

Speakers



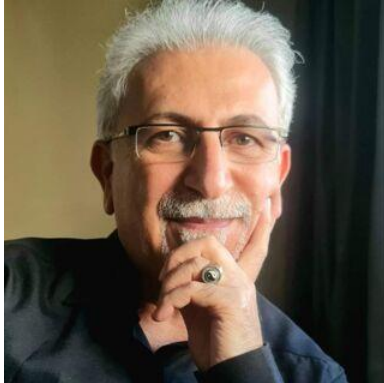
Behrouz Boochani
Empowerment of civil society since the Jina Uprising

Behrouz Boochani is a journalist, teacher, film maker and fiction writer, who grew up in Ilam, Iran, and studied political science, political geography and geopolitics in Tehran. Because of his interest in politics and voluntary teaching of Kurdish language and culture he was forced to escape arrest and imprisonment by the IRGC and become an asylum seeker. He was detained for four years in the Manus Island Offshore Detention Centre, where he used a mobile phone to write a memoir, *No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*, which won the Victorian Prize for Literature and the Victorian Premier's Prize for Nonfiction in January 2019. He now lives in New Zealand. His second book, *Freedom, Only Freedom : The Prison Writings of Behrouz Boochani*, was published in November 2022.



Dr Hussein Tahiri
Alternative strategies to current politics and armed struggle

Dr Hussein Tahiri holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Melbourne and a Bachelor of Arts with Honours (Politics) from La Trobe University, attained after coming to Australia from Rojhelat. He is currently an adjunct Associate Professor at Victoria University, Australia. Dr Tahiri is a public commentator on Middle Eastern and Kurdish affairs. His contributions in this sphere have been published in local and international media, refereed journal articles, books, and book chapters, including *The Structure of Kurdish Society and the Struggle for a Kurdish State* (2007) and *Counter Terrorism and Social Cohesion* (co-edited, 2011).

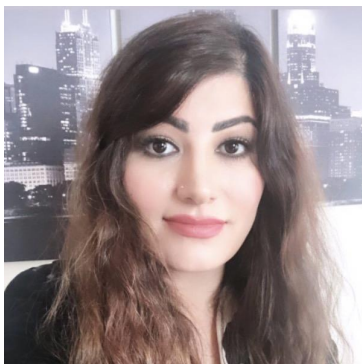


Dr Sherko Kirmanj

Strategies to minimize divisions and enhance cooperation

Sherko Kirmanj was born and raised in Erbil where he graduated as a civil engineer from the University of Salahaddin. Sherko left Bashur in the mass exodus in 1991 and was accepted as a refugee by Australia in 1993. He earned his Ph.D. in International Studies at the

University of South Australia. Sherko is the author of *Identity and Nation in Iraq* (English 2013, Arabic in 2015, Kurdish in 2017); *One hundred Years after Sevres* (Kurdish, 2022) *Islam, Politics, and State* (Arabic, 2021); and *Politicisation of Islam* (Kurdish, 2005). He has published fourteen articles and six book chapters in international refereed journals and academic volumes and written numerous newspaper and website articles. Sherko worked at the Ministry of Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region as the manager of the Human Capacity Development Program in Higher Education (HCDP) while lecturing at the College of Law and Politics at Salahaddin University, Iraq (2010-2012). He was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of South Australia (2012-2013) and a Senior Lecturer at the University Utara Malaysia, Malaysia (2013-2017). Sherko was an Assistant Professor, and the Head of the Department of International Relations, at the University of Sharjah in the UAE (2018-2022). He is currently British Academy Chair in Education, Conflict, and Crisis, at Ulster University, UK; and Adjunct Professor, at Koya University, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.



Shukriya Bradost

Desecuritisation of Ethnic Groups Issues

Shukriya Bradost holds an MA in Law and a Master's in International Security, and is currently a PhD candidate in Government and Security at Virginia Tech University focusing on the securitisation of

ethnic groups in Iran following the 1979 revolution. From 2009 to 2015, she served as a lawyer and legal assistant in the Ministry of Higher Education of the Kurdistan Regional Government. During that time, Shukriya was editor for the Ruwanin newspaper, and Khame magazine for academic research. She has worked as an international security analyst and researcher and frequently appears on BBC Persian, I24, VOA, and Iran International TV. She has had 100 academic and general articles on Iranian Affairs published, including in The Jerusalem Post, Al-Jazeera, and The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Bradost is currently facing significant challenges due to her activism and work shedding light on human rights oppression and ethnic discrimination in Iran. In 2010, she was sentenced to a 10-year prison term in absentia for her writings and interviews on these topics. In 2016, she received a direct threat of assassination from the IRGC and was issued a new verdict of life imprisonment in absentia.

HOST



Dr Gina Lennox

Dr Gina Lennox (BSc, PhD) fell in love with the Middle East after riding a motorbike from London to India and back in 1980-81, the journey taking her through Bakur and Rojhelat. Since 1994 she has worked with the Australian Kurdish community making radio programs, organising community workshops, writing a book based on oral histories 'Fire, Snow & Honey – Voices from Kurdistan' (Halstead Press, 2001), organising a conference 'Uniting in Diversity – A Kurdish Perspective' held at NSW Parliament House (2001), co-writing a play called 'The Blacksmith' with Barzou Ishmael (2002-2022), and co-establishing Kurdish Lobby Australia (KLA) with Zirian Fatah in 2015. KLA advocates for peace, democracy and self determination for all people in Greater Kurdistan. Lennox has also worked in Bashur in 2013 conducting agricultural research, in 2014 for an Australian-Kurdish construction company and in 2016 as a consultant in water resource management in Kirkuk. Her work in KLA involves writing reports, statements, and letters, participating in meetings with Australian parliamentarians and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and helping to fund small humanitarian projects.