

SPEAKER KIT

HUMAIRA GHILZAI

SPEAKER | WRITER | CULTURAL ADVISOR



CONTACT INFO

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BIO

Born and raised in Kabul, Humaira and her family fled Afghanistan and became one of many nameless refugees escaping the Russian invasion.

Humaira wants to share her experiences and knowledge in areas that aren't easily available so you can understand the realities of people who are different.

We have a tendency as people to look at the world through our own lens, but those values don't always translate to other cultures. As an immigrant woman, Humaira highlights issues about Islam, immigration, and the Afghanistan War that are not normally addressed, represented or understood properly in the current media.

After years of studying the people and history of Afghanistan, Humaira has spent almost a decade helping people bring authenticity and truth to their creative work by understanding the country, the people, and history of Afghanistan. Having worked in Afghanistan and living in the US, Humaira is able to bridge the gap between the two cultures and communicate complex, sensitive information in a way that is easily understood by other people. Humaira puts a face to a voice for women who are typically seen as victims so you can better understand where they've been, where they are at, and the strides women are making to change their future.

She is a proud co-founder of Afghan Friends Network (AFN) an organization focused on educating girls and women in Afghanistan. Also, she has instituted a Sister City relationship between Hayward, California and Ghazni, Afghanistan. She continues to spearhead critical programs that improve education for women, girls and boys, particularly in the province of Ghazni.

Apart from being a sought after Cultural Consultant for stage, film, authors, playwrights and Opera, she blogs about Afghan food, culture and the Islamic world.

Humaira has completed the 8-month long, Making Good Trouble, Anti-Racist Facilitation Training Program.

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SPEAKER TOPICS



- **100 Year History of Afghan Women** - How in the past 100 years, visionary leaders, regime changes, and wars affected the lives of Afghan women and what life will be like under the Taliban.
- **The Beauty of Afghanistan** - Introduction to country, history, and culture of Afghanistan.
- **Afghanistan Cultural Competency Training** - This is a 1 1/2 - 2 hour facilitated training that includes all the content from “The Beauty of Afghanistan” presentation and a deeper discussion of cultural authenticity.
- **My Pilgrimage to Mecca, As a Secular Woman** - A perspective on one of the largest gatherings of humans around the world. A better understanding of what Muslims do and the reasons for it.
- **Afghan Culture, Food, and Cultural Heritage** - Detailed demonstrations of the profound cultural exchange and rich traditions curated through live recipe displays and engaging discussion.

Humaira is also open to collaborating on creating a presentation for your event.

REFERENCES

“Ms. Ghilzai has an encyclopedic knowledge of Afghanistan, its history and culture. She weaves into her presentations her personal story as an Afghan and her current work with her non-profit organization, Afghan Friends Network, and on her monthly blogs on Afghan life and culture. She has special insights into the status of Afghan women, both historically and in present times. She blends into her talks Afghan history, current politics and culture.”

— Theodore L. Eliot Jr, Former US Ambassador to Afghanistan

“I called on Humaira to serve as a cultural consultant on the set of the stage production of my novel, “The Kite Runner”, and she graciously accepted. Humaira was indispensable to the production, providing important insights on a wide array of issues, including language, local customs, clothing, food, and a number of subtle cultural nuances. I know that the production benefited greatly from her assistance and the sense of credibility and authenticity that her consultation brought to the play. She is very well spoken in Farsi and has a firm grasp of the various shades of local Afghan culture. Humaira is a driven, intelligent, and passionate person, and it has been a blessing to be her friend and to work alongside her”

— Khaled Hosseini, Author, *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *The Mountains Echoed*

At a time when Afghanistan is featured so much in American news, I felt that I had to learn more about this country. Humaira's presentation about her native land was just what I needed: an informative timeline that included political, historical, and cultural details without bombarding me with facts. As I listened to Humaira explain the issues Afghans have faced throughout the years, I began to feel a connection with the Afghan people. Humaira was able to bridge the gap between "us" and "them."

— Martha Conway, New York Times Best Selling Author of *Under Ground River*

MEDIA



BEHIND-THE-SCENES (TV / THEATRE)



PREVIOUS EVENTS

PREVIOUS SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

The Commonwealth Club of San Francisco ~ World Affairs Council ~
Global Fund For Women ~ The Asia Foundation ~
CanadianDining For Women ~ UC Berkeley ~ Sonoma Salon ~
Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan ~
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services ~
University Women Helping Afghan Women ~ Golden Threads Productions
~ San Francisco Writer's Conference
Seattle Repertory ~ Women's National Book Association American
Conservatory Theater ~ New Strands Festival
Berkeley Public Library ~ San Jose State University ~ Cal State University
East Bay ~ Women for Women ~ San Jose Repertory Theatre
Arizona Theatre Company ~ Thunderbird University ~ Urban High School
~ San Francisco Library ~ Albany Elementary School
San Francisco Friends School ~ Adda Clevenger ~
The StrandRebuild Afghanistan Summit ~ Lick Wilmerding High School
American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco ~ University Women ~
Helping Afghan Women (Canadian Federation of University Women)
~KPMG
~Klayvio ~ Southwest Technical College ~ City of Hayward ~ AACI

PRESS
MENTIONS



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