

Lana Nusseibeh

Candidate for UN Secretary-General



“The United Nations was never meant to agree with the world. It was built to help the world agree.”

Lana Nusseibeh is an internationally recognised diplomatic leader, with a decades-long track record of addressing some of the most complex and consequential challenges on the global agenda. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated strategic leadership on matters of international peace and security, development, and human rights, while advancing cooperation on a broad range of issues including trade, sustainability, emerging technologies, and countering terrorism.

Her career in public service has been defined by working across political and geopolitical divides.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (until October 2026)

As Minister of State, Lana Nusseibeh advanced key priorities across a portfolio of nearly 50 bilateral partnerships across the European continent. As the Foreign Minister's Envoy to the European Union, she oversaw the launch of negotiations for two milestone agreements with the EU, on free trade, and on the broader strategic partnership. Throughout, she has worked closely with the three Presidents of the Commission, the Council, and the Parliament.

She has played a key role in engagements on major regional and international matters, most notably in relation to peace and security. Serving through a period of extraordinary upheaval in the Gulf and the wider Middle East, she represented her country effectively with both partners and opponents, advocating for diplomacy and adherence to international law.

In her capacity as the Foreign Minister's Envoy to the United Nations (UN), she was instrumental in mobilising the full range of international mechanisms across priority areas.

She previously served for four years as Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs, providing strategic direction and the country's diplomatic engagement across all geographies.

Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the UN, New York (2013-2024)

Over her more than decade-long tenure in New York, Lana Nusseibeh engaged across the work of the UN, spanning peace and security, humanitarian diplomacy, the Women Peace and Security agenda, international cooperation on technology and development, and UN governance and reform.

She successfully led the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) campaign for election to the UN Security Council. The UAE's term came during a time of unprecedented global tensions, including in March 2022 and June 2023 when she presided over the Security Council, and ensured constructive and impartial handling of the Security Council's work.

At a time of political impasse among Security Council members, Lana Nusseibeh focused on consensus-building, securing agreement on landmark instruments, including

Resolution 2681 (2023) on Afghanistan and Resolution 2686 (2023) on tolerance, peace and security. These negotiations were characteristic of her approach of working across various positions to identify achievable common ground and translate it into collective action.

She also marshalled a relentless diplomatic drive to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza. In December 2023, two months into the conflict in Gaza, she led a visit by current and incoming Security Council members to the Rafah crossing, bringing Security Council members closer to the humanitarian situation on the ground. Her leadership was instrumental in securing the adoption of Resolution 2720 (2023), paving the way for the delivery of humanitarian aid, and the appointment of a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator.

Throughout her tenure in New York, she championed women's leadership and meaningful participation in international peace and security, including in her role as President of the UN Women Executive Board in 2017. In partnership with UN Women, she played a pivotal role in launching the Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Women, Peace and Security Training Initiative in the UAE in 2018, which has already graduated more than 600 female cadets from military, security and peace sectors in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, creating a vital pipeline for women in peace operations.

She worked closely and directly with Member States and the Secretariat to foster consensus and secure progress on complex UN processes. This led to her three consecutive appointments as co-facilitator of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform, as well as co-facilitator for the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, and the ten-year review for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). As part of the WSIS process, she engaged widely with civil society, including extensive feedback gathered at the Internet Governance Forum in Brazil, which she fed directly into negotiations of the final WSIS outcome.

In each of these roles she managed entrenched differences between Member States effectively, while maintaining momentum towards spaces where agreement remained possible.

Her work on WSIS led a series of discussions with technology leaders, government representatives, and civil society on the role the Secretary-General could play in addressing emerging technology issues. These exchanges eventually culminated in the appointment of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation in 2018.

She also co-chaired with the UK the Friends of the Future of the UN, an informal grouping of Permanent Representatives that served as a sounding board and source of fresh thinking about reforms of the organisation.

Prior government roles (2006-2013)

In 2009, Lana Nusseibeh established and led the Policy Planning department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During her four years as Director, she provided strategic guidance to UAE leadership on the rapid changes in the regional political landscape during that period. She also served as the UAE Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In 2008, she led the UAE's successful diplomatic campaign to secure Abu Dhabi as the headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), a landmark achievement that established the first major international organisation headquartered in the Middle East.

In 2006, she joined the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs, where she played a leading role in preparing the first national elections to the consultative body, with a particular focus on reaching out to and mobilising women voters.

Prior to entering government service, she was an analyst at a think tank focused on foreign and security policy.

Education

- BA (Hons) and MA (Cantab) in History from Queens' College, University of Cambridge
- MA with Distinction in Israeli and Jewish Diaspora Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London
- She speaks Arabic and English and has a working knowledge of French.

Honors

- UAE Prime Minister’s Government Excellence Award, also known as the UAE Medal of Pride (2017)
 - National Order of Merit “Don José Falcón” awarded by the Government of Paraguay in recognition of her contribution to the provision of emergency relief during the Covid-19 pandemic (2022)
 - The Shield of Palestine, awarded by the Permanent Representative of Palestine in recognition of her work at the UN (2024)
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Board Roles

- Advisory Board of the London School of Economics Middle East Centre
 - Board of Advisors of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University
 - Board of Trustees of the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy
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Personal

- Lana Nusseibeh is married and has two children.
- She was born in 1978, is a citizen of the United Arab Emirates, and holds no other nationalities.