

## Inside Syria: 18 Months On

Thursday, 20 September 2012, Sheikh Zayed Theatre, New Academic Building, LSE

### Conference Programme

08.00 – 09.15    **Registration**

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09.15 – 09.30    **Welcome Address**

Professor Fawaz Gerges, LSE

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09.30 – 11.00    **Panel 1 – Inside The Regime**

The Makeup of the Syrian Leadership, the Military and Shabiha, Business Networks and Alawis

**What went wrong with the Bashar Al-Assad presidency?**

Dr Christopher Phillips, Queen Mary University

**The Military Balance of Power: The State of the Syrian Army**

(Retired) Brigadier General Akil Hashem

**How Regional and International Factors Impact the Syrian Conflict**

Ghayth Armanazi, Political Analyst and Former Arab League Ambassador

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11.00-11.30    **Tea & Coffee**

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11.30 – 13.00    **Panel 2 – Inside the Opposition**

The Nature and Dynamics of the Various Opposition Groups and Movements, Focussing on those Inside Syria

**The Syrian Opposition: A Balance Sheet**

Rime Allaf, Chatham House

**Syrian Opposition: A View from the Inside**

Suheir Atassi, National Council of the Damascus Declaration for Democratic Change

**Armed Groups in Libya: A Comparative Look**

Brian McQuinn, Oxford University/Centre on Conflict, Development and Peace Building

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13.00 – 14.00    **Lunch**

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14.00 – 15.30    **Panel 3 – Identity in Syria**

The Complex Influences on Identity and Allegiance and how these May Affect the Course of the Struggle

**Chair**

Professor Sami Zubaida, Birkbeck College, University of London

**Violence as a Modality of Government in Syria**

Professor Salwa Ismail, SOAS

**Government by Nightmare: Divide, Terrorise and Rule in the Syrian 'Black Hole State'**

Dr Abdelwahab El-Affendi, University of Westminster

**The Islamist Elements within the Syrian Uprising**

Dr Thomas Pierret, University of Edinburgh

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15.30 – 16.00    **Tea & Coffee**

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16:00 – 17:30    **Panel 4 – The War Era: Economic & Sociological Implications**

*The Interplay of the War and the Economy on Syrian Society*

**The State of the Economy: How Long can Syria Survive?**

Jihad Yazigi, Editor, *The Syria Report*

**The War Toll: Life for Ordinary Syrians**

Stephen Starr, Journalist

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17.30 – 18.30    **Keynote Address**

**Lessons Learned: Taking Stock of the Opposition Journey**

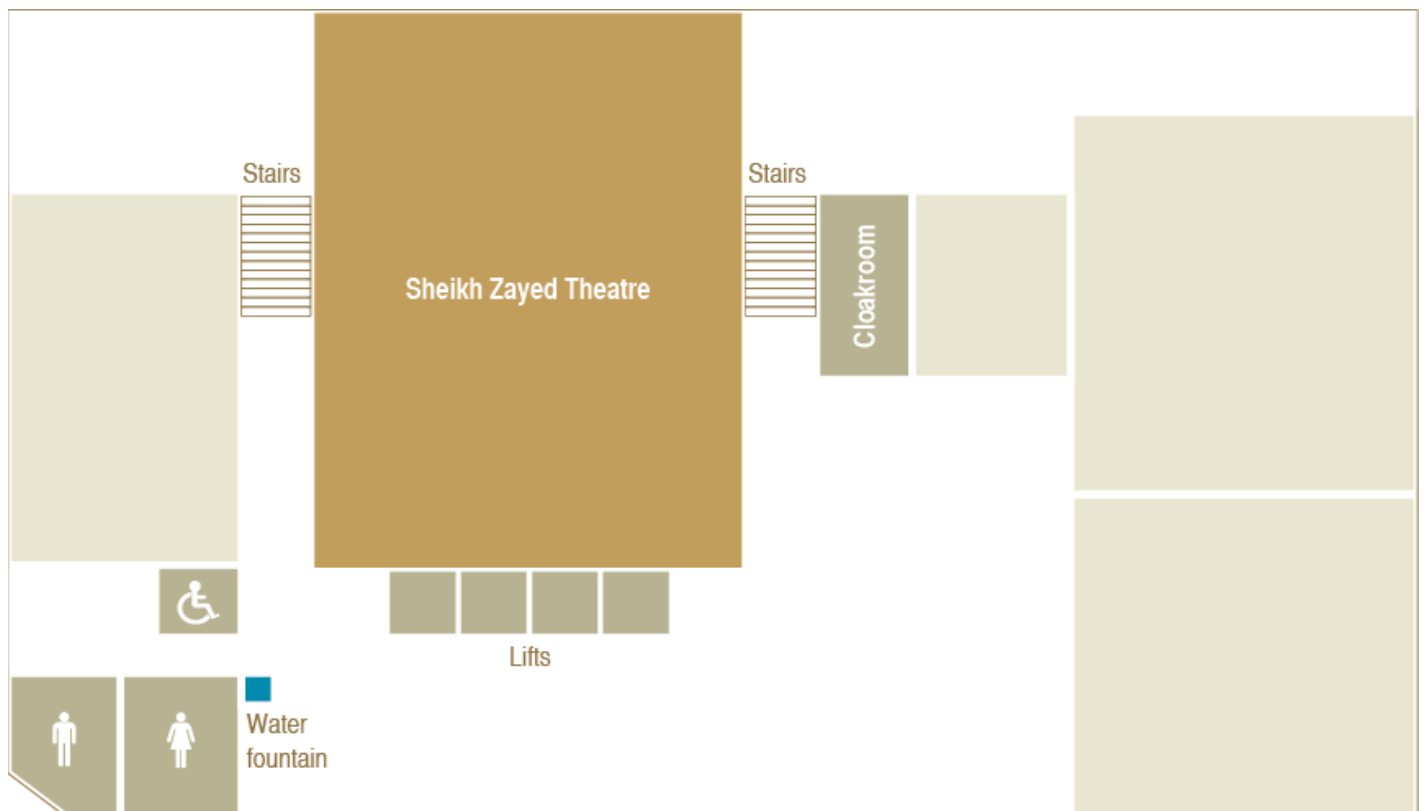
Professor Burhan Ghalioun, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle and Former Chairman of the Syrian National Council

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18.30              **Close of Conference**

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### New Academic Building, Lower Ground Floor



## Speakers' Biographies

**Rime Allaf** is a Syrian writer and a commentator on Arab world affairs. She has been an Associate Fellow at Chatham House since 2004. She has published numerous analyses and opeds, and is an advisor in both the public and private sector, giving briefings and writing papers on current socio- and geopolitical issues. With a background in communication and research, she continues to carry out consulting projects relating to the region. She was one of the first Syrian bloggers and remains very active on social media networks.

**Ghayth Armanazi** is a political analyst and former Ambassador to the Arab League in London. He founded the Arab International Media Forum and was formerly Editor-in-Chief of the quarterly journal *Arab Affairs*. He continues to write and contribute to media reporting on the Arab World.

**Suheir Atassi** is a Syrian human rights activist and a member of the Damascus Declaration for Democratic Change. She runs the Jamal Atassi National Dialogue Forum group on Facebook, an extension of a group of the same name which was disbanded in 2005 after a crackdown by the Syrian Government. She was arrested in 2005 and again in 2011 after providing an eye-witness account of the uprising to Al-Jazeera. She is a representative of the Syrian Revolution General Commission (SRGC), one of the largest coordination networks involved in the uprising.

**Dr Abdelwahab El-Affendi** is Reader in Politics at the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster and co-ordinator of the Centre's Democracy and Islam Programme. He is ESRC/AHRC Fellow in RCUK's Global Uncertainties Programme, and Visiting Fellow at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge. He was member of the core team of authors of the Arab Human Development Report (2004), and member of the steering committee of the 'Contextualizing Islam in Britain Project' (2009-2011).

**Professor Fawaz A. Gerges** is a Professor of Middle Eastern Politics and International Relations at LSE and the Director of LSE's Middle East Centre. He earned a doctorate from Oxford University and MSc from LSE. Gerges has taught at Oxford, Harvard, and Columbia, and was a research scholar at Princeton and held the Christian A. Johnson Chair in Middle Eastern Studies and International Affairs at Sarah Lawrence College. Gerges' most recent book is *Obama and the Middle East: The End of America's Moment?* (May 2012).

**Professor Burhan Ghalioun** is the former chairman of the Syrian National Council, a university professor at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, and a long time Syrian opposition activist. Based in France since the 1970s, Ghalioun was among Syrian opposition figures abroad who signed the Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change in 2005. He served as chairman of the Syrian National Transitional Council in August 2011 until he resigned this May. He continues to work within the SNC.

**(Retired) Brigadier General Akil Hashem** served in the Syrian military for 27 years and fought in the 1967 June War as well as the 1973 October War. He also served as a military trainer for many years in Damascus and also served as Chief of Staff of the Palestinian Fedayeen Commandos in 1982. He retired from the military in 1989 after the High Commandment of the Syrian Army accepted his fifth resignation attempt.

**Professor Salwa Ismail** is Professor of Politics with reference to the Middle East in the Department of Politics and International Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies. Her research focuses on everyday forms of government, social movements and contestation, and the politics of space. Her publications include *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (IB Tauris, 2003&2006), and *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters: Encountering the Everyday State* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). She is currently working on a manuscript on the politics of violence and memory in Contemporary Syria.

**Brian McQuinn** is a Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding in Geneva and is completing a doctorate at the University of Oxford's Centre for Anthropology and Mind. His research investigates the social practices and organizational structures underpinning cohesion in civil war armed groups. He recently completed seven months of fieldwork in Libya funded by the Berghof Foundation.

**Dr Christopher Phillips** is a Lecturer in the International Relations of the Middle East at Queen Mary, University of London. He holds a PhD in International Relations from LSE, specialising in contemporary Syria and Jordan. He has lived for several years in Syria and conducts regular research trips to Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt. He writes regularly for *The Guardian*, *The Majalla* and various other publications. His first book, *Everyday Arab Identity: The Daily Reproduction of the Arab World*, was published by Routledge in 2012.

**Dr Thomas Pierret** is a Lecturer in Contemporary Islam at the University of Edinburgh. He earned his PhD in Political sciences at Sciences Po Paris and the University of Louvain, and he has held postdoctoral positions at Princeton University and the Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin. He is the author of *Religion and State in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from Coup to Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). Since the beginning of the Syrian uprising, he has been featured extensively in media such as the *New York Times*, *the Financial Times*, *Foreign Policy*, *Le Monde*, the BBC and Al Jazeera English.

**Stephen Starr** is a journalist and author who moved to Damascus, Syria in January 2007 where he worked as an editor at the Syria Times and then as a freelance reporter. He has also reported from Iraq and Lebanon, covering the 2009 elections in Beirut. Until February 2012, he reported Syria's popular uprising unrestricted from inside the country. His book, *Revolt in Syria: Eye-Witness to the Uprising* was published in 2012. He is also the founder and editor-in-chief of *Near East Quarterly*.

**Jihad Yazigi** is editor-in-chief of *The Syria Report*, an online economic and business digest. He has written extensively on Syria's economic and business affairs and has published several sector reports on Syrian industries. He also works as a consultant for businesses and international organizations operating in Syria.

**Professor Sami Zubaida** is Emeritus Professor of politics and sociology at Birkbeck College, University of London. He is the author of *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East* (IB Tauris, 2011). His earlier books include *Islam, the People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (IB Tauris, 1993); *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East* (IB Tauris, 2001); and *Law and Power in the Islamic World* (IB Tauris, 2005).