

Ambassador Norman Eisen (ret.) is a senior fellow in Governance Studies at Brookings and an expert on law, ethics, and anti-corruption. Eisen has been recognized as [“at the very pinnacle”](#) of the lawyers who provide public analysis on the trials of former president Donald Trump. That includes his definitive reports on all four prosecutions of Trump—the federal [January 6](#) and [Mar-a-Lago](#) cases, the [Georgia](#) and [New York state](#) ones—as well as the [New York civil fraud trial](#). He also frequently comments on these topics for CNN, where he serves as a [legal analyst](#), and for the *New York Times*, where he regularly authors [guest essays](#).

Eisen has served in a variety of government roles, most recently as the special counsel to the House Judiciary Committee from 2019 to 2020 for the impeachment and trial of President Trump. Eisen was a [“critical force in building the case for impeachment”](#) (*Washington Post*). His book about his service in this role, [A Case for the American People: The United States v. Donald J. Trump](#) (Crown 2020), was praised as [“tantalizing”](#) (*New York Times*) and as [“an important piece of the historical record”](#) (*Just Security*). Eisen is also the author of [The Last Palace: Europe’s Turbulent Century in Five Lives and One Legendary House](#) (Crown 2018) and co-author of [States United: A Survival Guide for Our Democracy](#) (Cornell University Press 2022) as well as the editor of [Trying Trump: A Guide to His First Election Interference Criminal Trial](#) (SDDF Books 2024), [Overcoming Trumpery: How to Restore Ethics, the Rule of Law, and Democracy](#) (Brookings Institution Press 2022), and [Democracy’s Defenders: U.S. Embassy Prague, The Fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia, and Its Aftermath](#) (Brookings Institution Press 2020).

From January 2009 to January 2011, Eisen worked in the White House as special counsel and special assistant to the president for ethics and government reform. The press dubbed him [“Mr. No”](#) and the "Ethics Czar" for his tough anti-corruption approach. He also advised President Obama on lobbying regulation, campaign finance law, and open government issues, helping to assure the most [scandal-free](#) White House in modern history. He was the White House Counsel lead on the Dodd-Frank financial regulatory reform and other aspects of the recovery from the Great Recession.

After his White House role, Eisen [served](#) as the U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic from 2011 to 2014. He helped develop innovative anti-corruption and transparency strategies in cooperation with U.S. and Czech law enforcement and other stakeholders. Eisen also helped advance U.S.-Czech security and defense initiatives and deepened economic ties between the two nations.

Eisen is currently the chair of the [Anti-Corruption, Democracy, and Security \(ACDS\)](#) project, a multi-year Brookings initiative that tackles corruption to promote democracy and global security. The ACDS project builds upon his earlier [Leveraging Transparency to Reduce Corruption \(LTRC\)](#) program, which was a forerunner in identifying and recommending best practices in transparency and accountability to fight corruption along the natural resource value chain. He also co-chairs the Transatlantic Democracy Working Group. In the multiple detailed [reports](#) he has co-authored on Ukraine’s anti-corruption journey, Eisen outlined recommendations to key stakeholders on how to drive forward Ukraine’s anti-corruption

agenda and democratic future. He is the co-author of "[The Democracy Playbook: 10 Commitments for Advancing Democracy](#)," offering a roadmap backed by social science for countries to prevent and reverse democratic backsliding.

Before entering the Obama administration, Eisen was a partner at the D.C. law firm, [Zuckerman Spaeder LLP](#), where he specialized in litigation and investigations. His cases included Enron, the ADM antitrust case, the subprime financial collapse, the Clinton impeachment, and the 2000 and 2004 presidential recounts. He was named one of [DC's top lawyers](#) by *Washingtonian Magazine*. He currently provides pro bono legal representation through his law firm, [Eisen PLLC](#), including to the pro-democracy nonprofit organizations State Democracy Defenders Fund and State Democracy Defenders Action, as well as the Fund the Future PAC.

Eisen received his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1991 and his B.A. from Brown University in 1985, both with honors. He has been profiled in [The Washington Post](#), [New York Magazine](#), [Politico](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), and [Tablet](#). He was named in the [Politico 50](#) list of thinkers shaping American politics and the [Forward 50](#) list of American Jews. His writing has appeared in [The New York Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), [MSNBC](#), [The Atlantic](#), [Politico](#), [USA Today](#), and many other publications in the United States and internationally. He is the founder and former chair of [Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington](#), founder and former chair of the [States United Democracy Center](#), founder and current chair of the State Democracy Defenders Fund, and a board member of State Democracy Defenders Action.

Eisen was [credited](#) by director Wes Anderson as an inspiration for the character of the crusading lawyer Deputy Kovacs in the 2014 film "The Grand Budapest Hotel."