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## IRAQI AMERICAN LAWYER BRINGS DISTINCTLY NEW PERSPECTIVE TO EPIC'S LEADERSHIP AND 20-YEAR MISSION

WASHINGTON, DC – EPIC is pleased to welcome Iraqi American lawyer and human rights advocate Ms. Zeena Abdul-Rahman as the next President of EPIC's Board of Directors. Joining the board in August 2018, Zeena was unanimously elected to serve as President at EPIC's annual board retreat in late April.

*"It is only fitting that the 20th anniversary of our organization's existence brings a transition of leadership and a fresh new perspective to our mission,"* declared Sören Sühof, EPIC's outgoing President. *"As I step down after nearly seven years in the role, I have no doubts that the organization will be better off than ever under the leadership of our new Board President, Zeena Abdul-Rahman."*

Born to Iraqi parents, Zeena lived through the final years of Saddam Hussein and international sanctions, and some of her country's most uncertain, turbulent years. In 2003, her studies at Baghdad University's College of Dentistry were interrupted by the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, and repeatedly afterwards by the violence and political unrest that followed.

Zeena eventually moved to the United States to complete her education, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK) and a Juris Doctor in Law at George Washington University Law School. However, even after arriving to the U.S., Iraq's turmoil continued to hit close to home. Within the span of a few years, Zeena's father survived a kidnapping by armed militants and her fiancé survived an IED attack.

Driven by her personal experience, Zeena began volunteering her time to raise public awareness about the challenges facing millions of Iraqi families like hers, and pursuing other opportunities to make a difference. As an undergraduate at UTK, she wrote a regular column for her college paper, the Daily Beacon. At GW Law, she interned with the U.S. Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps and clerked for judges at the Arlington Immigration Court. As an Associate with the law firm Dechert LLP, Zeena co-chaired the firm's pro bono legal services for Iraqi asylum resettlement cases and special immigrant visa applications.

Today, she is a Senior Counsel with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and continues to devote her free time to making a difference, from supporting humanitarian charities to starting an online community for young Iraqi professionals.

*"In every way, Zeena embodies the unwavering spirit, mission, and work of the [Enabling Peace in Iraq Center](#). Our staff in the U.S. and Iraq are excited to work with Zeena and the board to further EPIC's impact,"* said Erik Gustafson, EPIC's Executive Director.

Founded in 1998, EPIC enables peace in Iraq by enhancing public understanding, monitoring the crisis, and responding to needs in Iraq. Read Zeena's [bio](#) and more about her journey to EPIC [here](#).

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