

Professor Ali AlZaag is a Biotechnology specialist, who gained his Ph.D. in Microbiology & Molecular Genetics at the University of Queensland, Australia in 1987. His research interests lie in Microbial Genetics and Molecular Epidemiology, Biosecurity and Biosecurity as well as Forensic DNA. He has taught MSc and PhD Specialist Biotechnology, Bacterial Genetics, Molecular Techniques, Molecular Pathogenicity and Epidemiology, Research Methods in Biotechnology, Genetic Engineering and Medical Microbiology.

Key achievements: Initiation/leadership of an Iraq Genetics & Biotechnology project; development and delivery of the first Iraqi national Masters and PhD programmes in specialist practice within a multidisciplinary field; founder of the Dept. of Biotechnology (1993) and Institute for Biotechnology (1999) at the University of Baghdad; contributor to the successful collaborative research management for Higher Education and Scientific Research; former Board Member, University of Baghdad; founder and board member of the National Scientific Research Commission; Chair, Department of Biotechnology/ School of Science (1993-1999); Dean of the Institute of Genetic Engineering for Graduate Studies (1999-2006); Member of Panel for the School of Science and the Council of Deans in the University of Baghdad (till 2006); Liaison officer to the International Centre for Genetic Engineering And Biotechnology-ICGEB (1993-2003); Manager of the editorial board of the Iraqi Journal of Science (1994-1998); Editor-in-chief of the Iraqi Journal of Biotechnology (2002-2006); member of the Committee on Drugs and Medicinal Plants Research; representative, SESAME regional project; scientific consultant on issues related to Biosafety, Biosecurity, Surveillance and Forensics; Member of the UNESCO-Amman advisory group on Iraq Higher Education.

He is currently engaged in the development of cooperative international programs to promote the safe, secure and responsible use of biological materials and training in biosafety, biosecurity and infection prevention to promote sound laboratory management practices. This includes surveillance of infectious diseases, the development of reports on the surveillance of infectious diseases projects supported by regional or international organisations, molecular diagnostics, and laboratory capacity building.

Professor Al Zaag has also recently initiated and is now Senior Technical advisor on a project entitled "The Application of DNA to the Identification of Missing Persons Resulting from Mass Fatalities" to establish a new centre of excellence for Forensic DNA training in Iraq. He is also a reviewer for the Qatar Foundation, the UREP and NPRP programmes and the ASTF grant programme.

Dr Alex Bellem is a linguist specialising in theoretical and comparative phonology (and the interface with phonetics) and Arabic dialectology. She is currently Research Director (Syria) of the British Institute, Amman, and is based in Damascus.

After graduating from the University of Manchester with a degree in Middle Eastern Studies (Arabic and Turkish), she lived in Damascus for a while, before returning to the UK to complete an MA in Linguistics at University College, London. She subsequently spent several years parenting, working as an academic editor, teaching English language and working on Iraqi folk poetry, before moving on to PhD research and teaching in the Department of Linguistics at SOAS in London. Alex's research is on Semitic phonology, with a particular focus on Iraqi and Syrian dialects; her major interest is in pharyngealisation (emphatics) and phonation; she is currently also collaborating on an investigation into the phonology and phonetics of Mehri, an endangered Modern South Arabian language spoken in Yemen and Oman. Before taking up her fellowship at CBRL she spent a "sabbatical" year as a Pronunciation Linguist at the BBC. Alex is also a Research Associate of the University of Salford.

Dr Géraldine Chatelard is a social anthropologist and historian of the contemporary Middle East, currently a research fellow with the French Institute for the Near East (IFPO) in Amman. After degrees in Arabic, English and Sociology from the Sorbonne in Paris, she conducted research in Jordan as a doctoral grantee with the Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain (CERMOC) from 1994 to 1999. She completed a Ph.D. in historical anthropology at the Écoles des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris in 2000. Her work, awarded a prize as "best dissertation in French on the Arab and Islamic world", was published in book form in French in 2004 (*Briser la Mosaïque*, Paris, CNRS Editions), and is soon to be published in English (Brill, Leiden). It looks at evolving notions of tribal, religious, local and national identities in Jordan from the mid-19th to the late 20th century based on a historical ethnography of Christian families in/from the town of Madaba set within a broader analysis of the history and politics of modern Jordan.

Her other area of research concerns international migration from Iraq since 1990 in a changing context characterised by more insecurity in Iraq and more restrictions on international mobility. From 2001 to 2004, she was a post-doctoral Marie Curie Fellow with the Mediterranean Programme at the European University Institute in Florence researching trends of migration from Iraq into Europe. She is currently working on a monograph on migration trends from Iraq that covers the period 1990 to today and is co-directing a regional academic research programme on 'Refugees from Iraq: taking the decision to leave' (funded by IFPO and the Refugee Studies Center, Oxford University) that covers Amman, Damascus, Cairo and Istanbul. See her list of publications with open-access links at <http://www.ifporient.org/spip.php?auteur208>

Gregor Meiering is Middle East Director for the Open Society Institute (OSI).

Cindi Warren Mentz is the Civilian Research & Development Foundation (CRDF) Director of Middle East-Northern Africa Programs. She currently leads CRDF's efforts in the Middle East-Northern Africa region, bringing to bear on the foundations' efforts more than 25 years of experience in non-proliferation, arms control and science co-operation activities. Ms Mentz joined CRDF in 2001 as Director of Non-proliferation Programs, and managed CRDF's support to a number of US government programs aimed at preventing the proliferation of WMD expertise.

Prior to CRDF, she worked under contract as part of a Department of State management team that established and implemented the Science Centre's non-proliferation program following the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Ms Mentz holds a BA from University of Vermont and has had additional training at the Middle East Institute, Minnesota Management Academy, and the Defence Intelligence College in Nuclear Treaties and Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties.

Professor Mohamed Olwan was born in Palestine and holds his PhD in law from Paris 2 University in 1971. He is an international recognized scholar specializing in international law and human rights. He is a former Dean of several faculties of law in Jordan. He is currently a Professor at the Faculty of Law, Yarmouk University. He has published widely on issues related to international law and serves as member of the Board of Trustees of the National Center for Human Rights and a Legal Adviser to the Judiciary Institute and Ministry of Justice in Jordan. He is former judge at the Administrative Tribunal of the Arab League and is currently a member of the Court of Arbitration at The Hague. He is also a member of the Advisory Council of Jurists to the Asia Pacific Forum, a group of eminent jurists who have held high judicial office or who are senior academics of human rights appointments. Professor Olwan is also a qualified lawyer before all Jordanian courts.

Dr Akram M. Othman holds a BSc in Mathematical Sciences and an MSc and PhD in Computer Sciences from the University of Technology, Baghdad. He has a professional and academic career spanning over 30 years. He has undertaken over 19 professional studies within the field of Information Technology (IT) and has published numerous academic papers. Currently he is a member of the Iraqi Science Academy (ISA), President of the Iraqi Computer Society (ICS) and Vice President of the Union of Arab ICT Associations (IJMA3).

While Dr. Akram is a well-known expert in the field of IT, he has also held senior posts in Research and Development, Economic Studies, Science & Technology and Human Resource Capacity-building. In addition, Dr. Othman has held several honorary positions with a number of IT advancement institutions, from board member to vice president.

Prof Amal Shlash was born in Baghdad and obtained her Ph.D. in Economics in the United Kingdom. She is currently a Professor of Economics and Chairperson of the board of Bayt al-Hikma, Iraq's premier think-tank. PROF Shlash is also a member of the "Strategic Review Board" set-up to oversee Iraq's reconstruction efforts. She has written several books and studies on Iraq's economy.