Christine van den Toorn Biography

**Christine M. van den Toorn**is the Founder and President of Iraq Fund for Higher Education, a DC based organization which provides higher-education opportunities to undergraduate and graduate Iraqi students both locally and abroad. She is a Senior Advisor at the **Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS),** at the **American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS)**, where she previously served as Director from 2013-2019. She was also the **Executive Director of External Relations and Policy**at the University. Ms. van den Toorn**organized the Sulaimani Forum, one of the leading policy events in the Middle East region,**for five**years.**She**has spoken on her fieldwork on local politics and her work in higher education in Iraq in**leading outlets like *Washington Post,* *Al Monitor,* Carnegie’s *Sada*, *Foreign Policy*, *War on the Rocks, Iraq Oil Report,* *Inside Iraqi Politics*, *Daily Beast* and *Niqash* as well as delivered talks on her research. She served in the United States Peace Corps in Morocco and holds an MA in Middle East History from the University of Virginia, and taught the subject at AUIS for four years. Ms. van den Toorn speaks Arabic, which she studied at Middlebury College, Georgetown University, the University of Damascus in Syria and the French Institute for Near East Studies in Damascus.