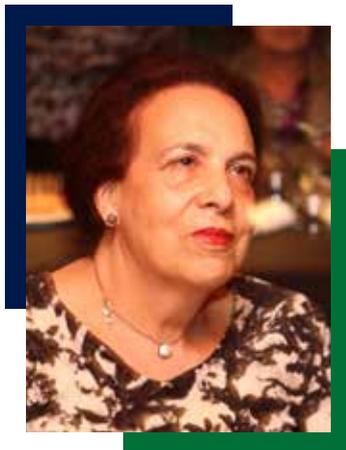




Marcela Zedan



Marcela Zedan is the Director of the *Eugenio Chahuán Center for Arab Studies* at the University of Chile, the oldest and most important university in Chile. The Center was established in 1965 and is the only research institution of its kind in Latin America. It was recognized by the Belén 2000 Foundation (Bethlehem 2000 Foundation) as the most important institution for the dissemination of Arab culture in Chile.

Marcela was born in Santiago, Chile, but grew up in a cultural environment that followed the language, cuisine, and customs of Palestine. Her father, Nicolás Zedan, was a Palestinian immigrant who came to Chile from Beit Jala at a very young age, in the 1920s. Her mother, Lidia Lolas, was also of Palestinian origin from Beit Jala. Marcela created her own family with Eugenio Chahuán, also of Palestinian descent. They had three children together: Eugenio, Marcela, and Felipe.

Marcela has been interested in the language and history of her ancestors since childhood. She consequently oriented her studies toward the Arab world. She holds a degree in philosophy, with a major in Arabic language, from the University of Chile. In 1979 she was granted a scholarship by the Ministry of Higher Education of Egypt to pursue postgraduate studies at Ain Shams University in Cairo. She has co-authored Arabic language books for Spanish speakers, and is the author of *Poetry Anthology of Modern Egypt*.

Chileans of Palestinian Origin

Marcela has devoted her life to research and the teaching of Arabic culture, history, and language - an interest she shared with her husband. Eugenio passed away in 2019 and, in recognition of his exceptional work and influence in Arab studies, the Center for Arab Studies at the University of Chile adopted his name.

As professor and director of the Center for Arab Studies, Marcela has organized and participated in countless courses, seminars, and activities related to culture, history, philosophy, poetry, cinema, and art in the Arab world and, in particular, in Palestine. In addition, she has trained generations of students in the Arabic language, becoming a cultural reference for Arab studies in Spain and in Latin America. Indeed, in 2005, the Rector of the University of Chile awarded Marcela the *Valentín Letelier* medal which is given to professors of outstanding academic



merit. Furthermore, in 2011 she received an award for her forty years of dedicated and recognized work.

Marcela is also part of Academics for Palestine, an organization that brings together several professors, in solidarity with the rights of the Palestinian people.



Marcela, her husband Eugenio Chahuán, and their children, Marcela, Felipe y Eugenio, in Beit Jala, in 2012