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To Our Stakeholders

As I have in the past, I’d like to start with a paean of appreciation for the progress that Iraq has made. Consider that in 2016, people were still holding serious debates about whether the country would survive ISIS. In 2018, by contrast, Iraq installed a technocratic government, anti-IED blast walls across Baghdad came down, and continued growth in oil exports shored up the public finances. Security has improved, and with it, local investment. While the S&P 500 contracted by about 5 percent in 2018, the Iraqi stock market was up nearly 12 percent across the year despite continuing geopolitical tensions in the Persian Gulf.

And yet, there are still reports every week about acts of violence in Iraq. The difference to the bad days of pre-2017, besides the order of magnitude, is that the violence today is less mass organized, particularly around national ideologies. The current troubles in the country do not stem from an ideological separatist national movement, but from the latent trauma and dysfunctional institutions that decades of war have wrought on the country. The skeleton of civil society has survived, but the muscles still need to be rebuilt. Until the marginalized and most deeply affected segments of society are empowered, latent instability will persist. Similarly, the economic gains I described above will not result in lasting prosperity for the majority of Iraqis as long as the country’s institutions remain weak.

In 2018, as you will read below, EPIC once again did its part to ensure stability and a more lasting prosperity in the region. I will not recap them all here, but the Safe Return project in particular is an exciting opportunity to help address arguably the most pressing issue in the world today, that of displaced persons. There are still hundreds of thousands of displaced Iraqis in camps and temporary housing across the country, not to speak of those who emigrated at some point over the past several years. Helping displaced families return to their places of origin heals fractures in communities, reduces stress in overburdened havens, and enables the important work that we take for granted in our own societies – educating the young, building businesses, keeping tradition – to take place.

Our Iraq Security and Humanitarian Monitor (ISHM) also continues to gain subscribers as a must-read for anyone interested in Iraq. If you haven’t subscribed, you should do so on our website right now – it’s free!

2018 was the first year we delivered a U.S. government-funded program, which besides diversifying our revenue sources is in itself an achievement; it recognizes the good work we have been doing for decades in and around Iraq. Reflecting the increased scope of our work in the ground, we have had to build up our operational infrastructure, opening a field office in Iraq and hiring Omar Al-Nidawi, Mohammed Khalil, and Shakir Almousa to support our efforts. At the same time, turnover in our organization in Washington D.C. has stretched our resources to address more mundane administrative workloads and fundraise. This is an area that we will seek to improve on in the years to come.

It is fitting that the 20th anniversary of our existence would also usher in another, much less important change for the organization – the transition of Board leadership. This will be the last annual report that bears my signature. But the organization will be better off than ever before under the leadership of our new Board President, Zeena Abdul-Rahman.

Zeena has already visited our field office in Iraq and is bringing new ideas to our group. With the addition of Zeena, Dennis Clancy, Kate Phillips-Barasso, and Taif Jany to our number, I believe we have a Board that is as impressive as any organization out there that of our size. It reflects the breadth of support we have
garnered over the years and a wide range of perspectives on the country, from U.S. armed forces veterans to first-generation Iraqis, with vocational backgrounds ranging from business to academics to government.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions as we move forward into a new era for EPIC, please don’t hesitate to reach out! And as always, please please do take a few minutes after reading this report to make a donation. Our work is sustained by individual donors; we quite simply couldn’t open the doors every day without you.

Thank you for your support. We are excited for the work we can do together!

Onwards,

Sören Südhof
President, Board of Directors
March 31, 2019
Introduction to EPIC

During the regime of Saddam Hussein, news reports in the mid-1990s told of a public health and humanitarian crisis in Iraq compounded by comprehensive United Nations trade sanctions. Children who were dangerously ill could not receive adequate life-saving health care, young people were unable to attend school due to poverty or a lack of basic necessities, and a significant part of the country was malnourished. Iraqis were cut off from the outside world while human rights defenders who dared to speak freely were jailed or killed by Saddam Hussein's regime.

Recognizing the need to act, EPIC was founded in 1998 by veterans of the Gulf War who believe that a human security approach can make Iraq safe and prosperous again. EPIC brought together veterans, Iraqis, aid workers, doctors, faith communities, and concerned Americans as a grassroots movement took hold. EPIC became a leading voice in the United States, amplifying the authentic concerns of everyday Iraqis and leading the conversation in Washington on the impact of economic sanctions and human rights violations.

Today, EPIC works one-on-one with civil society leaders in Iraq to provide relief to vulnerable populations, monitor the crisis to better inform public policy, and enhance understanding of Iraq’s story. EPIC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization registered in the District of Columbia and operates with three full-time employees, an eight member Board of Directors, and numerous volunteer advisers based in the United States, Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan, and elsewhere around the world. EPIC’s ultimate vision is a safe and prosperous Iraq in which all citizens live with the freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live with dignity.

EPIC’s strategy is based on a human security approach to aid relief and policy-making. Our goals are to educate Americans about the value of Iraq, provide emergency assistance to the country’s most vulnerable populations, and convince the international community to remain engaged in Iraq while providing the humanitarian, security, and political support necessary to break the cycle of violence. EPIC’s capacity to add value is rooted in our 21 years of experience working on the issues, our networks in Iraq and around the world, and our reputation as an independent, impartial, and non-partisan organization.
2018 Programming

EPIC advances its mission through a combined strategy of humanitarian fieldwork, research, and education. Through targeted, innovative programming, EPIC: (1.) provides relief by supporting the work of civil society organizations with advocacy, information, and funding; (2.) enhances understanding of Iraq’s contributions to the world and the challenges it faces through education and research targeted to the public and to policymakers; and (3.) monitors the crisis in Iraq, sharing that information with Iraqi civil society organizations and others in need of a deeper understanding of the day-to-day situation in the country. Included in this report are just a few of the highlights from 2018.

**PROVIDE RELIEF:** Carrying out impactful programs that address some of the most urgent needs of Iraq’s vulnerable populations.

**TRAUMA RECOVERY INITIATIVE**

The city of Mosul fell under the brutal occupation of the self-proclaimed Islamic State in June 2014. During the ISIS occupation, residents witnessed unimaginable atrocities: women were brutally raped, teenage boys were burned alive for refusing to adhere to ISIS ideology, citizens attempting to flee were shot, drowned, and worse. The need to rid the ancient and once beautiful city of the evils of ISIS was abundantly clear and the Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga, U.S.-led coalition, and other allies did so successfully in July 2017.

Emerging from the nightmare of ISIS and war, untold numbers of families and children in Iraq are suffering from post-traumatic stress and other disorders. As EPIC reported last year, few are receiving sufficient treatment and care. To help, EPIC launched our Trauma Recovery Initiative in June 2018. We raised more than $14,500 to help kick start the provision of urgently needed mental health care in Iraq.

In partnership with the Iraq Health Access Organization (IHAO) and Iraq’s leading psychologist, Dr. Abdul-Monaf al-Jadiry, EPIC funded a rapid assessment of mental health and psychosocial needs in July 2018. The field mission and assessment focused on Mosul, Sinjar, and other conflict-affected areas, and included high-level meetings with the Ministry of Health’s Directorate on Mental Health in Baghdad, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and health officials in Ninewa, and health workers at Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs) run by IHAO. In August 2018, EPIC and IHAO jointly published Dr. al-Jadiry’s findings and recommendations for international donors, aid agencies, and the Iraqi government. To address the scale and urgency of mental health and psychosocial needs in northwestern Iraq, far more attention and resources are required, including more funding and trainings at the PHCC level.

Following the publication of the report, IHAO began piloting Dr. al-Jadiry’s recommendations at Mosul’s Al-Quds Primary Health Care Center (PHCC). In November 2018, EPIC and IHAO convened a training of the Trauma Recovery Initiative in Mosul. A group 13 Iraqi doctors, social workers and psychiatrists came
together for three days of intensive training on integrating the provision of mental health care in primary health care centers and hospitals. Participants included the staff of more than a dozen different facilities and organizations from across Mosul, Sinjar, Baghdad and other areas affected by the war.

The needs for mental health care support are immense. Even before ISIS took over a third of Iraq’s territory in 2014 and the subsequent military campaign to oust ISIS from those regions, the prevalence of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder was high across Iraq, with 18.8% of Iraqis estimated to have suffered at least one of these disorders in their lifetime. Rates of these disorders were even higher among Iraq’s children. A group of Iraqi medical experts estimated that as much as one-third of all children in Baghdad, Mosul, and Dohuk demonstrated symptoms of moderate-to-severe mental disorders. The needs assessment and training were the first investments of EPIC’s Trauma Recovery Initiative, a program that we hope to continue with renewed funding.
SOCCER SALAM

Soccer Salam is EPIC’s joint initiative with the Iraqi Children Foundation, Karadah Project International, and the Goals and Dreams Outreach Foundation to raise public awareness about the humanitarian emergency facing more than three million internally displaced persons in Iraq, and deliver the joy of play to some of Iraq’s most vulnerable children and families affected by the crisis.

Although this campaign is built around soccer – a sport that serves as a chief symbol of national unity bringing together Arabs and Kurds, Sunni and Shia Muslims, and other parts of the population – the initiative is primarily focused on supplying goods necessary for survival to some of the most at-risk people in the world. Quite simply, children and families displaced by ISIS find it difficult to trust others. Soccer serves as our entry point into their lives, helps EPIC earn their trust, address their most critical needs, and eventually make them a part of our family.

Before 2018, Soccer Salam had helped deliver emergency humanitarian assistance to more than 60,000 Iraqis. In 2018, we consulted with our partners and began planning a relaunch of Soccer Salam with a focus on positive youth development and Iraq’s recovery needs. We also met with other stakeholders, including young people and aid groups in Baghdad, Erbil, and Mosul. Based on those meetings, EPIC is looking at how Soccer Salam’s programming can further positive youth development, especially for vulnerable children in areas most affected by the war. We are currently seeking renewed funding to relaunch Soccer Salam within the next year.

CONNECTION INITIATIVE

Iraq’s civil society has assumed a critical role in filling the service provision and local organizational void created by inefficiency and corruption within the country’s political establishment. Today, these civil society organizations are vibrant, diverse, and competently-led after a decade of growth and international support. However, many still lack capacity as they face outsized need for their services while Iraq moves past its ISIS nightmare.

In partnership with Professionals for a Better Iraq (PBI) and with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, EPIC launched the Connection Initiative in August 2017. The program connects Iraqi civil society organizations with skilled members of the country’s vast diaspora by developing a database of Iraqis in the United States willing to share their resources with in-country organizations. Iraq’s multi-generational diaspora represents a vast, yet largely untapped reservoir of talent that we mobilize to build civil society capacity at a critical moment in Iraqi political and social development. Such an effort showcases the involvement of the Iraqi diaspora in the country’s present and future, and facilitates increased exchange between Iraqis at home and abroad.

In 2018, we continued our Connection Initiative to match skilled Iraqi Americans to meaningful volunteer opportunities with Iraqi CSOs, and to help support and sustain those relationships. Based on lessons learned from the previous year, EPIC implemented a redesigned process for recruiting organizations and volunteers, guiding each from recruitment to needs and skills identification, matching,
engagement, monitoring, evaluation, and follow up. EPIC developed and signed partnership agreements with seven Iraqi CSOs; registered new volunteers; promoted 38 volunteer opportunities for skilled Iraqi Americans; and continued to work to facilitate successful matches and lasting connections between those CSOs and our growing base of skilled volunteers. EPIC also participated in several events in Washington DC and Michigan to reach the wider Iraqi American community, including meetings with the Iraqi American Young Professionals (IAYP).

SAFE RETURN

In October 2018, EPIC joined a USAID-funded consortium of organizations led by Heartland Alliance International (HAI) to design and carry out "Safe Return", an innovative 30-month pilot project to support the safe and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have survived severe human rights abuses — many from minority communities — to their homes in the Ninewa Plains and Western Nineva. The Safe Return consortium also includes EPIC’s long-time Iraq-based partner, the Iraq
Health Access Organization (IHAO). To support Safe Return, EPIC will conduct surveys on issues related to perceived safety and community trust, train and work with community-based monitors to map conditions and vulnerabilities, and develop messaging campaigns that will encourage community buy-in to support minority returns.

In preparation for our work in Iraq with USAID, we devoted considerable time setting up the necessary systems for finance, compliance, planning, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and field policies. In late September 2018, we hired Matthew Keller to serve as EPIC’s interim Country Representative in Erbil to register EPIC with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and establish our first field office in Iraq. At our headquarters office in Washington DC, EPIC hired a part-time consultant to prepare our office for managing our first USAID-funded program and overseeing field operations. It has been an exciting time for all of us at EPIC. Our work on Safe Return began in late 2018 and will continue through 2019 and 2020. Through the program, we are determined to do our part to help displaced and vulnerable Iraqis return to their places of origin, contributing to a restoration of the diversity of Ninewa where ISIS forcibly drove out Yazidis, Assyrians, Turkomen, Shabaks, and other Iraqi communities that are vital to the social fabric and economic life of the region.

At the same time, through our strengthened presence on-the-ground in Iraq, we look forward to learning more about the challenges facing Iraq and identifying gaps in the international humanitarian response where our research, monitoring, field work, and advocacy can make a difference.

**ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING:** Disseminating thoughtful, accurate information about Iraq’s security, humanitarian, and political context.

**IRAQ MATTERS PODCAST**

The *IRAQ MATTERS* podcast features guests who are experts in the fields of Iraqi culture, politics, humanitarian relief, security, and a wide variety of other fields. *IRAQ MATTERS* aims to educate the public about impactful individuals and organizations, current events and developments, and cultural themes related to Iraq. In 2018, EPIC shared three episodes:

- **January 19:** “Corruption and Reconstruction – Lessons Learned” with Stuart Bowen, former Special Inspector-General for Iraq Reconstruction for the United States government
- **December 4:** “Mosul’s Recovery: A Dream Deferred” with Rasha Al-Aqeedi, a native of Mosul and an acclaimed Iraq analyst
- **December 11:** “Basra’s Water Crisis” with Basma Alloush of the NRC
Episodes of the podcast are available on iTunes, Soundcloud, and directly through EPIC’s website.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

EPIC’s website has been a reliable source for information about the most pressing security and humanitarian development issues in Iraq since 2006. Our website attracts a loyal readership who trust the accuracy and independent voice of our pieces, including:

★ an analysis on Iraq’s post-ISIS recovery needs
★ An analysis of Iraq’s current business environment
★ Information for Iraqis in the US interested in voting in the May election
★ an in-depth interview with Yazidi activist Hazim Avdal on the urgency of justice for genocide survivors
★ Reflections on 2018

EPIC leverages the most salient social media platforms – including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram – to reach as wide a variety of audiences as possible with our content.
MONITOR THE CRISIS: Monitoring the situation on-the-ground to inform better public policy and more effective humanitarian assistance strategies to break the cycle of violence.

IRAQ SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN MONITOR (ISHM)

Every week since January 2015, EPIC publishes a digest of the latest security, humanitarian, and political developments in Iraq to an extensive network of policymakers, scholars, aid workers, journalists, and anyone else needing a deeper understanding of the context in Iraq on a weekly basis. Information is based on objective firsthand accounts and reliable Arabic and Kurdish news sources. In 2018, EPIC published 45 weekly ISHM reports to over 750 subscribers, who incorporated the information into international headlines, NGO reports, academic research, and new policy.

CONGRESSIONAL EDUCATION

EPIC is frequently called upon by Congressional staffers, committees, and think tanks in Washington to offer insight on the latest developments on-the-ground and to explain why a stronger human security-oriented response to Iraq’s needs is needed now. EPIC has played a leadership role in convening like-minded agencies in Washington and actively supports InterAction, an alliance of 180+ non-profits who work to advocate for a greater humanitarian response to pressing needs around the world.

In 2018, EPIC continued to actively participate in InterAction’s Iraq/Syria working group to coordinate research, public awareness raising, and advocacy among like-minded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to respond to humanitarian and reconstruction needs in Ninewa, Anbar, Kirkuk, and other conflict-affected areas across Iraq, and to ensure a more effective U.S. and international response to Iraq’s post-ISIS needs for recovery and human security.
SÖREN SÜDHOF, PRESIDENT

Soren Sudhof is a technology investor at Maverick Capital. He earned a B.A. in Ethics, Politics, and Economics from Yale University and his MBA at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he was an Arjay Miller Scholar and the winner of the Robichak Award. At Yale, as a Richard U. Light Fellow, Georg Walter Leitner Fellow, and Fox International Fellow, he explored religious political conflict across Asia and the Middle East, focusing in particular on India and on Iraq. Previously, he was an investment professional at Parthenon Capital Partners, a director for Vianar Affordable Housing, and a strategy consultant for Oliver Wyman, the global management consultancy.

MARION ABOUD, SECRETARY

Marion Abboud joins the EPIC Board with a dedication to human-centered, sustainable international development. Over the years, her work has been focused on the world’s most vulnerable populations, including women and children, internally displaced persons and refugees, and the extreme poor. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania with a B.A. in Communication and Public Service, Marion joined Women’s Campaign International (WCI), a US-based international NGO that focuses on gender development in conflict and post-conflict zones. During this time, Marion took a lead role in the design, implementation, and day-to-day management of WCI’s first Middle East/North Africa-wide women’s
leadership program. Marion then moved to Northern Iraq to join the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani (AUIS) where she designed, launched, and led the university’s first think tank: the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS). Marion directed IRIS to focus mainly on regional development issues, including water resource management, economic development, gender, migration, and conflict and peace building. In addition to her work at AUIS, Marion supported a number of refugee aid and assistance efforts in Iraqi Kurdistan. In pursuit of her interests in forced migration, gender, and education issues in the Middle East, Marion is now pursuing her MA in Global Human Development at Georgetown University where she is specializing in Education and Human Capital as well as Refugees and Humanitarian Emergencies. Marion speaks French and Spanish, and is proficient in Arabic.

HUSSEIN AL-BAYA, TREASURER

Hussein Al Baya is a Principal at the Blackstone group focused on impact private equity investing. Previously, he was on the investments teams at Sageview Capital, Valinor Management, and Bain Capital. Hussein started his career in the Investment Banking Division of Credit Suisse and the Principal Investment Area of Goldman Sachs. Prior to joining EPIC’s board, Hussein was a co-founder and a director of Rally for Iraq, a not-for-profit organization that established a scholarship endowment for Iraqi students to pursue undergraduate and graduate studies in the United States. Hussein earned a Bachelor of Science, with University and College Honors, from Carnegie Mellon University, and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

YASMEEN ALAMIRI

Yasmeen Alamiri is an Iraqi-American journalist covering foreign politics and policy in Washington, DC. She covered the White House for several years and has written extensively on the war in Iraq and American foreign policy. She received her undergraduate from James Madison University and her Master’s Degree from American University in journalism. She has long been interested in the cultural and economic implications of war. She travels often to southern Iraq to visit her family, as well as the across the greater Middle East and Europe. Her work has been published in both domestic US media outlets and publications across the globe.

DENNIS CLANCEY

Dennis Eoghain Clancey oversees support of all disaster operations at Team Rubicon, an international, veteran-based disaster response non-profit. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the United States Military Academy at West Point and an MBA from the University of Colorado. Prior to joining Team Rubicon, Dennis was a stand-out operations leader at Amazon in Europe and North America. He has spent time as a successful entrepreneur and award-winning documentary filmmaker. Dennis traces his interest in Iraq to when he was stationed there as an infantry platoon leader in the 101st Airborne Division, 2005-2006 – an experience that fuels his support of EPIC’s mission.

KATE PHILLIPS-BARASSO

Kate Phillips-Barrasso is the Director of Humanitarian Policy at InterAction. In this capacity she helps lead the NGO community’s efforts to secure policies for improved humanitarian response and represents the
experience and views of InterAction’s members in both U.S. and international humanitarian policy fora. Prior to joining InterAction, Kate served as the Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy for the International Rescue Committee (IRC). At the IRC, she guided work to draw the attention of policy makers to global humanitarian needs, led advocacy efforts for policy change to better assist people forced to flee war and disaster and oversaw the organization’s relations with the U.S. Congress, Executive Branch and other NGOs. Kate also worked for several years as a Senior Policy Advisor with CARE, leading the organization’s policy and advocacy efforts on a number of humanitarian and development issues. Kate is a Truman National Security Project Fellow and served as a Council on Foreign Relations Term Member. She holds a Master’s in International Development Studies from the Elliott School of International Affairs and a Bachelor of Science from the University of California, Berkeley in Conservation of Natural Resources in Developing Countries.

ZEENA ABDUL-RAHMAN

Zeena Abdul-Rahman is President of EPIC’s Board of Directors. She is a Senior Counsel in the Division of Investment Management of the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). In this position, Zeena provides legal advice and guidance on a wide range of policy matters involving the regulation of investment advisers and investment funds, including private funds, mutual funds and exchange-traded funds. Prior to joining the government, Zeena was an Associate at a law firm in Washington, DC, where she worked primarily on assisting mutual fund boards satisfy their fiduciary duties as well as their various compliance obligations. Zeena also co-chaired the firm’s immigration pro bono program and helped resettle several Iraqi immigrant families in the United States. Originally from Iraq, Zeena lived in Saudi Arabia and Iraq before moving to United States to complete her education. She earned a Juris Doctor from the George Washington University Law School and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Tennessee. Zeena is licensed to practice law in the State of New York and the District of Columbia.

TAIF JANY

Taif Jany was born and raised in Baghdad, Iraq. At age 16, he fled the sectarian civil conflict in the country and sought refuge in Damascus, Syria. Taif arrived in the United States to attend Union College in Schenectady, New York, where he studied sociology and French. Currently, Taif serves as the Policy Coordinator at the Young Elected Officials (YEO) Network, where he manages nationwide projects to effectively impact policy on the state and local levels of government. Taif also provides one-on-one public policy support to over 1,200 elected officials nationwide. From 2013 to 2016, Taif worked at EPIC, supporting day-to-day operations and helping to design, manage, and evaluate on-the-ground projects in Iraq, including Soccer Salam. Taif also helped oversee the Iraq Security and Humanitarian Monitor (ISHM), EPIC’s weekly report tracking and analyzing the latest security, humanitarian, and political developments in Iraq. Prior to EPIC, Taif’s experience includes work at the United Nations and internships with Congressional Quarterly, the Arab American Institute, and the office of Congressman Keith Ellison. As an Iraqi immigrant living in the United States, and because of his life experiences, Taif understands, believes in, and values the impact of EPIC’s work in creating long-lasting positive change in Iraq and the region.
PETER KJELDGAARD

Peter Kjeldgaard is the Director of Alliances and Channels at Upskill, a VR-focused tech startup. Previously, he served as business development manager at Opower, a tech startup that combines data analytics and behavioral science to help energy utilities save energy and become trusted advisors to their customers. In the past, Peter worked for Booz Allen Hamilton, consulting for US government agencies, and as a high school teacher. After moving on from teaching, he also spent time as a tutor and mentor for high school students in Washington, DC. Peter holds a M.A. in International Trade & Investment Policy from the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, and a B.A. in history from Yale University.

DAVID SLATER

David Slater has been interested in the Middle East since 2005, when he joined the U.S. Army. During his time of service, David studied Arabic at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) and deployed to Iraq twice, in 2008 and in 2011. While deployed, he worked closely with Iraqi civilians, personally witnessing the utter devastation which surrounded them, and therefore decided that he was going to do something to help improve their situation. To that end, after returning to the U.S., he finished junior college then studied International Relations at U.C. Davis. In the summer of 2013, David participated in the University of California Washington D.C program, during which he interned at EPIC and was instrumental in creating the “Iraq Matters” podcast. Currently, David is working as a Caseworker for the International Rescue Committee in Sacramento, where he helps resettle many Iraqi refugees and SIVs.

BILAL WAHAB

Bilal Wahab, PhD, is from Iraqi Kurdistan where he is a faculty member at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS). At AUIS, he teaches classes on petroleum policy and international politics. He was AUIS’s first research fellow at the Institute of Regional and International Studies. He completed his PhD at George Mason University’s (GMU) School of Public Policy, where he studied patronage networks, economic and political transition, and Iraq’s petroleum policy. While at GMU, he was the managing editor of Foreign Policy Bulletin for two years. He received a Master’s Degree from American University in Washington, DC on a Fulbright Scholarship. He also taught at Salahaddin University’s College of Law and Political Science and College of Education in Iraq, and has spoken at numerous campuses and think tanks across the US, Europe and Iraq. He has made frequent media appearances, including on Aljazeera, National Public Radio, News Hour with Jim Lehrer. He worked at the World Bank, the United Nations, and in numerous USAID programs. His latest publication is on Iraq-Kurdish dispute over the management of the country’s petroleum resources.
2018 Staff

ERIK GUSTAFSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Erik K. Gustafson is Executive Director of the Education for Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC), an organization he founded in 1998. Gustafson is a U.S. Army veteran of the 1991 Gulf War. Witnessing the consequences of war has fueled a life-long passion for peacebuilding, human rights work and humanitarian advocacy. Following his military service, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison to pursue a degree in education. While there, he led the Madison chapter of the East Timor Action Network, supporting East Timor’s right to self-determination. In 1997 and 1999, he traveled to Iraq to investigate the deterioration of humanitarian conditions under Saddam Hussein’s regime and the most comprehensive economic sanctions ever imposed in the history of the United Nations. In 1998, Gustafson moved to Washington DC and established EPIC to improve humanitarian conditions and promote human rights in Iraq. Under his leadership, Gustafson has hosted dozens of policy forums and led humanitarian advocacy on Iraq in Washington DC. In 2008, he organized Iraq Action Days, which helped generate $1.8 billion in funding for war-affected Iraqis and other vulnerable persons worldwide. From early 2009 to late 2010, Gustafson took a sabbatical from EPIC to spend time in Iraq. Based in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, he worked with DePaul University’s International Human Rights Law Institute (IHRLI), directing a countrywide professional development program for Iraqi human rights defenders. Participants included organizations from 9 of Iraq’s 18 provinces including Baghdad, Basra, Najaf, Anbar, Kirkuk, and Erbil. Since his return from Iraq, Gustafson has focused on implementing EPIC’s new strategic plan of research, advocacy, and field work to serve civil society throughout Iraq.

MARK M. SEAMAN, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mark comes to EPIC with over ten years of experience in strategic communications, non-profit fundraising, and humanitarian causes in the United States and other countries. Mark completed a Master of Public Affairs (summa cum laude) and Master of International Affairs at the Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris and Columbia University in New York, where he focused on countering terrorist recruitment by providing economic opportunity and education – instead of relying on military means alone. While in graduate school, he completed work with the US Embassy in Rabat, Morocco and with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya. Prior to continuing his education, Mark was responsible for corporate, foundation, and individual giving, public relations, and marketing for one of the nation’s largest AIDS service organizations and was a communications consultant for a DC-based media training firm. He has served on several non-profit boards and is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer from the Republic of Niger where his work centered on gender equality and public health. Mark is a 2006 graduate of American University’s School of Public Affairs and is originally from Central Pennsylvania. Mark is committed to EPIC’s mission of building more sustainable, human-centered solutions in Iraq and promoting peace through education around the world.

AYAD AMIN, DIASPORA PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Ayad comes to EPIC with a thorough understanding of Iraq’s potential – and the potential of the Iraqi diaspora living in the United States to help rebuild and reconstruct their homeland. Since he arrived in the
U.S. from Iraq in 2006, Ayad has worked with a number of refugee resettlement and other non-profit organizations in the Washington, DC area, including five years with the Iraqi Cultural Center, where he helped promote cultural understanding and campaign to help Iraq retrieve its looted antiquities since 2003. His knowledge and experience in using design, digital media, and other communications to promote peace contributed invaluably to contract work with relief organizations, cultural agencies, state and local courts, and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. In 2015, Ayad helped establish Voices for Iraq to assist in Iraq’s redevelopment, share Iraqi culture with the American public, and preserve the country’s heritage for future generations. Ayad has a degree in Architecture and Design from the University of Technology in Baghdad and an Associate Degree in Design and Multimedia. At EPIC, he is responsible for connecting the Iraqi diaspora living in the United States to civil society organizations and institutions in their native Iraq who need their help. Through this effort, Ayad envisions a future for Iraq filled with economic opportunity, cultural understanding, and true democracy.

MATTHEW SCHWEITZER, RESEARCH FELLOW

Matthew has a degree from the University of Chicago in History, specializing in modern Iraqi politics and society. He was previously EPIC’s Program Assistant in 2016-2017. In 2012, he launched an initiative to study the effects of war and violence on Iraq’s university professors and intellectual class. In 2014, he launched a complementary Harvard-funded initiative to examine the intersection of conflict, political development, and cultural heritage following the emergence of ISIS. Matthew has traveled throughout Iraq, and his writing has appeared in Foreign Policy, The Hill, World Politics Review, A-Jazeera, Le Monde Diplomatique, Truthout, Small Wars Journal, the International Journal of Constitutional Law, and other outlets. He has worked with the US State Department in Washington, DC, and Abu Dhabi, UAE. In his spare time, he edits the online magazine, Post-War Watch, which collects analysis from leading global experts on social, cultural, and political development in the Middle East and Afghanistan.
Financial Summary

1.1 Total Expenses

$267,897

- Research & Education: 25%
- Policy & Advocacy: 21%
- Field work: Safe Return: 17%
- Field work: Connection Initiative: 15%
- Field work: Trauma Recovery Initiative: 12%
- Administration & Other: 10%
1.2 Total Revenue

$167,223

- Gift of Securities: 50%
- Grants and Cash Donations: 46%
- Other: 5%
Special Thanks

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the following donors who deserve special recognition for making this year of growth and impact possible.

- Estate of Ruth Wilson
- The Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust
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