

# Panellists



## Chair: Tom Shakespeare

Tom is Professor of Disability Research at LSHTM. His research is all about hearing from neglected voices and overlooked lives. He also enjoys making people laugh, and has written several funny novels starring his (disabled) alter ego, Fred.

## Sir Adam Thomson

For 38 years until 2016 Adam was a career British diplomat. In addition to jobs in London, he served in Moscow, NATO Brussels, Washington DC, New Delhi, United Nations New York, and Pakistan. His last job was as UK ambassador to NATO in Brussels. Then, for nearly nine years until 2025, he ran a not-for-profit European network of former government ministers, diplomats, officials and military officers, working to reduce the risks of nuclear conflict in Europe and beyond.

Adam has always wanted to help make the world a better place. He believes in diplomacy as a vital tool for that - and a valuable life skill. And his experience means his focus is mostly on European security policy and on South Asia.



## Adam Matthews

Adam is the Chief Responsible Investment Officer (CRIO) at the £3.8 billion Church of England Pensions Board. He also serves at the Special Envoy for Peacebuilding for the Archbishop of Cape Town and is the Co-Chair, together with the Chairman of DeBeers South Africa, of the Global Centre for Peacebuilding and Business, which supports peacebuilding programmes in five conflict environments, and works with religious leaders, investors and business leaders to reimagine alternate paths that support flourishing peaceful communities.

Adam was appointed by the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) to be the investor representative on the UN Secretary General's Advisory Panel on Critical Transition Minerals, and successfully secured agreement within the Panel to address the legacy of mining and the need to establish a financing mechanism, to be piloted in two countries, to enable this issue to be addressed. He is currently working with the UN on advancing the pilot.

In 2022 the Archbishop of Canterbury awarded Adam the Canterbury Cross for his work on climate change and for establishing the Transition Pathway Initiative.

## Angus Hanton

Angus is a co-founder of the Intergenerational Foundation which campaigns for a better future, especially for younger people.

Younger generations have been given a raw deal on housing, university costs, the environment, pensions and the tax system, and together we could and should put this right.

Interested in other national policy issues, Angus has been shocked by how the UK is so much in thrall to the US, and has written a book with a self-explanatory title, *Vassal State: How America Runs Britain*.



## Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

### Human Rights Advocate on Injustice, Resilience and Freedom.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was detained at an Iranian airport while returning to London with her 22-month-old daughter after visiting family in Tehran. She was falsely accused of trying to overthrow the Iranian government, a charge she denied, and sentenced to five years in prison.

Over the next six years, she was held in different conditions, including solitary confinement, prison, and later house arrest with an electronic tag, and was banned from leaving Iran. After lengthy diplomatic negotiations, she was released and returned to the UK in March 2022.

Since her release, Nazanin has faced lasting physical and mental health challenges while rebuilding her life, reconnecting with her family, and strengthening her relationship with her daughter.

She now speaks publicly about her experience, advocates for political prisoners and prison reform, and contributes to cultural and public life in the UK through writing, broadcasting, and public events.

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## Sarah Mills

Sarah Mills is part of the Midlands team of Climate Action Advisors, working for Ashden's Let's Go Zero project. CAAs provide FREE support to education settings in creating DfE compliant action plans and calculating carbon emissions to help them take meaningful action that puts student voice and leadership on sustainability front and centre.

Drawing on a background of 12 years of secondary teaching, along with experience in educational TV at the BBC, working in the communities division of the local council and helping to lead several community sustainability groups, Sarah is passionate about sharing impactful climate solutions.

One of her favourite parts of this job is meeting with student eco teams to hear about what matters most to them, barriers and successes. It's also great to share best practice between schools, funding opportunities, curriculum resources and provide opportunities for students and staff to network with one another to have even more impact.



## Dr Fady Abusidu

Fady Abusidu is a former official who worked at the Palestinian National Authority on foreign affairs and security matters including Arms Control and Regional Security, where he acted as part of a negotiating team representing the Palestinian position at various international gatherings and track II meetings.

Dr Abusidu worked at various research centres and international institutions, including the European Parliament, on issues relating to the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

He holds an MA in conflict resolution and a PhD from the University of Bradford, where he also spent time teaching.

## Dr Olena Miliienko

Olena is an academic and practitioner in Public Law and Politics, with expertise in the protection by administrative courts of human rights from violation by public authorities, conflict and security.

She has a particular interest in good governance, human-oriented state and public service, qualitative administrative acts of public administration, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, decentralisation, and the protection of rights of displaced persons.

Olena has over ten years' experience working in the public sector in leading positions in Ukraine (Head of staff of the Seventh Administrative Court of Appeal; Chairwoman of the Commission on Legal Policy of Vinnytsia Regional Council; Member of the Regional Council; Director of the Training Centre for Judges).

She also has more than nine years' experience working as academic: an associate professor in the Faculty of Law, Department of Commercial and Administrative Law in the Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University; Professor at the Business and Law Department in the Open International University of Human Development "Ukraine"; Visiting Associate Professor in the Institute of Advanced Study, Politics and International Studies Department, University of Warwick, UK; British Academy Research Fellow.

Dr Miliienko has published more than 60 papers, an individual scientific monograph and several joint scientific monographs, and was invited by a major academic press to write a book on internally displaced persons in Ukraine.



## Taha Zaheri Abdehvand

Taha is a former medical student at Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences and an alumnus of the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents (SAMPAD).

Due to his digital advocacy for religious pluralism and freedom of conscience, Taha was targeted by security forces, placed under judicial prosecution, and faced the imminent threat of capital punishment.

In late 2025, against his deepest will, he was forced to flee his homeland—enduring the profound bitterness of exile and separation from his family—and was compelled to abandon his clinical studies to preserve his life.

A central pillar of Taha's current work involves engaging with young people to discuss the fundamental values of peace and liberty. By sharing his lived experience, he demonstrates how resilience can overcome systemic barriers.

At the heart of Taha's mission is a steadfast commitment to mutual respect for all faiths, the protection of religious minorities, the defense of freedom of expression, and the advocacy for political prisoners detained for their convictions.

A dedicated human rights analyst, he is co-author of the investigative article, "Iran in the Flames of Repression," published by Iran Human Rights Watch (IHRW).