

Background: Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil

Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil was born to a Coptic Orthodox family in 1963 in Alexandria, Egypt. She studied civil engineering at the University of Alexandria, Egypt, and after her marriage with Cornelis Hulsman in Alexandria in 1988 she went to the Netherlands and studied at the University of Delft. She lived in the Netherlands from 1988 to 1994, became involved in intercultural and interfaith dialogue when she returned to Egypt with her husband.¹

After returning to Egypt, Sawsan Gabra discovered that several Western media organizations and activists had misrepresented incidents involving Muslim-Christian relations in Egypt, and felt that Egyptian opinions had to be translated to show different views to a Western public. As a result, in 1997, she co-founded the Religious News Service from the Arab-World (RNSAW), predecessor of [Arab-West Report](#).

Sawsan Gabra formed the selection criteria for Arab-West Report² She is also a member of the editorial board of Arab-West Report and provides analytical input for articles written for [Arab-West Report](#).

In 2004 Sawsan Gabra became chair of the founders founding the [Center for Arab-West Understanding](#) as an Egyptian non-government organization (NGO). The procedure took much time but her work was rewarded in June 2007 with the recognition of the NGO by the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity.

In 2005 Sawsan Gabra founded the civil company [Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Translation](#), which has been providing translation and editing services for the weekly Arab-West Report since January 1, 2006.

Sawsan Gabra participated in several investigative reports whereby her Coptic Orthodox background facilitated contacts with Orthodox priests, bishops and organizations. She has contributed to interpreting events from the Egyptian context. She assisted the Anglican scholar Father Dr. John Watson in his research for his publication 'The Transfigured Cross; A Study of Father Bīshūy Kāmil,' and Coptologist Dr. Otto Meinardus in several of his studies.³

Sawsan Gabra led in April 2008 the formulation of an Egyptian petition with Egyptian Christian and Muslim leaders and intellectuals [against the film 'Fitna' by Dutch Member of Parliament Geert Wilders](#) which was sent to the chair of the Dutch Parliament.⁴

Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil has served as 'World Servants' country coordinator for Egypt between 1997 and 2010, and coordinated 'World Servants' youth visits to Egypt for cultural exchange. In her professional work it is important to her to use one standard in dealing with people of all religions and convictions.

¹ Mia Ulvgraven, [Biography of Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil, January 2007](#)

² [Arab West Report Selection Criteria](#).

³ Coptic Church Review, Volume 23, Number1&2, Spring/Summer 2003 and RNSAW 2002, 9, art. 14

⁴ Arab-West Report, 2008, week 2, art. 2.

Sawsan Gabra returned to the Netherlands in 2010 for the education of their children. She visits Egypt annually to chair the General Assembly of the Center for Arab-West Understanding and work with the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Translation.

Selected reports which Sawsan Gabra contributed to

- 'Escalations following the alleged conversion of a priest's wife to Islam' "AWR, 2004, week 51, art. 13".
- 'No evidence of forced conversion of Christians to Islam in Egypt' "AWR, 2007, week 11, art. 2".
- 'One-sided reporting about Egypt' "AWR, 2007, week 51, art. 3".
- 'Take facts about Christians in Egypt into consideration' "AWR, 2007, week 51, art. 5".
- 'To be an effective advocate for peace, media distortions must be addressed' "Quaderns de la Mediterrània, June 2007, translated and published in Arabic in al-Muntada (Jordan), issue no. 234, 2007, AWR, 2007, week 14, art. 2".

Resume

Personal Details

Name Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil
Date of Birth September 6, 1963
Place of Birth Alexandria, Egypt
Nationality Egyptian , Dutch
Marital Status Married in 1988 (4 children)
e-mail sghulsman@yahoo.com

Residence:

1963-1988 Egypt
1988-1994 The Netherlands
1994-2010 Egypt
2010-today The Netherlands

Professional Experience:

2005 – today CEO of the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Translation (CIDT), Egypt, supervising local management and finance
1997- today Co-founder Arab-West Report, editorial support, academic indexing database
1997-2010 Country coordinator Egypt for World Servants, technical coordinator of building projects with volunteers, budgeting
1986-1988 Design engineer in Mina engineering office, Alexandria, Egypt

Education

1981-1986 Bachelor Civil Engineering in Alexandria, Egypt .
1988-1989 Netherlands language course, TU Delft
1989-1995 Bridging program Civil Engineering and Bachelors Civil Engineering
December 2010- today Masters Civil Engineering (Material and sciences)

Public Functions

2004 - today Chair of the Center for Arab-West Understanding, Egypt
Languages Arabic (native), Dutch (excellent spoken and reading, fair writing) and English (excellent spoken and reading, fair writing).