

Peace Maker - May ۲۰۰۸

Dear Friends,

As this will be the last opportunity for me to address you in this newsletter, I wanted to take a moment to express what a privilege it has been to serve here in Iraq over the last ۱۰ months. Much has been accomplished in that time: from building up our New Facilitator Cadre and expanding our local reconciliation work in places like Mahmoudiya to developing education curricula for Iraqi youth. There are even signs of progress at the national level, as evidenced by the successful combined training with members of the CoR's committees on national reconciliation and human rights in May ۲۰۰۸. Looking ahead to ۲۰۰۹, I am excited at the prospect of focusing our attention more on promoting non-violence and peaceful coexistence among Iraqi youth and enabling women to take on a more active role in spreading messages of tolerance.



While I have been fortunate to have had a number of interesting work experiences in my life thus far, none has been more challenging or more rewarding than managing USIP's Iraq field office. I have learned much, and been humbled by how much I have still to learn about the Iraqi people and its culture. On a personal level, I can say frankly that while I deeply regret the fact that war and conflict are the circumstances that brought me here, I am deeply grateful for the opportunities this tragedy has afforded me to work alongside of our wonderful Iraqi colleagues and with you, our Iraqi partners. This has unquestionably been the best part of this experience.

Fortunately for me, though I am leaving Baghdad, I will remain part of the Iraq Team, taking over from Paul Hughes as Director of the Iraq Program in Washington. At the same time, I am very pleased to introduce our incoming Chief of Party, Bob Boorda. Bob brings with him a similar commitment to working closely alongside our Iraqi colleagues to further our combined efforts to bring stability and lasting peace to Iraq.

With gratitude,
Rusty Barber

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Our Mission

The mission of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is to develop and disseminate knowledge of peaceful alternatives to violent conflict. The United States Congress funds all Institute programs. The Institute is Not part of the US Administration.

In Iraq, USIP works with Iraqis to reduce inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence, speed up stabilization and democratization, and reduce the need for a US presence. To date more than 100 NGOs throughout Iraq have received USIP grants. USIP provides grant funding to Iraqi organizations seeking to contribute to a peaceful and stable Iraq. Areas of focus include:

- Strengthening inter-ethnic, inter-religious and inter-communal cooperation.
- Promoting the rule of law and human rights.
- Enhancing conflict resolution capacity at the community level.
- Maintaining regional stability.
- Increasing the capacity of nongovernmental organizations to contribute to a democratic and peaceful Iraq.
- Developing free electronic media that encourage responsible public debate on critical and divisive issues.
- Promoting the role of Iraqi women in public policy and decision making to build a democratic Iraq.

Training Program

Under the supervision of BDO, a group of Iraqi advanced facilitators implemented three main basic workshops to train groups of participants from the Central, South Central and the Southern provinces. The participants got basic training on Conflict Management to provide them with the basic skills to deal with the different conflicts in their local communities. The prominent group of the total participants will be selected to continue the intermediate and the advanced training by USIP to be active peace facilitators dealing with conflicts in the different provinces of Iraq.

Grant Program

Four local NGOs with different specializations start implementing their projects which aim to spread peace culture with support of USIP, these projects also aim to build the capacity of local NGOs and empowering women to work affectively on solving the local conflicts to promote peace. In addition of empowering citizenship spirit for youth.

Mamoudiyah follow up project started!

The first phase of "the Public Awareness and Dialogue project" to follow up on Tribal Accord Initiative. The project's activities including ٢٠ billboards which will be erected in strategic locations around the region quoting key goals of the accord and encouraging the population to support them. ٧,٠٠٠ posters will also go about at key public locations and ٢٠٠٠ calendars distributed.

Also very encouraging: the district's Iraqi Army is providing security and transport for workers erecting the boards.

Needless to say, we're delighted to see this important follow-on effort finally becoming reality. The project also including series of sessions in the major urban centers and key rural areas, targeting specific demographic groups (women, students, farmers, sheikhs, local government) to educate and encourage local action in support of these goals.

Rule of Law Activities (April, May ٢٠٠٨)

This period was particularly demanding for USIP's Rule of Law program in Iraq. One of the key achievements was the successful organization of the ٢nd annual conference in support of judicial independence. With over ١٠٠ participants, the conference brought together top officials in each of the three branches of government under the banner, "The Role of Each Branch in Supporting Judicial Independence."

- The speakers included Chief Justice Madhat Al-Mahmood, Mr. Dhafer Al-Ani (Chief of Staff for the Presidency Council), and Dr. Sabah Al-Karboli (Legal Advisor to the Speaker of the Council of Representatives) in addition to other prominent judges, including a judge from the Kurdistan region. Participants in the lively discussions included Ms. Wijdan

Salim, Minister of Human Rights and ⁹ leading parliamentarians (such as Mr. Abdul Kareem Samaraie, Mr. Baha Al-Araji, Sayed Ali Al-Alaq, Shadha Al-Abusi, Zakia Haqqi and Dr. Salim Al-Jbouri) as well as ^ξ Federal Supreme Court Justices, ^ο Cassation Court Justices, and the President of the Judicial Training Institute. Also participating were the Integrity Commission President, Shura Council President, Bar President, Assistant President of Baghdad University, President of Tikrit University, ^ϑ law school deans and representatives of the international community (UK, US & Danish Embassies, EC Delegation, and UNAMI).



The discussions were constructive and fruitful resulting in a number of recommendations for each branch of government to strengthen their role in support of judicial independence.

One of the main outcomes of this conference was the proposal to conduct regular seminars with parliamentarians to discuss how judicial independence can be bolstered during the drafting of the constitutionally required enabling legislation. The Iraqi Committee for Judicial Independence (ICJI) is working with the COR presidency to design and implement this proposal.

- In the area of Property Claims, this period witnessed the development of the program and participant list for the upcoming Workshop in July through a series of meetings with officials from the Ministry of Migration (including the Minister), Baghdad Provincial Council, Ministries of Interior and Human Rights, Bar Association, Higher Judicial Council, Saydiya Support Council and others. Five papers were commissioned, primarily based on a number case studies developed over the course of our meetings. The papers are designed to explore the legal issues raised by these cases as well as evaluate the experiences of the CRRPD and Saydiya Support Council. They will be prepared by the Deputy Minister of Migration, legal advisor to the Presidency Council, legal advisor to the Council of Ministers, a judge in the CRRPD and the president of the Saydiya Support Council.
- Another very significant development during this period was the launching of the partnership between USIP and the Ministry of Human Rights for the wide distribution of the film, *Confronting the Truth (CTT)*. This documentary film analyzes ^ξ different experiences with Truth Commissions in post-conflict countries around the world. With the successful showing of the film at the USIP Conference in Erbil in early May, the Ministry of Human Rights initiated its screening of the film in [^] provinces with ^{^^} separate sessions.

Workshop for Iraqi Officials on Reconciliation and Human Rights

Sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace

The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) conducted a three-day training program on 3-5 May 2008 in Erbil on collaborative problem-solving and reconciliation for 30 officials involved in Iraqi reconciliation and human rights. Specifically, the participants represented a number of key institutions: the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), as well as its Kurdish counterpart; the Parliament's Committee on Reconciliation (CoR), including both its Human Rights Committee and its National Reconciliation Committee; the Implementation and Follow-Up Committee for National Reconciliation (IFCNR) from the Office of the Prime Minister; and the Human Rights unit within Baghdad University. These institutions - though charged with similar portfolios - had never previously been brought together to establish common understandings of their roles and goals. The primary trainers leading this workshop included Vice President for International Programs Mike Lekson, Senior Program Officer Nina Sughrue, and Baghdad Office Senior Reconciliation Facilitator David Steele.

The workshop assisted government professionals involved in human rights and reconciliation to develop skills and contacts. The workshop began with a presentation by an Iraqi NGO leader and a senior USIP Iraqi facilitator on a successful conflict resolution effort in Mahmoudiya, where USIP-trained Iraqi facilitators brokered a path-breaking peace accord that enabled local tribal leaders to create a common vision and action plan for improving security, governance, rule of law, economic and social well being in their region. Following presentation of this stimulating example of reconciliation, participants were presented with an examination of the dynamics of relationship building in a context of deep-seated conflict, focusing on such issues as the meaning of reconciliation, perception clarification and how to get out of a cycle of revenge. Each participant was then helped to discover and evaluate their own predominant style of conflict intervention prior to introducing techniques of negotiation and mediation. Through presentations and practical exercises, the officials were helped to identify common and compatible interests, negotiate creative solutions to common problems, and work together across professional and ethnic lines. On the last day of the workshop, participants formed working groups to develop action plans that would creatively address typical concrete problems at various junctures of Iraqi society.

The workshop also included a screening of the film "Confronting the Truth," a new USIP video about truth commissions and societies in transition. The session, which was facilitated by Iraqi American Sermid Al-Sarraf, generated enormous interest in the eventual development of processes whereby reconciliation and human rights could be address constructively in Iraq. Participants overwhelmingly recommended that this video be shown to members of parliament, staff from government ministries, those working in police and judicial systems, as well as other prominent government and non-government personnel.

Finally, the Baghdad office of USIP is committed to providing follow-up support to both government agencies and non-governmental institutions that have participated in this kind of training event. There is a strong desire on the part of USIP to build indigenous capacity that can adapt and pursue efforts at reconciliation and peace building. The coordinator of these efforts is senior reconciliation facilitator David Steele. Dr. Steele.

