



**For Immediate Release:**

**The Mosaic Institute Launches its 2009 Speakers' Series,  
*Building Bridges in Canada: New Perspectives on  
People and Peace***

**Toronto – March 5, 2009.** Last evening the Mosaic Institute hosted the first session in its 2009 Speakers' Series, *Building Bridges in Canada: New Perspectives on People and Peace*. The series is being presented at the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity ([www.centrefordiversity.ca](http://www.centrefordiversity.ca)).

The inaugural session, entitled *Diaspora Diaries: A Panel Discussion on Cultural Duality*, was attended by approximately 100 invited guests from Canada's Arab communities and the Jewish diaspora. The audience participated in a lively conversation about maintaining dual identities as Canadians and as "something else", and how to balance these different and - at times - competing roles.

The panel featured 4 prominent Canadians. The discussants were Amit Breuer, a renowned Israeli-Canadian filmmaker; Hind Kabawat, a Syrian-Canadian attorney and peace activist; Rachel Sklar, a Canadian blogger and author based in New York; and Omar Alghabra, a former MP and Past President of the Canadian Arab Federation. Ms. Breuer and Ms. Sklar are both Jewish, while Ms. Kabawat is a Christian Arab and Mr. Alghabra is a Muslim born in Syria and raised largely in Saudi Arabia.

The discussion was moderated by the eminent journalist and commentator Noah Richler, author of *This is My Country, What's Yours?: A Literary Atlas of Canada*.

At the end of the evening, attendees were asked to complete a survey designed by The Strategic Counsel ([www.thestrategiccounsel.com](http://www.thestrategiccounsel.com)). The survey measured audience perceptions of a variety of issues relating to the Middle East. Surveys will be administered again at various points in the series so that changes in attendees' attitudes over the course of the series, if any, can be tracked.

The next installment in the series – *The Business of Making Peace in the Middle East* - will take place on April 6. It features Sir Ronald Cohen, venture capitalist and founder of the Portland Trust ([www.portlandtrust.org](http://www.portlandtrust.org)).

*Building Bridges in Canada: New Perspectives on People and Peace* is a six-part Speakers' Series running from March to November, 2009. It endeavours to bring together leaders of those ethnocultural and faith-based communities in Canada with strong historical and personal connections to the Middle East with an eye to identifying common ground and committing to collaborative peacebuilding activities. It is proudly presented by the Mosaic Institute working in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity.

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