

Biographies

President

Mirna Barq

Mirna Barq was born in Damascus and raised on Hanania Street, one of the oldest streets in the world, and where one of the world's oldest churches is located. Mrs. Barq is married and has three girls. Like most of us, Mrs. Barq dreams that one day soon she will go back to Syria and show her family all the places that filled her childhood memories. To her, Syria remains the most beautiful place on earth. Mrs. Barq graduated from the University of Central Florida and has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering and a Master's Degree in Environmental Sciences. Mrs. Barq works for Florida's Orange County Public Works Department in key leadership role. Mrs. Barq has over twenty years of experience in the field of Civil Engineering and her knowledge and experience encompasses managing major projects and programs in land development, geotechnical, environmental and transportation engineering. Mrs. Barq has successfully implemented Orange County's Transportation Concurrency Management System and today manages both Concurrency and Mobility Management processes. Mrs. Barq serves on several County-designated Committees including Alternative Impact Fee Committee (Vice-Chairperson), the Development Review Committee (DRC) and the Concurrency Review Committee (CRC). Mrs. Barq remains a community activist, she recently served as the president of the Women's Committee for the Arab American Community Center. Mirna joined the Syrian American Council in April 2011, just one month after the start of the revolution, acted as the Vice Chair for the Orlando Chapter. In October 2012, Mrs. Barq was elected by SAC board as Vice President and in June 2014 became president.

Director of Government Relations & Strategist

Mohammed Alaa Ghanem

Mohammed Alaa Ghanem is the Senior Political Adviser, Government Relations Director, and Strategist for the Syrian American Council in Washington D.C. He previously served as a professor at the University of Damascus, and has been involved in the Syrian Revolution since its early days as a peaceful protest movement. His work connects U.S. policy-makers and the Syrian-American community with the revolution inside Syria. Utilizing his extensive network of contacts at all levels of the Syrian opposition, he frequently travels to the liberated parts of Syria, participates in international conferences on Syria, and advises local administrative councils in liberated areas across Syria on international relations. In early 2013, he participated in monitoring the elections of the first democratically elected government in Aleppo. Ghanem is also a fellow with the Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies. At SCPSS, he has been involved in SCPSS' Syria Transition Roadmap, an ambitious post-Assad transition project. He holds a

master's degree in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. He's frequently quoted in the media, and his op-eds have appeared in the New York Times, the Washington Post, Foreign Policy, Politico, the Hill, the New York Post, the Huffington Post, Syria Deeply, and the Atlantic Council MENASource. He has appeared on CNN, Al Jazeera, MSNBC, HuffPost, RT, and CCTV America.

In-district & Outreach Director

Omar Hossino

Omar is the Director of Public Relations and Outreach at SAC where he focuses on strategic communications, and coalition building with interest groups, advocacy organizations, and think tanks. He also serves as a liaison between local chapters and the national office to organize letter-writing, call-in, and district meeting campaigns to Congress.

Omar has over five years of research experience working in think tanks and policy organizations in Washington D.C. including working for two years for at the Middle East Program of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace where he focused on Syria and Egypt. He also worked as a Summer Associate in the U.S. House of Representatives at the Congressional Budget Office's National Security Division where he worked on analyzing U.S. defense policy.

He has briefed policymakers in the executive branch and Congress and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs on the Syrian crisis, and has spoken about the crisis at Princeton University, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch and the Open Society Institute. He is the author of many reports on Syria for numerous think tanks which have been quoted in the New York Times, Reuters, and the Associated Press. His articles have appeared in Foreign Policy, Syria Deeply, Al-Hayat, and other publications.

Omar holds a M.A. in U.S. Foreign Policy from American University, a J.D. in law from Catholic University, and a B.S. in Political Science from Radford University.