

Zainab Salbi

Founder and CEO, Women for Women International

Author of *Between Two Worlds: Escape from Tyranny:*

Growing Up in the Shadow of Saddam and

The Other Side of War: Women's Stories of Survival & Hope.

Every once in a while a new voice emerges with the power to change the world. Zainab Salbi, activist and social entrepreneur, is such a voice. Ms. Salbi inspires and moves audiences with the passion of her personal experience as a survivor of war and her dedication to rebuilding communities after war, one woman at a time.

She has raised her voice, and thousands of women have responded to the call, to help women survivors of war rebuild their lives through her organization, Women for Women International. The *Oprah Winfrey Show* has featured Ms. Salbi and her organization seven times.

Ms. Salbi is “a recognized force for women’s rights and self-sufficiency,” says the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Time calls Women for Women International “a lifeline for women in war-torn countries” and named Ms. Salbi “innovator of the month” for her pioneering work as philanthropist. In 2007, she was selected as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. *Forbes* gave her its 2005 Trailblazer Award. In 1995, President Clinton honored Ms. Salbi at a White House ceremony for her humanitarian work. In 2006, Women for Women International received the *Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize*, the world’s largest humanitarian award.

Ms. Salbi survived the bombs and lies of living in the shadows of Saddam Hussein. She writes about those terrifying years in her memoir, *Between Two Worlds: Escape from Tyranny: Growing Up in the Shadow of Saddam* (Gotham, 2005). She escaped Iraq and through adversity began to help other women whose lives had been torn apart by war. Her personal story inspires; her passion moves. Her second book, *The Other Side of War: Women's Stories of Survival & Hope* (National Geographic, 2006) chronicles the stories of women who overcome the horrors of war and rebuild their families and countries.

Ms. Salbi is regularly interviewed in the national and international media including, the BBC, NPR, ABC News *Good Morning America*, NBC *Nightly News*, CNN, Fox News, PBS, Al Jazeera, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Newsweek*, among others.

“Women who survive war are strong, resilient and courageous – they just need some support dealing with the aftermath of conflict,” Ms. Salbi says. “So, we give them the tools they need to help themselves and their families, while providing them with the education to be leaders and advocates in their communities.”

The Washington Post says “Salbi’s vision is that by strengthening women, her organization [Women for Women International] can help rebuild communities and nations.”

Since Ms. Salbi founded Women for Women International in 1993, tens of thousands of women have joined a quiet but strong movement to help women survivors of wars and civil strife to rebuild their lives. One by one, 93,000 women survivors of war have begun to contribute to the political and economic health of their societies. Ms. Salbi has dedicated her life to the belief that stronger women build stronger nations.

Ms. Salbi’s social entrepreneurship has brought her accolades. Ms. Salbi was most recently named a Prime Mover by Hunt Alternatives Fund. In 2006, she was asked to speak to global business leaders at the Clinton Global Initiative and the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. She also received Auburn Theological Seminary’s highest honor, a Lives of Commitment Award, in 2006, and was named one of the 2006 Washingtonians of the Year by *Washingtonian* magazine. The organization was honored with the Arab American Institute Foundation's Kahlil Gibran Spirit of Humanity Award. Ms. Salbi received the 2005 Human Security Award presented by the University of California, Irvine. In 2004 she was named as the Communicator of the Year from Alverno College.

She also writes and lectures extensively on the themes of the status of women and violence against them during and after war. Ms. Salbi is contributing to the forthcoming *Women and Human Security: Challenges of Conflict and Global Change* to be published by the University of California Press.

Her other writings include: “Mass Rape: Natural, Cultural, or Social?” ,in the *Journal of Sacred Feminine Wisdom* (1996); 1996 “The Role of Microcredit in Poverty Alleviation in a Post Conflict/ Transitional Society: Bosnian Villages as a Case Study,” *Making the Transition Work for Women*, World Bank Conference , (June 1999); “Think Big, Spend Small: The Impact of Woman-to-Woman Small Scale Support,” and , *Women Philanthropy and Social Change: Visions for a Just Society* (2004).

She serves on the advisory boards of Tällberg Foundation International Advisory Council, the Peter Gruber Foundation Women’s Rights Prize, World Pulse Magazine and the International Museum of Women. Ms. Salbi also serves as a Young Global Leader for the World Economic Forum and is a member of the International Women’s Forum.

Ms. Salbi earned a Master Degree in Development Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2001 and a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Women's Studies from George Mason University in 1996.