



Rawan Osman

Rawan Osman (Arabic: روان عثمان, born 1983 or 1984) is a Syrian-born German activist. She advocates for the normalization of relations between Middle Eastern Arab states and Israel.^[1]

Life

Osman was born in Damascus into a secular family.^[2] Her father's family were Sunni Muslims from Damascus, first recorded in 1938, while her mother's family were Shiite Muslims from a village near Baalbek, in the Lebanese Beqaa valley.^[3] Osman grew up in the Beqaa Valley,^[4] though she returned to Syria after graduating from high school.^[2] She also lived in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.^[4] In 2011, at the onset of the Syrian civil war, she moved to Strasbourg, France, to learn skills to open a wine bar in Damascus.^{[5][6]} There, she met Jewish people for the first time while living in the city's Jewish quarter. These encounters prompted her to reckon with the antisemitism she had been taught growing up.^[7] She later attended Heidelberg University in Germany, where she studied Modern Hebrew and Jewish Studies.^{[3][4]}

Rawan Osman	
	روان عثمان
Born	1983 (age 41–42) <div>Damascus, Syria</div>
Citizenship	Germany
Education	Heidelberg University
Occupation	Pro-normalisation activist
Known for	Supporting the <u>Abraham Accords</u>

Activism against antisemitism

While living in Europe, Osman began advocating for awareness about antisemitic attitudes and education in the Middle East and among the Middle Eastern diaspora.^[5] In particular, she advocates for multicultural acceptance in the Middle East, including acceptance of Israel and Israelis, and the condemnation of "the instigators of wars willing to sacrifice innocent life" and "those who exploit the Arab-Israeli conflict to fuel their political power."^[3] With reference to the large number of refugees from Syria in Germany, she wrote that "Germany must recognize and seek to understand the embedded nature of anti-Semitism in Syria in order to better help its newest residents to live lives free of state-sponsored prejudice." Further, she stated: "A Europe unsafe for Jews will never be safe for other minorities."^[5]

To further this, she founded Arabs Ask, a forum meant for Arabs to ask questions and challenge preconceived notions about Judaism and Israel.^{[6][8]} In 2023, she advocated for the signing of the Abraham Accords.^[3]

While working with the Center for Peace Communications, Osman became involved with Sharaka.^[4] In 2022 and 2023, she was part of Sharaka's Arab delegation to the March of the Living, a Holocaust commemoration event in Poland.^{[4][9][10][11]} She has also traveled to the United States with Sharaka,

participating in community events.^[12] She was criticized by Arab social media users in January 2024 after posting videos of herself speaking to an IDF soldier and Avichay Adraee, a spokesman for the IDF.^[13]

From September to November 2023, Osman published a blog for *The Times of Israel*. Apart from her own story of becoming aware of antisemitic indoctrination, she strongly condemned Hamas for the attack on 7 October 2023.^[14] She is also working on a book about Israel and Israelis.^{[2][10]} In the film *Tragic Awakening: A New Look at the Oldest Hatred*, she described her reaction when she learned about Jewish history and realized she had been indoctrinated: "I was angry. Because the Jew is not my enemy."^[15]

On 4 March 2024, Osman spoke at the United Nations Human Rights Council. In her short speech, she criticized the governments of Qatar, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria for what she described as failures to support the people in Gaza and to fight against Hamas and Hezbollah.^{[16][17]}

Personal life

Osman lives in Germany.^[11] She was born a Sunni Muslim,^[3] and has identified as an Arab-Zionist.^[6] In 2025 she began the process to convert to Judaism.^[18]

She has been estranged since the October 7 Hamas-led attack on Israel from most of her family and friends who are still Syria and Lebanon. According to Osman, some cut off ties due to fear, while others due to antisemitism.^[18]

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External links

- [Israel: State of a Nation with Eylon Levy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lip9soswORg) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lip9soswORg>) Rawan Osman, How Arabs See Israel (September 18, 2024)
 - [Osman's blog at *The Times of Israel*](https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/author/rawan-osman/) (<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/author/rawan-osman/>)
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