

Pluralism Forum: Speaker Biographies

Prospects for Pluralism Post-Arab Spring:
Does Tunisia Suggest a Way Forward?

Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat, 199 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON

Speakers:

His Excellency Mr. Mehdi Jomaa – Former Prime Minister of Tunisia



Mr. Mehdi Jomaa was born in the city of Mahdia (Tunisia). After receiving his engineering degree from the National Engineering Institute of Tunis, he began his career in France at Hutchinson, a subsidiary of the TOTAL Group. He specialized in aeronautic systems and focused on strategy, international business and transformational leadership.

In March 2013, Mr. Jomaa was appointed the Tunisian Minister of Industry. In this role, he initiated several policy changes including a new national energy strategy, legislation on renewable energy sources, as well as new procedures for managing conflicts within large, state-owned industrial groups.

In January 2014, after several months of an acute political crisis, Mr. Jomaa was appointed Head of Government to lead the country towards its first general and fair elections under the new Constitution.

During his tenure, he reorganized the security apparatus for a more efficient response to terrorism, launched a national economic dialogue to build consensus around reforms, and initiated efforts to promote foreign direct investment in Tunisia. He introduced an innovative approach to governance based on “vision, strategy and leadership.”

Mr. Jomaa is a recipient of the Tunisian Order of the Republic and German Order of Merit. He was awarded the 2014 Amadeus “Man of the Year” from Morocco.

Mr. Jomaa is married and father to five children.

Dr. Marwan Muasher – Vice-President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; former Foreign Minister of Jordan



Dr. Marwan Muasher is vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment, where he oversees research on the Middle East. Dr. Muasher served as foreign minister (2002–2004) and deputy prime minister (2004–2005) of Jordan, and his career has spanned the areas of diplomacy, development, civil society, and communications. He was also a senior fellow at Yale University in 2010-2011.

Dr. Muasher began his career as a journalist for the *Jordan Times*. He then served at the Ministry of Planning, at the prime minister’s office as press adviser, and as director of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington.

In 1995, Dr. Muasher opened Jordan’s first embassy in Israel, and in 1996 became minister of information and the government spokesperson. From 1997 to 2002, he served in Washington again as ambassador, negotiating the first free trade agreement between the United States and an Arab nation. He then returned to Jordan to serve as foreign minister, where he played a central role in developing the Arab Peace Initiative and the Middle East Road Map.

In 2004 he became deputy prime minister responsible for reform and government performance, and led the effort to produce a ten-year plan for political, economic, and social reform. From 2006 to 2007, he was at the Jordanian Senate.

Most recently, he was senior vice president of external affairs at the World Bank from 2007 to 2010.

He has authored two books, *The Second Arab Awakening*, published by Yale University Press in January 2014 and *The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation*, also published by Yale University Press, June 2008.

Dr. Muasher serves on the American University of Beirut’s board of trustees since March 2007 and the Board of the Global Centre for Pluralism since May 2015. He lives in Amman, Jordan.

Moderator:

**Dr. Bessma Momani – Senior Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation;
Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Waterloo**



Dr. Bessma Momani is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Waterloo and the Balsillie School of International Affairs.

She is also Senior Fellow at the Centre for International Governance and Innovation (CIGI), and has been Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., a visiting scholar at Georgetown University's Mortara Center. She is a 2015 Scholar of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and a Fulbright Scholar.

She has authored and co-edited over eight books and over 65 scholarly, peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters that have examined the IMF, the World Bank, petrodollars, the Middle East and Arab youth. She is a current recipient of a research grant funded by Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to study cooperation between the IMF and World Bank. She was also the past recipient of two previous SSHRC grants on the reform of the IMF executive board and on Middle East urbanization.