**Baltic Opinion Leaders**

**February 22-27, 2020**

**Sunday, February 23, 2020 – Day 2**

**EINAT WILF** is considered to be one of Israel’s most articulate representatives on the international stage. Her opinion articles are regularly published in international publications and she is frequently interviewed for television and radio programs around the world. Her original commentary focuses on matters of foreign policy, economics, education, and Israel and the Jewish people. Dr. Wilf served as a Member of the Israeli Parliament from 2010 to 2013 on behalf of the Labor and Independence parties, where she was Chair of the Education, Sports, and Culture Committee, Chair of the Knesset Sub-Committee for Israel and the Jewish People, and a Member of the influential Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. She served as the Baye Foundation Adjunct Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a Senior Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute, Foreign Policy Advisor to Vice Prime Minister Shimon Peres, and a Strategic Consultant with McKinsey & Company. Her fourth and most recent book, “Winning the War of Words,” compiles her essays on Israel and Zionism. Dr. Wilf holds a B.A. in government and fine arts from Harvard University, an MBA from INSEAD in France, and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Cambridge.

**ATTILA SOMFALVI** is the political commentator for *YNET,* Israel's largest news website, and chief anchor at *YNET TV*. He is the host of the political program Central *Game* on the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) television channel.  He frequently appears as a commentator on Israeli TV channels (*Channel 1, 2* and *10*) and on regional radio stations.  He lectures on communications and politics and moderates panels about current events.  Mr. Somfalvi previously served as *YNET's* criminal reporter and editor, and hosted a show on etiquette on *Israel Television Channel 1*.   During his military service, he was the editor, army correspondent and Lebanon correspondent for the Israel Defense Forces magazine *B'Machane.* He has been selected as one of the thirty most successful young Israelis by *Time Out* magazine.  He is currently studying for a degree in law.

**ROY ZWEBNER** is CEO at Gav-Yam Negev Advanced Technologies Park (Cyber Park). Prior to that, he served as the director general and director of marketing of the Park. The Park is currently home to more than 70 leading multinational tech corporations and start-up companies. Mr. Zwebner founded and served as CEO of TVU, a media and information data-mining start-up company. He holds a B.A. in business and an LL.B. He is a graduate of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Global MBA program of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (IDC).

**Monday, February 24, 2020 - Day 3**

**MEIR ELRAN** is a senior research fellow, director of the Homeland Security Program, and co-director of the Society–Military Program at The Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University. Dr. Elran is also the head of the MA program for national security with the department of public policy at the Sapir Academic College. His main areas of academic research are homeland security, disaster management, and societal resilience in face of protracted terror. He has had a distinguished career in the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) Military Intelligence directorate where he holds the rank of brigadier general (res.). He served in the IDF as deputy director of military intelligence, assistant director of the Research Division for Evaluation, deputy commander of the National Defense College., and was a senior member of the Israeli delegation to peace talks with Jordan. Following his retirement from the IDF, Dr. Elran served as the deputy director general of the municipality of Tel Aviv and as a senior advisor to several Israeli ministries. Dr. Elran holds a B.A. in political science and Middle East studies from The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, an M.A. in international relations and Russian studies from Indiana University, and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Haifa.

**KOBI MICHAEL** is a senior research fellow at The Institute for National Security Studies and editor of Strategic Assessment. Among his primary research interests are peace and war studies; strategy; national security; civil-military relations; socio-military relations; peace maintenance; and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Dr. Michael served as the deputy director general and head of the Palestinian desk at the Ministry for Strategic Affairs. He was a member of the faculty at Ben Gurion University, a senior faculty member at Ariel University, and a visiting professor at Northwestern University in Illinois and Peking University. He has published widely in his field - including 17 books and monographs and over 80 articles and chapters in books and has been awarded several academic prizes, among them, the Yariv Prize, the Tshetshik Prize, the Yitzhak Sadeh Prize, and the Israeli Association for Political Science Prize, awarded for the best book of 2008-9. Dr. Michael holds a B.A. in behavioral science from Ben Gurion University of the Negev, and an M.A. in conflict resolution from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His Ph.D. was also completed at The Hebrew University.

**IBRAHIM ABU AHMAD** is a senior researcher at Alma Research and Education Center. (The center is dedicated to researching the security challenges on Israel’s northern borders and educating opinion makers.) Born and raised in Nazareth, Israel, Mr. Abu Ahmad is well acquainted with the multiple identity-issues of young Arab-Israelis. He illuminates the term “Israeli-Arab” and openly shares his thoughts on the unique challenges this group encounters as a prominent minority engaged with Israeli society and culture. He holds a B.A. in international relations, focusing on U.S.–Middle East relations. He began his studies at the American University in Cairo and completed his degree at James Madison University, U.S.A.

**DANIEL SALAME** is the correspondent for Arab affairs at YNET(an Israeli news outlet). Previously, Mr. Salame worked as an assistant analyst at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), as a columnist for NRG360, and as a social media manager in a major public relations firm. Mr. Salame conducts speaking tours inside the northern Druze villages to global audiences, exposing them to the unique life style of the Druze community in Israel. He completed his compulsory military service in the Israel Defense Forces as an officer in the Air Force’s operational command and control headquarters and continues to serve in the reserves.

**SARIT ZEHAVI** is a national security and Middle East analyst. Lt. Col. (res.) Zehavi served for 15 years in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) specializing in military intelligence, initially in the IDF Research and Analysis section and later in the IDF Northern Command. She has briefed hundreds of delegations, ranging from U.S. senators, congressmen/women, and politicians to global military commanders, senior journalists, and visiting VIP groups. Within the framework of her new initiative “Alma,” she continues to brief individuals and delegations on Israel’s northern border, and is invited to lecture on a broad range of issues related to current affairs in the Middle East to global audiences overseas. Lt. Col. (res.) Zehavi holds a M.A. in Middle East studies from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

**Tuesday, February 25, 2020 – Day 4**

**YAEL RAZ LACHYANI** is the spokesperson for the Nahal Oz community. Kibbutz Nahal Oz is located in the northwestern part of the Negev desert, close to the border with the Gaza Strip and near the development towns of Sderot and Netivot. She previously served as the director of supplemental edducation on Kibbutz Nahal Oz, where she recruited, trained, and mentored youth counselors. She also worked with education teams during ongoing trauma situations and security threats. Ms. Raz Lachyani holds a B.A. in human resource administration from Sapir Academic College and a degree in interior design from the Holon Institute of Technology.

**DAVID BENJAMIN** is an Israeli attorney and international consultant specializing in international law, the law of armed conflict, and counter-terrorism. He also lectures widely on these subjects, both in Israel and abroad, and is a frequent commentator in the media. He is a former career-officer in the Israel Defense Forces’ (IDF) Military Advocate General’s Corps (MAG) where he ultimately served as Chief Legal Advisor for the Gaza Strip and as Director of the Strategic and International Branch in the International Law Department. He continues to volunteer as a reservist in the IDF holding the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Mr. Benjamin is a member of the Israel Bar Association. He holds a master’s degree in law from Tel-Aviv University and bachelor’s degrees in law and political science from the University of Cape Town. He is also a graduate of the IDF Command and Staff College.

**DAVID SILBERKLANG** is an historian at Yad Vashem, where he serves as Editor-in-Chief of Publications, Editor of *Yad Vashem Studies* and Series Editor of the Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project. He previously served at Yad Vashem as chief historian of the Museum Development Project, in which capacity he wrote the historic outline that served as the basis for the content of the new Holocaust History Museum. Dr. Silberklang is also a lecturer on Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and serves as Israel's representative on the Academic Working Group of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. He was a Visiting Professor at Case Western Reserve University and is author of the soon-to-be published book *Gates of Tears*. Dr. Silberklang has a B.A. from Columbia University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

**Wednesday, February 26, 2020 - Day 5**

**REUVEN HAZAN** is a political scientist, diplomat, political affairs commentator, and former chair of the Political Science Department at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was the advisor to the speaker of the Knesset (Israel’s parliament) and served as assistant to the chair of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Professor Hazan is a member of the editorial board of the International Political Science Review, the Journal of Legislative Studies, and Party Politics. His expertise is in historical and current analysis of democratic institutions, and Israeli democracy. He has served as a commentator for CNN, Fox, BBC, and NPR. A ninth-generation Israeli, Dr. Hazan studied at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Columbia University.

**KHALIL SHIKAKI** is a professor of political science and the director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah. He is a senior fellow at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University. Dr. Shikaki has taught at several universities including Bir Zeit University, An-Najah National University, the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and the University of South Florida. He served as Dean of Scientific Research at An-Najah University in Nablus. Dr. Shikaki was a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., and has authored several books on Palestinian politics. Dr. Shikaki’s research has focused on the peace process, Palestinian state building, public opinion, transition to democracy, and the impact of domestic Palestinian politics on the peace process. He has conducted more than 200 polls among Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as dozens of joint polls among Palestinians and Israelis. Dr. Shikaki holds a B.A. in political science from the American University in Beirut and a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University.

**MOHAMMED A. DARAGHMEH** is the West Bank correspondent for Associated Press. He is also a lecturer in Journalism at Birzeit University. Mr. Daraghmeh was a reporter for *Al-Ayyam Daily Newspaper* and *Al-Quds Daily Newspaper*. He has written investigative series on the crisis in the Fateh Movement, corruption in the Palestinian Authority, and the concept of unity between West Bank and Gaza. Mr. Daraghmeh has a B.S. in Political Science from Al-Najah University and a diploma in covering conflicts from Fojo Institute in Sweden.

**YARDEN VATIKAI** is the head of the National Information Directorate, Prime Minister's Office, where he worked under Prime Ministers Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Olmert. Previously, he served as head of communications at the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization, as media adviser to the Minister of Defense, and as spokesperson for the Coordinator of Government Activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (COGAT). He has a deep understanding of communication and information strategies, and is well acquainted with operational, political, media and intelligence systems. Mr. Vitikay holds a B.A. in political science, and an M.A. in political communications, both from Tel Aviv University.

**Thursday, February 27, 2020, Day 6**

**DANNY TIRZA** is the General Manager of Yosmot Consultation, Management & Guidance Company.  He is a colonel (res.) in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Dr. Tirza’s illustrious military career spans three decades – during which he held various positions, from combat soldier to consultant on the planning of Israel’s security infrastructure.  He served as the Territorial and Border Advisor to the Prime Minister at the Annapolis peace summit. Dr. Tirza holds a B.A. in political science from Tel Aviv University, a M.A. in business administration from the University of Riga, and a Ph.D. in business administration from York University.