Connecting people and cultures through Tourism in the Mediterranean region

Roundtable on Religious Tourism

29 May, 2016, Maghdouche, Lebanon
Programme

Sunday, 29 May - Maghdouche Basilica Meeting Room

10.00 - 15.30  Registration

15.30 - 16.00  Opening session

John Defterios, CNNMoney Emerging Markets Editor, interviews:

- Michel Pharaon, Minister of Tourism of Lebanon
- Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of UNWTO

16.00 – 18.00  Roundtable on Religious Tourism

This session will explore the challenges and opportunities for the development of religious tourism routes in the Levant, cross-country pilgrimages and networks of religious tourism destinations, as effective means to foster regional development and integration, cross-cultural exchanges and understanding as well as self-education and learning.
Moderator:

- Alison Hilliard, Director of The Green Pilgrimage Network, United Kingdom

Speakers:

- Michel Pharaon, Minister of Tourism of Lebanon
- Nayef Al Fayez, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan
- Rula Ma’ayah, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine
- Mohammad Abdel Jabber Musa, Chairman of the Iraqi Tourism Board
- Amr El Ezabi, Advisor to the Minister of Tourism of Egypt
- Francisco Singul, Director of Culture for Saint James way, Galician Tourism Board, Spain
- Rateb Y. Rabie, KCHS, Founder, President and CEO, Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation
- Dina Tadros, Managing Director and Partner, ITALôTEL Tours, Egypt
- Samir Sarkis, Founding Member and General Secretary of On the Footsteps of Jesus, South Lebanon Foundation

Debate

18.30
Launching of Lady of the Mantara - Magdouche as an international religious tourism destination

21.00
Dinner in Sidon
Opening Session

John Defterios - is the CNNMoney Emerging Markets Editor. Based in the network’s Abu Dhabi bureau his reporting focuses on the top business stories from emerging and BRIC economies.

Defterios has more than two decades of financial news and current affairs experience covering some of the landmarks events during that period including the Gulf War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the World Trade Centre bombings and G8/G20 summits from his postings in London, Washington, New York, Los Angeles, Rome and the Middle East.

He is a World Economic Forum media leader and member of the Global Agenda Council on the Arab World and has served as Chairman of the Business Week Leadership Forums in London, Beijing and New York, the World Islamic Economic Forum amongst others.

Michel Pharaon - Minister of Tourism of Lebanon

Born in Beirut in June 1959, he has an MA in economic sciences and business administration –Dauphine University - Paris IX.


M. Pharaon is also Vice president of the executive committee of the superior council of the Greek Catholics, member of Trustees of Patriarchal School and founder of the free health care center at “St Sauveur”.

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Michel Pharaon

John Defterios
Taleb Rifai - Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Mr. Rifai is Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) based in Madrid, Spain. He holds this position since 1 January 2010. He was unanimously elected at the 18th session of UNWTO General Assembly (October 2009), following the recommendation of the UNWTO Executive Council made in May 2009.

From March to December 2009 he was UNWTO Secretary-General ad interim. From February 2006 to February 2009 he was Deputy Secretary-General. From January 2003 to February 2006, Mr. Rifai was the Assistant Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Prior to this appointment, Mr. Rifai served in several ministerial portfolios in the Government of Jordan as Minister of Tourism and Antiquities; Minister of Information; and, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation. During his term as Minister of Tourism, Mr. Rifai served as Chairman of the Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

From 1997 to 2000, he was Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Jordan Cement Company, one of the largest public shareholding companies in Jordan; and directed the first large-scale privatization and restructuring scheme in Jordan. Mr. Rifai was also actively involved in policy making and developing investment strategies in his capacity as Director General of the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC) in Jordan (1995-1997). From 1993 to 1995, Mr. Rifai headed Jordan’s first Economic Mission to Washington DC, promoting trade, investments, and economic relations between Jordan and the USA.

Mr. Rifai began his career as Professor of Architecture, Planning and Urban Design at the University of Jordan from 1973-1993. He received his Ph.D. in Urban Design and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia – USA (1983); and a MSc. in Engineering and Architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Chicago – USA (1979). He also attained a B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering from the University of Cairo in 1973.
Alison Hilliard - Director of The Green Pilgrimage Network, United Kingdom

Alison Hilliard is a broadcaster and Director of the Green Pilgrimage Network. It was launched in 2011 and has grown to include over 25 pilgrim cities of 8 major faiths worldwide. Its vision is that pilgrims on all continents, and the pilgrim cities and places that receive them, become models of care for the environment. It is currently being established as an independent charity having been an initiative of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation: a UK-based charity founded by HRH Prince Philip that helps the world’s major faiths develop key environmental programmes. Alison was Deputy Secretary General of ARC for the last 7 years.

Alison spent over 20 years with the BBC- as a presenter and reporter for BBC Radio and Television. She was head of Religious Broadcasting for the BBC World Service and is author of ‘Living Stones Pilgrimage’ with the Christians of the Holy Land. She has lived and worked in Jerusalem, Uganda and Ethiopia.

Nayef Al Fayez - Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan

His Excellency Mr. Nayef Hmeidi Al Fayez has been appointed as a Minister of Tourism and Antiquities on 2 March 2015 till present.

H.E Mr. Nayef al Fayez has been the Jordanian Minister of Tourism on 25 October 2011. On 11 October 2012 he has been re-appointed as Minister of Tourism & Antiquities & Minister of Environment till 30 March 2013.

In 2014: he has been appointed as chairman of the national company for tourism development. His Excellency was appointed Managing Director of the Jordan Tourism Board in 2007, and served until 2011. Prior to that, he served as an advisor in the Prime Ministry and as the Managing Director of the Dead Sea Institute Project from 2005-2007.

Mr. Al-Fayez began his professional career at the Royal Hashemite Court serving as Assistant Chief of Royal Protocol for His Majesty Late King Hussein (1994-1999) and for His Majesty King Abdullah II (1999-2005). During that time he also served as the Director of the office of His Royal Highness Prince Feisal Bin Al-Hussein, and as the Head of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah’s Protocol.
A graduate of Brigham Young University, Mr. Al-Fayez holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, and a Master's Degree in International Relations. He has been decorated with a number of Jordanian and foreign medals.

**Rula Ma'ayah** - Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine

Mrs. Rula Ma’ayah is the Minister of Tourism & Antiquities of the Palestinian National Authority and a Member of Fatah Leadership Committee of the West Bank and in the High Council of Childhood and Motherhood. From 2008 to 2012, Mrs. Ma’ayah was the General Director of the Ministry of Justice, a member in the Governance Strategy Group and a member in the Justice Sector Working Group. In 2007, Mrs. Ma’ayah was an instructor at ICP Bethlehem University and served as a Director in the Ministry of Youth and Sport from 1995 to 2005. H.E. Rula Ma’ayah has also been a Bureau Member at the International Union of Socialist Youth and a member in the General Union of Palestine Students/International Relations Committee. Mrs. Ma’ayah has a B.S. degree from Birzeit University and a Professional Diploma from the Catholic School of Milan. Ma’ayah speaks Arabic, English and French.

**Mohammad Abdel Jabber Musa** - Chairman of the Iraqi Tourism Board

**Amr El Ezabi** - Advisor to the Minister of Tourism of Egypt

Amr Abdul Fattah Al Ezabi is the advisor to the Egyptian Minister of Tourism. He previously acted as the chairman of Egyptian Tourist Authority (2007-2012) and the assistant of Egyptian Minister of Tourism (2006-2007).

Al Ezabi was director of the Egyptian Tourist Office in Montréal, Canada from 2003 to 2006. He also previously worked as a tourist attaché in Paris (supervising the Swiss Market) and a director in the Egyptian Tourist Office, Madrid, Spain. Al Ezabi has a Master Degree in Sociology, Paris Sorbonne University, France. (Institution of Socio-Economic & Development Studies) (1986-1988) and a Diploma of Modern French Literature from Paris University. Al Ezabi graduated from Cairo University with a Bachelor Degree in Science, Chemistry Section in 1982.

In September 1989, Al Ezabi received a license of Tourist Guidance from the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, and a license of Ministers’ Prime Assistants & Assistants in March 2007.
Francisco Singul - Director of Culture for Saint James way, Galician Tourism Board, Spain

Francisco Singul is a Doctor in History of Art (2001). He has a degree in Geography and History, Art History sections (1987) and history of Galicia (1989). He is the head of the department of Culture of the Xacobeo, Xunta de Galicia since 2014.

Singul was the head of Exhibition Area of Xacobeo Xunta de Galicia from 2006 to 2014.

Main activities: curator, coordinator of conferences and collective books, researcher and disseminator of culture of the way of Santiago.

He has lectured and participated in international conferences, from 1996 to 2015 in Brazil, Mexico, USA, Japan, Turkey, Norway, Poland, Estonia, Hungary, Croatia, France, UK, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

He has published 16 books and over 50 articles on the Camino de Santiago in journals, exhibition catalogs and books. Among his books is noteworthy one published in Japanese in 2008, the Publishing Engine Room in Tokyo, entitled “Camino de Santiago”

Rateb Y. Rabie, KCHS – Founder, President and CEO, Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation

Sir Rateb was born in Amman, Jordan to Palestinian parents. A former businessman and life-long advocate for Palestine, Sir Rateb’s most important and dearest role is that of President/CEO of the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF), which he founded in 1998 with other Americans and Palestinians concerned with the presence of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. HCEF is a charitable faith-based development organization, with over 20 programs and initiatives, with offices in Washington, DC and Bethlehem, Palestine.

Sir Rateb is committed to improving living conditions for Arab Christians in their homeland and preserving the Christian heritage of Arabs.

From 1981 to 1986, Sir Rateb was Director of Operations for British/Saudi Corporation Saudi Support Services, Ltd. He later moved to Jordan, where he worked for his own
company, Reem Support Services. In 1989, he moved to Washington, D.C. where he worked for Marriott Corp. and founded, managed and owned several businesses (Image Printing & Publishing, Inc. and Vison Management & Consulting, Inc.) Sir Rabie is co-founder and past national president of the Birzeit Society and co-founder of the Institute for Health, Development and Research in Palestine. He is also a Knight Commander of the Equestrian Order of Holy Sepulchre a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus, and Chairman of the U.S. Muslim Christian Coalition (MCC) for the Protection of Christians and Religious Minorities in the Arab World. In 2007, the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) conferred upon Sir Rateb Rabie the Faith and Tolerance Award. This award is given to individuals working with faith-based organizations to encourage cooperation and peacemaking in the Middle East.

**Dina Tadros** - Managing Director and Partner, ITALÔTEL Tours, Egypt

Dina Emil Tadros Guirguis, went to Sacré Coeur Heliopolis School. She graduated from Ein Shams University Electrical Engineering. Tadros speaks French, Italian and English.

She worked till 1992 as an Electrical Engineer, and started her Travel agency on 1996 with an Italian Partner Michele Stefanelli. Her travel agency is one of the few specialized on the biblical and cultural Tours in Egypt. Worked as advisor for HE our ex Minister of Tourism Hisham Zaazou for the Coptic heritage and especially for the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt. Tadros is a part of the holy Family journey Committee under the umbrella of the ETA. She collaborated in the event of launching the program of the holy family on the 21st of October 2014.

One of her main aims is to succeed to popularize the Idea that Egypt is a part of the Holy land and to promote the several sacred routes following the movement of the central figures of the three monotheistic religions.

**Samir Sarkis** - Founding Member and General Secretary of On the Footsteps of Jesus, South Lebanon Foundation

Sarkis graduated as a Civil Engineer from Ecole Centrale d’Ingenieur de Nantes, France. He is the president of Sakis Establishments : Entreprise Batiments et Travaux Publics and a founding member and General Secretary of : On the footsteps of Jesus in South Lebanon.