

## Biographies of Speakers for the Taub Center Conference on Who Will Serve the Public? The Future of Israel's Public Service

### Opening Remarks



Prof. Avi Weiss

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**President, Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel; professor of economics, Bar-Ilan University.** He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. Avi has been a senior faculty member at Bar-Ilan University since 1988 and served as chair of the Department of Economics between 2005 and 2008. He specializes in applied economics with a focus on industrial organization, antitrust, labor economics, law and economics, and behavioral and experimental economics.

Avi is the editor of the Israel Economic Association's journal, *The Economic Quarterly* and is associate editor of *Economic Inquiry*. In the public work, he has served as Chief Economist and Deputy Director of the Israel Antitrust Authority between 2003 and 2005, was a member of the Anti-Dumping Commission of the Ministry of Industry and Trade between 1999 and 2003, served as a member of the Subcommittee on the Cost of Living and Competition of the Trajtenberg Commission on Social and Economic Change, and acted as a consulting member of the Bachar Intra-Agency Committee for Reform of the Financial Sector. Today, he is the academic representative on the Appeals Committee for the Regulation of Prices of Goods and Services Law and a member of the Competition Task Force of Israel's Grand Strategy Forum. He has been a research fellow at the Institute of Labor Economics (IZA) in Germany since 2000. Throughout his academic career, he has published more than fifty articles in refereed journals and professional books.



Col. (Res.) Miri Eisin

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**Chair of the Taub Center Board.** Miri Eisin served in the Israeli intelligence community and retired at the rank of full colonel in 2004. Over her twenty year career in the military she served in diverse positions in the field, combat units and research departments.

Miri served as the Israeli Prime Minister's spokesperson from the second Lebanon war until the end of 2007. She now teaches at IDC Herzliya, and works extensively with the media, student groups and diplomats. Miri is a fellow at the Center for International Communication at Bar Ilan University and an associate at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism. Miri is a board member of the Deborah Forum, Women in Foreign Policy and National Security; and the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel.

Miri holds a BA from Tel Aviv University in Middle Eastern Studies and Political Science, an MA from Haifa University in Security Studies, and is a graduate of the Israeli National Defense College.

## Opening Lecture



### Taki Sarantakis

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**Taki Sarantakis has been president of the Canada School of Public Service** since July 2018, having previously served as associate secretary of the Treasury Board at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. Mr. Sarantakis spent most of his career at Infrastructure Canada, including as assistant deputy minister of Policy and Communications.

In 2011 Mr. Sarantakis was awarded Canada's Public Service Award of Excellence in Public Policy, and in 2013 he was a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Prior to joining the federal government, Mr. Sarantakis was a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto. He holds a BA and an MA from York University in Toronto, as well as an Executive Certificate in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He is a graduate of the Rotman School of Management's Institute of Corporate Directors Education Program, holding the ICD.D designation.



### Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz

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**Head of the Civil Service Commission.** Civil Service Commissioner and Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology.

From 2018 to 2024, Prof. Hershkowitz served as Israel's Civil Service Commissioner. Previously, he held several senior academic and public positions, including Dean of the Continuing Education and External Studies Division at the Technion, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics at the Technion, Chair of the Technion Academic Staff Association, President of Bar-Ilan University, Chair of the Jewish Home Party and Member of Knesset, Minister of Science and Technology, and Chair of the

National Council for Research and Development.

Prof. Hershkowitz has also served in numerous public roles, including President of the Technion Disciplinary Court, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Sha'anun College, member of the Board of Trustees of the Lev Academic Center in Jerusalem and of the Netanya Academic College, and participant in key national bodies such as the Haifa Municipal Education Committee, the National Responsibility Forum, the Constitutional Council (Haifa and the North) of the *Constitution by Consensus* initiative of the Israel Democracy Institute, and the National Steering Committee for Science and Technology Education.

He earned all his academic degrees in mathematics from the Technion and has published around 90 scientific papers, as well as served as editor of several academic journals.

Alongside his academic and public activities, since 2003 Prof. Hershkowitz has served as the rabbi of the Ahuza neighborhood in Haifa. In recognition of his achievements, he has received numerous awards, including the Landau Prize for Research (1982), the Rotary Governor's Shield for Tolerance (2008), an Honorary Fellowship from the Jerusalem College of Technology (2011), the Medal of Honor from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2013), an Honorary Doctorate from the Netanya Academic College (2014), an Honorary Fellowship from Sha'anun College of Education (2015), the Medal of Honor from the Government of Hungary (2017), and the title of "Honorary Citizen of Haifa" (2023).



## Emi Palmor

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**Fellow at *Tachlit* and Project Director for the rehabilitation of Nir Oz.**

In the past, Palmor served as Director General of the Ministry of Justice between 2014 and 2019. During her tenure, she emphasized the Ministry's role as a social institution providing services to the public, alongside its central function as a government body for legal counsel and legislation. She led a series of organizational reforms within the Ministry's headquarters and professional units.

Palmer held various positions throughout her public service career, including Director General of the Rabbinical Courts; Chair of the Council of Certified Public Accountants in Israel; Chair of the Joint Legal Committee between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; and Chair of the Governmental Team for the Eradication of Racism against Ethiopian Israelis. In 2016, the team led by Palmor submitted its conclusions and presented over 50 recommendations, which were adopted and funded by the government—most of which have been fully implemented. She has held numerous other significant roles in the public sector.

As a senior public servant and afterward, Palmor has taken part in a variety of professional and personal mentoring programs, including the Executive MPA program at the Federmann School of Public Policy and Government at the Hebrew University; Facebook's Women Empowerment Mentoring Program; and the "Olim Beyachad" mentoring initiative.

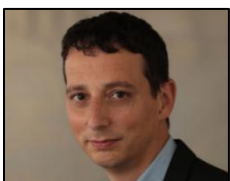
In May 2020, she was appointed as a member of Facebook's Oversight Board—an independent, global body of 20 members that serves as the company's supreme appeals court on issues related to content moderation and removal.

## First Session: A Public Sector Workforce Crisis?

### Chair

#### Nir Kaidar

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**Director General, Taub Center**

Nir has a comprehensive and longstanding familiarity with Israeli and international health and welfare services. He has extensive experience in public service in leading strategic processes, research, formulating reforms, and leading innovative processes in government ministries. Since 2006, he has held a series of managerial positions in the Ministry of Health. From 2014 to 2019, he served as senior deputy director general and head of the Strategic and Economic Planning Administration at the Ministry of Health, and from 2019 he served as senior deputy director general and head of the Strategy, Economic Planning, Research and Regulation Administration at the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs. Mr. Kaidar holds a BA in economics, philosophy and public policy, and an MA in public policy, both from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He lives in Jerusalem, is married to Zohar and father of Beeri, Tamar, and Maayan.



## Rachel Berner Shalem

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### **Senior Division Director for Health Workforce Planning at Israel's Ministry of Health**

Rachel leads the national long-term planning of the healthcare workforce, including forecasting the future demand for physicians and health professions, developing strategic plans to meet system needs in each discipline, and advancing their implementation. Her division ensures that Israel will have a sufficient and high-quality medical workforce to meet the health system's needs for decades to come.

Previously, Rachel headed the Health Economics Division at the Strategic and Economic Planning Administration in the Ministry of Health, and served as director of Research and Budget at the Israel Employment Service. She has over 13 years of experience in strategy development and reform management in the public sector. In 2017, she was named one of *TheMarker* magazine's "40 Most Promising Young Leaders." Rachel holds BA and MA degrees in economics, both with honors, from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She lives in Jerusalem, is married and a mother of four.



## Hila Levi Ben Horin

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**Family physician resident and member of Mirsham organization.** Hila served in the IDF's Unit 8200 during her mandatory service. She later studied medicine at the Hebrew University and continued to serve in the IDF for several additional years in various positions.

She is currently a family medicine resident at Maccabi Healthcare Services, a member of *Mirsham's* leadership team, lives in Modi'in, and is a mother of three.



## Yael Gabay

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### **Head of the Welfare Division in the Jerusalem Municipality**

The Jerusalem welfare services system is the largest among Israel's local authorities and is responsible for providing social services to the city's residents. It includes 33 social service departments spread across the city and a professional headquarters, offering culturally tailored services to Jerusalem's diverse populations: general, Arab, and ultra-Orthodox.

Previously, she served as Head of the Planning Department of the Community Services Administration at the Jerusalem Municipality, where she led the development of numerous innovative programs, including initiatives to break the cycle of poverty and services for people with disabilities. In recent years, she has focused extensively on issues related to the human capital of welfare services. Yael serves on the Board of Directors of the Jerusalem Theater, is a member of the Local Government–Ministry of Welfare Coordination Committee, and sits on the management boards of Keren Shalem and "Lavi," the Jerusalem municipal education corporation. She holds a bachelor's degree in Social Work from Bar-Ilan University and a master's degree in Public Policy and Government from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



## Eyal Ram

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### **CEO, senior advisor, and educational entrepreneur at “Yesh Od Efsharut”**

Eyal serves as a senior consultant and educational entrepreneur, advising the Atid school network, the Mateh Asher Regional Council, the Penima organization, and others. For about ten years, he served as deputy director general of the Ministry of Education and head of the Teaching Personnel Administration, responsible for the training, recruitment, and professional development of over 200,000 teachers and education support staff. He managed a budget of about NIS 3.4 billion, which also included responsibility for yeshivas and ultra-Orthodox institutions. Previously, until 2014, he served as CEO of the Institute for Democratic Education, leading community change processes and unique teacher-training programs. Earlier in his career he managed the Scout Movement’s service year in Tel Aviv and helped develop community-based educational projects. He is a graduate of leadership programs of the Wexner Foundation, Digital Leaders, and the Gesher Leadership Institute. Married and a father of three, he lives in Emek Hefer.



## Omer Weinberg

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### **CEO of Tashtit (Infrastructure) – an organization dedicated to strengthening Israel’s public service**

Omer is a co-founder of Eco-Governance, an ecosystem of organizations promoting a stronger civil service in Israel, and a co-author of the policy paper From Academia to Public Service. He works to elevate the importance of public service on the Israeli agenda and to enhance its effectiveness. He has extensive experience in training and integrating young people into public service, and specializes in developing models and initiatives that connect the public with the civil service while embedding a public-service ethos in educational frameworks. He founded and directed the Yesodot Center — a training center preparing young adults for careers in public service — and the Adva Program, a pre-military academy focused on public service, and was a co-author of the policy paper “From Academics to Public Service.”

## **Second Session: Trust & Tension: Civil Servants and Elected Officials**

### **Chair**



## Shavit Ben Porat

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**Researcher at the Taub Center.** She holds a BA (with honors) and MA in the research track of the Environmental Economics and Management Department in the Faculty of Agriculture, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is a graduate of the Amirim Program – a research program for honor students. Her research at the Taub Center has included the areas of welfare and the Israeli labor market.

In 2015, Shavit published an original work on the future of the Israeli labor market, and following that, she has lectured and spoken to numerous organizations and government agencies on the subject. Since then, she continues to be a member of various committees dealing with welfare and work like the Israel Democracy Institute, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and other government committees.

In the past, Shavit has been a teaching assistant for BA and MA students and a research assistant in the Economics Department of the Faculty of Agriculture, The Hebrew University, and worked as an economist in Zenovar, a company offering economic, financial, and strategic consulting services



## **Maria Jiries**

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### **CEO of the Shita Institute**

Maria is CEO of the Shita Institute for Promoting Local Democracy and an expert in local government, regionalism, and governance. In the past, she established and managed the Regional Development Division at the Ministry of the Interior, authored the report of the team for promoting regionalism and decentralization, and served as Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Transportation. Maria is a graduate of the first year of the Young Cadets in Public Service Program.



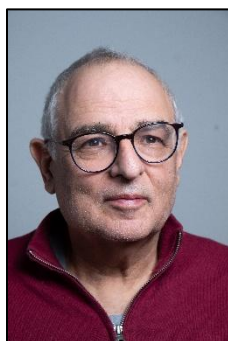
## **Inbal Mashash**

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### **CEO of the Israel Employment Service**

Inbal formerly served as director general of the Ministry of Communications where she led initiatives to maintain the continuous functioning of Israel's communications sector, privatize Israel Post, expand cellular infrastructure, simplify regulation, and promote competition in the telecommunications market. Prior to this, she spent over two decades in the public sector in senior management positions at the Population and Immigration Authority. In her final role there, as Head of the Foreign Workers Administration, she spearheaded service-improvement reforms, drove a digital transformation, developed and implemented monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and advanced the signing and management of bilateral agreements with foreign countries to recruit workers across various economic sectors.

Inbal holds a BA in law, an additional BA in Public Administration and Policy, an MA in Business Administration, and is a licensed attorney. She is a graduate of the "Makom Shel Ma'oz" leadership program, lives in Kibbutz Zikim, and is married with two sons.



## **Ehud Praver**

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### **Head of the Society and Populations Team, Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research**

Ehud (Udi) Praver joined the Jerusalem Institute as head of the Society and Populations Team in June 2021, following a long and distinguished career in public service.

Praver began his public journey in the IDF Education Corps, where he served in a range of positions, including in his final role as deputy chief education officer (with the rank of colonel).

Upon conclusion of his military career, Praver served as the education envoy for the Jewish Agency in North America and as the principal of the Gymnasia Ha'ivrit High School in Jerusalem.

In 2004, he was appointed deputy head of the National Security Council and coordinated its work on national resilience and on Jerusalem. As part of this role, Praver was among the founders of the Authority for National Civic Service.

In 2006, the unit moved from being under his authority within the National Security Council to being a department within the Prime Minister's Office, and Praver was appointed head of policy planning. The department later changed its

name, and Prawer was appointed deputy director-general for governance and social affairs in the Prime Minister's Office. Throughout his 12-year career in the Prime Minister's Office, he had a sizeable impact on the planning approach of the government, worked to integrate public engagement strategies, developed the assessment frameworks for government activity, coordinated the government's engagement with Arab citizens of Israel and the Bedouin population, coordinated the government's work with Israelis of Ethiopian descent, worked on formalizing the working relationships between the government and the third sector, and oversaw the governance aspects of Israel's process of joining the OECD.

From 2017 to 2018, Prawer served as the acting civil service commissioner. Following his retirement from the public service, he served as head of the public council of the Zalman Shazar Center and as a senior fellow at MAOZ.

Prawer holds a bachelor's degree in education and the history of Israel and a master's degree in education, both from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He lives in Mevaseret Zion. He is married to Leah and is a father of three.



## **Itzik Shmuli**

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### **CEO of UJA New York Israel Office**

Itzik is a well-known public figure in Israel. From 2013-2021 served as a Labor Party MK in Israel's Knesset and from 2020-2021, he served as Minister of Labor, Welfare, and Social Services, a period of great accomplishments for the ministry. He started his political career as the chairman of the National Union of Israeli Students and was a recognized leader of the 2011 Israeli social protest movement.

Shmuli has received numerous awards over the years for his work, including being elected as the Knesset's "Outstanding Acts for Social Inclusion Member of Parliament MK" five times. He is also the winner of the "Ometz" Award, Outstanding Parliamentarian Award from the Israel Democracy Institute, Medal of Light from the Holocaust Survivors' Organization, Medal of Honor from the Foundation for the Welfare of Holocaust Victims, Rotary Award and more. He has an MA in public policy and government with honors from The Hebrew University. Shmuli and his partner, Eran, live in Kibbutz Ohr Haner in Otef Azza, and they have two boys, Nevo and Iv'ri.