

BIOGRAPHY | Randa Kassis | Official Website

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BIOGRAPHY

Born in Damascus, Randa Kassis is a Franco-Syrian politician, secular in the forefront, and a leading figure of opposition to the Bashar Al Assad Syrian regime. She is the founder and President of **the Movement for a Pluralistic Society** and was a member of the Syrian National Council until August, 2012.

Her father, a professor of psychology at the University of Damascus who took part in the activities of a Syrian opposition party, suffered great psychological pressure by being forbidden to publish articles, among other things, causing him to flee to Algeria for four years from 1979 to 1983. His family followed in 1980 and stayed until 1982. When he returned to Syria, he resumed his duties at the University of Damascus until his death in 1989.

At a young age, Randa Kassis rebelled against Syrian society and began questioning politics. While all teenagers joined the Ba'athists for fear of reprisals, Kassis refused to join the party. Her father supported this initiative, preferring to let his daughter decide for herself and assuring her that no harm would be done to her. Indeed, Randa Kassis never suffered physically or psychologically from this decision. She also opposed Christianity, her parents' religion, being disturbed by the woman's position in religion. Later, she began to feel the lack of political, cultural, and social change in Syria. According to her, this was due in part, to the acceptance and resignation of the Syrian people.

After graduating from high school in 1987, Randa Kassis chose to follow in her father's footsteps by studying psychology and anthropology. She moved to Germany where she stayed for three years before settling in Paris, France where she currently lives.

In 2010, Kassis played a key role commentating and writing about the Tunisian revolution. As the Arab Spring gathered momentum, this inspired her to return to Syrian political life and establishing the Movement for a Pluralistic Society in October, 2012.

Randa Kassis is now a leading secular figure on the Syrian conflict. She draws on her experience as a politician and writer to demystify the complexities attached to many Arab countries and the way politics are run. She speaks to media, corporations, and governments about Middle East politics, the future of the region, and the sensitive cultural issues attached to the region.

Kassis is no longer a member of the Syrian National Council, having been excluded due to her many declarations alerting the Syrian opposition about the rise of Muslim fundamentalists.

Publications

She has published a book, Crypts of the Gods which talks about religions, their origins, and their ways of functioning. (Ed. The First Arabic e-books Publisher, 2012) It has three distinct sections:

- research on totemic systems
- myths and the sexual process that leads to beliefs
- psycho-neurology and the old and new theories

Her second book is entitled, “Le Chaos Syrien” (Syrian Chaos) written with Alexandre del Valle, November, 2014.

Political Activities

- Randa Kassis is participating in the 2016 Geneva Peace Talks under the banner of the Moscow group. She is Co-President with Kadri Jamil of the Syrian secular and democratic opposition delegation.
- President and one of the founders of AD HOC Organization for secularism, modernism and pluralism in the Arab world.
- President of the follow-up committee of Astana Initiative (resulting from Astana 1 and Astana 2 work meetings with opposition parties) March and October, 2015
- President of the Movement for a Pluralistic Society – from 2012, bringing together Atheists, Christians, Alawites, Sunnites, Kurds, and other ethnic, religious or ideological minorities
- President of the Syrian Secular Coalition – September, 2011 to August, 2012
- Member of the Syrian National Council – December, 2011 to August, 2012
- One of the founders and Treasurer of the Association for the Protection of Freedom of Speech in the Arab World – 2007 to 2009