

CAMCA NETWORK BOARD 2024-25

Mr. Zafar Hashemi

Afghanistan, Fall 2016



Mr. Zafar Hashemi is a Senior Counselor at the Embassy of Afghanistan in the United States. Previously he served as Deputy Spokesman of the President of Afghanistan – in this position, he managed and coordinated communications and messaging of the Presidential Palace across the Afghan government and society as well as the international community. Mr. Hashemi is an award-winning journalist, and from 2007-15 he worked for the Afghanistan Service of Voice of America, reporting on Afghan, American and world affairs for radio, television and web in both Farsi and English. From 2006-7, Mr. Hashemi managed public affairs and communications at the Afghanistan Stabilization Program (ASP). Also, from 2004-2006 he managed a UNDP funded project to produce media content about democracy, elections and civic participation in post-9/11 Afghanistan. Mr. Hashemi holds an MA in Public Management from Johns Hopkins University (2015), and a BSc in Political Science and Journalism from the University of Maryland University College (UMUC, 2012).

Mr. Grigor Vardanyan

Armenia, Fall 2022



Dr. Grigor Vardanyan is a Co-founder and Deputy CEO of Green Food LLC, a strawberry farming and trading company established in 2018. He is also a part-time research fellow at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. His primary research interests include Arabic Studies, focusing on contemporary history of Syria and the Syrian Alawite community. Dr. Vardanyan is an author of a monograph, “The Alawi Community in Syria: From Minority to Political-Military Elite” (2017) and of numerous scholarly articles on Syrian history. In addition, from 2010-2017, Dr. Vardanyan worked as an assistant in International Relations and Military Education at the Office of the First Deputy Minister of Defense of Armenia. Prior to joining the Ministry of Defense, Dr. Vardanyan held different positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia. Dr. Vardanyan holds a Ph.D. in Arabic Studies from the Institute of Oriental Studies at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia (2011), as well as an MA (2008) and a BA (2006) in Arabic Studies from Yerevan State University. He is also an Ancien of NATO Defense College (2015), accomplished the International Defense Resource Management Course at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA (2013) and the British Military English Course at Saint John University in York, UK (2012).



Mr. Fuad Karimov is a Director of Professional Support Services LLC, the largest shared services center in Azerbaijan providing financial reporting and taxation services. He is also an adjunct lecturer in Finance, Accounting and Project Management at ADA University. Previously, from 2016- 18, Mr. Karimov served as the Chief Administrative Officer and a Member of the Executive Board of GILAN Holding, one of the largest private organizations in the country that operates in highly diversified sectors of the economy, including banking, insurance, hospitality, agriculture, consumer goods, construction and development, retail, property management, and manufacturing. Prior to joining GILAN Holding, from 1998-2016, Mr. Karimov worked at KPMG LLP in Azerbaijan, Russia, Germany and the United States, where he managed projects in more than 20 countries focusing on IPO, mergers and acquisitions, restructuring, valuation and due diligence. Mr. Karimov holds an MSc in Technology Management from Columbia University in New York (2013), an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in Chicago (2011), a BSc in Applied Accounting from Oxford Brookes University (2010), and a BA in Legal Regulation of the Economy from Baku Western Caspian University (1999). In 2010-11 he was an exchange student at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), Tel Aviv University and WHU-Otto Beisheim School of Management in Germany. Mr. Karimov is currently pursuing a Doctorate degree in Business Administration at Grenoble Ecole de Management.



Ms. Sophie Berishvili is a Political Secretary (Internal Policy) at the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) in the British Embassy, Tbilisi since 2016. Currently, her portfolio includes internal politics, democracy, institutional capacity building, human rights (including minority, religious and LGBTQ+ rights), elections and UK-funded scholarship/fellowship programs. Ms. Berishvili began working at the British Embassy in 2008 and has held various positions during this period. Previously, from 2004-2008, Ms. Berishvili worked as a Human Rights Officer at the Public Defender's Office of Georgia. In this role, she reported on human rights, managed individual complaints and appeals and contributed to annual recommendation reports presented to the Parliament of Georgia. From 2003-2004, Ms. Berishvili worked at the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), an election watchdog. ISFED has led parallel vote tabulation (PVT) methodologies and was instrumental in identifying electoral fraud during the November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections, contributing to the "Rose Revolution." Ms. Berishvili holds an MA in Law from Tbilisi State University (2006) and during her studies spent one year as an exchange student at the University of Saarbrücken, Germany.



Ms. Ainura Sagyn is a social entrepreneur, engineer, eco-activist, and Co-Founder and Co-Director of TAZAR, a green tech startup at the forefront of innovative solutions to waste management challenges in Kyrgyzstan. Her entrepreneurial spirit led to the development of the TAZAR mobile application, connecting waste producers with recyclers, thus reducing waste in landfills. She also serves as an Operational Manager at ARTISANT LLC, an NFT digital fashion platform. Ms. Sagyn is a vocal advocate for women's empowerment and sustainable technology. Her advocacy for women in STEM and green tech is recognized both in Kyrgyzstan and internationally. Throughout her career, Ms. Sagyn has initiated various projects to support her community, turning ideas and opportunities into

impactful actions. Her initiatives range from co-founding the online magazine, SHEISNOMAD, to mentoring school girls to organizing coding training for girls across all regions of Kyrgyzstan. Ms. Sagyn also organized the first Central Asian JavaScript conference, emphasizing inclusivity and the integration of people with disabilities into the IT sector. Ms. Sagyn's contributions have not gone unnoticed. In 2021, she received the Abie Award and the Aurora Tech Award for her outstanding work and, in 2022, she was featured by BBC in their list of the top 100 influential women from around the world. Ms. Sagyn holds a joint MA in Computer Vision and Image Processing from the Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain, and the University of Bordeaux, France (2022) and a BA in Computer Engineering from Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University (2012). She also completed an Artificial Intelligence for Social Decision-Making Course at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (2019).



Ms. Laura Demessinova is Head of the Investor Relations Division at the National Welfare Fund "Samruk-Kazyna" and a member of the supervisory boards at two subsidiary companies, "Samruk-Kazyna Contract" and "Samruk-Kazyna Trust." Prior, she served as the Executive Director of the NGO Bolashak Association (2018-2021), and as a Senior Manager at Samruk-Energy JSC, a national utility company (2014-2018). Ms. Demessinova has practical experience in both the public and corporate sectors, as well as non-governmental organizations, and is actively involved in various social activities such as charity, volunteering, education, youth policy, women empowerment, alumni organizations, etc. As a member of the National Commission on Women's Affairs she works on promoting women's rights in the country.

Previously, Ms. Demessinova was a member the Youth Affairs Council under the President of Kazakhstan and the National Council of Public Trust under the President of Kazakhstan. Ms. Demessinova holds an MA in International Business in Hospitality and Tourism Management from Cesar Ritz Colleges in Switzerland (2012) and a BS in Finance and Marketing from KIMEP University in Kazakhstan (2010). Currently she is pursuing her PhD in Political Science at Eurasian National University in Kazakhstan.



Ms. Gereltuya Orgil is the Founder and CEO of EMPR, an Ulaanbaatar based independent reputation management agency focused on delivering strategic communication services and brand PR campaigns to local and international clients. Since its creation, EMPR has successfully worked with more than 60 clients including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, ADB Mongolia, the British Embassy in Mongolia, the Embassy of Canada in Mongolia, Visa, IPP FA, BeautySecrets.mn and others. Prior to founding EMPR, Ms. Orgil held various PR and media related positions in the UK and Mongolia. Besides her work as a business executive and communications professional, for more than a decade Ms. Orgil has been leading several youth, young professional and civil society grassroots movements in support of democracy, against corruption and pressuring the government and political leaders to be accountable to professional associations, women, youth, the private sector and other groups. In recent years, she has also been running high-impact political campaigns empowering the new generation of voters, including managing an election campaign for the HUN party, which in the 2020 Parliamentary elections received 14% of votes and for the first time earned a seat in the Mongolian Parliament. Ms. Orgil holds a BA in Mass Communications and PR from London Metropolitan University, UK (2007).



Ms. Nailya Menlasheva is an economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) office in Tajikistan, where she oversees analyzing economic data, developing policy recommendations and assisting in the implementation of financial programs. Prior to joining the IMF in 2017, Ms. Menlasheva worked as a Project Development Officer and then Head of the Department for Logistics at the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), a French humanitarian non-governmental organization that develops and implements programs that target the country's most vulnerable populations. From 2011-2015, Ms. Menlasheva worked at the Ministry of Finance of Tajikistan where she held various positions, including as Head of the Debt Analysis Department. Her commitment to green finance projects led her to secure grants and loans exceeding \$20 million through the Public Implementation Unit that she founded within the Ministry of Finance. Ms. Menlasheva holds a PhD in Finance and Credit (2022) and an MA in Accounting and Finance (2011), both from the Russian Tajik Slavonic University. She also completed certificate courses at the IMF, ADB, Vienna Joint Institute, Harvard Law School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Georgetown University.



Ms. Gunesh Bakgalova is currently working for Petronas as an in-house Senior Legal Executive. Prior to her current position she worked for the European Commission's project on budgeting reforms in the Ministry of Finance of Turkmenistan. Previously, Ms. Bakgalova worked for numerous national agencies, law firms, and international organizations including Schlumberger Corporation, the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, the Ministry of Justice, the National Coordinating Unit of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, ABA Rule of Law Initiative in Turkmenistan, OSCE Center in Ashgabat, AK Counsel-SNR Denton, PPG Industries Inc. and Miller & Martin PLLC. Ms. Bakgalova holds an MA in Political Science from the Institute for European Politics in Berlin, Germany (2012), an LLM from the Law School at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (2009) and an LLB from the School of Law & International Economic Relations of the Turkmen State University (1999).



Ms. Nodira Mukhammadkulova is a Project Manager for the UNDP, UNODC, UNESCO Joint Program 'Youth for Social Harmony in the Fergana Valley' funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Previously she was a Team Leader on Innovative Research in the Public Sector at the Public Administration Reform and Digital Transformation project at UNDP-Uzbekistan and National Agency of Project Management under the President of Uzbekistan. She led four teams of researchers that work on introducing innovative governance, promoting citizen engagement, commercializing scientific research and developing digital public services for vulnerable groups of populations. Ms. Mukhammadkulova also serves as a member of the Public Council of Khokimiyat of Tashkent City. She has more than 15 years of professional experience in international development working for organizations such as UNDP, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) contributing to the implementation of social, economic, environmental and public projects. Ms. Mukhammadkulova holds an MA in World Economy and Geopolitics (2004) and a BA in International Economic Relations (2002) from the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent. She has also successfully completed an MBA type program in Professional Management at the Uzbekistan-Japan Center for Human Development as well as numerous international courses on women empowerment issues.