



**GUILFORD**  
COLLEGE  
**CONCEPTUALIZING PEACE**

[www.guilford.edu/peaceforum](http://www.guilford.edu/peaceforum)

**April 12, 2024 • 9 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.**

## **AGENDA**

- 9:15 - 9:30 a.m.      Welcome and Overview  
*Meagan Holleman, Kyle Farmbry, Jean Bordewich*
- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.    A Conversation with Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley  
*Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, Kyle Farmbry (fielding questions)*
- 10:45 - 11:45 a.m.   Conceptualizing Peace - Perspectives from Former Refugees  
and Formerly Displaced Persons  
*Walter Blass, Michael Conteh, Noor Ghazi, Diya Abdo (moderator)*
- Noon                    Lunch
- 1 - 1:50 p.m.        Conceptualizing Peace - What are the Roles of Institutions?  
*Joseph Sany, Under-Secretary General Bience Gawanas,  
Ken Gilmore (moderator)*
- 2 - 2:50 p.m.        Conceptualizing Peace - Middle East Peacebuilding  
*Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Tess McEnergy '06, Mark Justad (moderator)*
- 3 - 3:45 p.m.        Conceptualizing Peace - Interfaith Initiatives and Perspectives  
*Francisco Burgos, Christina Repoley '02, Najeeba Syeed '95,  
Lia Scholl (moderator)*
- 3:45 - 4:30 p.m.    Closing Conversation - How do we Conceptualize Peace?  
*Meagan Holleman, Lyndon Rego*
- 4:45 - 5:30 p.m.    Reception

# GUILFORD COLLEGE

## "CONCEPTUALIZING PEACE" FORUM



## SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

April 12, 2024, Guilford College

### Keynote Speaker



#### **Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley**

Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, former Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malta, is the President of the Middle East Policy Council, a think tank that contributes to American understanding of the political, economic and and cultural issues that affect U.S. interests in the Middle East. Gina is senior advisor at the strategic advisory firm, WestExec Advisors, and a senior non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council. Before her current appointments, she held a series of senior positions that included foreign policy advisor to the Commander of U.S. Cyber Forces, deputy coordinator for counterterrorism for the Department of State and country director for Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. She was the first woman to lead a diplomatic mission in Saudi Arabia as the principal officer in Jeddah after taking on the position of Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for the Middle East and Africa. In addition to the State Department, she held senior positions at the Defense Department and on the National Security Council staff. Prior to that, she was a professional staff member for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Gina has degrees from The George Washington University and The Johns Hopkins University.

### Other Presenters



#### **Diya Abdo**

Diya Abdo is the Lincoln Financial Professor of English in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Guilford College. Her teaching, research, and scholarship focus on Arab women writers, Arab and Islamic feminisms, and refugee studies. She has also published poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Her book *American Refuge: True Stories of the Refugee Experience* was selected as a North Carolina 2024 Reads Book. In 2015, Diya founded Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR), which advocates for housing refugee families on college and university campus grounds and supporting them in their resettlement. She has been awarded a Emerson Collective Fellowship (2024) and has received the J.M. Kaplan Fund Innovation Prize (2021) for her work building a movement of welcoming campuses.



### **Mohammed Abunimer**

Mohammed Abu-Nimer is Abdul Aziz Said Chair in International Peace and Conflict Resolution at American University (D.C.). He has conducted interreligious conflict resolution training and interfaith dialogue workshops in conflict areas around the world. As a professor with over 35 years of teaching experience, he has developed numerous courses that deal with different facets of peacebuilding and conflict resolution and regularly publishes on the subject. His most recent areas of focus have included faith-based peacebuilding, interfaith dialogue in peacebuilding and building social cohesion and pedagogical considerations on incorporating peace and forgiveness education in the Arab world and Muslim world. He also served as a senior advisor to the KAICIID Dialogue Centre, an international organization that specialized in interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Mohammed has been both author and an editor of more than 13 books on faith-based and interfaith peacebuilding and has authored numerous articles in refereed journals and is co-founder and co-editor of the *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*. He has a doctorate from George Mason University.



### **Walter Blass**

Walter Blass has experienced much in his 90-plus years, including being displaced from his country, surviving the Holocaust and serving as a Peace Corps director in Afghanistan. After his father was arrested during World War II, he was captured and sent to a home for delinquent children. His journey led him to the United States where he learned English, became a Quaker and was reunited with his family. Walter graduated from Swarthmore College (Pa.) with a B.A. in Economics, Princeton University as a first year Economics graduate student and Columbia University with an M.A. in Economics. He has also taught management, globalization and strategic planning courses in Shanghai, Singapore, Moscow, Belgrade, Mexico City and Esfahan, Iran, through Grenoble Ecole de Management. He was one of the first economists hired in the Bell System but interrupted his career to volunteer with the Peace Corps. He went on to become a director for AT&T, has been a university professor and Guilford College trustee, and founded a successful consulting firm, Strategic Plans Unlimited.



### **Francisco Burgos**

Francisco Burgos is executive director of Pendle Hill, a Quaker study and retreat center in Pennsylvania, where he previously served as Director of Education. Prior to joining Pendle Hill, he held leadership positions at the Center for Community Initiatives at the Monteverde Institute and at Monteverde Friends School in Costa Rica. He also served with the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C., and the American Friends Service Committee in Baltimore, Md. Francisco was a De La Salle Christian Brother for almost ten years, serving in Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Costa Rica, and has been a Friend since 2004. He is a member of Harrisburg (Pa.) Friends Meeting and an attendee of meetings including Monteverde Friends Meeting in Costa Rica and Adelphi Friends Meeting in Maryland.



### **Michael Conteh**

Michael Conteh has over 20 years of leadership, academic, research and capacity-building experience spanning Southern and Western Africa, Europe, and the United States. His journey has a significant chapter as a former Sierra Leonean asylum seeker in Namibia, rich with personal struggles and professional triumphs. This profound experience shaped his perspective and deepened his commitment to social justice, fueling his work with refugees and vulnerable populations. Michael possesses exceptional negotiation, alliance development, transformational leadership, and strategic planning abilities. His interdisciplinary expertise, which now includes a unique blend of personal experience and academic rigor, investigates universities as anchors in their host cities. His expertise encompasses public sector

management, gender, and development; community dialogue on imagining a preparation framework, human security, refugees and forced displacement; criminal justice and policing, community engagement strategies; and research and advocacy on various social justice issues and program evaluation. His interdisciplinary and collaborative research efforts focus on empowering society's most vulnerable communities, which has enabled him to establish effective networks throughout Africa and the global north.



### **Bience Gawanas**

Bience Gawanas is a Namibian lawyer who served as Special Adviser on Africa for the United Nations from 2018-20. Earlier in her career, she served for 10 years as Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government. She was a Commissioner on the Public Service Commission in Namibia for five years and an ombudswoman in the Namibian Government for seven years. She has been a lecturer in Gender Law at the University of Namibia, Director of the Board of the Central Bank of Namibia and involved in many non-governmental organizations including Secretary-General of the Namibian National Women's Organization and patron of Namibian Federation of Persons with Disabilities. She was African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs. She is constantly building on her foundational education in law, human rights and social development. Bience holds an LLB Honors degree from the University of Warwick, an Utter Barrister Degree from the Council of Legal Education School of Law/Lincoln's Inn, an Executive MBA from the University of Cape Town and an honorary doctorate in Law from the University of Western Cape.



### **Noor Ghazi**

Noor Ghazi, an Iraqi-American peace activist, is director of the University Sponsorship Program for Every Campus A Refuge, which is based at Guilford College. Noor's extensive involvement as a professor of practice at UNC Chapel Hill and visiting lecturer at Mosul University-Iraq has allowed her to dedicate significant time to various peace projects, including a long documentary highlighting life under ISIS in Mosul. With a strong emphasis on conflict in Iraq's modern history, Noor actively fosters collaborative efforts for peace building by creating inclusive platforms that unite diverse voices towards a more peaceful future in the region. Noor holds an M.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies from UNCG with a focus on international Peace Development.



### **Ken Gilmore**

Ken Gilmore is a Professor of Political Science and the chair of Political Science and International Studies at Guilford College. He teaches courses on economic justice and inclusion, with a particular focus on the local Greensboro community. He also teaches international courses on global inequality and the pursuit of peace. Ken taught at the University of Texas, the University of Washington and Rutgers University before Guilford. He has received two national awards for "Outstanding Teaching in Political Science" from the American Political Science Association and Pi Sigma Alpha (the National Political Science Honors Society) for his contributions to active-learning, and the Dick Dyer Memorial Award for advising and excellence in teaching at Guilford. He earned his Ph D. in Political Economy and International Relations from Rutgers University in 1996.



### **Meagan Holleman**

Meagan Holleman is a dedicated Multifaith Coordinator & Chaplain for Students at Friends Center at Guilford College, where she passionately fosters a diverse and inclusive environment. With a M.Div. degree from Wake Forest University and an undergraduate degree from Mars Hill University, Meagan's journey into chaplaincy and student support has been marked by a commitment to social justice and holistic care. Her tenure at Guilford has seen her hold various roles, each contributing to her comprehensive understanding of student needs and institutional dynamics.



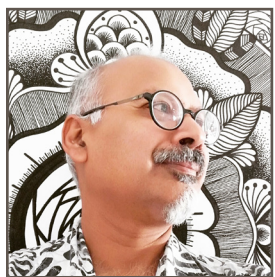
### **Mark Justad**

Mark Justad is the Director of the Center for Principled Problem Solving and Excellence in Teaching (CPPSET) at Guilford College and teaches in the Department of Religious Studies and Ethics. Launched in 2008, CPPSET advances the College's Principled Problem Solving and Ethical Leadership initiatives in values-based education through traditional coursework, targeted research and hands-on experiential problem-based teaching and learning. Mark also directs the PPS Scholars Program and serves on the College's Ethical Leadership Council. He has taught numerous courses in Religious Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Mark earned a M.Div. from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in Religion from Vanderbilt University.



### **Tess McEnery '06**

Tess McEnery '06 is executive director of the Middle East Democracy Center, a new nonprofit formed from a merger of the Project on Middle East Democracy and the Freedom Initiative (POMED). Tess previously served as executive director for POMED. She has dedicated her career to standing up for U.S. foreign policy that advances democracy, protects civic space and defends universal human rights. In her 15 years with the U.S. government, Tess was twice Director for Democracy and Human Rights at the White House National Security Council and served in senior positions at the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development. She received her Master of Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University and her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Guilford College.



### **Lyndon Rego**

Lyndon Rego is a transformation catalyst and the founder of CoMetta, an initiative to build cross-community networks and collaboration. Earlier, as the founding head of the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at the African Leadership University (ALU), he focused on shaping an integrated approach to development across faculty, staff, and students. Prior to ALU, Lyndon was a senior leader for 14 years at the Center for Creative Leadership, where he led innovation efforts and the transformative Leadership Beyond Boundaries practice which focused on increasing access to leadership development in the world. This included designing and facilitating leadership, innovation and strategy efforts in 24 countries around the globe with a wide range of nonprofit, education, community, government and business entities. Lyndon has a bachelor's degree in Advertising and a master's degree in Communication and Media Studies from the University of North Dakota and an MBA from UNC Chapel Hill.



### **Christina Repoley '02**

Christina Repoley '02 is Vice President of Program at the Forum for Theological Exploration, a leadership incubator inspiring and resourcing the next generation of leaders for the church and academy. She founded and served as executive director of Quaker Voluntary Service, a national organization providing opportunities for social justice work, communal living and exploration of the Quaker way for young adults. She has served on the staff of the American Friends Service Committee and now serves on the board of directors of Friends Fiduciary Corporation, a Quaker socially responsible investment organization based in Philadelphia. Christina holds a Master of Divinity from Emory University's Candler School of Theology and a B.A. from Guilford College.



### **Joseph Sany**

Joseph Sany is the Vice President of the Africa Center at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP). Under his leadership, the Africa Center seeks to deepen, elevate, and expand USIP's commitment to stem violent conflict in Africa. In his previous role at FHI 360, Joseph provided technical leadership in the design and implementation of peacebuilding and civil society development programs in several countries in Africa and Asia. Prior to his work at FHI 360, he advised international organizations and development agencies including MINUSTAH and the ECCAS on peacebuilding and development strategies. Joseph's publications include *Reintegration of Ex-Combatants: A Balancing Act* and contributions to the conversation about African development and politics in the blog "African Praxis." He holds a doctorate in Public Policy and a master's in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University.



### **Lia Scholl**

Lia Scholl is the pastor of First Friends Meeting in Greensboro, NC. She has been a pastor and activist for 20 years, working in churches and in organizations advocating with and for sex workers, drug users and returning citizens. She's the author of *I Heart Sex Workers* (Chalice Press, 2013). Originally from Alabama, she earned her M.Div. at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University.



### **Najeeba Syeed '95**

Najeeba Syeed '95 is the inaugural El-Hibri endowed chair and executive director of the Interfaith Institute at Augsburg University (Minn.) and a tenured full professor of Religion. She has been a professor, expert practitioner and public speaker for the last two decades in the fields of conflict resolution, interfaith studies, mediation, restorative justice, education, social, gender and racial equity. An award-winning educator, she has taught extensively on interreligious education and published articles on faith and community-based conflict resolution, restorative justice, and interfaith just peacemaking. Najeeba also brings significant executive experience with organizations focused on conflict resolution in community, higher education, and government settings, including the Western Justice Center Foundation and the Asian Pacific American Dispute Resolution Center. In 2021, she served as chief of staff to the first Asian American woman elected to the Los Angeles City Council. She holds a law degree from the Indiana University School of Law and a bachelor of science degree from Guilford College.



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