
How This GU-Q Student Became One of Only 15 Rangel Scholars for 2024

Published on July 10, 2024

Document Date: Wed, Jul 02 2025 11:55:58 am

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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In a competitive field of nearly 1,000 applicants, Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) student Ranneme Abu-Hajar (SFS'26) has distinguished herself as one of the 15 Rangel Scholars for 2024. This prestigious honor, awarded by the U.S. State Department and Howard University's Charles B. Rangel Summer Enrichment Program, underscores her dedication to public service and international diplomacy.

Ranneme's passion for international affairs began at a young age, shaped by witnessing the devastation of war and famine in countries like Syria and Yemen. She first discovered the Rangel program while searching for U.S. Diplomat preparation programs before acceptance at GU-Q. "I

was attending community college and dreaming of a career where I could amplify Muslim and Arab American voices in American foreign policy discussions,” she recalls. “I became interested after reading about alumni stories on the program website.” This commitment deepened when she came to GU-Q, where she cherishes the “privilege of conversing with peers and faculty from all over the globe.”

She credits her professors at GU-Q for their unwavering support through the rigorous selection process, which required a personal statement and several essays. Ranneme, a Palestinian-American, impressed the committee with her determination to address global issues through her bicultural perspective. “I drew inspiration from people experiencing the hardships of displacement and conflict,” she says, especially her grandparents, who were refugees during the 1948 Nakba.

During her summer at Howard University, Ranneme will study Political Economy and the History of U.S. Foreign Relations, focusing on U.S. involvement in the Middle East. “I’m excited to join a community of aspiring U.S. diplomats,” she shared. The program offers invaluable networking opportunities, including panel discussions and visits to key institutions like Congress, USAID, and the U.S. State Department. “These experiences will allow me to engage with experts in a more intimate setting, building stronger connections,” she added. Throughout the program, she will

also participate in various simulations with the U.S. State Department involving crisis management, peacebuilding, and migration. Additionally, Ranneme will gain insights into NATO's current security and military challenges and priorities within the Euro-Atlantic region at the 2024 NATO Washington Summit Public Forum.

Looking ahead, Ranneme aims to leverage the Rangel program's opportunities to advance her studies and career in international affairs. She encourages her fellow students to be proactive in networking and seizing opportunities. "Planning ahead and staying informed on the current foreign policy priorities within the U.S. government is crucial," she advises.