Meet the US Youth Observer to the UN: Munira Khalif

Munira Khalif is the 2017-18 U.S. Youth Observer to the United Nations, a role appointed annually by the U.S. Department of State and UNA-USA to increase youth engagement in global affairs. Munira was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is currently an undergraduate student at Harvard University, majoring in Economics and minoring in Government. She is a dedicated advocate for universal access to education and women’s and girls’ rights. Her experience as a first-generation Somali-American raised her awareness of the sad reality that many children, especially girls, lack the opportunity to attend school and underscored the transformative power of education.

Munira has served in UNA-USA’s Girl Up campaign, a youth delegate to UN’s inaugural Malala Day, and lobbied for girls’ rights in developing countries, in addition to co-founding Lighting the Way, a youth-run NGO that seeks to provide better access to girls in East Africa by providing scholarships, building libraries, and sponsoring teachers. Munira was awarded the UN Special Envoy for Global Education’s Youth Courage Award and has been invited twice to attend the annual White House Iftar dinner, which celebrates Muslim-American trailblazers both in the public and private sector.

Social Justice Book Club
How Does It Feel to Be a Problem: Being Young and Arab in America by Moustafa Bayoumi

Just over a century ago, W.E.B. Du Bois posed a probing question in his classic The Souls of Black Folk: How does it feel to be a problem? Now, Moustafa Bayoumi asks the same about America’s new “problem”-Arab- and Muslim-Americans. Bayoumi takes readers into the lives of seven twenty-somethings living in Brooklyn, home to the largest Arab-American population in the United States. He moves beyond stereotypes and clichés to reveal their often unseen struggles, from being subjected to government surveillance to the indignities of workplace discrimination. Through it all, these young men and women persevere through triumphs and setbacks as they help weave the tapestry of a new society that is, at its heart, purely American. Amazon.com
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