

**DRAFT OVERVIEW | August 26, 2024**

**Inside The Middle East | Intelligence Perspectives in Partnership with Beth El Congregation**

**INSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST | A VIEW FROM THE REGION**

**VOICES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST**

Saturday, September 28

**INSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST | A VIEW FROM THE REGION**

**1:00 – 4:00 pm**

**What Is Your Story? Plus Q & A**

Avi Melamed will kick things off by giving us a quick rundown of each guest, setting the stage for what promises to be a compelling session. Then, we'll hear from each speaker, including Avi, as they share their personal stories—stories that bring the complexities of the Middle East to life. Following these self-introductions, Avi will conduct focused interviews with each participant, exploring their distinct story and unique perspectives on the critical issues of the day. This will lead into an open discussion, where our panel will examine the latest news events, offering a range of perspectives that reflect the multifaceted nature of the region. This session offers a rare opportunity to hear diverse viewpoints on unfolding events in the Middle East. We'll wrap up with an open Q&A, allowing you to engage directly with our speakers and deepen your understanding. Don't miss this chance to be part of an engaging and thought-provoking conversation!

Sunday, September 29

**TO UNDERSTAND ISRAEL | WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE MIDDLE EAST**

**9:00**

Coffee & Breakfast / Light Snack

**9:30**

Avi opens the day with “educational framing” and an overview of the day.

**9:35 – 9:45**

**This Land is My Land? | Avi Melamed אבי מלמד افي ميلاميد**

A 10-minute journey through 4,000 years of history.

**9:45 – 10:15**

**The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict | A View From The Region | Avi Melamed אבי מלמד افي ميلاميد**

The conventional Western narrative that the "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict shapes Middle Eastern geopolitics" and that "solving it will bring peace to the region" is inaccurate and counterproductive. In reality, the Middle East influences the Israeli-Palestinian conflict's trajectory. In this session, we will see how regional events shape the conflict. This understanding is critical for anyone who wants a future of hope for Israelis and Palestinians.

**10:15 – 10:30**

Q & A

10:30 – 11:00

**October 7 A Pivotal Moment In The Middle East | How Did we Get Here? Where Are We? Where Are We Going? | Avi Melamed افي ميلاميد אבי מלמד**

The current war between Israel and Hamas is a defining moment in the Middle East. As the world grapples with the escalating conflict, understanding the core issues becomes vital. Are we fully aware of what fuels this war? What led us to this critical juncture? What does “the day after” look like? What implications does it hold for Israel? What implications does it hold for the Palestinians? What implications does it hold for the region? What are the lessons for the West?

11:00 – 11:25

Q & A

11:25 – 11:30

Avi closes morning and frames afternoon

11:30 – 12:45

**Lunch**

- ❖ **People can have lunch on own**
- ❖ **Speakers will stay in the Offit Auditorium so people can talk to the speakers if they want**
- ❖ **Either the Seam Line (Avi and Maia’s Jerusalem series) OR Inside The Middle East | The Primer will be screened**

12:45

Avi sums up the morning and introduces and frames the afternoon

1:00 – 1:30

**Iran | Spearhead of The Resistance | Hussain Abdul Hussain حسين عبد الحسين**

Since coming to power in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran brags it controls 4 Arab capitals – Beirut, Damascus, Bagdad, and Sana’a. And to a large extent -it does. How is Iran paving the way to becoming the superpower in the Middle East? And why Israelis, Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, and millions across the region are paying such a high price.

1:30 – 1:50

Q & A

2:00 – 2:05

Avi links between sessions

2:05 – 2:30

**Radical Islamism from the Middle East to the West | Dalia Ziada داليا زيادة**

We will delve into the playbook of radical Islamist groups like Salafists and Islamic Jihad, as well as political Islamist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, to understand how they utilized mainstream Arab and Muslim sentiments and beliefs to gain political advantages on the geopolitical chessboard of the Middle East. We will also examine how these groups are now employing similar strategies to establish a political presence in the United States and other Western countries by abusing the space of free speech in these democratic nations.

2:30 – 2:50

Q & A

3:00 – 3:05

Avi links between sessions

3:05 – 3:50

### **Bridging Voices: Unveiling Truths and Promoting Coexistence | Hayvi Bouzo هيبي بوظو**

Discover how Yalla, a leading media platform, shares unheard Arab and Israeli voices in both Arabic and English. Yalla bridges the gap between people and promotes coexistence by bringing diverse perspectives to the forefront.

In the wake of October 7th, Yalla's role in educating and countering disinformation has become more vital than ever. By sharing untold stories and marginalized voices from the MENA region, Yalla plays a crucial part in combating misinformation.

In this session, Hayvi will draw on her deep roots in the region and extensive career as an Arabic-language broadcast journalist to introduce you to powerful, often overlooked voices. You will gain access to practical tools that will help you further your knowledge and empower you to educate others.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear from someone with a profound connection to the region and a commitment to unveiling hidden truths and fostering understanding.

### **How To Navigate the Digital Landscape of Misinformation | Andrew Schuster**

In my presentation, I will share practical strategies and insights for navigating the complex landscape of misinformation in today's digital age. Drawing from my experiences in digital marketing, entrepreneurship, and community leadership, I aim to equip attendees with the tools they need to discern truth from falsehood and to actively combat misinformation in their own spheres of influence.

3:50 – 4:10

Q & A

4:10 – 4:20

Mini Break

4:20 – 5:00

### **Concluding Panel | Israel and the Middle East Today & Tomorrow | Avi Melamed & All Speakers**

What does the future hold? In this session, Avi, Andrew, Dalia, Hayvi, and Hussain will look ahead and have an open conversation and share their own predictions about the road ahead...

5:00 – 5:30

Q & A

**Concluding Session & Next Steps? Follow up Meeting – Date TBA!**

## SPEAKER BIOS

**Avi Melamed** **افي ميلاميد** **אבי מלמד** Geopolitical Middle East Expert, Intelligence Analyst, Former Israeli Intelligence Official and Senior Arab Affairs Advisor. Founder of Inside The Middle East Intelligence Perspectives [ITME], an apolitical, non-partisan educational non-profit institute. Author of three books on the region. His recent book is "Inside The Middle East | Entering a New Era." Avi is also the author, producer, and host of a documentary series on Jerusalem, "The Seam Line," a five-part docuseries exploring the many layers of the conflict in and over Jerusalem. His newest project, Inside The Middle East | The Primer, is a one-hour educational video designed to provide a Western audience with an understanding of the factors shaping the region, equipping diverse viewers with vital education through on-the-ground filming and authentic voices from the Arab and Muslim world often absent from Western discourse. Avi is Fluent in Hebrew, Arabic, and English. He is a frequent commentator on international media platforms such as Al-Arabiya, Al-Hura, BBC, CNN, I24 News, FOX, France24, Sky News and many more. He is a recognized expert featured in ABC, AP, Bloomberg, the Financial Times, the Hill, NBC, Newsweek, Reuters, and the Wall Street Journal, just to name a few. And is a permanent contributor to USA Today. To keep up with Avi's analysis, please visit the ITME HUB. <https://insidethemiddle-east.com/category/inside-the-middle-east-hub/>

**Hayvi Bouzo** **هيبي بوزو** is a highly respected American broadcast journalist born and raised in Damascus, Syria. With a history of critically acclaimed TV and radio shows, she has made a significant impact in her field. Hayvi is the co-founder and host of the Yalla show and Yalla Productions, providing a platform for positive and inspirational voices in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). At Yalla Productions, Hayvi leads efforts to counter misinformation and disinformation on social media by sharing true, untold stories and diverse perspectives in both Arabic and English. This mission is central to her work, as she strives to shed light on suppressed narratives and promote a more informed and empathetic world. She has also served as a bureau chief for Orient News in Washington, DC, and hosted "The Axis" show, where she interviewed high-profile guests, which was viewed by millions worldwide. Her insightful reporting and dynamic style have earned her numerous recognitions and accolades for her achievements. Hayvi's mixed background has influenced her passion for giving a voice to marginalized communities. In her work, she focuses on confronting hate and antisemitism while promoting positive values and fostering peace and coexistence among people in the MENA region.

**Hussain Abdul-Hussain** **حسين عبد الحسين** is a distinguished analyst specializing in Iranian affairs, with a deep focus on the Gulf region and Yemen. Of Shia Iraqi and Lebanese heritage, Hussain was born and raised in Beirut, Baghdad, and Baalbek—cities at the heart of major Middle Eastern events. He holds a degree in History and Archaeology from the American University of Beirut, where his journey in journalism began. Hussain worked as a reporter and later as managing editor at Beirut's The Daily Star, covering conflicts along the Lebanese-Israeli border and in Iraq. In Washington, Hussain played a pivotal role in establishing and managing Alhurra Iraq, an Arabic satellite network. He later served as the head of the Washington Bureau for the Kuwaiti daily Alrai. As a Visiting Fellow at Chatham House in London, he contributed to international discourse, with his work appearing in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and various Arabic

publications. His analysis has been cited by Vox, The Jerusalem Post, and Newsweek, and he frequently shares his expertise on CNN, MSNBC, and major Arabic satellite networks. Currently, Hussain is a research fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), where he continues to provide invaluable insights into the complexities of the Gulf region and Yemen.

### **Andrew Schuster**

With my background as the grandson of Holocaust survivors, I have a personal understanding of the dangers that propaganda and misinformation can pose to society. Throughout my career, I have been committed to combating misinformation through various avenues, including my experience as the CEO of Further Insights, a digital marketing firm specializing in social media, along with prior experience working at Baltimore Sun, and as a former board member of WellAware, a nonprofit dedicated to providing sustainable water solutions in East Africa.

**Dalia Ziada** **داليا زيادة** is an Egyptian award-winning writer and political analyst specializing in governance, geopolitics, and defense policy in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. She has been recognized for her leading role as a civil rights activist in the Arab Spring revolutions of 2010-2011 and for her uncommon stance as an Arab Muslim intellectual in support of Israel's war against Hamas in 2023. Dalia studied international relations, with a focus on international security studies, at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University (in the United States). Dalia worked in leading positions at major regional and international think tanks and civil society organizations, where she wrote dozens of papers analyzing the geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean region, advocated for peace and democracy in the Middle East, and fought tough political and cultural battles against radical Islamist groups in Arab countries. As a social entrepreneur, Dalia co-founded and led the Liberal Democracy Institute (LDI) in 2015 and the Center for Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean Studies (MEEM) in 2019. Before that, Dalia served as the Executive Director of the Cairo-based Ibn Khaldun Center for Democratic Studies and as the Regional Director in the Middle East and North Africa for the Washington-based American Islamic Congress (AIC). Dalia is also a member of several regional and international voluntary initiatives for peace and liberalism, such as the Clarity Coalition and Diplomats. Dalia authored the best-selling book "The Curious Case of the Three-Legged Wolf - Egypt: Military, Islamism, and Liberal Democracy" (2019) and other internationally acclaimed books dating back to 2006. Dalia's next book project "The Coalition of Odds" explores the reshuffling of power coalitions in the greater Middle East and their rising influence on the historical and renewed conflicts between modern-day world superpowers. In November 2023, Dalia had to flee Egypt, running for her life. During the 2023 conflict between Hamas and Israel, Dalia condemned Hamas's October 7 attack on Israeli civilians and expressed strong support for Israel's military retaliation against Hamas. Her public stance led to significant backlash in Egypt, resulting in threats to her safety and accusations of espionage and incitement of war crimes. Now, Dalia lives in the United States, where she is determined to continue her fight against radical Islamists and her activism for peace in the Middle East.