



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Founder of National Youth Orchestra of Iraq to present at College of International Security Affairs**

Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. – Zuhail Sultan, the founder of the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq, will present *Uniting Iraq's Youth through Music*, on Wednesday, Sept. 23, at the [College of International Security Affairs](#), National Defense University at Fort McNair. The event is free and open to the public.

Sultan was named the Euphrates Institute's 2015 Visionary of the Year for her work in developing the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq. She founded the organization in 2009 in Iraq when she was 17 years old. Using the power of social media, she quickly grew the group to 40 young musicians from across the country, including youth from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Since then, the orchestra has performed to sold-out audiences throughout Europe while holding workshops.

“The orchestra's barrier-crossing connections have kept me going (during difficult times),” said Sultan, referring to Iraq's recent turmoil. “I remember all the results I have witnessed first-hand with the orchestra, and how Sunni, Shia, Kurds and Christian play together in harmony. They have so much in common as young people.”

The youngest child in a scientific family of four children, Sultan studied piano studies at the age of 6 in Iraq. At age 9, she auditioned to the Music and Ballet School of Baghdad. After many artists departed Iraq during the 2003 Iraq War, Sultan was left without a piano teacher. She continued to study piano herself, and teach the younger students in her piano class. Despite the turmoil in Iraq, she performed concerts abroad. In 2009, along with Scottish conductor Paul MacAlindin and Musicians for Harmony's artistic director Allegra Klein, she formed the orchestra with the help of the British Council and the then Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Barham Salih, whom she contacted through Twitter. Musicians in the orchestra, many who are women, have defied criticism and threats in order to take lessons, receive coaching, play chamber music and perform as an orchestra.

Zuhal Sultan's appearance at the [College of International Security Affairs \(CISA\)](#) is part of the Women, Peace and Security initiative first established by the United Nations, and now implemented by the Department of Defense in professional military education. CISA is the Department of Defense flagship for education and the building of partner capacity in combating terrorism and irregular warfare at the strategic level.

Sultan will present her message from 1-2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 23, at the College on International Security Affairs on the NDU Campus at Fort McNair. To RSVP for the event, visit <http://bit.ly/ZuhalSultan> or call 202-685-9463.

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**\*\* For Media Only** - For more information about Zuhal Sultan or to schedule an interview on Sept. 23, contact Dr. Kirclin Bateman, 202-685-7780, or Col. Ann Knabe, PhD 202-685-9460.

*About the College of International Security Affairs: CISA is the Department of Defense flagship for education and the building of partner capacity in combating terrorism and irregular warfare at the strategic level. Visit <http://cisa.ndu.edu/>*