

Iraqi Children’s Hope is thankful to be friend with U.S.-Iraq Business Council (USIBC)  
Through The U.S. Chamber of Commerce. See page 3

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
International Affairs



U.S.-Iraq Business Council Update | October 7, 2020

**\*\*MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!\*\***

**U.S.-Iraq Virtual Economic Summit**  
December 7-8, 2020

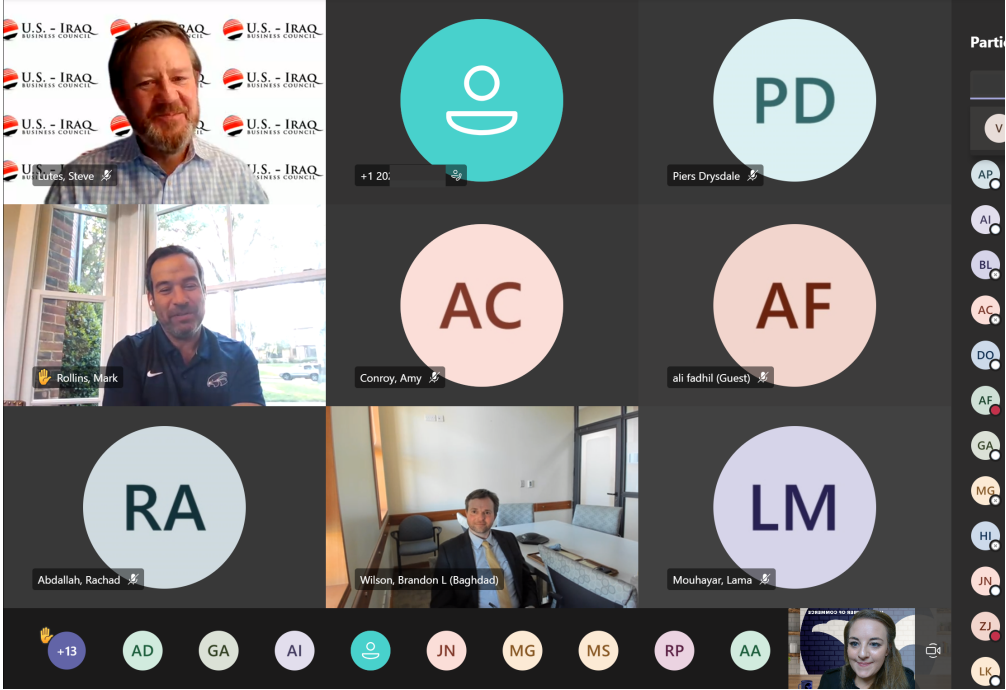
Attention members and friends! We invite you to mark your calendars and plan to join us for this capstone event with key Iraqi government officials and business leaders. Please stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks.

\*\*\*\*\*

**\*Recently Confirmed\***

**USIBC Virtual Briefing with the World Bank's**  
**Zainab Allawi**  
*Advisor to the Dean of the Board of Directors*  
October 26, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. EDT  
(invitation forthcoming)

**U.S.-Iraq Business Council hosts virtual meet & greet with U.S. Embassy**  
**Baghdad's new Senior Trade & Investment Officer Brandon Wilson**



Last week, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-Iraq Business Council hosted a virtual meet and greet with the U.S. Embassy Baghdad's new Senior Trade and Investment Officer Brandon Wilson. A Foreign Service Officer since 2007, Wilson was most recently Deputy Chief of the Political and Economic Affairs Section at U.S. Embassy Lusaka from 2017-2020. Before that, he had worked on sub-Saharan Africa energy policy in the Energy Resource Bureau at the State Department in Washington 2015-2017. His previous overseas assignments include working as an economic officer covering trade and investment in Turkey; as an economic officer covering trade, aviation, and investment disputes in Venezuela; and as a consular officer in Mexico.

The virtual meeting occurred soon after news of the U.S. Administration's considerations to potentially close U.S. Embassy Baghdad. Wilson stated that the embassy remains operational and they continue to monitor the situation.

These events follow the successful visit to Washington by Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi in August, which reinvigorated bilateral the relationship on several fronts and included the announcement of several deals on the sidelines of the U.S. Chamber event, further strengthening U.S.-Iraq energy partnerships.

In discussing Iraq's difficult fiscal situation, slumping oil prices, COVID-19, and the inability to telework for many within government and the private sector, highlighted EXIM Bank's recent unanimous approval of a \$450 million loan to assist Iraq in the purchase of U.S. goods and services, including rice and wheat, to help meet Iraq's immediate needs. In addition, Wilson reiterated that Ambassador Tueller and the U.S. Embassy Baghdad team have continued important efforts to proactively engage with new leadership from the Government of Iraq, which has included recent meetings with the Iraqi Ministers of Oil, Trade, and Finance. He also provided updates on the GOI's work to ratify a federal budget plan for 2020, explaining that the most recent draft was pulled back for further consultations and revisions, and the USG team continues to engage key stakeholders at every level to encourage positive progress toward a resolution. Following his remarks, participating Council members engaged in a moderated discussion with Wilson and shared their insights on doing business in Iraq from several different perspectives.

*The U.S.-Iraq Business Council extends a warm welcome to Brandon and a special thanks to our friends from the USG, especially James Nussbaumer at the State Department, for their partnership in hosting this insightful discussion!*

### ICYMI

**BUSINESS PITCH COMPETITION CAPS YEAR-LONG CIPE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOB-SKILLS PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS IN IRAQI KURDISTAN**



Three would-be entrepreneurs from the Kurdistan Region (KRG) of Iraq emerged as the winners of a business pitch competition on September 28 that capped a year-long Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) project to improve entrepreneurship and job skills for seniors from Garmian, Charmo, and Halabja universities in the KRG. Organized by CIPE with local partner the Kurdistan Economic Development Organization (KEDO), the competition pitted students with the top three business plans from each university – for a total of nine competitors – against one another in five-minute pitches. A CIPE/KEDO-selected independent jury made up of local entrepreneurs and business leaders selected the three winners:

- Mr. Rzzgar Mohammed from Chamchamall, a senior at Garmian University, plans a business to package healthy, organic meals, filling a need in the market he identified in his research.
- Mr. Mohammed Latif from Kalar, a senior at Charmo University, plans a wholesale facility to produce and package Kurdish bread and other regional specialties.
- Ms. Safeen Avyan from Halabja, a senior at Halabja University, seeks to start an interior design firm to serve both residential and commercial clients.

KEDO and CIPE have committed to engaging the KRG business community in the coming months to help try to secure seed capital for these three promising entrepreneurs.

In all, more than 150 students – 63 men and 87 women – took part in the year-long program, conducted by CIPE, KEDO, and the three universities, and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Trainers selected and trained by CIPE and KEDO taught a series of 144 total sessions from January to June 2020, successfully pivoting the program online with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic (a first for Iraqi universities). The sessions focused on job market skills such as resume and interview preparation, as well as entrepreneurship skills such as business plan development and market research for those with the dream of starting their own business. The program sought not only to impart employment and entrepreneurship skills, but also to pique students' interest in careers in the private sector as an attractive alternative to the public sector career path that is more traditional in Iraq. To that end, 50 of the students participated in internships with 21 firms, giving them critical insight into the workings of the private sector.

Already, 12 of the students have found jobs in the private sector since graduating from the program in mid-September, and 32 have started their own businesses.

For more information about the program, contact Mohammed Al-Saeedi at CIPE:  
[malsaeedi@cipe.org](mailto:malsaeedi@cipe.org).

### **\*FRIENDS OF THE USIBC\***



Iraqi Children's Hope is a non-profit organization with 501(c) 3 status and EIN # of 84-4760484.

[IcHope.org](http://IcHope.org) was established in response to the dire need of assistance intending to the necessities of the increasing number of orphaned children in Iraq. Our aim is to help Iraqi orphans and widows change their lives through education, training, and empowerment. Also, Iraqi Children's Hope offers supporters the opportunity to sponsor an individual child.

**TOGETHER WE BUILD A LIFE WHERE AN ORPHANED CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH ARE SAFE, STRONG AND VALUED**



For more information about our projects, please visit our website [www.ichope.org](http://www.ichope.org) or contact us at [info@ichope.org](mailto:info@ichope.org)

### **REMINDER TO RSVP:**

**U.S. Chamber's**

**Middle East, Turkey, and Central Asia Affairs Dept.**

*cordially invites you to a virtual "meet and greet" with*

**Camille Richardson**

**Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Middle East & Africa**

**U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service, U.S. Department of Commerce**



[Click here for bio](#)

Participants will have the opportunity to hear about DAS Richardson's priorities and also brief our featured guest on challenges and opportunities facing U.S. companies in the region.

**Thursday, October 15, 2020**

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. eastern time (ET)

**REGISTER HERE**

### ***Recent News and Reports***

#### **October 6:**

[UNDP Report: Impact of Covid-19 on the Iraqi Economy](#)

[President Nechirvan Barzani receives US Deputy Assistant Secretary David Copley](#)

[IFC to grow Middle East and Africa investments amid pandemic, lower oil prices](#)

[Cabinet meets in Dhi Qar, approves measures to expedite health, education, water and other projects in province](#)

#### **October 5:**

[Iraq's plans to boost refining capacity seen facing financing, economy of scale hurdles](#)

[Inflated public service salaries threaten Iraq with bankruptcy](#)

[Closing the US Embassy in Baghdad Is the Wrong Answer](#)

#### **October 4:**

[The War for the Future of Syria and Iraq Will Be Fought on Smartphones](#)

#### **October 1:**

[World Bank: Breaking out of Fragility: A Country Economic Memorandum for Diversification and Growth in Iraq](#)

[Amb. Silliman: When militias fire at the US embassy in Baghdad, their real target is Iraqi society](#)

[Iraqis gather in Baghdad to mark anti-government protests anniversary](#)

[Uptick In Qi Card POS Installations Throughout Iraq Spotlights Strong Growth](#)

[How Iraq Can Turn Economic Diversification into Growth and Stability](#)

#### **September 30:**

[Cabinet discusses health, electricity, approves several draft laws](#)

[View Email Online](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Join](#)

This e-mail was sent to [SLutes@USChamber.com](mailto:SLutes@USChamber.com) and contains information directly related to your subscription profile.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
1615 H Street, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC, 20062, US



**U.S. Chamber of Commerce**

"U.S. CHAMBER" and "U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE" are registered trademarks of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America.