

January 31, 2005



## Israeli and Arab Writers to Meet in Groundbreaking Literary Encounter

**Sheikh Hussein Bridge - February 15, 2005**

**January 31, 2005** - Israeli, Palestinian and Arab writers from around the world will meet at the Sheikh Hussein Bridge on Tuesday, February 15, 2005 for a unique literary gathering. The Bridge, which is an international crossing point between Israel and Jordan, serves as a powerful symbol of hope, a link to understanding and a passageway over conflict.

The one-day encounter is a brainchild of international publishers and cultural institutions that work with authors from the Middle East, and has been coordinated by Deborah Harris of the Harris-Elon Agency, Israel. With the goal of providing a dynamic platform for sharing views and experiences, an opportunity for voices from both sides of the bridge to be heard, some 50 writers and 100 publishers have confirmed their participation thus far. Among the writers attending the event are **Leila Sebbar and Chaled Fouad Allam, Algeria; Ahmet Altan, Turkey; Abdel Kader Benali, Morocco; Jaber Yassin Hussein, Iraq; and A.B. Yehoshua, David Grossman, Sayed Kashua, Yehudit Katzir and Alona Kimhi, Israel.**

- **The press is invited to attend**
- **Full program open to press (see attached program)**
- **Transportation will be provided**
- **A special press conference will be held at 13:00**

**Samir el-Youssef**, Palestinian writer attending from London, said, "Only by meeting each other can we, Palestinians and Israelis, truly know how close or distant we really are; how easy or difficult it will be to live together. We don't have the luxury of avoiding this encounter; it is the duty of Palestinian and Israeli intellectuals and writers to gain such knowledge and render the experience for our communities." Israeli writer **Etgar Keret**, also participating, said, "If we, writers from both sides, can't find the empathy, or the imagination, to see the other and to try and understand the other, then who will?"

**For registration and interviews, please contact:**

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**\* Because of security and organizational procedures, members of the press planning to attend the event are required to register as soon as possible and no later than Thursday, February 10th.**

**\* Transportation must be reserved in advance.**

**"Voices from Two Sides of the Bridge"**

**A literary event at  
The Sheikh Hussein Bridge**

**February 15, 2005**

**Israeli, Palestinian and Arab writers exchange literary viewpoints**

**Program:**

- 10:15 Welcoming address - Stefan Von Holtzbrinck**
- 10:30 Michael Naumann - opening remarks**
- 10:35 The Power of Language**
- 10:45 Panel Discussion - How Does Language and Place Affect your Identity as a Writer (or your Writing)?**
- 12:45 Poetry Reading: each poet will read one poem**
- 13:00 Buffet Lunch (13:00 – 14:30)**
- 13:00 Press Conference (13:00 – 13:30)**
- 14:30 Panel Discussion - Can Writers Change the World?**
- 16:15 Poetry Reading: each poet will read one poem**
- 16:30 Farewell**

**Sponsors: The Von Holtzbrinck Publishing Group  
ACPD (Amman Center for Peace and Development)  
Istituto Italiano di Cultura  
Institute Cultural Francais  
The Fulbright Foundation**

**Funded by: The Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation)**

**Moderator: Michael Naumann, Die Zeit, Germany**

**Coordinator: Deborah Harris, Harris-Elon Agency, Israel**

**Project Coordinator: Pony Brzezinski**