Democracy prize from NIF.

Jed Ober is a senior political and management professional with more than a decade of experience in domestic and international politics and advocacy. As the former Senior Director of Programs at Democracy International, he served on the company’s senior management team, representing the organization to US government clients on Capitol Hill and throughout the international community. In 2010, he served as Democracy International’s chief of staff in Kabul for an election observation mission to Afghanistan’s last parliamentary elections. In 2016, he served as the Deputy Director of Delegate Operations for the Hillary Clinton campaign, and in 2018, he was a Senior Advisor for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Until January 2025, he served as the chief of staff for Pennsylvania Congresswoman Susan Wild.

Moien Odeh is an international human rights attorney and PhD candidate at George Mason University Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution. While living in Jerusalem, Moien represented Palestinians in leading public interest cases in Israeli courts. His resume includes: Political and IHL advisor for diplomatic missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah; founder and manager of the legal clinic in East Jerusalem neighborhoods behind the Wall; US State Department “young leader” and participant in the State Department’s “Leaders for Democracy Fellowship” on conflict resolution; fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; fellow at the University of Virginia Center for Politics and Global Perspectives on Democracy; member of the European Academy of Diplomacy; “young legal leader” for the

International Bar Association. Moien is a board member for: Kids FOR Peace, IPICRI and the Peace and Justice Association. Moien holds an LLB and BA (Accounting) from Hebrew University, and an LLM from the University of Pittsburgh. He is a commentator and author in Middle Eastern media and US media.

Rawan Odeh is Partnerships Manager for social impact at monday.com. Prior to joining monday.com, she was the Executive Director of New Story Leadership. She often found herself as the only Palestinian, woman and person under 30 in political halls of power in Congress, the White House and diplomatic channels. She understands that those closest to the problem are closest to the solution and yet they don't have access. She saw the same story working for Women's World Banking in micro-finance for low-income women across the world. Over one billion women remain outside formal financial systems, and that is why she joined monday.com, where she leads partnerships with different social and tech organizations to close the digital divide for nonprofits around the world.

Congressman Jamie Raskin represents Maryland's 8th Congressional District in the US House of Representatives. Now in his fourth term, he serves as the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Previously, Raskin served on the House Judiciary, Rules, and Administration Committees and was the lead impeachment manager in President Trump's second trial. He also served on the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack. Before Congress, Raskin was a three-term Maryland State Senator, leading efforts on marriage equality, the death penalty's abolition and the National Popular Vote Compact. A longtime professor of constitutional law at American University, he has authored several books, including *Unthinkable: Trauma, Truth and the Trials of American Democracy*. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School and a former editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Noa Sattath became the Executive Director of ACRI in November 2021. Noa is an ordained Reform Rabbi and spent the past 11 years as Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), where she was responsible for leading the organization's public strategy regarding religion and state, gender equality and the fight against racism. Noa has been a partner in leading social justice struggles, especially the struggle against the exclusion of women and against the election of racist candidates running for Knesset. Prior to IRAC, Noa served as Executive Director of the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance, where she aided in the historic move to lead the first Pride March in the city. Noa also served as Executive Director for MEET, an organization that uses technology to develop the joint leadership of young Israelis and Palestinians from Israel and the West Bank.

Shripal Shah is a Democratic strategist with more than 20 years of experience in state and federal electoral campaigns. In 2024, he served as the Independent Expenditure Director for House Majority PAC, where he led a \$265 million independent electoral strategy that contributed to Democratic wins in key House races nationwide. Previously, Shripal was a Partner at Left Hook, launching its public affairs practice, and served as Vice President of American Bridge 21st Century, helping elect President Joe Biden and maintain Democratic control of Congress. His experience also includes roles as Communications Director for Senate Majority PAC, Communications Director and Deputy Campaign Manager for US Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), along with positions at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and Democratic National Committee. He resides in Washington, DC with his wife and two sons.

Yehuda Shaul was brought up in a Jewish Orthodox family in Jerusalem. As a teenager, Yehuda studied in a yeshiva based in the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Mikhmas. He began his military service in March 2001 as an infantry combat soldier and later served as commander during the Second Intifada. He finished his service in March 2004, with two years spent in the West Bank. Immediately afterward, Yehuda founded Breaking the Silence (BTS) together with other Israeli soldiers from his unit and served as a co-director until 2019. In 2020, Yehuda left BTS and together with Dana Golan (the co-director of BTS from 2009-2012) founded Ofek: The Israeli Center for Public Affairs. Yehuda currently sits as one of BTS' board members.

Rabbi Amy Joy Small served as Senior Rabbi of Ohavi Zedek Synagogue in Burlington, Vermont, from 2015 until her retirement. She was involved with Jewish Communities of Vermont and Vermont Interfaith Action. Previously, Rabbi Small created and led Deborah's Palm Center for Jewish Learning and Experiences, based in Morristown, NJ. From 1997-2013 she was rabbi of Congregation Beth Hatikvah in Summit, NJ. Rabbi Small is a member of the Clergy Executive Committee of the Rabbinic Cabinet of J Street. She has been involved in interfaith Middle East peace efforts, as a leader in the National Interreligious Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NII) and a co-teacher of "Building Abrahamic Partnerships" at the Hartford Seminary. Small has served in leadership for Religions for Peace, USA and was a delegate to the World Conference of Religions for Peace in Kyoto, Japan, in 2006. Small was recognized with the MetroWest NJ Rabbinic Award, and served as the chairperson for the Rabbinic Cabinet of the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest, NJ.

Dr. Ali Vaez is Crisis Group's Iran Project Director and Senior Adviser to the President. He led Crisis Group's efforts in helping to bridge the gaps between Iran and the P5+1

that led to the landmark 2015 nuclear deal. Previously, he served as a Senior Political Affairs Officer at the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and was the Iran Project Director at the Federation of American Scientists. He is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and a Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He is a co-author of *How Sanctions Work: Iran and the Impact of Economic Warfare*.

Former Congresswoman Susan Wild represented Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley from 2019 to 2025 after flipping the swing district in the 2018 midterms. She served one of the most competitive House districts with a strong focus on fairness and justice for the working class. Before Congress, Wild was Allentown's City Solicitor and brought her dedication to transparency and oversight to Washington. She chaired the House Ethics Committee and later served as its Ranking Member. She also co-chaired the New Democrat Coalition Climate Change Task Force and was vice chair of both the Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus and the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations. Wild, the only Jewish member of Pennsylvania's delegation during her tenure, was one of J Street's most consistent, reliable champions in the House. She remains deeply committed to advancing peace, justice and human rights domestically and internationally.

Efrat Yerday is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Tel Aviv University, researching Ethiopian Jews and Blackness in Israel. Her dissertation, "Ethno-national Citizenship: Ethiopian Jews in Israel between 1955-1975," is set for completion in June 2025. She authored *To Be Black and Beautiful in Israel* (2019) and *Jewish Illegality: The Case of Ethiopian Jews* (2021). She co-edited *The Monk and the Lion: Contemporary Ethiopian Visual Art in Israel* and wrote the epilogue for the Hebrew translation of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. From 2023 to 2024, she was a teaching fellow at the University of Maryland and American University. Beyond academia, her activism is rooted in her experiences as a first-generation daughter of politically active immigrants. She chaired the Association of Ethiopian Jews and founded Ra'av Publishing, the Ethiopolitics reading group and a research group at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. She has also contributed to Haaretz, Ynet and Middle East Eye.

Julie Rodin Zebrak is a veteran DC attorney, political consultant, organizer and fundraiser. She spent 18 years at the Department of Justice, including as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Deputy Attorney General, before serving as Senior Advisor at the US Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). In 2016, she left the government to focus on political consulting and organizing. She founded *Yes Moms Can* and co-founded *Mamas4Kamala* and *JoeMamas*, mobilizing moms nationwide

in support of Democrats. Zebrak also mentors young adults pursuing public policy and government careers. A leading voice on law and politics, she contributes to *Washington Monthly* and has been featured in *CNN*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and more. She serves on the board of the Jewish Democratic Council of America, on the board of CHOICES Center for Reproductive Health, and is a contributor to *The Contrarian*.