

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Lebanon



**Mrs. Kristen
Knutson**
Head of Office a.i

Ms. Kristen Knutson is the acting Head of Office for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Beirut, Lebanon since 29 January 2024.

Kristen has more than 20 years' experience with the United Nations in the fields of humanitarian affairs and communications and has supported emergency response in more than a dozen crises around the globe. Prior to her deployment to Lebanon, she served as OCHA Head of Office in Burkina Faso from July 2019 until January 2024. She has also served as Head of the Operations Team (2018-19) and Head of the Regional Partnerships Unit (2013-2017) with OCHA in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand), and as Public Information Officer with OCHA in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Haiti, and Uganda, as well as at Headquarters in New York.

Kristen studied at the University of Minnesota, USA, and the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, and holds a master's degree in political science. She is a national of the United States of America.

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**Mrs. Helena
MAZARRO
GARCIA**
Deputy Head
of Office

Helena joined OCHA Lebanon in June 2020 as the Deputy Head of Office. She started her career in 1993 with a first deployment with Médecins du Monde in Angola. After several years in DRC, Kenya and Bosnia-Herzegovina, she joined OCHA in 1996 and was posted in Angola during the demobilization process and the following upsurge of the conflict. Since 2000, she has been working with OCHA in Burundi, Colombia and Myanmar where she was most recently heading the coordination team. Helena has a BA in Information Sciences/Journalism (Spain) and a master's in management of Rural Development (UK). She is native Spanish speaker and proficient in English, French and Portuguese.

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**Mr. Pierre
DAHER**

Special assistant to the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator

Pierre joined OCHA in August 2023 as Special Assistant to the UN DSCL/RC/HC in Lebanon. He previously worked as Governance Officer at UNRCO Lebanon for four years, with a focus on enhancing partnership with the Lebanese Parliament. Pierre brings over seven years of experience in the legal and public policy field.

He holds a BA in law, two Masters in public and comparative law from the Lebanese University and is currently a PhD candidate in international constitutional law.

Pierre is a Lebanese national and is fluent in Arabic, English and French.

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**Ms. Kawthar
FAHS**

Senior Communications and Reports Officer

Kawthar has 14 years of professional experience in Media, Communications, Translation projects' management, content creation and information analysis. Prior to joining OCHA, she was the Information Analyst at the European delegation to Syria, where she analyzed the main media narratives and disinformation activity, and advised accordingly decision-making senior officials based in Beirut and Brussels. She has also worked at Amnesty International for five years as a Regional Language Coordinator and a MENA Strategic Advisor covering Tunis, Lebanon, London and Jerusalem offices. From 2008 until 2016, she led the Media and Communications work at 2 sisters UN agencies FAO, UNRWA, and Amel Association NGO in Lebanon. She has also worked as a freelance journalist and translator at one of the local daily newspapers for almost 4 years. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Language Interpretation and Translation

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**Mr. Eyram
DZITRIE**

Humanitarian Affairs Officer

Eyram Dzitrie, a Ghanaian national, has worked for international humanitarian, development and peace sector organizations in Africa and Asia. Between 2016 and 2019, he served at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Country Office in Yangon, Myanmar as an Associate Expert. Before this, he served as a Project Officer at UNICEF's Field Office in Ghana, and has also worked for peace organizations such as the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (the Africa regional bureau of UNODA, based in Lomé, Togo). He holds masters degrees in international development from the University of East Anglia, UK and the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

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**Ms. Khouloud
MAHDI**

Humanitarian Affairs Officer

Khouloud joined OCHA Lebanon in February 2021 as Humanitarian Affairs Officer. Prior to joining OCHA, she has worked for five years with international NGOs. She was co-leading the Water Sector in Lebanon, working in the three existing humanitarian responses in Lebanon (LCRP, COVID19 and Beirut blast response), developing WASH strategies, coordinating the response and ensuring the inclusion of local and international partners. Prior to that, she was WASH program manager for water and sanitation programs implemented in Lebanon. She is a good advocate for the multi-sectorial response, emergency-stabilization nexus and environmental initiatives. Khouloud holds a BS in Biochemistry from USJ, BE in Environmental Engineering from Lebanese University and DEA- Master 2 in water science from USJ.

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**Mr. Fadel
SALEH**

Humanitarian Affairs Officer

Fadel Saleh joined OCHA in September 2023. With over seven years of professional experience, his experience is focused on analysis, coordination, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement and humanitarian access in Lebanon and Syria. Notably, he served as a Conflict & Safety Advisor at the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) in Syria, contributing to safety and access for humanitarian organizations. Prior to this, Fadel worked as a Conflict Analyst & Conflict Sensitivity Mainstreaming Officer at UNDP Lebanon, focusing on tension monitoring, coordination, policy planning, and mainstreaming conflict sensitivity in Lebanon. He also served with several NGOs, UN ESCWA, and the American University of Beirut (AUB). Fadel holds a master's degree in Global Public Policy and a bachelor's degree in Political Sciences/International Affairs. He is proficient in both Arabic and English.

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**Ms. Benedetta
DE ALESSI**

Humanitarian Affairs Officer

Benedetta De Alessi has joined our team on surge from the OCHA Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ROSEA), where she heads the Access, CMCoord and Analysis Unit. She has worked for OCHA for over 8 years. Prior to that she has worked with humanitarian NGOs to respond to complex emergencies in Sudan and South Sudan. She has worked extensively on negotiations and peace processes. She holds a PhD in Politics from SOAS, University of London.

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**Ms. Haya
ALAYED**

Humanitarian Affairs
Officer

With over 14 years managing humanitarian programs in the Middle East, specializing in gender mainstreaming and women empowerment, a strong expertise in the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), I am currently working as a Humanitarian Affairs Officer with OCHA ROMENA. I worked with OCHA in Palestine, Jordan, and Syria, including surge missions to Ethiopia, South Sudan, Yemen, and Syria. Previously, I supported relief programs with ICRC in the West Bank. I hold a BA in Business Administration, a conflict resolution diploma from Bir Zeit University, and I'm pursuing part-time International Relations studies at Liverpool University.

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**Ms. Désirée
ABI HACHEM**

Associate
Humanitarian Affairs
Officer

Désirée joined OCHA in June 2014. It is her first UN experience since she has previously worked in the private sector as Assistant Project Manager for several years. Désirée holds a Master of Project Management from Cardiff Metropolitan University in London and BA in Business Administration from the Modern University for Business and Science in Beirut. She was born and raised in Lebanon and is fluent in Arabic, English and French, and has basic knowledge in Spanish.

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**Mr. Craig
ANDERSON**

Head, Humanitarian
Financing Unit

Craig joins us in Lebanon having previously worked for OCHA Country-Based Pooled Funds in both Iraq and Nigeria, as well as having worked for operational NGOs and the mixed national/international NGO forum in Iraq. Prior to joining the humanitarian sector, worked as an analyst/reporter for the British Foreign Office focusing on the Middle East region. Craig has an active interest in the Middle East region.

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**Mrs. Yendi
GHOSSEIN**

Deputy Fund
Manager, Humanitarian
Financing Unit

Yendi joined OCHA Lebanon in March 2016 to support the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund as a Programme Analyst. Prior to joining OCHA, she has worked for UNDP in resource mobilization, CSR and the E&E Programme. Prior to that, she worked for the FAO and UNIDO on the implementation of various projects in the aftermath of 2006 July conflict. Yendi holds a MA in Industrial Technology from Saint Joseph University, a MA in Management from L'École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP-Europe) and a MBA from L'École Supérieure des Affaires (ESA) in Lebanon. Yendi was born and raised in Lebanon and is fluent in English, French and Arabic.

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**Mrs. Dana
KHAWAJA**

Finance Officer,
Humanitarian
Financing Unit

Dana joined OCHA Lebanon in August 2017 as finance officer for the Lebanon humanitarian fund coming from Save the Children international's head office where she worked in financial analysis, donor's compliance and capacity development of national NGOs over five years. Dana holds a MA in finance and MBA in business from Saint Joseph University. Dana was born and raised in Lebanon and is fluent in English, French and Arabic.

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**Mrs. Sandra
RIZK**

Programme Assistant,
Humanitarian
Financing Unit

Sandra has joined the United Nations in 2015 where she has worked for over four years with UNDP Lebanon supporting in the implementation, monitoring and the evaluation of various projects at the Ministry of Energy and Water. She has also worked with UN-HABITAT for over two years supporting the programme in various tasks. Prior to her UN experience, she has worked for over six years in the head offices of Société Générale de Banque au Liban. She joined UN OCHA Lebanon's team in July 2021 as Programme Assistant in the Humanitarian Financing Unit. She is holding a bachelor's degree in International Business Management, in addition to a MA in Management from l'École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP Business School), and an MBA from École Supérieure des Affaires (ESA) in Lebanon.

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**Mr. Joseph
RIZKALLAH**

Finance Assistant,
Humanitarian
Financing Unit

Joseph joined the UNOCHA in August 2021. This marks Joseph's first experience with a UN agency. His previous work experience lays in audit, and non-profit financial management. Joseph holds a master's degree in accounting and financial management from the University of Glasgow, and a bachelor's degree in banking and finance from the Lebanese American University (LAU).

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**Mr. Chafic EL
HALLAL**

Programme and
Communication
Assistant-Humanitarian
Financing Unit

Born in 1991, Chafic holds a master's degree in business administration. He worked as an accountant in a school, handling multiple tasks including tuition installments, payroll system, Social Security CNSS, bank & cash reconciliations. During his work as an accountant, he also managed the school's social media accounts where he launched successful campaigns, ran contests and implemented new features to develop brand awareness. Prior to joining OCHA, Chafic worked as project coordinator in an event planning agency, which managed large events such as Adyan Conference, BIPOD Festival 2021, LEEP Final Event, BIPOD Festival 2022, Astellas team bonding event.

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**Mr. Bernard
CHEDID**

Information
Management Officer

Bernard joined OCHA Lebanon in May 2014, coming from the Regional Office in Amman where he supported OCHA's Syria team. During the response to Lebanon crisis in 2006, Bernard joined iMMAP team as a Geographic Information System (GIS) Officer. He has seven years of experience in information management and mapping in humanitarian contexts, in natural disasters as well as complex emergencies. He has worked in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Chad, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria. Bernard has substantive UN-iMMAP partnership experience since he was seconded to OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP. Bernard holds an advanced degree in Architecture and is fluent in Arabic, French and English.

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**Ms. Bernadette
DABBAK**

Information
Management Officer

Bernadette joined OCHA Lebanon in 2018 as Information Management Officer. She's a member of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team since 2021 and deployed to the earthquake emergencies in both Turkiye and Morocco in 2023. In 2021 she worked on the global mapping of IASC coordination structures with the Coordination Division in Geneva. She also has over 10 years of experience in Water Engineering and GIS across Lebanon, Jamaica, Malaysia, and New Zealand. Bernadette holds a joint Master of Hydroinformatics and Water Management from the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis (France) and Newcastle University (UK), and Bachelor's degrees in Civil & Environmental Engineering, and GIS from Notre Dame University in Lebanon. Bernadette is a dual Lebanese-Armenian citizen, and is fluent in Arabic, French, and English.

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**Ms. Malak
KANJ**

Associate Information
Management Officer

Malak joined OCHA Lebanon in June 2022 as an Associate Information Management Officer. Prior to joining OCHA, she was working with UN-Habitat Lebanon as a GIS/Information Management intern supporting the Urban Analysis and Policy Unit. She has over 5 years of experience in the research field working on water quality monitoring, environmental information management and GIS work in Lebanon and Greece. Malak holds a MSc in Geoinformation in Environmental Management from the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CHIEAM-MAICh) in addition to a MSc in Phyto-ecology: Resources, Security and Applications and a bachelor's degree in Biology from the Lebanese University. She is born and raised in Lebanon and is fluent in English and Arabic and has basic knowledge in French.

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**Mrs. Rana
KARAM**

Administrative and
Finance Officer

Rana joined OCHA in January 2014 coming from UNDP Lebanon where she worked as an Admin and Finance Assistant for three years. She holds a Master of Management with a specialization in Finance from L'Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP-Europe) and a second master's Degree from L'Ecole Supérieure des Affaires in Beirut. Rana was born and raised in Lebanon and is fluent in Arabic, English and French.

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**Mr. Wael
SLEIMAN**

Administrative
Assistant

Wael joined OCHA in July 2023 as Administrative Assistant. Prior to joining OCHA, he was working with Shareq as project coordinator. He has 14 years of experience in retail business in the accounting department handling multiples tasks including closing cash registers, tuition installments, cash and bank reconciliation. In addition, he worked for 8 years in the ministry of finance, and as financial and life insurance advisor.

He holds an accountant degree from TLC . He was born and raised in Lebanon, and he is fluent in English and Arabic, and he has basic knowledge in French.

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**Mr. Elie
EL HAGE**

Driver

Elie joined OCHA in February 2016 coming from the International Medical Corps organization, where he worked as driver. Before that, he worked at the UN International Independent Investigation Commission for three years as mechanic and driver. Prior to joining the UN, Elie was supervising a group of heavy duty vehicle mechanics in charge of maintaining, repairing and operating diesel generators, towing machines, forklifts, cranes and trucks at the Winbidira Airlines Company at the Airport of Kinshasa in Congo. Elie is a certified vehicle mechanic with extensive experience in maintenance and operation of light and heavy vehicles. Elie speaks Arabic, French and English.

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**Mr. Zouheir
BADER**

Driver

Zouheir joined OCHA in April 2014 coming from UNDP's Live Lebanon Project where he also worked as driver. Before that, he worked at the UN International Independent Investigation Commission for three years. Prior to joining the UN, Zouheir was a mail dispatcher at Liban Post. Zouheir speaks Arabic and English.

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**Mr. Houssam
EL HELOU**

Driver

Houssam joined the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in February 2021 as a driver, after working for nearly ten years at Bekdash Company in the transportation field.

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**Mr. Hassan
DORRAH**

Driver

Hassan Joined OCHA in July 2015 coming from WFP Lebanon. He has bachelor's degree in business administration from the Arab Open University.

Hassan is fluent in Arabic, English and French.

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