

# SALON PANELISTS



## Karen Koning AbuZayd

Karen Koning AbuZayd currently serves as Commissioner on the United Nations' Human Rights Council mandated Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. Karen completed a 30 year career with the United Nations in 2010.

She began her humanitarian career in the Sudan in 1981, dealing with Ugandan, Chadian and Ethiopian refugees fleeing from war and famine in their own countries. From the Sudan, she moved to Namibia in 1989 to help coordinate the return of apartheid-era refugees, a successful repatriation operation which led to elections and independence. A year later, the Liberian civil war erupted, and she moved to Sierra Leone to head the UNHCR office in Freetown, initiating a new emergency response, that of settling 100,000 Liberians in 600 villages along the Liberian/Sierra Leone border.

From 2000 to 2005 she was based in Gaza as the Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), where she helped to oversee the education, health, social services and microenterprise programs for 4.1 million Palestinian refugees. From 2005 to 2010 she served as Under Secretary General and Commissioner General and during her 19 year tenure with UNHCR also worked in Sudan, Bosnia, and Geneva (overseeing South Africa, Kenya and Somali programs) before becoming Chef de Cabinet and in Washington, Regional Representative.

Currently in Chicago, Karen participates in a number of national and international boards including the Middle East Policy Council, the American Friends of UNRWA, the International Organization of Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection and the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO.)

Before joining the United Nations, Ms. AbuZayd lectured in political science and Islamic studies at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, and at Juba University in southern Sudan. She earned her Bachelor of Science from DePauw University (which awarded her an Honorary Doctorate and a Medal for Public Service) and her M.A. in Islamic Studies from McGill University.



## Dr. Lynette Jackson

Dr. Lynette Jackson is an associate professor of Gender and Women's Studies and African Studies at UIC. She received her PhD in African History from Columbia University in 1997. Dr. Jackson is the author of *Surfacing Up: Psychiatry and Social Order in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Cornell 2005) and numerous other articles and book chapters on topics relating to women, gender and the state in colonial and post-colonial Southern Africa, particularly having to do with the regulation of women's bodies and sexuality. Dr. Jackson's current research looks comparatively at African refugees, including child refugees, and the formation of new African diasporas.

Dr. Jackson is engaged in social justice and human rights activism, with a particular focus on the human rights of women and girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered peoples in Africa. She serves on the Chicago Committee of Human Rights Watch, the World Refugee Day planning committee and held previous board memberships on Heartland Alliance's Human Care Services and Vanavevhu: Children of the Soil, an organization that caters to orphans and vulnerable children from Zimbabwe. Dr. Jackson also consults and provides expert witness testimony in gender and sexual violence-based political asylum cases.



Robert Golden Pictures

## Nigel Osborne

Nigel Osborne is a composer and human rights activist. He is the Co-chair of the World Economic Forum on Culture and Emeritus Professor of Music at the University of Edinburgh. His works have been featured in most international festivals and performed by many leading orchestras and ensembles, from the Moscow to the Berlin Symphony Orchestras, and from the Philharmonia of London to the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has had close relationships with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, London Sinfonietta, Hebrides Ensemble and Ensemble Intercontemporain, Paris. He has composed extensively for the theatre as well. He is the winner of the *Opera Prize of Radio Suisse Romande and Ville de Geneve*, the *Netherlands Gaudeamus Prize*, the *Radcliffe Award* and the *Koussevitzky Award of the Library of Congress*, Washington. Professor Osborne studied composition with Kenneth Leighton, Egon Wellesz, Arnold Schoenberg, and Witold Rudzinski. He also studied at the Polish Radio Experimental Station, Warsaw.

For multiple decades, he has worked in Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and the former Yugoslavia, East and West Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus and South East Asia helping traumatized children heal through music. He has created multiple operas about his work with the children of Mostar, some of which have been performed internationally in partnership with British-based *Opera Circus*. An anticipated 2016 world tour of a new operatic work, *Naciketa*, is currently in progress.

He continues to extensively study both the neurophysiological and neuropsychological benefits of music. Professor Osborne was a 2014 Salzburg Global Seminar Fellow and Faculty Member.



## J.E. Rash

J.E. Rash is a U.S.-born lecturer, writer and consultant in dialogue, NGO development, conflict resolution and education. His career includes studies in law, religion, and alternative medicine, work in professional theater and media, and the design of educational training programs. Mr. Rash is the president and founder of Legacy International, a U.S.-based organization dedicated to promoting peace through education and increased citizen participation. For more than 35 years, Legacy has been delivering cutting-edge programs in leadership training, sustainable development, cross-cultural relations, public health education, civil society development, religious tolerance, and conflict prevention.

Throughout his work, Mr. Rash seeks to build bridges of understanding and develop practical connections between people of diverse backgrounds by emphasizing universal values, social responsibility, and mutual respect. Mr. Rash has been honored many times for his service to humanity. In 1987, he received the *Friends of the United Nations Environment Programme 500 Award* for outstanding contributions to the environment. He has presented at the Asian Conference on Religion for Peace in New Delhi; the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the United Nations; the 2000 State of the World Forum, Islamic Unity Conference; University of Colorado's Golda Meir Center for Political Leadership; International Symposia on Science and Consciousness in Olympia, Greece; Cancun, Mexico; and the University of Arizona Middle School; and The World Bank.

Mr. Rash has founded two additional non-profit organizations: World Community and Circle Group and is an authorized teacher in five traditional schools of Sufism. He speaks frequently at both Muslim and multi-faith gatherings on topics of inner and outer peace, non-violence, Islam and modernity, practical spirituality, and social responsibility. He has authored two books, "Islam and Democracy" and "Applied Sufism" and contributed to several others.

# SALON MODERATOR



## Alexandra Salomon

Alexandra Salomon is a producer and regular fill-in host for *Worldview*, *Chicago Public Radio's* (WBEZ's) daily global affairs program. Before becoming a producer on *Worldview*, she was a series producer for *Chicago Matters: Beyond Borders*, a year-long series examining immigration experiences in the region. As series producer, she helped to produce and coordinate all aspects of *Chicago Matters*, including on-air features, online materials and public events.

Prior to joining the staff of Chicago Public Radio in 2007, Alexandra worked as a production assistant at ABC News in New York, later becoming a producer for ABC News in Europe. While overseas, she also worked as a stringer for *The Boston Globe* and as a freelance producer/reporter for several news organizations including the BBC, the CBC and the Jerusalem Post.

Alexandra received a *Knight International Press Fellowship* in 2006. The fellowship took her to Nigeria and Moldova, where she taught journalism courses to students at the International Center for Journalism in Chisinau, Moldova and worked with print, radio and television journalists across Nigeria. In 2001, she received both a *Peabody Award* at ABC News for team news coverage of the September 11 terrorist attacks and an *Emmy Award* at ABC News for investigative news coverage.

She has an M.A. in International Affairs from Columbia University and a B.A. in Art History from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.