

In Celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Arab-American Day  
**the League of Arab States and the United States Institute of Peace**  
*present*



**THE ARAB WOMAN:  
ENHANCING LEADERSHIP  
AND RESILIENCE**



*Monday, December 5, 2016  
10:00 AM to 3:15 PM*

The League of Arab States adopted a regional action plan on women, peace and security in partnership with UN Women in October 2015, highlighting the need to empower Arab female leaders to strengthen institutions and help communities address conflict peacefully. On December 5, to mark the Fifth Annual Arab-American Day, the League of Arab States and the U.S. Institute of Peace will host a discussion with Arab women leaders, academics and policymakers on how education and economic opportunities can engage women and men in supporting women's voices, equality and success.

**Program Agenda**

9:00—10:00 AM

**Registration**

*Women's Stories* art exhibition on display. Refreshments served.

10:00—10:20 AM

**Opening Remarks**

**Nancy Lindborg**, *Welcoming Remarks*  
President, U.S. Institute of Peace

**Ambassador Inas Mekkawy**, *Introductory Remarks*  
Head of Women, Family and Childhood Department, the League of Arab States

10:20—11:45 AM

**Session 1: Empowering Women and Building Resilience**

Social and economic empowerment of women has been shown to strengthen stability and resilience. This panel will explore opportunities for the League of Arab States to invest in supporting women's empowerment for the region's peace and prosperity.

**Randa Fahmy**, *Moderator*  
Founder and President, Fahmy  
Hudome International

**Nadereh Chamlou**, *Panelist*  
International Development Advisor,  
Board Member of Arab International  
Women's Forum

**Manal Omar**, *Panelist*  
Associate Vice President, Center for  
Middle East and Africa, U.S. Institute  
of Peace

**Hibaaq Osman**, *Panelist*  
Founder & CEO, El Karama

**Donald Steinberg**, *Panelist*  
CEO, World Learning

11:45 AM—1:15 PM      **Luncheon and Keynote Address**

**Ilhan Omar**, *Keynote Address*  
Minnesota State Representative

**Dr. Linda Bishai**, *Moderator*  
Director of North Africa Programs, U.S. Institute of Peace

1:15—2:45 PM

**Session 2: The Up-and-Coming Arab Woman**

From the national level to the grassroots, Arab women continue to face and overcome challenges to lead their countries and communities, while empowering one another. This panel will feature success stories of Arab women leaders breaking barriers, assess Arab and global initiatives focusing on women, and make recommendations for greater inclusivity.

**Dr. Kathleen Kuehnast**, *Moderator*  
Senior Gender Advisor, U.S. Institute  
of Peace

**Marwa Alkhairo**, *Panelist*  
Manager of Partnership  
Development, International Youth  
Foundation

**Sali Osman**, *Panelist*  
Cybersecurity Risk Advisory,  
Ernest and Young, and “One  
to Watch” Award from  
Executive Women’s Forum

**Hajar Sharief**, *Panelist*  
Co-Founder, *Libya Ma’an*  
*Nabneeha*

2:45—3:15 PM

**Closing Remarks**

**Dr. Sahar Mohamed Khamis**  
Professor of Middle East  
Media and Communications,  
University of Maryland

**Amy Schedlbauer**  
Director of the Office of Regional  
Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs,  
U.S. Department of State

## Speaker Bios



**Marwa Alkairo** joined International Youth Foundation in 2012 after working with the Carter Center as an elections consultant in Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, and on the South Sudan Referendum. Prior to that, Marwa worked at the Institute for the Study of International Migration where she conducted research and organized policy briefings on U.S. temporary work programs and spearheaded a conference entitled Moving Forward with the Iraqi Refugee Situation in Syria. Marwa was Business Manager/Researcher for Quilting Point Productions, which produced the documentary series “What is Said About Arabs and Terrorism.” She received her Master of Arts in Arab Studies from Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service and Bachelor of Arts in Government and International Politics from George Mason University. Marwa’s extensive research on the Iraqi diaspora culminated in her thesis study, “Iraqi Diasporic Identity Across Generations, Struggle, and War,” which she was invited to present at many conferences and lectures. Marwa is Iraqi-American and a native Arabic speaker.

**Dr. Linda Bishai** is the director of North Africa Programs at USIP. She has focused on peacebuilding education and training, electoral violence prevention, countering violent extremism and security sector/community dialogue. Bishai was responsible for a series of programs on electoral violence prevention in Sudan before the general elections and the South Sudan referendum and co-teaches the Preventing Electoral Violence in Africa course at USIP. She has also worked on police/community dialogue programming and developing violence prevention programming for upcoming elections in Africa. Bishai has worked with university educators to support peacebuilding concepts and courses in diverse fields and curricula. Before USIP, Bishai was an assistant professor of political science at Towson University, teaching courses in international relations, international law, the use of force and human rights. She currently teaches international law and the use of force as an adjunct professor at the George Washington University. She has also taught at Brunel University, the London School of Economics, the University of Stockholm and Georgetown University. Her research interests include identity politics, liberal internationalism, and the international use of force. During 2003-2004, Bishai served as a Supreme Court Fellow at the Federal Judicial Center, where she worked on an introduction to international human rights law for the federal judiciary. Bishai holds a B.A. in history and literature from Harvard University, a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center and a Ph.D. in international relations from the London School of Economics.





**Nadereh Chamblou** is an international development advisor. Before that, she was Senior Advisor at the World Bank. In her more three decades with the World Bank, she held technical, coordination, managerial, and advisory positions in such areas as economic management, private sector development, financial markets, knowledge economy, sustainable development and infrastructure, corporate governance, and gender and development. She has worked on Latin America, East Asia and Pacific, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). She authored seminal reports on issues related to economic competitiveness, talent pool, and diversity. Among them: “Corporate Governance: A Framework for Implementation,” which led to the establishment of the OECD/World Bank’s Global Corporate Governance Forum; “Gender and Development in MENA– Women in the Public Sphere”; “The Environment for Women’s Entrepreneurship in MENA”; and, “Women, Work, and Welfare in the MENA.” She serves on several non-profit boards related to MENA and Iran. She was a 2015 recipient of The International Alliance for Women’s “Making a Difference” global award.

**Randa Fahmy** has more than twenty-five years of legal and public policy experience. In 2003, Ms. Fahmy launched Fahmy Hudome International (FHI), a strategic consulting firm, which provides critical advice and counsel to Fortune 500 companies, foreign governments, media organizations, and private sector entities with an interest in international business transactions and energy policy. Prior to founding FHI, Ms. Fahmy was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as the United States Associate Deputy Secretary of Energy. Working with the White House and the Departments of State and Commerce, she developed and implemented international energy policy. Ms. Fahmy was also the point person at the Department of Energy for increased advocacy on behalf of American energy companies seeking business around the globe. Prior to government service, Ms. Fahmy was a practicing attorney with the law firm of Willkie, Farr and Gallagher, where she specialized in the areas of international trade and corporate litigation.



**Dr. Sahar Mohamed Khamis** is an expert on Arab and Muslim media, and the former Head of the Mass Communication and Information Science Department in Qatar University. She is a former Mellon Islamic Studies Initiative Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago. She is the co-author of the books: “Islam Dot Com: Contemporary Islamic Discourses in Cyberspace” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and “Egyptian Revolution 2.0: Political Blogging, Civic Engagement and Citizen Journalism” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Additionally, she authored and co-authored numerous book chapters, journal articles and conference papers, regionally and internationally, in both English and Arabic. She is the recipient of a number of prestigious academic and professional awards, as well as a member of the editorial boards of several journals in the field of communication, in general, and the field of Arab and Muslim media, in particular. Dr. Khamis is a media commentator and analyst, a public speaker, a human rights commissioner in the Human Rights Commission in Montgomery County, Maryland, and a radio host, who presents a monthly radio show on “U.S. Arab Radio” (the first Arab-American radio station broadcasting in the U.S. and Canada).

**Dr. Kathleen Kuehnast** is the senior gender advisor at the U.S. Institute of Peace, where she has worked since 2008. She is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. As a socio-cultural anthropologist, Kuehnast has focused on the different gendered impacts of violence and conflict on both men and women. In addition, her efforts have focused on the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325, including the critical role women should play in all aspects of peacebuilding. In this capacity, Kuehnast co-edited the volume, “Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century” (2011). She has been a part of the international vanguard of introducing the concept of engaging men in conflict countries in the championing of women’s rights. Prior to USIP, Kuehnast worked 15 years in the international development



field, primarily with the World Bank, where her role as a senior social scientist included research and project management on the thematic streams of women and poverty, social capital and community driven development in fragile and post-conflict societies. Kuehnast’s regional expertise is Central Asia, where she lived for several years in the post-Soviet country of Kyrgyzstan completing her doctoral dissertation research, which resulted in a number of publications on the impact of post-Soviet transition on Muslim women, including the co-edited volume, “Post-Soviet Women Encountering Transition: Nation Building, Economic Survival, and Civic Activism” (2004). Dr. Kuehnast is a recipient of the post-doctorate Mellon Foreign Fellowship at the Library of Congress, and also a former post-doctorate Kennan Institute Fellow at the Wilson Center. Kuehnast is the 2015 recipient of the Perdita Huston Human Rights Award of the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area. Kuehnast holds a doctorate in socio-cultural anthropology from the University of Minnesota.



**Nancy Lindborg** has served since February, 2015, as President of the United States Institute of Peace, an independent institution founded by Congress to provide practical solutions for preventing and resolving violent conflict around the world. Ms. Lindborg has spent most of her career working in fragile and conflict affected regions around the world. Prior to joining USIP, she served as the assistant administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) at USAID. From 2010 through early 2015, Ms. Lindborg led USAID teams focused on building resilience and democracy, managing and mitigating conflict and providing urgent humanitarian assistance. Ms. Lindborg led DCHA teams in response to the ongoing Syria Crisis, the droughts in Sahel and Horn of Africa, the Arab

Spring, the Ebola response and numerous other global crises. Prior to joining USAID, Ms. Lindborg was president of Mercy Corps, where she spent 14 years helping to grow the organization into a globally respected organization known for innovative programs in the most challenging environments. She started her international career working overseas in Kazakhstan and Nepal. Ms. Lindborg has held a number of leadership and board positions including serving as co-president of the Board of Directors for the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition; co-founder and board member of the National Committee on North Korea; and chair of the Sphere Management Committee. She is a member of Council on Foreign Relations. She holds a B.A and M.A. in English Literature from Stanford University and an M.A. in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.



**Ambassador Inas Sayed Mekkawy** is a high-level diplomat at the League of Arab States. She has an experience for more than 25 years in Arab and international affairs, sustainable development, women's empowerment, setting and implementing the developmental projects at national and regional levels. She has worked with regional and international organizations on planning, implementing and evaluating programmes in the fields of social development, governance, and women's empowerment. She has long experience on Arab and African affairs, strategic planning, policy-making, and regional partnerships on women's empowerment with the United Nations. Also, with implementing Millennium Development Goals, participating developing the sustainable development agenda for post-2015,



expanding partnership and cooperation between the Arab region and other regional groups, especially African and South American countries on promoting and advancing women and childhood rights and conditions on the regional and international levels. Ambassador Mekkawy is currently Director of the Women, Family and Childhood Department at the League of Arab States. She worked as a Coordinator for the 2nd Arab African Summit in 2010. She had a pioneering role on holding the 1st Arab Women's Summit, in Cairo, and all subsequent regional forums to empower women at the Arab level. She has a deep knowledge and understanding of the status of women's rights, in Egypt, as well as on the issues of women, peace and security during armed conflicts at the regional level. In addition, she is the founder of Bahia Ya Masr movement and the Standing Committee for Egyptian Women. She worked at different political, social and cultural levels, and on issues of human rights, gender equality, empowerment and advancement of women and childhood conditions at regional and international levels. This is in addition to her work in projects of civil education and awareness, promotion of cultural cooperation, and the Arab international cooperation with UN organizations, EU, European Parliament and some of the other Arab, regional and international organisations and institutions in the different sustainable development fields.



**Ilhan Omar** is the newly elected, Minnesota House Representative for District 60B. She is the first Somali-American, Muslim woman in the nation to hold an office at this level. She is an experienced policy analyst, progressive DFL activist, coalition builder and community educator. Most recently, she served as the Director of Policy Initiatives at Women Organizing Women, where she empowered East African woman to take civic leadership roles in their community. Ilhan lives in the West Bank neighborhood of Minneapolis with her husband and their three children. Ilhan's interest in politics began at the age of 14 when she was an interpreter for her grandfather at local DFL caucuses. Watching neighbors come together to advocate for change at the grassroots level made Ilhan fall in love with the democratic process. Ilhan's steadfast belief in the American dream of democracy has driven her to make our district, city, and community a better place for everyone. Through her

work as a policy analyst and community advocate, Ilhan has advanced important issues, including support for working families, educational access, environmental protection, and racial equity.

**Manal Omar** is the associate vice president for the Middle East and Africa Center. Previously, she was regional program manager for the Middle East for Oxfam - Great Britain, where she responded to humanitarian crises in Palestine and Lebanon. Omar has extensive experience in the Middle East. She worked with Women for Women International as regional coordinator for Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan. She also served as an international advisor for the Libya Stabilization Team in Benghazi in 2011. Omar lived in Baghdad from 2003 to 2005 and set up operations in Iraq. She launched her career as a journalist in the Middle East in 1996. UNESCO recruited her to work on one of her first lead assignments in Iraq in 1997-1998. Omar also spent more than three years with the World Bank's development economics group. She has carried out training programs in Yemen, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Sudan, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Kenya and many other countries. Omar's activities have been profiled by the *Washington Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the BBC, NPR, *Glamour*, the *London Times* and *Newsweek*. Her articles and opinion pieces have appeared in the *Guardian*, the *Washington Post*, *Foreign Policy*, *Azizah Magazine* and *Islamica Magazine*. Omar is on the advisory board of Peaceful Families Project, an organization with international reach that recognizes domestic violence is a form of oppression that affects people of all faiths. She also serves on the advisory board of Prosperity Catalyst and Women's Voices Now. She was named among Top 500 World's Most Influential Arabs by Arabia Business Power in 2011 and 2012, and among the 500 Most Influential Muslims in the World by Georgetown University and The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in 2009. In 2007, *Islamic Magazine* named her one of the ten young visionaries shaping Islam in America. She holds a master's degree in Arab studies from Georgetown University and a bachelor's degree in international relations from George Mason University.



**Hibaaq Osman** is the founder and CEO of Karama, a movement to end violence against women and promote women's participation in public life across the Arab region. Hibaaq's work focuses on building change at the grassroots level, a system that combines the knowledge and credibility of activists based in the community with Hibaaq's political and strategic expertise. By working in this way, Karama has launched and built resilient, sustainable and mutually supportive movements in 14 Arab countries, as well as the Arab Regional Network on Women, Peace and Security. Karama's support and training programmes have reached tens of thousands of women from Morocco to Yemen, from Lebanon to Somalia, all the time elevating local activists to become national, regional and international voices. Karama and its partners have secured positive change for women across the Arab region through advocacy and activism. Widely recognised for her work with Karama, Hibaaq has been named one of the 500 Most Influential Muslims, and formerly served as a member of UN Women's Global Civil Society Advisory Group.

**Sali Osman** is an internationally recognized Cybersecurity, Audit, & Risk professional with extensive leadership, consulting, speaking, and teaching experience working to make a significant contribution to the Security Industry. As a leading Subject Matter Expert with Sarbanes Oxley (SOX) and Payment Credit Industry (PCI) expertise within Cloud and Mobile environments, Sali currently serves in the Advisory practice of Ernst & Young LLP. With an early career in law enforcement, Sali has 20 years in IT and 10 in Security & Risk executive leadership. Sali has served in senior officer roles with major global Fortune 50 companies and a sought-after Subject Matter Expert for Audit committee briefings. She serves as trusted executive and board advisor in Security Governance and compliance. Sali occasionally publishes and edits security books and publications, and is a frequent



voice for the industry on TV and speaking at international conferences. She has hands on experience in Security within multiple industries: Media, Higher Education, Finance, Government, Oil & Gas. She has extensive program management experience with implementing security & risk initiatives enterprise-wide and managing projects in both centralized and decentralized security environments. One example of program initiatives was her role as the first female advisor in risk management for ARAMCO. Sali believes it is her responsibility and honor to share her knowledge and inspiration to lift up the next generation of Security and Risk Leaders. Sali enjoys mentoring young professionals and training (Teaching Assistant) in the U.S. Cyber Challenge Program under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and as a mentor in the CyberLympics. She is founder of the Cyber Ninjettes, teaching middle and high school girls coding and Cyberhacking techniques. She is also a frequent guest speaker in high school, college and university cyber camps. Sali has made professional contributions to the industry as a technical reviewer for distinguished books and publications "*Law, Policy and Technology: Cyberterrorism, Information Warfare and Internet Immobilization*" and "*Cyber Law.*" As a global citizen, Sali has led community development efforts in the U.S. and Sanction lift talks against Sudanese nationals and educators in Africa. She helped the Sudanese American and Egyptian American Community in career development. She acted as Executive Director and the *Chairperson, Mentor-Protégé Committee* International Consortium of Minority Cybersecurity Professionals and serves on the advisory board on the EC-Council and active member at the Executive Women Forum (EWF).



**Amy Schedlbauer** is the Director of the Office of Regional and Multilateral Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Ms. Schedlbauer served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Algiers, Algeria from 2014 to 2016. She arrived in Algiers after a one-year diplomatic assignment at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, heading the energy team. From 2010-2012, she was the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Egypt and Levant Affairs at the Department of State in Washington, DC, which then covered the bilateral relationship with Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. From 2008-2010, Ms. Schedlbauer served at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York, covering Middle East issues in the UN Security Council and UN Security Council reform in the UN General Assembly. From 2004 to 2007, she was the Economic Section Chief at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, focused on the bilateral economic relationship with the Palestinian Authority and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Her earlier assignments included tours in the Department of State in Washington, DC, on the Lebanon and Jordan desks and as a staff assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. She also served overseas in Kuwait and Mauritius. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Schedlbauer worked as a Political Analyst for Triton Energy. She earned a Bachelor of Science in International Politics from Georgetown University and a Master's in Public Policy from Princeton University.





**Hajer Sharief** was appointed by Secretary General of the UN Mr. Ban-ki Moon as a member of the advisory committee for the progress study on youth, peace and security mandated by Security Council resolution 2250. She's also an advocate for the Kofi Annan foundation with the Extremely Together initiative on Countering Violent Extremism. She co-founded the "Together We Build It" organization when she was 19 years old during the Libyan revolution in 2011 and has since been working on supporting the democratic process in Libya by emphasizing the relevance of the role of women and youth in peacebuilding and the de-radicalization of society. In 2013 she co-initiated the 1325 Network in Libya which is a network of a diverse group of civil society organizations and independent activists representing more than 30 cities in Libya, working all over the country to raise grassroots awareness and encourage women and young women to play an active role in the context of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and de-radicalization of society, by encouraging women to question the radical opinions about traditional positions of women in the society. Most recently Hajer was announced the recipient of the Student Peace Prize for 2017.

**Donald K. Steinberg** became the president and CEO of World Learning on July 1, 2013. He has brought to World Learning more than 30 years of experience with government and nongovernmental organizations and expertise in the fields of international relations and development. Prior to World Learning, he served as deputy administrator at the US Agency for International Development where he focused on areas including the Middle East and Africa, organizational reforms, and enhancing dialogue with development partners. During his previous work with the government, Steinberg served as director of the State Department's Joint Policy Council, White House deputy press secretary, National Security Council senior director for African affairs, special Haiti coordinator, US ambassador to Angola, and the president's special representative for humanitarian demining. He was also deputy president for policy at the International Crisis Group and a Randolph Jennings senior fellow at the US Institute of Peace and has advised the Women's Refugee Commission, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and the Institute for Inclusive Security. He holds master's degrees in journalism from Columbia University and political economy from the University of Toronto, and a bachelor's degree from Reed College. Steinberg's honors include the Presidential Meritorious Honor Award, the Frasure Award for International Peace, the Hunt Award for Women in Policy Formulation, the Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship, the State Department Distinguished Service Award, and six State Department Superior Honor Awards.

