

For Immediate Release



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AUB to Award 4 Honorary Doctorates to Huda Akil, Mouna Haraoui, Simon Shaheen and Ahdaf Soueif

The American University of Beirut (AUB) will confer Honorary Doctorates in Humane Letters during its 148th Commencement Exercises to four outstanding individuals as per a letter sent by the Office of AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri to the AUB Community stating that “In the spirit of our BOLDLY AUB campaign, this year’s outstanding honorands are trailblazers who lead, innovate, and serve with great effect in our world today: Groundbreaking world-class scientist Huda Akil; leading philanthropist and former first lady Mouna Haraoui; internationally acclaimed music composer, producer, and performer Simon Shaheen; and prominent best-selling author and activist Ahdaf Soueif. They have been selected as enduring models of engaged citizenship; advancing knowledge and innovation across all boundaries, preserving culture and heritage, and resolutely pursuing excellence in their fields.”

Khuri concluded that “Each of the distinguished personalities we honor this year is an example of excellence and service and all have the capacity to inspire our students in different ways to lead in original, passionate, and meaningful giving. They have been chosen in recognition of their achievements on the international stage and their determination to take the lead in their disciplines to serve their local, regional, and global communities. With their work, they stand proof that through service we become leaders”.

Huda Akil is an innovative scientist, brilliant teacher, and world-class mentor. Her groundbreaking research has been transformative in helping the world understand the neurobiology of emotions. Akil is the Gardner Quarton Distinguished University Professor of Neuroscience and Psychiatry, and co-director and senior research professor of the Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience Institute at the University of Michigan. Born in Damascus, Syria, Akil is one of the most highly-cited neuroscientists in the world.

Mouna Haraoui is a humanitarian, activist, inspiring public speaker, and former first lady of Lebanon. She spent decades of her life promoting education, public health, and human rights and is the founder and president of the Chronic Care Center. She put women and children at the core

of development efforts and is the founder of the National Heritage Foundation and the Lebanese Permanent Committee of Coordination, and is an award-winning member of several national and international associations.

Simon Shaheen is an eleven-time Grammy award-nominated composer; avid producer of festivals; renowned leader of music ensembles; winner of multiple international awards for his original creations of unique world music and his ingenuity as virtuoso on the oud and violin. He is professor of music at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, one of the most significant Arab musicians and performers of his generation. He has released seven albums and contributed selections to soundtracks for movies, theatrical performances, and documentaries.

Ahdaf Soueif is a novelist, journalist, activist, commentator, and eloquent witness. She is one of the most prominent and influential Egyptian writers of her time. Her best-selling novel, *The Map of Love*, has sold over 1.5 million copies and was a finalist for the Man Booker Prize in 1999. Following the Egyptian uprising of 2011, Soueif published two books and numerous articles based on her eyewitness account of the Tahrir Square demonstrations and their aftermath.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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