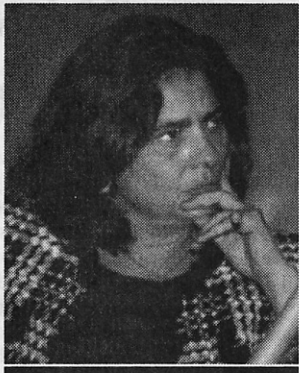


Tributes



Gone too soon

Nadia Younes: the name immediately evokes a vivacious, witty and dynamic woman, robust in mind and spirit as well as energetic in words and thoughts. I have known Nadia for the past 30 years. While she was still in Egypt, we sat on the same courses at AUC. Since then, I followed with immense admiration and pride her superlative career with the United Nations. Our paths crossed several times in international fora, the last one being in Johannesburg last year for the World Summit for Sustainable Development where she was the real dynamo, like a drone in a beehive, behind the activities of a gathering where the whole world was represented.

What was refreshing about her was that she found humour in almost any stressful situation, whether it was Kosovo or Baghdad, shining like a bright star over long and stormy nights. "My Egyptian princess" as she was called by Bernard Kouchner, whom she assisted as political advisor in Kosovo.

How ironical and cruelly sad that just a week before the vicious bombing against the UN headquarters in Baghdad, I was conversing with Mr Iqbal Reza, Kofi Anan's chief of staff, who happened to be attending the Assila Conference with me in Morocco, when he announced that Nadia had just been promoted to become assistant secretary-general of the United Nations. It was a dream she had always nurtured; how cruel that it was in Baghdad that her career peaked and her life ended.

In Baghdad she and Sergio di Mello exerted tremendous effort to obtain from the American coalition more prerogatives for the Iraqi Interim Governing Council; this is what we were told by Mehdi Al-Hafez, the newly appointed Iraqi minister of planning.

Their whole aim was to try and create conditions to bring peace and justice to this war torn country. She will be long remembered for her accomplishments, and we urge Dr Farkhonda Hassan, the secretary-general of the National Council for Women, to preserve a special place for Nadia Younes, who managed to convey, more than anything else, an enlightened image of an exceptional Egyptian woman.

To her devastated brother and sister, to her cousins, family and friends, I offer my most sincere condolences for an irreparable loss.



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