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American High Court Judge Visits Baghdad, Erbil

U.S. Justice Edith Jones, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, visited Iraq March 21 – 25 to engage with Iraqi audiences on democracy, civil society, rule of law and women’s empowerment. During her visit, Judge Jones met Iraqi Chief Justice Medhat and discussed the development of the Iraqi Judiciary and how the U.S. might assist that development. She also met with judges, lawyers, scholars, journalists, and civil society actors in Iraq, offering encouragement and hope for further professional judicial exchanges between the U.S. and Iraq.

Justice Jones was particularly impressed with the depth and experience of female judges in Iraq, noting, “they clearly represent the best of the best, displaying remarkable courage as mothers, judges, and women.”

In addition to visits to Baghdad Law School, the Iraqi High Tribunal, the Iraqi Bar Association, and the Central Criminal Court of Iraq, Judge Jones also traveled to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. While there she met with several leaders in the regional judicial community, including with Chief Judge Ahmed Abdulla Zubeyr, several of the Justices on the Court of Cassation, and the head of the Kurdistan Bar Association (KBA). Prosecutor Jaudat Sayeed met with Judge Jones regarding the criminal justice system at the Juvenile & Women Prison in Erbil.

Judge Jones graduated from Cornell University in 1971. She received her law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1974. She was nominated to the Fifth Circuit by President Ronald Reagan, and confirmed by the United States Senate on April 3, 1985. In the past, Jones has been mentioned frequently as a top contender for appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States.

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U.S. Justice Edith Jones, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit