



Cambridge Centre for Palestine Studies
مركز كامبريدج لدراسات فلسطين

The Cambridge
Interfaith Programme
Faculty of Divinity



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



The Cambridge Centre for Palestine Studies invites you to
attend a special event on their visit to Cambridge

Ms Sahar Francis, Human Rights Lawyer
The Revd. Ashraf Tannous

Who Arrived especially from Palestine to talk about:

The

- Prof. Professor Esra Ozyurek (Discussant)
- Prof. Stefan Sperl, Academic Director of CCPS (Discussant)
- Dr Makram Khoury-MaChool, CCPS Founding Director
Vote of Thanks

Date: Thursday 16th of October 2025 Time: 5.30pm

Venue: Cambridge

RSVP to Email:

Theccps21.org@gmail.com and cambridgeevents21@gmail.com

– OR to the Mobile: Text and What's App: 078 459 87 459

Please arrive between 5:15-5.30pm

The Cambridge Centre
for Palestine Studies
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<https://ccps21.org/>
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Ms Sahar Francis is a human rights lawyer with 27 years of experience as a Palestinian Human Rights Defender. This has included counselling and representing Palestinian prisoners and advising organisations on legal issues. Sahar earned her law degree from the University of Haifa in the 1990s and has sought tirelessly to expose Israel’s human rights abuses in the occupation ever since. She is a renowned expert on human rights, having addressed both the European Parliament and recently the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Sahar has been active for many years in civil society networks such as PNGO (Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations) and PHROC (Palestinian human rights organizations council) and is currently an active member of the Palestinian Christian Kairos Palestine network.



Sahar Francis

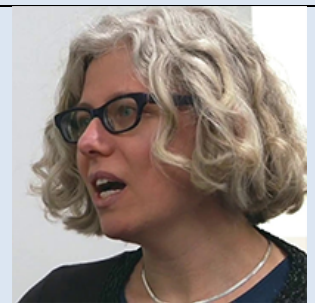
Reverend Ashraf Tannous was born in Jerusalem and raised in Ramallah. He did his undergraduate studies at the Near Eastern School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon, then went into seminary at the Bossey Seminary in Geneva, Switzerland. He was ordained into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in 2012 and was first called as an associate pastor in Jerusalem. Since then, Reverend Ashraf has served congregations in Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, and since June 2025 he has been installed at Christmas Lutheran church in Bethlehem. For nine years, Reverend Ashraf led the Youth work in ELCJHL until 2021. He now serves as the Chief Justice in the Ecclesiastic Court. Reverend Ashraf lives with his wife and three boys in Jerusalem. In his (spare!) time he is working toward a Doctorate of Ministry from the United Lutheran Seminary of Philadelphia, PA, which he hopes to complete in 2026.



Reverend Ashraf Tannous

Professor Esra Ozyurek: Professor Esra Ozyurek joined University of Cambridge (Faculty of Divinity) after having taught at the London School of Economics and University of California, San Deigo. She completed her PhD at the University of Michigan and prior to that she received a completed her undergraduate degree in Sociology and Political Science at Bogazici University, Istanbul. Her subject area specialty include:

- Secularism • Islam and Muslims in the West • Muslim-Jewish relations • Religious conversion • Empathy • Holocaust memory • Civil religion • Turkey • Germany



Prof. Esra Ozyurek

Prof. Stefan Sperl is the First Academic Director of the Cambridge Centre for Palestine Studies. Prof. Sperl graduated from Oxford (BA Arabic), the American University in Cairo, and The School of Oriental and African Studies SOAS (PhD 1977).

After spending ten years working for UNHCR in Egypt, Sudan and Geneva he joined SOAS in 1988 where he taught courses in Arabic literature and Refugee Studies. In his capacity as Head of the Near and Middle East Department, he arranged for SOAS BA Arabic students to spend their year abroad at Al-Najah University in Nablus, Occupied West Bank. He retired in 2018 as Emeritus Professor of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies and continues to be engaged in lecturing and research. From 2023 to 2025 Prof. Sperl taught courses on classical Arabic Literature at the University of Cambridge.



Prof. Stefan Sperl

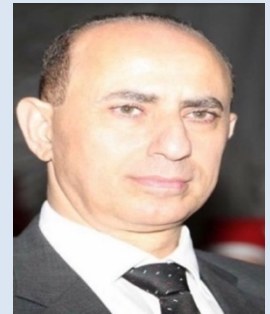
Prof. Sperl's publications include articles on Arabic, Islamic and Refugee Studies, as well as Mannerism in Arabic Poetry: A Structural Analysis of Selected Texts (1989), Qasida Poetry in Islamic Africa and Asia (with C. Shackle, 1996), 'Stabat Mater: Reflections on a Theme in German-Jewish and Palestinian Arab Poetry' (Comparative Criticism, 2000), and The Cosmic Script: Sacred Geometry and the Science of Arabic Penmanship (with A. Moustafa, 2014) which won the Iran Book of the Year Award (2016).

The eminent scholar's recent publications are:

'The Qur'an and Arabic Poetry' (The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies, 2020), the volume Faces of the Infinite, Neoplatonism and Poetry at the Confluence of Africa, Asia and Europe with the accompanying website www.lyrics-of-ascent.net (with Y. Dedes, 2022), 'Islamic Spirituality and the Visual Arts' (The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Islamic Spirituality, 2023), and 'Arabic Poetry and Neoplatonic Poetics' (Journal of Arabic Literature, 2025).

Over the past four decades, Prof. Sperl participated in numerous international conferences and presented papers on Arabic and Comparative literature as well as Refugee and Palestine Studies. He will take on an expanded role in the Centre's academic development and strategic planning

Dr Makram Khoury-Machool is the founding director of the Cambridge Centre for Palestine Studies. He is an internationally renowned academic (and Public Intellectual) specialising in International Relations and Political Communications. Prof. Dr Khoury-Machool is the author of many academic publications on Palestine, the media and Palestine and Palestinian media; communicating war (such as: kidnap videos; Internet and uprisings; war, audiences and propaganda; Syria and Palestine). As a media practitioner (during the 1980s & 1990s), he was acclaimed as the journalist who announced the outbreak of the first Palestinian Intifada in December 1987. During his coverage of the unfolding events in the Gaza strip, he was shot in the face and rescued under fire. In 1990 he was awarded the International Reuters Award for Journalism. During the academic year 1990-91, Khoury-Machool was a Reuters Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. In 1996 Khoury-Machool was elected by the World Economic Forum (Geneva-Davos) as one of 100 Young Global Leaders (GLTs). Between 1999-2002 he completed his PhD., at SOAS, University of London, where he also taught. Since October 2003 he taught and supervised at the University of Cambridge and numerous English universities. He founded (Eurocse) the European Centre for the Study of Extremism in Cambridge in June 2016 and he is currently the director of the Cambridge Centre for Palestine Studies.



**Dr. Makram
Khoury-Machool**

To register please follow the section at the bottom of this webpage:

<https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/events/conversation-palestinian-christians-contemporary-human-rights-challenges>

For any query please email: Theccps21.org@gmail.com and cambridgeevents21@gmail.com

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