



## **UNAOC Fellowship Alumni Event**

*“The Role of Media and Civil Society  
in Fostering Peace”*

December 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> – New York, U.S.A.



Federal Foreign Office

The UNAOC Fellowship Programme is made possible by grants from the Federal Foreign Office of Germany

## – Participants Biographies –



**Athar Ahmad (U.K., 2017 EUNA cohort)** Athar is a multi-award winning reporter and documentary maker for the BBC. His work focuses on exploring the nuances and intricacies of minority communities and groups, providing a platform for voices and ideas often ignored by the mainstream media. Athar's work is renowned for its robust, analytical yet sensitive deconstruction of often complicated issues, from an undercover investigation into the sexual exploitation of divorced Muslim women in the UK, to his award winning documentary on mental health conditions faced by men with body image issues. Athar regularly appears across international BBC news programmes, providing analysis and insight on television, radio and online. He has presented feature length documentaries for the BBC World Service and has made films for a number of the BBC's flagship news programmes. Athar's tenaciousness in delivering original forms of journalism has seen him recognized as a key ethnic minority voice within the industry, leading to a nomination for Specialist Journalist of the year at the 2017 British Journalism Awards, seen as the UK's equivalent to the Pulitzer Prize. Athar also has a MA in Broadcast Journalism from City University, London.



**Aziza Benlamoudi (Algeria, 2016 MENA cohort)** Aziza holds a BA in Applied Linguistics and an MA in Language Sciences from Biskra University, Algeria. She served as an ESP teacher for Architecture students at Biskra University before pursuing a career in education as an EFL secondary school teacher at the Algerian Ministry of Education since 2012. As an educator, Aziza has been passionate about Project-based learning, intercultural dialogue, and citizenship education. She also wrote articles for "Teach Middle East" Magazine, UAE. Besides her career path, she has also been engaged in many civil society initiatives, which enabled her to build a strong network that led her to co-found "Algerian Youth Voices" in 2014, while also participating in prestigious programs, such as the Young Leaders Visitors Programme in 2017.



**Elena D'Angelo (Italy, 2017 EUNA cohort)** Elena graduated in Political Science, MSc in Transnational Cooperation and Development at the University of Turin. She holds a BA in Media Languages, Theory and Practices of Information, at the Catholic University of Milan and, in 2015, she specialized in Research Methods and Techniques at ECPR, in Ljubljana. She joined the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research

Institute (UNICRI) in 2010, where she is currently working. Her work is mainly focused on applied research, training for law enforcement and legal professionals and technical cooperation. Elena is the author and co-author of several publications on the following topics: organized crime, illicit trade and supply chain security, data protection, anti-discrimination, including gender-based violence and online hate speech. She was recently heard by the Commission Jo Cox at the Italian Chamber of Deputies on UNICRI activities on anti-discrimination and hate speech. Since 2016 she is visiting fellow at the United Nations University (UNU-ViE SCYCLE), mainly dealing with environmental issues and sustainable policies. She is also a consultant for the Research Institute on Crime and Security (RiSSC), dealing with hate crime and hate speech related activities. Before joining UNICRI, Elena worked with multiple international organizations and NGOs in Belgium, Brazil and Iran, both at the institutional level and in the field, dealing with development and gender-related issues. She is an activist for the rights of refugees, migrants and LGBT people. She volunteers for the Italian branch of the international network Refugees Welcome.



**Emad Badi (Libya, 2017 MENA cohort)** Recognizing the urgent need for Libya to undergo a post-Arab Spring cultural change in 2012, Emad worked as an international soft skills trainer at Dale Carnegie Training, focused on engaging Libyans to solve conflicts via dialogue. To this day, Emad continues promoting dialogue-based solutions through his work in civil society on two fronts. Emad is CEO of Project Silphium, a Libyan NGO, that he has

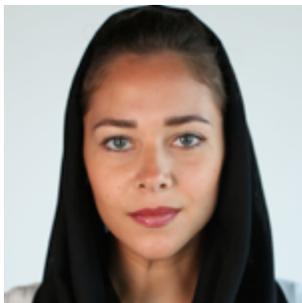
helped become a trusted platform promoting gender equality and advocating for women involvement in peace-building solutions. Emad also actively champions SCR2250/SCR1325 on Youth/Women involvement in Peace and Security, having represented Libya in the Arab States Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security in Amman and delivered tangible recommendations on their application in Libya and MENA. Emad's works full-time with Peaceful Change Initiative, an international peace-building organization, where he assumes a dual role: he leads on the Conflict Sensitivity Analysis for UNDP's Stabilization Facility and consults

on the alignment of community-led initiatives with social peace and local development needs. Through this work, Emad channels PCI's vision of empowering local leaders to build sustainable and conflict sensitive peace building initiatives.



**Emna Ben Yedder (Tunisia, 2012 MENA cohort)**

Emna has worked in investment banking for years. She is now co-leading Medico Consult, a Tunisian company acting in the field of medical devices. Through her involvement in the “Centre des Jeunes Dirigeants, (“CJD”), she is working on strengthening networks of young business leaders in Tunisia through capacity building activities. Together, they advocate for reforms and a better business environment. Emna is also the co-founder of various civil society initiatives dedicated to foster local governance in Tunisia. Through grassroots projects, she works on raising political and cultural awareness among citizens to encourage their participation in the transition process. She recently got involved in an initiative called “Le 15” in Tunis, focusing on entrepreneurship and gathering in the same place actors from the whole value chain of entrepreneurship; from inspiration to successfully established entrepreneurs. Within this initiative, she co-opened a gallery with the goal to democratize access to art and favor the development of cultural startups. Emna holds a Masters in Business specializing in finance from the NEOMA Business School. She speaks English, French, Arabic and Spanish.



**Fatima Al Banawi (Saudi Arabia, 2017 MENA cohort)**

Fatima is a social consultant and artist. She graduated with a Master’s Degree in Theological Studies from Harvard University in 2015, while exploring exoteric hermeneutics in Islamic Studies, and tracing gender, cultural, and religious representations in contemporary literature and film. Her work in consultancy includes projects for the Family Protection Society, Islamic Development Bank, and Petro-Rabigh. However, with her persistence to deepen the conversation between social impact work and the arts, she has embraced a multi-hyphenate profession combining consultancy, writing, and acting. In 2010, Fatima co-founded the Theatre of the Oppressed Jeddah Chapter. In 2015, she founded The Other Story Project; a platform that collects personal life stories & reproduces them in art form, with an aim for psychosocial development and a reshaping of the public narrative about Saudi society. In 2016, Fatima became internationally recognized for her debut in the award winning, Saudi’s

submission to the Oscars, feature film, *Barakah Meets Barakah*. She recently co-starred in a new TV series, *Bashar*, and continues to do so as an instinctive response to her natural talent in acting.



**Hayder Al Shakeri (Iraq, 2017 MENA cohort)**

Hayder is a youth advocate from Iraq who worked on development and youth issues in Iraq and MENA. He has an interest in post-conflict development and youth participation in decision making in addition to an interest in media specifically citizen journalism. Hayder finished his Bachelors degree at the American University in Beirut and worked after that in different parts of Iraq for three years prior to moving to London to finish his Masters degree in Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Hayder has a passion for volunteering and volunteered in many youth initiatives including a project with the United Nations Development Program in Iraq, Startup weekend Baghdad, the Lebanese Red Cross, TEDxBeirut, Ahalna campaign and others. Additionally Hayder is an alumni of the Tomorrow's Leaders program from the Middle Eastern Partnership Initiative at AUB, an alumni of the Young Leaders Visitors Program from the Swedish Institute, a fellow at HIVOS for IGMENA and currently a holder of the Chevening Scholarship to finish his Masters degree in London.



**Jasmin Hasic (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2017 EUNA cohort)**

Jasmin is an Assistant Professor at International Burch University. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Universite libre de Bruxelles and LUISS Guido Carli of Rome. His research interests revolve around diaspora studies and demographic changes associated with post-conflict migration, along with peace-building and transitional justice in multicultural societies. As a part of this Ph.D. research, he conducted fieldwork in 25 local communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He currently serves as the Executive Director of Humanity in Action Bosnia-Herzegovina, an international non-profit focused on minority and human rights. He has worked as a Research Analyst at the Centre for Security Studies in Sarajevo and as a legal associate at the Crime Suppression and Re-Socialization Initiative focusing on evaluating the efficacy of the Bosnian penal system reform. He has completed professional traineeships at the European Parliament and the Bosnian Embassy in Brussels. Jasmin holds an LL.B., and an LL.M. (Hon) from the University of Sarajevo. He completed his undergraduate education at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, majoring in International

Relations and European studies, and holds an M.A. degree in Political Science from Central European University.



**Khalil El Masry (Egypt, 2014 MENA cohort)**

Khalil is a peace engineer and activist. He currently works as a consultant to the project “Advancing Inter-religious Peace-building” in Minya in partnership with Catholic Relief Services. He works with local communities, religious leaders, media representatives, and Muslim and Christian youth in order to foster peace-building in their villages. Khalil is the co-founder of "Selmiyah"

(Peacefully) movement promoting culture of peace and building bridges of trust within the Egyptian society, and coordinating the efforts of the different stake holders. He is also a member of different peace-building and intercultural exchange networks such as Initiatives of Change, Caux Scholars Program Alumni, and MitOst. Khalil worked as a consultant in different projects promoting civic engagement, peace, and co-existence in partnership with international organizations such as GIZ, Save the Children, British Council, and UNHCR. He also facilitated many workshops promoting citizenship, non-violent communication, and peaceful conflict resolution. In 2010, Khalil founded "Madad for Information Technology" a company which main mission is to provide IT support to the civic society in Egypt. Last year, he launched a new training program called "Peace Engineers" to build the capacity of more network weavers for peace. Now, he's managing "El-Midan" (The Square) portal, an online platform dedicated to support the efforts and activities promoting a culture of peace all over the world. Recently, he has been appointed as a lead trainer for UNAOC peace-builders program in MENA region.



**Klara Hoskova (Germany, 2017 EUNA cohort)**

Klara works at the intersection of intercultural education, documentary film and democratization research. She is the coordinator of media programs (literacy, multiperspectivity and art) at the German UNESCO-School of Prague, where she teaches German literature and global history. She engages high-school students on rethinking critical consumption and production of media

content. Her academic work focuses on democratization processes in the former Communist block, more particularly on the importance of civil society and the transparency of media for a stable democracy. Over the past years, she has been involved in different projects related in the fields of civil society and education, and contributed to develop media and educational content for the Council of

Europe and for film festivals and cultural institutes. In 2017, her students' work has been selected to participate in "Who else? Leading youth towards civil engagement", an initiative of "One World Film Festival", an International film festival focusing on Human Rights. Klara is currently working on a documentary film focusing on the Muslim community in Prague and researching on multiperspective history teaching in (post-)conflict areas.



**Manal Elattir (Morocco, 2010 MENA cohort)**

Manal is a social entrepreneur determined to impact the lives of women and youth across Africa and Middle East igniting their power to bring about positive economic and social change. In 2012, Manal launched Anarouz, the first social business in Morocco that aims at empowering women in rural areas through leadership, entrepreneurship and market access. She, then launched a global ecommerce business ASILASHOP that partners with women-led handicraft businesses and cooperatives to create a new luxury style that fosters ethical fashion, preserves Morocco's craft heritage and empowers women entrepreneurs. Before becoming an entrepreneur, Manal was the director of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Alumni Network in Morocco. Manal has been recognized at the international level for all the work that she has done. She took part in the FORTUNE Most Powerful Women program, Women Leaders of the World by the Global Women Leadership Network, VITAL VOICES Lead Fellow. She also won various awards: Architects of the future award, the Australia Middle East Media Women's Award and the World of difference award by the International Alliance of Women. Manal is a motivational speaker and an international public speaker on issues ranging from entrepreneurship, youth employment, women's rights and intercultural dialogue.



**Roda Siad (Canada, 2015 EUNA cohort)**

Roda is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and researcher who is passionate about producing films for social change. In 2012, she co-founded Borderless Films, a Calgary-based independent production company that creates impact through storytelling. She has conducted research in southern Europe on the global refugee crisis. Her report entitled *Italy's Ten-Year Emergency: Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in light of the Dublin II Regulation* was presented at the 2020 Vision for Humanity Symposium hosted by the University of Calgary. She went on to produce *Living at the Border*, a web documentary that shares the stories of African migrants and asylum seekers

living in Italy. The project won a 2014 Amnesty International Canada Media Award for best online journalism. Her most recent project, “*19 Days*”, is a short documentary for the National Film Board of Canada that explores the settlement experiences of refugee families. The film received several awards and was included in the Toronto International Film Festival’s Social Justice, in Short programme. *19 Days* has been screened across Canada, the US, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UK, the Czech Republic and Japan. She holds a Master’s degree in Media Production from Ryerson University in Toronto.



**Shawn Lent (U.S.A., 2010 EUNA cohort)** Shawn moves this world as both a program manager and a social practice dance artist, with experience from a field in Bosnia to a children’s cancer hospital in revolutionary Egypt. Shawn currently serves as a blogger, facilitator, guest lecturer and speaker, Program Director for Chicago Dance-makers Forum and project lead for Dance Peace. Previously, Shawn was the EducationUSA Advising Coordinator at AMIDEAST Cairo, working with the US Embassy Cairo. She is honoured to have been a U.S. Fulbright Scholar, UNAOC International Fellow, presenter at Hope College and University of Maryland, and the Commencement Speaker for Millikin University in 2014. Shawn holds a masters degree in Arts Management - Arts for Youth and Community Development from Columbia College Chicago.



**Taras Dzyubansky (Ukraine, 2015 EUNA cohort)** holds a B.A. in Philosophy and studied at various papal institutes in the Vatican. He obtained his PhD in Theology and Interreligious Dialogue in 2012. Taras has deepened his involvement in interfaith dialogue by working in Kazakhstan and in Eastern Ukraine. In 2010, he received a prestigious Russell Berrie Fellowship in Interreligious Studies, which enabled him to pursue his doctoral degree and to get acquainted with the study of Judaism and other religions. Since October 2012, Taras has been working as an adviser to the mayor of Lviv for religious and ecumenical issues. In May 2013, he inaugurated an interfaith centre “Libertas”, the first of its kind in Ukraine. Since its creation, the centre has held over 40 ecumenical and interreligious events in view of promoting dialogue and understanding among different religious groups. Taras has been awarded with several distinctions related to his innovative approach on interfaith dialogue and social issues. For the past three years, he served as an adviser to the President of the Lviv Chamber of Commerce and Industry on social issues. He now teaches at

the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine and he coordinates an international group of alumni who are engaged in various interfaith initiatives. Author of three books, Taras is strongly committed to promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue.



**Tomas Horvath (Slovak Republic, 2017 EUNA cohort)** Tomas is an experienced manager in NGO, private sector and official institutions. He has worked for several organizations and volunteered on projects in Europe, North America and Africa. He is a member of national and international initiatives, Director of sobi - CSO focused on eco-social impact, Manager at the Slovak NGDO Platform leading an EU project focused on SDGs and Policy Coherence, and Member of the Steering Committee of the Health Initiative Association. Tomas is also actively involved in Health and Education projects in Uganda and participate in the project of Standard Procedures at the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic as Publicity Manager and Activities Coordinator. Lately, Tomas was accepted into the UNLEASH community and recognized as a young SDGs Talent and Innovator and participated in the preparation of the National SDGs Plan in Slovakia as a Consultant to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the Slovak Republic.



**Yousef Alhelou (State of Palestine, 2012 MENA cohort)** Yousef is a Palestinian broadcast journalist, documentary filmmaker and political analyst based in London, U.K. For the last four years, Yousef has been working for Al-Araby TV Network, covering the U.K. and Europe. He recently became the host and producer of an English broadcast program that focuses exclusively on Palestine, in addition to his role as a field reporter. His work has also been featured in a variety of local and international media outlets in broadcast, print and online such as BBC, US Today, Aljazeera, Middle East Monitor, Middle East Eye, The Real News Network, CBC radio Canada, New Zealand TV, UN Observer, PressTV, Maan News Agency among many others. In 2011 Yousef participated in the UN-DPI program. As a Reuters Journalist fellow, he attended the University of Oxford in 2013 and he is currently pursuing his MA in International Relations at Brunel University in London. Before relocating to the U.K. in 2013, Youssef was reporting from Gaza and covered the two Israeli wars on Gaza in 2008 and 2012, the arrival of siege-breaking boats as well the

political rivalry between Fatah and Hamas since 2007. Yousef currently runs a Facebook page called “Gaza TV News” that has nearly 300,000 followers.