



MEET OUR MEMBERS

May 2018

MEMBERS OF THE MONTH

They returned to Lebanon to establish their own business. Who are they and what do they do?



RINDALA BEYDOUN

is Founder and Managing Partner of **Tribonian Law Advisors**, focusing on cross-border and domestic mergers, acquisitions and dispositions, real estate development and asset purchases, as well as a wide variety of corporate transactions.

RAMI EI JISR

is Founding Partner at **Broadgate Advisers** and its sister company **B&Y Venture Partners**, two up-and-coming Lebanon based boutique investment bank and Venture Capital firm.



WAHID CHAMMAS

is Founder and CIO of **TyreGate Capital Holdings** which is a diversified Investment Company, encapsulating both Private Equity & Activist Public Equity funds, as well as a Family Office.



MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

BERNARD ABDO is now partner at 8F Investment Partners, a global financial group serving institutional and family office clients.

AHMAD DEEK has been appointed as Chief Risk Officer at OppenheimerFunds in NY. He will be responsible for leading the firm's risk management function and further enhancing its corporate governance structure.

PHILIPPE EL ASMAR has been appointed a newly created role as head of Asia Beta Strategies at JPM. He is based in Hong Kong and is responsible for driving and accelerating the firm's Asian beta strategies expansion.

PAUL RAPAHÉL has been promoted to the role of Executive Vice Chairman of UBS reporting to the

Executive Board. He will focus on a number of cross divisional priorities including the coverage of some of the UBS largest client relationships.

" LIFE can play an important role by encouraging (or even creating a platform that allows) its members in the diaspora to work with the Lebanon-based firms and businesses as much as possible so the next generation can survive through the tough economic times and continue to provide work opportunities in Lebanon.

Rindala Beydoun

What triggered their return to Lebanon and what are the pros of doing business there?

RINDALA returned to Lebanon in 2012, after living most of her life in the US and then Dubai, determined to contribute and give back to her country. Her aim as a lawyer is to improve the country's ethics, governance and prevailing culture of sectarianism.

In her view the pros of working in Lebanon are:

- Good talent and human capital
- Opportunities to be involved in community work and projects
- Feeling of contribution to Lebanese economy and society (even if on a very small scale)

In addition, she is able to give her children a strong Lebanese identity, is always surrounded by family and enjoys the Mediterranean weather.

RAMI returned to Lebanon in 2011, after having lived in the US and Saudi Arabia. His aim was to make Lebanon somewhere that was not only known for commercial banking but also for Investment Banking. He believes there is an abundance of Lebanese talent, especially when taking into consideration those working at

NEW MEMBERS

ACCOUNTING/AUDIT

Joseph El Bitar | *Ernst & Young* | *New York*

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Zayd Hammam | *Gansett Companies* | *New York*
Stephane Issa El-Khoury | *Harrington cooper* | *London*

CAPITAL MARKETS

Tarek Moussa | *First Abu Dhabi Bank* | *Dubai*

CONSULTING

Charbel Kobrianos | *Bulger Partners* | *New York*
Joseph Shammas | *Deloitte* | *Montreal*

top investment banks and looking to come back. A very competitive cost structure in comparison to the other regional financial centres also makes Lebanon attractive to work in.

WAHID had never lived in Lebanon up until now and thus most in his circles had repeatedly warned him that he had not the faintest idea of what it was like and what he was getting into. Yet, for the last decade, he has had a nagging temptation to try it out, convinced that creating the right environment was all that was necessary to make Beirut work, that is: ring-fencing TyreGate's work-environment to be completely non-dependent on, or exposed to, the country's many negatives, while allowing him and his teammates to enjoy all the positives that Lebanon has to offer: social life, family, weather, human capital, low cost operations, tax-friendly environment and the best services and fun that any country has to offer. He has brought on board like-minded professionals who have indeed worked alongside him for years. Collectively they are having a blast and, with the help of travel and sourcing of all their deals from outside Lebanon, they are not feeling as though they are missing a beat given they are still tapping into their old networks and traveling continuously.

CORPORATE FINANCE LAW

Ziad Raymond Azar | *White & Case LLP* | *New York*

FAMILY OFFICE

Charles Toutounji | *First Financial Consulting* | *Paris*

FINTECH

Florian Hayek | *Lending Club* | *Los Angeles*
Nadim Takchi | *Cambridge Blockchain* | *Paris*

INVESTMENT BANKING

Joelle Korban | *Standard Chartered Bank* | *Dubai*
Walid Mezher | *Barclays* | *Dubai*
Rana Zmeter | *ING Bank* | *London*

OPERATIONS

Emile Moghabghab | *International Monetary Fund* | *Montreal*

PRIVATE BANKING

Fabio Nader Jaber | *Deutsche Bank* | *Geneva*

PRIVATE EQUITY

Fady Abouchalache | *TriSpan LLP* | *London*
Marwan Azzi | *White & Case LLP* | *New York*

" *LIFE is doing a great job already. If anything, a little more effort can be done to encourage more communication and collaboration between the financial executives in Lebanon (whether previously expats or not) and LIFE members overseas. I think such closer collaboration would result in direct mutual benefits and opportunities to both sides and would shed more light for expats to learn more on the potential of servicing their clients out of Lebanon.*

Rami El Jisr

What are the challenges of working in Lebanon?

RINDALA

- Bad infrastructure (we are ranked country n. 130/137)
- Slow internet
- High cost calls
- Political unrest
- Very few local business opportunities

RAMI

Capital market regulations are going in the right direction, but more needs to be done by authorities to raise Beirut's profile as a financial center.

WAHID

For my team and I, just traffic and pollution, frankly. We have solved for the rest: given we have chosen to ensure that nothing in Lebanon can affect our work, we seldom have an excuse to "blame Lebanon" for anything, besides personal safety and comfort of course. We try to make our personal work and team environment as close to the one we had before moving to Beirut. One thing is for sure - Lebanon can be highly toxic if you wake up every day with a "glass half empty" attitude. But with a positive attitude, it is miraculous how much "Lebanon" can be made to work well, again so long as you ensure nothing in Lebanon should determine what you work on, who you work with, or the outcome of your investment decisions.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

SAAD AZHARI in Bloomberg Blom Bank's Azhari Says Things in Lebanon Getting Better
[Better](#)

PHILIPPE EL ASMAR in etfexpress
[JPM appoints new head of Asia Beta Strategies](#)

RAMI EL JISR in Euromoney 2018 Awards
[Broadgate Advisers awarded Best Investment Bank in Lebanon, at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2018](#)

ALEXANDRE HARKOUS in BFM Business
[Le domaine de la gestion financière en pleine mutation](#)

JEAN RIACHI in Executive Bulletin
[FFA Private Bank named Best Private Bank in the Middle East 2018](#)

" *It is shocking how much I have tapped into the LIFE network whenever I need support, partnership or even entertainment! Whenever I need a lawyer, an accountant, a recruiter, a referral, an investment banker, a wealth manager, a commercial bank, a tax expert, a co-investor, a shareholder, a 3rd party marketer, a hedge fund expert who is short something I am trying to buy, or even someone to just have lunch with and/or to whom I can vent- I cannot manage without the LIFE network. Indeed, in each of the aforementioned categories of work above, I am proud to have professionally engaged with a LIFEer and the experience has been FANTASTIC. There's nothing better and more fulfilling to reach the point where you can work with friends and colleagues with little need to even sign a contract! From Palo Alto to Paris to Geneva to Singapore to Sydney to even Africa (where we don't have a chapter), I have had the*

opportunity to tap into the LIFE network to accomplish my goals. When work is fun, you no longer regard it as work. I can safely say there's not a single week where I do not interact with someone from the LIFE network.

Wahid Chammas



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