

# The Alma Center

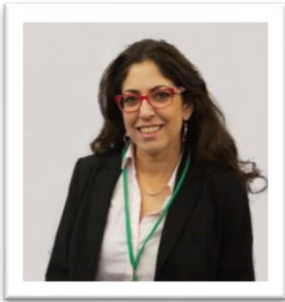
## Our Vision & Mission

**Understanding the Security Challenges on Israel's Northern Borders**



**Education | Research | Media**

## From our CEO



Founding the Alma Center is a dream come true for me. Ever since I was a student of Middle Eastern Studies at the Ben-Gurion University, I felt that another perspective was needed on the way the events in the Middle East are discussed. This feeling has only intensified in recent years, during which the global media has become very polarized, with a disproportionate emphasis on the placement of the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a primary cause in the instability of the Middle East.

As a resident of the Galilee for the past 11 years, I have developed a different perspective on the questions I dealt with as a student and later on, as an intelligence officer in the IDF. I wanted to bring an authentic and professional viewpoint to those who had never been exposed to the myriad of complexities in the Middle East, especially outside of Israel. A year ago, I established Alma, a unique Center that focuses primarily on Israel's security challenges on its northern borders. The Center's activities combine educational content – provided by the Center's diverse team of speakers, to varied groups from abroad - together with professional, qualitative and comprehensive research that highlights and analyzes events that are significant to the security of the State of Israel. The Alma Center is located in the Western Galilee region of northern Israel, and all staff members are residents of the Galilee and the Golan Heights.

I can admit that I could not have imagined that in a few months from the beginning, we would establish such an impressive Center, offering interactive and one-of-its-kind experiences for visiting groups. During the early days of the Center, I came to the realization that even senior officials and other opinion makers from the Academic and media arenas in the US and Europe, are craving for the knowledge we provide - professional, coherent and spiced with a personal and authentic point of view.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my team for their inspiring creativity and dedication; to our treasured clients who have believed in our vision from the outset; to the elite group of philanthropic donors who have helped me to establish Alma as an independent, non-profit organization; and to the Galila Foundation, who have supported and nurtured me from the outset and provides me with the tools to develop Alma as a globally-recognized Israeli think-tank that has gained significance and influence in the international arena.

Lt. Col. (res.) Sarit Zehavi,  
Founder and CEO of Alma

## What is Alma?

Alma is a non-profit education and research center (501c3), founded by Lt.Col Sarit Zehavi. Alma is dedicated to researching the security challenges on Israel's northern borders and sharing our conclusions with the world. We focus on opinion makers, research centers, academia and all those interested in an in-depth appreciation of the multi-dimensional complexities in the Middle East.



Alma takes pride in providing an authentic, unique and professional perspective regarding the areas on both sides of the borders of Lebanon, Syria and Israel. Our research interweaves the special diversity of societies along those borders with geography, politics and military capabilities – all combining together to impact the ever-changing security climate in the region.

Living alongside Israel's volatile northern borders can be quite challenging but is definitely interesting and dynamic. In order to understand what is happening on the other side of the borders, we personally explore and study the challenges in northern Israel by visiting different sites on the Syrian and Lebanese borders, collect information from various sources in multiply languages and analyze meaningful events that can directly influence Israel's security in the future.

In the ever-changing Middle East, it is very important to stay on guard and be updated. No day seems like the one before. We at Alma provide significant, original and well-illustrated research material, based on a deep understanding of the security situation.

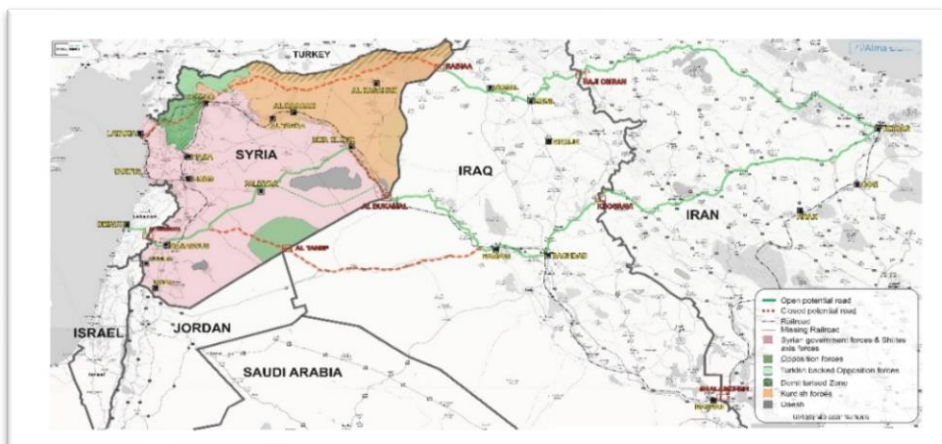
All of Alma's researchers and speakers are residents of Israel's northern border communities and together with their personal and professional experiences, they hold an authentic view point of the developments in the neighborhood.



## Research Department

*Alma develops exclusive analysis based on integrating information from social networks and sites in Arabic. Our research department focuses on the security challenges along Israel's northern borders and we are enhancing our expertise in better understanding the developments on the border zone with Syria and Lebanon daily - considering the ever-changing situation on these borders.*

Our Research Department follows media outlets and social media in the region on a daily basis. This ability to follow daily events enables us to provide updated briefings and publish relevant research products.



Production of research products and accessories

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Social Media: thousands were exposed to our daily publications

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Our Publications – found on our website [israel-alma.org](http://israel-alma.org) and in international media

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Podcasts - Q & A style interviews

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Publication of translated video materials and analysis reports on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

## Research topics – Lebanon:



- Who actually runs Lebanon? - Hezbollah's control of the Lebanese government and the population in southern Lebanon, following the results of the Lebanese parliamentary elections in May 2018.
- Hezbollah's indoctrination of the Iranian Islamic Revolution ideology among the population in southern Lebanon.
- UNIFIL and its role in enforcing UN Security Council Resolution 1701 & Hezbollah's use of civilians as human shields.

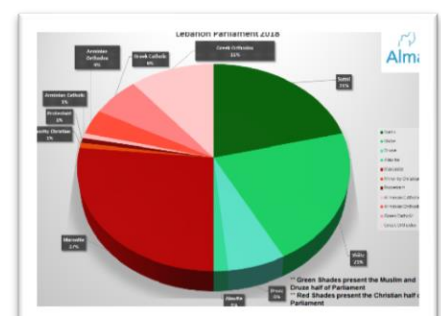
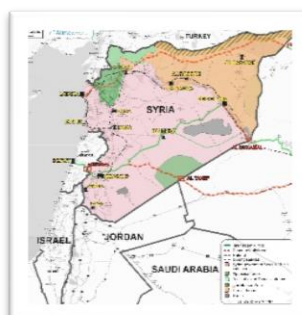
## Research topics – Syria:

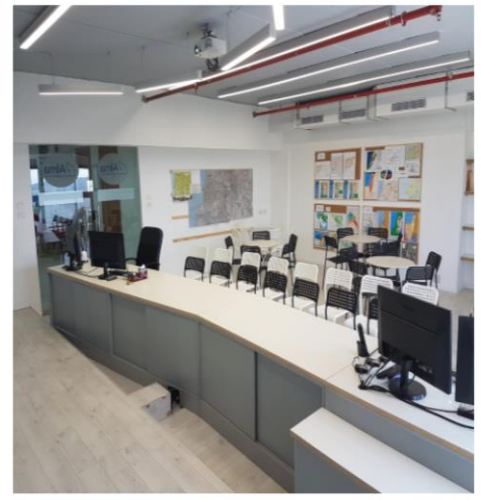


- The Shi'ite Axis' involvement, deployment and influence in the Syrian Golan Heights.
- The Shi'ite Axis' ground corridor from Tehran to Beirut via Damascus.
- The final stages of the civil war in Syria and the rehabilitation efforts - with an emphasis on the border area adjacent to Israel.
- International involvement in the Syria's southwest region - Russia, UN and US influence.

## Research Products:

Visual products: Infographics, mapping, translated video materials, news articles and special reports.





## Education Department

*Thousands of visitors, coming from all over the world, are exposed to Alma`s educational content every year.*

Last year has been a challenging and exciting year for the staff of the Education Department. Alma has evolved from a "one woman show" to a comprehensive non-profit center employing 7 staff members, all residents of northern Israel. We collaborate together to generate accurate analysis and interpretation of the northern borders' security challenges to global opinion makers and political leaders. This year, we have carefully reviewed the needs of our target audiences and developed new, informative programs, alongside the development and improvement of our on-location security briefings. We were pleased to learn that so many people, groups and institutes from around the world are yearning for knowledge on the dynamic events along Israel's northern borders. Our speakers met with politicians, diplomats, leading academics, journalists, businessmen, families, students and youth - all of whom were exposed to the unique content of the Alma Center and learned about Israel's security challenges on the northern borders.

Field briefings on the border

Geopolitical & Cultural seminars

Panels with speakers from the human mosaic of the Galilee

`Security Crisis simulation` in Alma`s unique `Situation room`

Interactive workshops

Indoor lectures

## Meet Alma's speakers:

### Lt. Col (Res.) Sarit Zehavi – founder and CEO



Lieutenant Colonel (Res.) Zehavi served for 15 years in the Israeli Defense Forces, specializing in Military Intelligence – initially with the IDF Research & Analysis section and later on, within the IDF Northern Command. Sarit has briefed hundreds of groups and forums, ranging from US Senators, Congressmen/women and politicians to senior journalists and visiting VIP groups in Israel and overseas. Sarit scripts numerous position papers and updates focusing on Lebanon, Syria and Israel's national security challenges. Sarit holds an M.A. in Middle East Studies from Ben-Gurion University. Sarit Zehavi and her husband Yaron are raising their 5 children in the Western Galilee.

### Lt. Col (Res.) Guy Malal – Vice President



Lt. Colonel Guy Malal is a knowledgeable speaker with over two decades of experience as a Commander in the IDF and is fluent in Arabic. Guy Malal conveys an in-depth appreciation of Israel's society, diverse cultures, history and geo-political challenges. Guy gained his B.A. degree in Middle East studies and Geography and is now studying for his M.A. in Geography at Haifa University. Guy is primarily engaged in the area of tourism development, and serves as Deputy Director of Israel's School of Tourism, where he also teaches Middle-East & Islam studies. In parallel to his civilian occupations, as part of his military (reserve) duty, he serves as commander of a training course in an IDF Intelligence operational unit. Guy is married and is the father of 3 children and lives in the community village of Yuvalim, located in the Central Galilee region.

### **Major (Res.) Avraham Levine - New Media Director & Geopolitical Speaker**



Major Avraham Levine (Res.) is the Media Director and geopolitical speaker at Alma. His parents are both Americans, who made Aliya to Israel in the 70's. Avraham served in the IDF's Golani Infantry Brigade in a number of combat roles, including stints in Lebanon as well as in Judea & Samaria. Avraham still serves as an IDF Intelligence Officer with his reserve unit every year. Married with seven children, Avraham and his family reside in the rural community of Avney Eitan, located on the Golan Heights, a mile away from the Syrian border. Having gained his B.A. degree in Organizational Psychology, Avraham's professional experiences ranges from business promotion & marketing to tourism development in Israel. He brings a wealth of personal knowledge and professional experiences to his role at the Alma Center.

### **Ibrahim Abu Ahmad – Senior researcher & speaker**



Ibrahim is a young Israeli Arab who was born and raised in Nazareth. Today he lives in the village of Tur'an, near Tiberias. He serves as a senior researcher in the research department of the Alma Center and as a lecturer. Ibrahim has a BA in International Relations, with focus on US-Middle Eastern relations. He began his studies at the American University in Cairo (AUC), Egypt in 2011, and because of the Arab Spring and uprisings in Egypt, had to move to the United States where he completed his education at James Madison University in Virginia. Ibrahim meets numerous groups and exposes them to conflicting identities of an Arab-Israeli young man who grew up and was educated in the northern part of Israel.

## '60 Minutes'

### Israel's Security Challenges along its Northern Borders



*Alma's '60 minutes' security briefings, including Q&A, (unless specified otherwise), takes place at selected observation points along Israel's borders with Lebanon and Syria. All of Alma's geopolitical speakers are experienced IDF officers, serving in their reserve units.*

#### A. Issues explored & discussed at the Lebanese border:

Lebanon's complex religious and political status; the 2006 'Second Lebanon War' and subsequent UN resolution 1701; Hezbollah's military deployment in Southern Lebanon; the international connections to the region and Israel's multi-dimensional security challenges along this volatile border.

- **Mount Adir**: panoramic observation point looking into South Lebanon and a memorial site commemorating IDF's fallen soldiers during the 'Second Lebanon War' in 2006.
- **Dovev**: a lookout point located inside an Israeli border village.
- **Kibbutz Hanita**: briefing at a lookout point into Lebanon and/or a tour of the Kibbutz guided by Hanita residents.
- **Metulla**: a border-fence vantage point, with an optional experience of driving alongside the Lebanese border.
- **Misgav-Am**: a panoramic observation post suitable for all weather conditions.
- **Rosh-Hanikra**: the maritime border dispute with Lebanon and Israel's Mediterranean gas-production initiative.
- **Zarit/ Shtula**\*: a visit to the site where Hezbollah's abduction of Israeli soldiers took place in July 2006, precipitating the 'Second Lebanon war' (Pending IDF approval)

## B. Issues explored & discussed at the Syrian border:

The security implications of the concluding civil war in Syria; Iran & the Shi'ite axis on the border; Operation "Good Neighbors"- how Israel treated injured/wounded Syrian refugees; the United Nations (UNDOF) activity in Syria; the international involvement in this region and the security challenges facing Israel on the Syrian border.

- **Mount Bental:** a panoramic observation point into Syria and Lebanon.
- **Quneitra:** a border observation point into Syria and Lebanon.
- **The former Syrian Military headquarters:** shifting Israeli security perceptions & policies on the Syrian border and the epic story of Israeli spy Eli Cohen, "Israel's Man in Damascus" during the decade leading up to the 1967 war.
- **Tel Saki:** a lookout point into Syria - brief review of the 1973 "Yom Kippur War" and its subsequent geopolitical implications.
- **Majdal Shams:** A Druze village located on the border-fence with Syria. Insight into the challenges & dilemmas of this distinctive community.
- **The Israel-Syria 'open' border crossing:** Can the UN keep the peace and fulfil its mission of observing the disengagement agreement in the post civil war era in Syria.
- **The 'Peace Observatory' in Kfar Haruv:** historic and strategic analysis of the 'Six Days War' in 1967.
- **"Negev Kinarot" viewpoint:** the strategic importance of the Golan Heights to Israel's security – past and present.

All of Alma's '60 Minutes' analysis-briefings along the Lebanon and Syria borders are specially designed for all levels of geopolitical knowledge and caters to individuals as well as to small and large groups. Some of the outdoor locations are better suited for larger groups and some have WC/Cafeteria options. In stormy weather conditions, the sessions will take place at the Alma Center, located in the Western Galilee region.

Alma's experienced and fluent geopolitical speakers engage with their audiences and ensure an experience that conveys a deeper appreciation of the multi-dimensional security complexities facing the State of Israel along its northern borders.

## Life on the Border: An insider's Viewpoint

The security challenges of a community living on the border  
(led by a community member) + Geo-political briefing

### A. Avney Eitan- The story of an agricultural Moshav near the Syrian border from the perspective of a local resident

Avnei Eitan is a religious Moshav (rural village) located in the southern part of the Golan Heights about 5 kms from the Syrian border. The Moshav was established in 1974 by members of the Nahal Brigade, an IDF brigade that



serves in this area. The Moshav is named after eight of its members, who were killed in the battles of the Yom Kippur War and the period after. The name comprises of the initials of each of the soldiers. Adjacent to the Moshav is the Tel Saki heritage site, where a fierce battle took place when Israeli armored forces were hit by Syrian fire while trying to rescue six IDF soldiers who were trapped in bunkers on the hill overlooking Syria. Two of the eight soldiers who died were part of a rescue team that attempted to rescue the six trapped soldiers amid a battle with the Syrians.

#### What's in the program?

- Life in Avnei Eitan from a personal perspective: the story of the establishment of the Moshav and the agricultural lifestyle of its residents, including a visit to the central bomb-shelter near the nursery schools and the security challenges of a Moshav located right across from the Syrian border.
- A security briefing at the Tel Saki Observatory on the Syrian border: Avni Eitan's connection to Tel Saki, which also serves as a heritage site commemorating the difficult battle that took place during the Yom Kippur War. The security situation of Israel on this border and the new situation in Syria today will be discussed.



- ‘Good Neighbor’ Project: The Moshav’s empathy towards the suffering Syrian civilians they can see from their own community, and their commitment to collect food, clothing and toys from the residents to help Syrians in tents across the border.



The activity will be led by Major (res.) Avraham Levine, head of New Media and a geopolitical speaker at the Alma Center - Avraham served in the IDF as a combat officer in the Golani Brigade’s anti-tank unit, and has served in the reserves near the northern border. He is married and has seven children. Avraham has lived in the modern-religious community of Avnei Eitan in the southern Golan Heights for most of his adult life and he was raised in the community of Kedumim, located in Samaria.

## B. Kibbutz Hanita – How is living on the Lebanese border?

Kibbutz Hanita is located on the north-western side of the Israeli-Lebanese border. The Kibbutz constitutes a significant milestone in the history of Jewish communities in the Land of Israel. Hanita was one of the first Jewish communities in the Western Galilee, established as part of the "Tower and Stockade" project, led by the Haganah during the Arab Revolt (1936-1939) in response to the Arab riots against Jewish communities. The goal was to establish Jewish communities by building settlements overnight - first a tower was erected and surrounded by a fence, as a base-camp for future settlement. Today, Hanita is a prosperous, modern Kibbutz, whose economy is based mainly on agriculture and technology.

### What's in the program?

- **A walking tour through the Kibbutz:** The story of the establishment of Hanita, the unique way of life of a kibbutz in Israel, the influence of capitalism and life in Hanita today. Hanita’s activity of promoting peace between Israelis and the Lebanese residents of the villages close to the border.



- **Field briefings on the border:** The security challenges of a Kibbutz located on the northern border, facing the area of activity of Hezbollah.
- **The Kibbutz's 'Situation Room':** Ensuring the safety of the Kibbutz residents.
- A short visit to Hanita's museum: The history of the Kibbutz & the Galilee region.



The activities will be led by Lieutenant Colonel (Res.) Sorel Hershkovitz - Sorel lives with his family in Kibbutz Hanita. He currently serves as the Kibbutz's Community Director and in practice is responsible for maintaining the routine lifestyle of the Kibbutz's residents- from planning budgets and resources to managing employees and implementing decisions taken by the community. Sorel served as an officer in the IDF and has extensive operational experience in field intelligence. Among other things, he served as the liaison officer of the IDF Northern Command and was responsible for the connection between all the foreign forces operating in the area. Sorel holds an MBA in Business Administration. The groups who meet Sorel are exposed to an authentic point of view of a kibbutz resident with a relevant security background, resulting in an authentic viewpoint of an active resident of Kibbutz Hanita.

### C. Kibbutz Dan: The story of a Kibbutz located on both the Syrian & Lebanese borders

Kibbutz Dan, one of the oldest Kibbutzim in the Hula Valley, was established in 1939 and is located in the Upper Galilee, at the borders between Israel and both Syria and Lebanon. Dan, one of the "wall and tower" communities, was built overnight by dozens of volunteer pioneers who built a high watchtower and around it, built barracks and enclosed the area. This was actually the basis for



the Kibbutz. Since Israel's Independence and until today, the residents of the Kibbutz have been exposed to security threats and attacks from Syria and Lebanon. Three generations grew up in the shadow of this security threat, while trying to preserve the kibbutz's routine lifestyle.

**What's in the Program?**



**The Eastern Pillbox:** An improvised stone structure used in the 1967 war as a fortified military post on the outskirts of the Kibbutz, on the border with Syria. On the second day of the war, a Syrian commando battalion attacked the Kibbutz and Kibbutz members repelled the invading enemies from the position of the eastern pillbox.



**A tour of the Kibbutz:** The story of Dan's establishment, the unique Kibbutz lifestyle, a visit to the communal shower hut established in the 1940s, the unified accommodations and the influence of capitalism and privatization on the kibbutz's guests.

**Visit to the children's shelter in the kibbutz:** The security challenges of a Kibbutz located on the borders with both Syria and Lebanon, a visit to the bomb-shelter where the children of Dan spent many days and nights, while the Kibbutz was shelled by the adversary on the other side of the border.

**'Good Neighbor' Project:** The Kibbutz's empathy towards the suffering Syrians so close to their own community, and the residents' commitment to collect food, clothing and toys from the residents to help Syrians in tents across the border.



The activity will be led by Yoav Hermoni -Yoav was born and raised in Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael. A few years ago, he moved with his wife and children to Kibbutz Dan, located in the Upper Galilee. In the army, he served as an armored officer. He holds a BA in International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies and a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies. Since 2006, Yoav has served as a guide who guides individuals and groups across the country, including Birthright, Students, Jewish Federations, Families, and more. Yoav is also a tour guide in a variety of countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Portugal, Georgia, Spain and Morocco. Yoav is part of the alert unit of Kibbutz Dan and serves as the security-commander of the community during emergency situations.

## The ALMA 'Security Crisis' Simulation



Becoming the Israeli (Government) Cabinet members for one day... Are you ready...?

*Making critical decisions concerning the security challenges on Israel's northern borders security challenges*

*Facing complex and multi-level dilemmas*

*Understanding the complexity of Israel's decision-making process: Key players/ How to guarantee Israeli citizen's safety? / avoiding collateral damage in non-symmetric warfare*

### How does it work?

A field briefing on the border

- Outdoor briefing at Mount Adir lookout on the Lebanese border provided by the Israeli Intelligence Director (role-played by ALMA's speaker) – 45 mins.

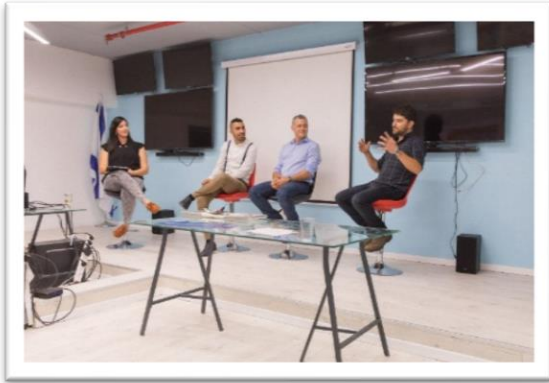
Alma's 'Situation Room': Starting with a short intro.

- Getting to know the various political players on Israel's northern borders – Iran, Hezbollah, Syrian government, Lebanon, International and regional players etc - 15 mins.

Israeli Cabinet meeting - Decision making process in scenarios of security escalation

- **Dilemma no. 1:** The Israeli Cabinet is facing tough decisions every day, taking the risk of war. The participants will have to decide how best to protect their civilians and maintain effective deterrence while, at the same time, avoiding deterioration into a widescale conflict.
- **Dilemma no. 2:** With Israel in a war situation, and with many Israelis civilian casualties, the Cabinet will have to make decisions involving 'collateral damage' beyond enemy lines. Civilians on both sides are at high-risk. What is the 'right decision' to take in this situation? - 60 mins.

## Speaker Panels at the Alma center When Jews, Muslims, Christian & Druze meet...



*At the Alma visitor's center, groups will be able to meet 2-3 speakers from different communities, ethnic backgrounds and identities, creating a tapestry of personalities from the Galilee region in northern Israel. Each speaker will express his/her viewpoint on a number of issues concerning their community and will take part in an interactive Q&A session, responding to questions from the moderator and the audience.*

### ALMA's Speakers



**Ibrahim Abu Ahmad-** Arab Israeli - Senior researcher at ALMA.

**Viola Abu- Shaded-** a career oriented single mother from the Druze village of Sajur.

**Sheikh Kassem Bader-** Druze Religious leader.

**Daniel Salame-** The correspondent for Arab Affairs at YNET from the Druze Village Julis.

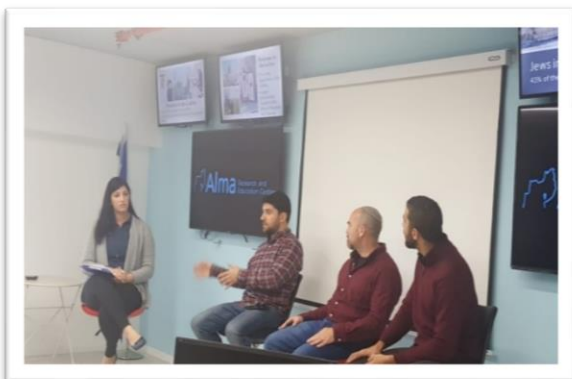
**Dr. Samuel Tobias-** Senior physician at the Western Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya and a leading surgeon who treated injured Syrians.

**Rabbi Shlomo Goldfarb-** Orthodox rabbi and IDF Officer from the secular community of Kfar Veradim.

**Mariam Hannoun-** Young Christian of Lebanese descent living in Israel.

**Kamil Sari-** Israeli- Christian living in Haifa and Director of the Israel Antiquities Authority, northern division.

**Shadi Khalloul-** Israeli Aramaic Maronite - Chairman of the Israeli Aramaic Christian Association.





**Ibrahim Abu Ahmad- Senior researcher at Alma's research department.**

Ibrahim is an Israeli Arab, born and raised in Nazareth, Israel. Today, he lives in the village of Turan, near the lake town of Tiberius. He is Alma's senior researcher and holds a B.A in International Relations, focusing on US-Middle Eastern relations. He commenced his academic studies at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. When the "Arab Spring" began, he moved to the US and completed his degree at James Madison University in Virginia. In his panel presentation, Ibrahim deals with the multiple identity-issues of a young Arab-Israeli, born and raised at the north of Israel. He also illuminates the term "Israeli-Arab" and openly shares his thoughts on the unique challenges they encounter with Israeli society and culture. Ibrahim unfolds his personal story and experiences as an Israeli-Arab living in northern Israel and provides many fascinating insights into the dilemmas and issues he contends with on a daily basis.

*\*Ibrahim also speaks on 'the challenges of the Arab minority community in Israel', in his home town Turan.*



**Viola Abu-Shaded - Women's status in the Druze community**

Viola Abu-Shaded lives in the Druze village Sajur and holds an LL.B and LL.M degree in Law. She works as an Affiliate Manager for an international trade company, in the stock exchange market. She represents her company in conferences worldwide and runs numerous campaigns in different languages. Viola lectures on the status of Druze women in Israel as well as around the world. She speaks about women living in a conservative Druze society that want to integrate into the modern Israeli society. Viola lucidly elaborates on the delicate balance between modern society and culture and how to preserve the Druze society's special values.



**Sheikh Kassem Bader- Druze Religious leader**

Sheikh Kassem Bader is a Druze leader from the Galilee village of Horfeish. He raised his children on the values of loyalty and respect to their homeland Israel and some of them have served in elite IDF units. Sheikh Bader holds an important position in the Druze establishment and for almost thirty years he has been actively engaged in PR advocacy, on behalf of the Druze community in Israel. He hosts numerous groups in Israel and conducts many speaking engagements overseas, providing insight into the fascinating world of the Druze religion, culture and its complicated geo-political situation. The Druze Heritage Center he established exposes its visitors to components of the ‘secret’ religion, as well as a broad analysis of the Druze community, its unique way of life and discusses the unbreakable bond between Druze and Jews in the Galilee region, an inspiring model of shared-societies’ values.

*\*Sheikh Kassem also lectures to groups in Horfeish village*



**Daniel Salame- correspondent on Arab Affairs at YNET (an Israeli leading news outlet)**

Daniel Salame represents an excellent example of the strong bond connecting the Druze and Jewish populations in Israel. He was born and raised in the Druze Village Julis, located in the Western Galilee region of northern Israel. Daniel completed his compulsory military service as an officer in the Israeli Air Force’s operational command and control head- quarters and still serves there in his reserves capacity. He holds a B.A degree in communications and has worked as an assistant analyst at INSS (Institute for National Security Studies), as a columnist for NRG360 and as a social media manager in a major PR firm. Nowadays he works as the correspondent for Arab Affairs at YNET. Daniel also conducts speaking tours inside the northern Druze villages to global audiences, exposing them to the unique life style of the Druze community in Israel.

*\* Daniel also speaks on ‘The Integration of Druze in Israeli society’.*



**Dr. Samuel Tobias- Neurosurgeon at Nahariya Hospital**

Dr. Samuel Tobias is originally from Mexico City and immigrated to Israel in 2011 with his wife and two children. Dr. Tobias works as a senior physician in the Neurosurgery Department at the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya, where 70% of the Syrians wounded in the civil war were treated in Israel. Dr. Tobias is an experienced surgeon who has worked in Mexico, the US and in Jerusalem. He specialized in Skull Base Surgery and in 2013 was invited to become part of the team led by Prof. Jean P. Soustiel, to establish a new Department of Neurosurgery at the Galilee Medical Center in the coastal town of Nahariya in northern Israel. His main practice is skull base tumors, pediatric neurosurgery, spine surgery and neuro-trauma.



**Rabbi Shlomo Goldfarb- Orthodox Rabbi and Major in the IDF**

Rabbi Shlomo Goldfarb, is a charismatic teacher and lecturer who lives with his family in Kfar Veradim, located in northern Israel. He holds a B.A in Jewish Philosophy and law and also studied to become an ordained Rabbi in a Jewish Yeshiva. Over the years, Rabbi Goldfarb volunteered in summer camps of Jewish communities around the world and served as the deputy Rabbi of the Jewish community in Mumbai, India. Since 2004, he serves as the Rabbi of Kfar Veradim's synagogue and lectures in Seminaries/Colleges located in the town of Safed. Alongside his religious occupations, Rabbi Goldfarb holds the rank of Major (reserves) in the IDF and has served in the artillery & armored corps. He now does his reserve duty as the deputy Rabbi of the IDF northern division. He meets and prays with soldiers before they go to battle and he also meets with them after they come back, sometimes after they lost their friends during the battle. Rabbi Goldfarb believes that his experiences in both civil and army lifestyles, enabled him to form a bridge and connection between different people and communities in the Israeli society.



### **Mariam Hannoun- Young Christian Lebanese**

Born in Lebanon, Mariam was only 5 years old when she fled, together with her entire family, from their Christian village to Israel, in wake of the Israeli military withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in May 2000. Her father was a former soldier of the South Lebanon Army (SLA), who allied with the Israeli army in Lebanon. He had to escape from his country in order to save the lives of his family from the vengeful Hezbollah fighters, since he was considered a traitor. Thousands of former Lebanese Christians with a similar background now live in Israel. Mariam grew up and lived in Israeli society as a Lebanese Israeli, raising many issues and questions regarding her dual identity. She progressed through her school years and as a talented athlete, she made it to Israel's national basketball team and received a full scholarship to play basketball and study international business and psychology in the United States. Nowadays, she's a professional basketball player in the Israeli Premier Basketball League. In her presentation, Mariam tells her personal story as Christian of Lebanese descent living in Israel, with many family members still living not far from the Israel-Lebanon border.



### **Kamil Sari- Archeological findings of the Israeli History**

Kamil Sari is an Israeli- Christian living in Haifa. Kamil holds a B.A in Archeology and History, and M.A and Ph.d in Archeology. For the past 25 years, Kamil has been working for the Israel Antiquities Authority. He held multiple professional positions, the latest of which as Director of the northern region at the Israel Antiquities Authority, a role he holds since 2016. Kamil published more than 150 articles on Archeology, and has also participated in radio and TV programs discussing archeological excavations in Israel and around the world. Kamil lectures to numerous groups in educational centers, schools, universities and seminars in addition to the business community in Israel. He speaks on

varying subjects ranging from archaeology and excavations to the archaeological history of the churches and in the footsteps of famous women during ancient times and the Industrial Revolution.



**Shadi Khalloul- Chairman of the Israeli Aramaic Christian Association.**

Shadi Khalloul is an Israeli Aramaic Maronite from the village of Birem. He is Chairman of the Israeli Aramaic Christian Association and acts as a spokesperson for the `Christian officers Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Forum`. Prior to his studies in international business and finance, Shadi served as a lieutenant in the paratrooper corps in the IDF.

He is involved in education and advocacy in order to revive the Aramaic-Syriac language among Maronites and other Christians in Israel. He is a staunch believer in the importance of nurturing a close relationship between Christians and Jews in Israel. Shadi was recognized by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his success in encouraging Christians in Israel to join the IDF and integrate more smoothly into the Israeli Jewish society. He is the founder of Pre-military Educational Leadership program for Christian – Jewish youths. He is recognized as the first Christian academic, IDF Officer to become a Knesset candidate after joining a Zionist party in the 2015 elections. Shadi participates in several international conferences and college campus tours, discussing the Jewish – Christian Aramaic relations inside and outside of Israel.

## Alma`s Indoor Presentations



### **Lecture 1: Israel`s Security Challenges on the Northern Borders**

How has the civil war in Syria changed the IDF's security doctrine on the Syrian border? How is Hezbollah preparing for the next conflict with Israel? What are the solutions (if any) and how is the US involved? Presenting a virtual review of Israel's volatile northern borders and analyzing all the implications to Israel's security.

### **Lecture 2: Who is the REAL boss in Lebanon?**

Is it Lebanon's past that shapes its present and future, or is the current state of chaos in this corner of the Middle East a long-term predicament? How does the social and religious complexities impact Lebanese society? Is the Lebanese army (LAF) a viable alternative to Hezbollah? What is Hezbollah's hidden agenda and is it dictated by Iran? How threatening is the new reality (Iran/Syria/Hezbollah axis) to Israel?

### **Lecture 3: The `Arab Spring`s` failure – Syria as a case study**

More than half a million people have lost their lives in the civil war in Syria and many more millions are displaced. Now that the war is reaching its final stages, will the Assad regime and its allies (Russia, Iran and Hezbollah) manage to reunite Syria and bring hope to its people? Will Sunnis and Shi'ites be able to live together in this war-

torn country? How does the Russian involvement in Syria shape new rules of engagement with Israel? How should Israel act in order to deal with the Iranian threat as well as the Shi'ite axis expansion in Syria and across the Israeli border?

**Lecture 4: The Middle East: A different point of view**

In order to understand the complexity of the Middle East and its myriad of internal conflicts, it is an imperative to dig into the roots of the multi-ethnic and tribal societies across the Middle East and find the common denominators that have influenced and shaped the Middle East in the past century. These, combined with other factors, have contributed to the political and social processes in the Middle East. In this presentation, we explain the role of each of the different key variables in shaping the Middle East separately and combined.

**Lecture 5: The challenges of the Arab minority in Israel**

The lecture is provided by Ibrahim Abu Ahmad, a young Israeli-Arab, a senior researcher and lecturer at the Alma center. The lecture discusses the conflicting identities of an Arab-Israeli young man who grew up and was educated in northern Israel.



In addition, he elaborates on the term "Israeli-Arab" and candidly shares his views on the distinctive challenges of Israeli Arabs as a minority within Israeli society and culture. Ibrahim shares his personal story along with his experiences as an Israeli-Arab living in northern Israel, providing a fascinating insight into the dilemmas and issues he and his society faces every day.

***The lecture will deal with the following topics:***

- The history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (beginning in 1948) from the personal perspective of an Israeli-Arab.

- The identity crisis of Israeli Arabs.
- Changes experienced by Arab society and culture over the last two decades, due to the influence of technology and exposure to Western culture and the differences between different generations.
- The importance of integrating Israeli Arabs into the Israeli society
- Arab society today as a minority living within a democratic Jewish State.

### **Lecture 6: Powerful rivalries in the Middle East – is the region and the world any safer?**

The regional powers in the Middle East (Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) all have to deal with a new era following the re-imposed sanctions on Iran and the final stages of the civil war in Syria. Modern diplomacy in this region is deeply influenced by memories of a "glorious history" and ancient rivalries. We explore the complex relationships between the leaders of these three great powers: Rouhani, Erdogan, and Crown Prince, Mohammed Bin Salman. How do their strategies and ambitions shape their positions regarding the new reality in the Middle East?

### **Lecture 7: Solving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict – how difficult can it be?**

Looking at the key issues of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations: borders, settlements and refugees. What about the status of Jerusalem? Is this a national or a religious conflict and is the two-state solution still relevant?

### **Lecture 8: International Law and Israel's Security Challenges- Two cases: Gaza and South Lebanon.**

What are the causes of collateral damage in Gaza? What has Israel done to prevent it? Who is responsible for enforcing the United Nations Security Council resolution that ended the war between Israel and Lebanon in 2006? Was the resolution ever implemented?

**Lecture 9: Women in the Middle East: Her-story vs history**

The region's historical narrative from a feminine perspective. We analyze honor codes, status, clothing and how they all impact the Arab world today. Examples of brave feminine leaders through the generations and the current plight of women living in Arab regimes.

**Lecture 10: The Oil-Economy of the Middle East – Economic interests influenced by political turmoil**

Over the past few years the “Arab Spring” had become a “stormy winter” while the regional powers of the Middle East (Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) are fighting each other through proxies in various fields. Did the events in the Middle East over the past years affect the Oil-Economy and oil prices? Can Saudi Arabia utilize oil production to develop a stable independent economy? how does oil affect political and social interests in the Middle East? How does this game play out by global powers and regional proxies affect Israel's security and strength?

## Workshops



### "Knowledge is Power" (KIP)

***There are different ways to tell the story about conflicts in the Middle East in general, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular. We will discuss the basic facts vs. myths related to these issues.***

**KIP 1: The true cause of Arab/Muslim unrest and friction with the West**

- Internal conflicts in the Middle East, the roots of the terror attacks in Paris, California and Florida.

**KIP 2: Does Israel want peace or aggression?**

- The truth about Israel and its neighbors: borders, wars, special relationships and more.

**KIP 3: Did Israel cause "massive civilian damage in the Gaza conflict"?**

- The last operation in Gaza: IDF activity - between legal to legitimate; "Human shield" and collateral damage; how both sides protected their civilians?

**KIP 4: Does Israel policy in Jerusalem inflame Palestinians?**

- the historical connection between the Muslims and Jerusalem, versus the historical connection between Jews and Jerusalem. The City's history. Who really controls the 'holy sites' in Jerusalem today?

*\*Recommended for young leadership groups and/or students*

**“A day in the life of an intelligence officer”- Military Intelligence & the Middle East**

***The group will have a taste of the role of a military intelligence officer, dealing with the twisted realities in the Middle East. The group will be divided into sub-groups and they will read and assess the latest media articles from the Middle East. We will then re-group and analyze these articles. This exercise will empower the group to understand media articles of this type and, in future, to be able to read them in a more critical way.***

What is the role of the Intelligence Officer in the IDF? – a personal insight

Nasrallah, Hezbollah, and Allah - Basic concepts in the geopolitics of the region: Islam, Shi'ite, Sunni and in-between sects, borders in the Middle East, Israel's relations with its neighbors and other countries in the Middle East

Biases in different sources, cross information, and data extraction – focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

**“A day in the life of a news editor” - journalism in the Middle East**

***The group will have a taste of the role of a news editor, dealing with the twisted realities in the Middle East. The group will be divided into sub-groups and they will read and assess the latest media articles from the Middle East. Their mission is to wright and film a news broadcast summarizing the articles.***

***We will then re-group and watch the broadcasts and analyze the differences between them. This exercise will empower the group to understand media articles of this type and, in future, to be able to read them in a more critical way.***

What news do we choose to consume and what do we do with the information we receive?

Biases in different sources, cross information, and data extraction – focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



## Activities Abroad

**Over the past year, Alma has taken an active part in important conferences in the United States and Europe and has held meetings with senior officials and decision makers overseas.**

Our overseas activities focus primarily on increasing accessibility to information and the formulation of recommendations on Israel's security challenges on its northern borders among prominent opinion leaders and decision makers from around the world. As an independent expert, Sarit Zehavi is regularly invited to speaking engagements and meetings in Europe and the United States. She has taken an active role in conferences and has held meetings with senior administration and congressional officials in the US, raising awareness, stimulating processes and offering fresh, research-based perspectives and ideas concerning the challenges faced by Israel on its northern borders.



Alma participates in conferences, seminars and panes in the United States and Europe

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Senior members of the US Congress and their staff are briefed, a few times a year on Capitol Hill by Sarit Zehavi and learn about Israel's security challenges on the northern borders

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Every year, Sarit Zehavi, Alma's Founder & CEO, participates the AIPAC policy conference held in Washington, D.C. In 2018, Sarit presented a simulated tour of Israel's northern borders to an audience of 18,000 people





## [Alma in the Media](#)

**Journalists from Europe, the United States, Australia and China all had the opportunity to learn about Israel's security challenges on the northern border, from the personal perspective of Sarit Zehavi, a mother of 5, living in the Galilee, coupled with a professional-expert perspective as a Lieutenant Colonel in the IDF reserves and founder of the Alma Research & Education Center.**

Media reports around the world are rife with disinformation and partial information when they cover events in the Middle East in general, and the security challenges Israel faces in particular. Over the past year, we have met at sites on the northern borders with dozens of global journalists from many countries including Germany, the United States, China, Australia and France. In addition, Alma's Founder & CEO, Sarit Zehavi, was interviewed by countless media outlets - newspapers, tv/radio programs and podcasts - and took the opportunity to provide accurate information and sources on Israel's security challenges on the northern borders - from an authentic, personable and highly accountable, professional perspective.

## Looking Forward

During the coming year, Alma will expand its activities on a number of levels:

- In the field of education, we are looking to expand our client base and reach even more diverse audiences from all over the world. In addition, we will work to implement our primary programs - the “simulation room” exercise and the speakers’ panel.
- In the research arena, we aspire to significantly increase our capacities and to evolve from a new "laboratory" research center, into a leading, globally-branded research center. We will be increasing the number of posts, infographics and accessories we produce and become recognized as a significant authority on the critical and complex issues relating to security along Israel’s borders and to provide up-to-date and credible sources of knowledge for our target audiences.
- We are committed to continuing with our work overseas and to participate in prestigious and important conferences, seminars and events, enabling Alma to impact prominent global decision makers and to effectively expose them to the realities of the security challenges Israel faces every day.

## Our Request

Alma is a registered and approved Israeli non-profit organization, with tax-deductible - 501(c)3 approval for philanthropic contributions made in the United States and the United Kingdom. Your support is critical for the continued development and expansion of the Alma Center. All contributions to the Alma Center are tax exempt in Israel and overseas through the Galila foundation;

**Israel:** via Bank Transfer\ Check: Galila – The Northern Galilee Development

**USA:** PEF Israel Endowment Funds Inc

**UK:** Galila Charitable Trust UK

For donations via [Jgive](https://www.give.org), visit Alma’s website at: [www.israel-alma.org](http://www.israel-alma.org)

# Israel's Northern Borders at a Glance



# Understanding the Security Challenges on Israel's Northern Borders



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