

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS PANELISTS

Sam Yebri

Sam Yebri is an attorney and civic and non-profit leader. A graduate of Yale University and USC Law School, Sam is an experienced trial lawyer at Merino Yebri LLP. Sam has served Los Angeles as a City Commissioner under Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, on a Gun Violence Prevention Task Force under Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer, and as a Board Member of Bet Tzedek Legal Services and the Friends of Westwood Library. Sam is also a prominent leader in the Jewish community, having served as a Board Member of the Anti-Defamation League, ETTA, the Builders of Jewish Education, Jewish Free Loan Association, both USC and UCLA Hillel, and 30 Years After.

Rob Eshman

Rob Eshman is Senior Contributing Editor of the *Forward*.

Rob started his career as a staff writer at the *Jewish Journal* in 1993, when it was a small community paper.

In 2009, Eshman founded TRIBE Media Corp, reimagining the community paper for the future. Tribe Media Corp. produces the Jewish Journal, the largest independent American Jewish weekly, *Tribe* magazine, a glossy four-color monthly lifestyle magazine, and jewishjournal.com, with 1.5 million unique monthly users, now the largest Jewish news website outside of Israel. In 2011, Jewish Journal launched the world's first multi-platform mobile Jewish news app. In 2013 he launched HollywoodJournal.com.

Both the *Jewish Journal* and Rob have won numerous local and national awards for writing, design and community leadership.

A graduate of Dartmouth College, Eshman has written for *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and the *Huffington Post*. He is a frequent commentator on Los Angeles-area radio and television and has served as a Visiting Lecturer on journalism at the University of Southern California Annenberg School of Communication and the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Rob serves on the boards of the Media Policy Center, The Miracle Project and is a founding board member of the Daniel Pearl Journalism Institute in Herzliya, Israel.

In addition to his editing and publishing duties, Eshman writes the blog *Foodaism*, named one of the best food blogs in Los Angeles by CityBest.com. At his home in Venice, Rob tends to fruit and vegetable gardens, as well as six chickens and two goats.

Gina Raphael

Gina proudly Chairs The Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) in California. WIZO is the largest social services provider in Israel outside of the Government helping women & children.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper

Rabbi Abraham Cooper is Associate Dean and Director of Global Social Action for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a leading global Jewish human rights organization. ^[L]_[SEP]

Rabbi Cooper has been a longtime activist for Jewish and human rights causes on five continents. In 1977, he came to Los Angeles to help Rabbi Marvin Hier found the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Together with Rabbi Hier, Rabbi Cooper regularly meets with world leaders, including Pope Francis, presidents, and foreign ministers to defend the rights of the Jewish people, combat terrorism and promote multi-faith relations worldwide. ^[L]_[SEP] ^[L]_[SEP]

Rabbi Cooper is an acknowledged expert on online hate and terrorism and has helped produce and present the SWC's renowned traveling exhibitions at the Vatican, the UN, Knesset, US Congress, Tokyo, New Delhi, and Buenos Aires. He is a founder of the Global Forum on Anti-Semitism, and Newsweek ranked Rabbis Cooper and Hier as #8 among the 50 most influential rabbis in America. Rabbi Cooper has worked extensively with Arab leaders in the Gulf States and witnessed the historic UAE/Bahrain/Israel Abraham Accords ceremony at the White House.

In 2022, Rabbi Cooper was appointed Vice Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom which tracks violations of religious freedom around the world.

Rabbi Cooper co-authored with Rev. Johnnie Moore, The Next Jihad, based on their interviews in Nigeria with scores of Christian survivors of deadly Islamist terrorist attacks. His op-eds appear in major US and Israeli outlets, in Asia and in the Arab News and Al-Arabiya.

Rabbi Cooper is a recipient of Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Community Service Leadership Memorial Award, a recipient of an honorary doctorate from Yeshiva University and the Orthodox Union's National Leadership Award.

Sagi Refael

Sagi Refael is a Jewish Israeli-American with perspective as an art historian and a curator. Sagi is an active board member in Jewish Artists Initiative (JAI) in Southern California, and lecturer at the American Jewish University. In 2019 he curated a video project for JAI that was shown at the Jerusalem Biennale.