



RAFTO

About Rouba Mhaissen (31)

Born in 1988 in Lebanon. Lebanese and Syrian citizenship, residence in Beirut, Lebanon/London, UK.

Education:

- 2011-2015** PhD, Gender and Development Economics from School of Oriental and African Studies, SOAS University of London
- 2010-2011** Master's degree, Development Economics and International Development from London School of Economics
- 2006-2009** Bachelor's degree, Economics from American University of Beirut

Positions and work:

2011 – currently - Founder and Director of Sawa for Development and Aid

Honors and awards:

- **2019** – The Vital Voices Global leadership award
- **2017** - The AUB Most Distinguished Alumni Award
- **2017** - Forbes 30Under30 list for Policy and Law
- **2016** - FCO Marsh Award for Peacemaking and Peacekeeping
- **2011** - Queen Elizabeth Award

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About Sawa for Development and Aid (SDAID)

Sawa for Development and Aid is a Lebanese-registered grassroots organization working with Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The organization was founded in 2011 as a reaction to the dire need for support to the first Syrian families who took refuge in Lebanon. Today, Sawa works on humanitarian aid, education, development and job training, and provides basic needs and more for individuals and communities. It has adopted a holistic approach, involving the refugees in the design and implementation of projects to provide them with job opportunities, and offers educational, economical

and women empowerment programs. Sawa has more than 250 volunteers, most of them are refugees, and provides support to hundreds of thousands of individuals in Lebanon. The organization also does documentation, research and political advocacy, and has recently published the report “*Unpacking Return: Syrian Refugees’ Conditions and Concerns*” (Feb 2019).
Webpage: www.sdaid.org

Twitter: [@sawafordaid](https://twitter.com/sawafordaid)

Sources:

<https://www.vitalvoices.org/people/dr-rouba-mhaissen/>

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/blogs/study/humanitarian-system-messed-rouba-mhaissen-work-syrian-refugees/>

<https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2016/11/rouba-mhaissen-shows-international-community-honored-britain/>

<https://www.asfarifoundation.org.uk/sawa-development-aid/>

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External expert:

Maja Janmyr, Professor at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights

Her current research focuses on refugee rights in the Middle East, with a particular emphasis on the situation of Syrian and Sudanese refugees and other migrants in Lebanon.

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ABOUT THE RAFTO FOUNDATION

The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights is a non-profit organization dedicated to the global promotion of human rights. Annually we award the Rafto Prize to individuals or organizations working to promote human rights. We also support the work of the laureates and activists and offer human rights and democracy education in Norway. The foundation was established in 1987 in memory of Professor Thorolf Rafto (1922-1986), and has since awarded 33 prizes to human rights defenders worldwide. Last year, Polish Ombudsman Adam Bodnar received the Rafto Prize for defending human rights and judicial independence in Poland.

Web: rafto.no @Raftofoundation