



## Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing

### Panelist Biographies

## Imprisoned Writers and the Right to Freedom of Expression

### Panel I



**Nadine Farid Johnson** serves as PEN America's Washington director. An attorney and advocate with a focus in democracy, human rights, and governance, she has a breadth of experience across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Most recently, she served as executive director of the ACLU of Kansas, where she led the expansion of the affiliate's advocacy, reach, and impact. She is a former United States diplomat whose work spanned the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and multilateral affairs. Prior to entering public service, she was a professor of constitutional, international, and intellectual property law at Gonzaga University and a Climenko

Fellow and Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School. In the private sector, Johnson worked as a patent litigator and later oversaw operations and supported community engagement at Google in Los Angeles.



**Clare Robinson** is Advocacy Director at Scholars at Risk, where she leads SAR's efforts to identify, report on, and respond to attacks on higher education communities worldwide. Ms. Robinson developed and oversees the organization's Student Advocacy Seminars, faculty-led teams of students conducting advocacy on behalf of imprisoned scholars and students via the Scholars in Prison Project; and is responsible for research and advocacy around country-focused concerns relating to academic freedom. She serves on SAR Europe's European Coordinating Committee for Academic Freedom Advocacy. She was previously Public Information Officer in the Office of the Prosecutor of the

International Criminal Court.



**Anna K. Nelson** serves as the Executive Director of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) USA. Based in Washington D.C., Ms. Nelson directs RSF’s activities in the United States, as well as Canada and English-speaking Caribbean nations, and leads a talented team of advocacy, communications, and development specialists, whose role it is to raise awareness of press freedom issues, mobilize donor support, and promote the importance of trustworthy journalism and access to reliable information. Prior to joining RSF, Anna served as the Head of Communications and Public Affairs for the International Committee of the Red Cross’ Regional Delegation for the U.S. and Canada. In this role, she supported the ICRC’s outreach to external stakeholders, including the media, academic institutions, Congress, think tanks, NGOs, and other civil society actors.

### **Moderator**



**Dinaw Mengestu** is a writer, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor of the Humanities, and Director of the Written Arts Program at Bard College. Born in Ethiopia and raised in Illinois, Mr. Mengestu is a recipient of the 2012 MacArthur Foundation Award. His fiction and journalism have been published in *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, *Harper’s*, *Rolling Stone*, and *The New York Times*. Mengestu was chosen for the 5 under 35 Award by the National Book Foundation and was named on *The New Yorker*’s “20 under 40” list in 2010. He is also the recipient of a Lannan Fiction Fellowship, The Guardian First Book Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, among other awards. He is the author of three novels: *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2008) *How to Read the Air* (2010), and *All Our Names*. His work has been translated into more than fifteen languages.