



IRAQ

The Current Situation

As 2010 drew to a close, Iraq formed its second democratically elected government since the adoption of the Constitution in 2005. It was a year of change and transition, with the March 2010 national elections resulting in heavy turnover in the Iraqi Parliament and the U.S. ending more than seven years of combat operations in Iraq in August. The nine month government formation process highlighted the increasing primacy of politics as the means for settling disputes in Iraq but also pointed towards the persistent divisions within Iraqi society. Key foci in the coming year are expected to be efforts to implement power sharing agreements that underpin the new government and to define the nature of the partnership between Iraq and the U.S. as the December 2011 deadline for the full withdrawal of U.S. troops approaches.

Despite hard won gains in stability, the conflict in Iraq is not over. The U.S. role is transitioning from military-led to civilian-led, which will require a rigorous re-prioritization of goals and objectives as resources attenuate. Meanwhile, the extended disputes over government formation illustrate the broader continuing need to help Iraqis develop the capacities and institutions to prevent, productively manage and resolve conflict without resort to violence. These efforts will need to encompass not just national and local government, but also civil society groups and the education of Iraq's next generation to play roles as active citizens. A tremendous amount has already been invested in Iraq, but a withdrawal without proper support for Iraqi institutions could have even more costly consequences.

Going Forward: USIP in Iraq

Since 2004, USIP has maintained a permanent field mission in Iraq, with an outstanding Iraqi and American staff who provide essential on-the-ground support to USIP's programs. Experts in Baghdad and Washington implement projects aimed at:

- **Promoting moderation and reconciliation;**
- **Strengthening governance and civil society;**
- **Giving the next generation a stake in peace and stability**

Promote Moderation and Reconciliation

USIP is building on its successful efforts to promote reconciliation by broadening the scope of dialogue at the grassroots and national levels.

- **Network of Iraqi Facilitators:** In the most violent areas of Iraq, driven by ethnic and sectarian divides, USIP's Network of Iraqi Facilitators (NIF) has provided conflict management training, facilitated dialogue between conflicting groups, and solved local problems, contributing to the fragile peace that Iraqis are finally beginning to enjoy today. Since 2004, USIP's Academy for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding has trained and mentored these facilitators in crucial skills of conflict analysis, communication, negotiation, third-party facilitation and mediation, and problem solving. In application of the skills, members of the network, who have been drawn from across Iraq's geographic, ethnic, and confessional landscapes, support other USIP programming, including Justice and Security Dialogues, Women's Toolkit, and other projects. They also develop their own initiatives, under close USIP mentorship, to bring together government, tribal, religious, and civil society leaders in efforts to reduce tensions and build peace.
- **Confronting the Truth: Transitional Justice in Iraq:** USIP recently concluded its project to spread awareness of transitional justice mechanisms in Iraq. In partnership with the Ministry of Human Rights, USIP conducted over 80 workshops throughout Iraq, facilitating discussions of past human rights abuses and the appropriate timing, forum, and process for a national dialogue on reconciliation. The Ministry produced a report on the findings of the project, which called for evaluating the performance of institutions of

National reconciliation and examining the potential role for tribal leaders, clergy, NGOs and the private sector in reconciliation efforts. In July, USIP and the Ministry of Human Rights hosted a conference, attended by the Minister of Human Rights, to present the report and the impacts of the project.

- **Facilitating Community Discussions on Religious Peacemaking in Iraq:** In 2009, USIP premiered an Arabic-language version of the documentary film chronicling interfaith reconciliation in Nigeria, “The Imam and the Pastor.” The film resonated deeply with religious leaders who requested its broad dissemination. USIP has since developed a curriculum and provided training to over 20 civil society and religious leaders who are screening the film and facilitating community discussions throughout Iraq on religious reconciliation and pluralism.
- **Preventing Media Incitement to Violence:** The Center of Innovation for Media, Conflict and Peacebuilding partnered with the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and UNESCO to continue efforts to prevent media incitement to violence in Iraq. Building on the previously published guidelines designed to limit inflammatory reporting – distributed prior to the national elections in Iraq in March of 2010 – the Center and the Annenberg team conducted a content analysis of pre-election media coverage on five of the most watched Iraqi TV channels. This research revealed how Iraqi media currently use inflammatory language and how they can report in ways that will support successful elections. This stage will be followed by a workshop for news directors, media regulators, and civil society media monitors to learn content analysis methods and to collaboratively develop a conflict-sensitive reporting style guide. The diverse group of participants will then be able to customize these resources for use at their own organizations as a means of preventing media incitement to violence.
- **National Dialogue:** USIP for several years has contributed its expertise and convening skills to a national dialogue among Iraqi parliamentarians focused on reconciliation issues. Organized principally by the Italian nongovernmental organization Ipalmo, this dialogue has improved inter-sectarian and inter-ethnic understanding, moderated political positions and helped to open a path towards a more formal reconciliation process both in parliament and in Iraqi society.

Strengthen Governance and Civil Society

Institutional capacity-building is essential to Iraq’s long-term stability. USIP projects aim to bolster Iraqi institutional capacity and strengthen civil society organizations.

- **Supporting Conflict Mitigation and Transformation:** Over the last two years, USIP has provided financial and training support to national civil society organizations working across Iraq working to promote conflict resolution through unique projects that use sports, arts, and civic education as tools for mediation. A core group of these organizations working in Iraq’s hot spot areas (Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahudin) joined together to establish the SILM (Peace Net: Peace for a Unified Iraq) network. SILM held their founding conference with USIP support in December in Erbil, Iraq. As a result of the conference, eighteen organizations agreed to a peer learning network in which they will increase their capacity, share best practices with lessons learned, and leverage experiences and visibility among their membership. The 18 organizations will continue to work in partnership with a USIP coordinator to launch this horizontality structured Iraqi led knowledge sharing network. USIP will continue supporting this network by providing technical expertise, learning experiences and training opportunities to address member needs that will accompany the training they provide to one another.
- **Justice and Security Dialogue in Iraq:** As states emerge from violent internal conflict, a defining task is not just establishing a monopoly on the use of force, but establishing that this monopoly is legitimate. When victimized by crime and violence, will citizens call the police, or resort to other methods to redress their grievances? In this program, Iraqi police leaders will be brought together with community leaders for dialogues that are designed (1) to help identify sources of misunderstanding, fear, and mistrust among the security forces, community/civil society leaders, and the general public; and (2) to develop ways in which community and security leaders can cooperatively and proactively address these challenges. As in other USIP dialogue projects, the Iraqi Justice and Security Dialogues will be organized, supported, monitored, and evaluated by USIP’s trained Network of Iraqi Facilitators, building sustainability into the program from the beginning.
- **Advanced Negotiation Workshop for Iraq:** This course will provide a comprehensive framework to help practitioners structure their efforts in negotiation, with practical investigations of problem-solving approaches and other considerations necessary to the development of effective sustainable agreements. Along with well-developed case studies, the course will emphasize practical exercises and skill-building in this essential capacity. Participants will include elected officials at the local, regional, and national levels. Select advanced facilitators from USIP’s Network of Iraqi Facilitators will serve as co-trainers and will receive specialized mentoring in advance of the program. Through

this process, advanced negotiation training will develop into a standard training program that NIF members will be able to offer and deliver to key audiences on their own.

- **Toolkit for Collaborative Problem-Solving: Focus on Kirkuk:** In 2011 USIP will implement a multi-phased project in Kirkuk that seeks to connect local, provincial and national leaders in collaborative problem-solving. Throughout the application of the Toolkit there are two overarching goals: developing actionable agreements among leaders in this disputed province and leaving behind the working relationships and experiences of collaborative problem solving so that they may continue to effectively address their communities' needs.
- **Strategic Economic Needs and Security Exercise (SENSE):** In 2010, more than 300 Iraqis benefited from this interactive, computer-supported simulation that teaches negotiation, coalition-building, and effective resource allocation skills. More than 1,400 Iraqis have now been trained through the program. The intensive five-day program is designed to encourage cooperation and coordination across government and civil society institutions. Managed by USIP's Baghdad office, the SENSE program is staffed and delivered by and for Iraqis.
- **Protecting Minority Rights:** In 2010, the Rule of Law Center brought together leaders of small Iraqi minority groups to discuss the challenges faced by their communities and the ways they could advocate for their interests. These discussions resulted in the formation of Iraq's first minority parliamentary caucus and an alliance of civil society organizations active in the field of minority rights.
- **USIP Grants in Iraq:** USIP's Grant Program is a well-respected source of funding and support among Iraqi civil society organizations that aim to resolve conflict and promote peace. USIP has funded more than 90 projects in Iraq since 2004, and will grant an additional \$900,000 to Iraqi organizations in fiscal year 2011. USIP assists organizations throughout the application process, and places heavy emphasis on monitoring and evaluation to ensure maximum efficiency and impact.

Giving the Next Generation a Stake in Peace and Stability

The next generation in Iraq faces the challenge of transcending the effects of their recent past, and embracing democratic values and human rights. USIP projects help Iraqi youth emerge from the cycle of violence by giving them a stake in peace and stability.

- **Iraqi National Civic Education Development Project:** USIP is facilitating cooperation between government education officials from federal Iraq and the Kurdistan region and providing technical assistance in strengthening civic education in Iraqi schools. In 2010, in cooperation with Iraqi partners, USIP completed a national Civic Education Teacher's Manual for grades 4 through 9 tailored to the Iraqi context. In 2011, USIP will begin providing teacher training for Civic Education teachers from across Iraq.
- **Developing Peace and Human Rights Educators:** USIP is helping to develop the field of peace and human rights in higher education in Iraq through teacher training, developing and disseminating curricular resources, fostering academic research, and strengthening linkages between academics and civil society. In 2011, USIP's cadre of educators will begin training fellow academics in effective human rights education methods.
- **Peace Media for Iraqi Youth:** The Center of Innovation for Media, Conflict and Peacebuilding is working with in-country Iraqi media and youth (ages 14-18) to assist in the design and production of a carefully researched multi-media peacebuilding program. In early 2009, Iraqi educators, youth NGO representatives and conflict resolution specialists collaborated in devising the curriculum and educational goals of the program. This process was followed by a two-day youth summit in Iraq for 30 Iraqi teenagers in July 2009. The youth competed in a series of challenges ranging from performance arts to short films, and the summit became the basis of the pilot television special "Salam Shabab" (Peace Youth) and the social networking website SalamShabab.com. The pilot program set the stage for a nine episode reality TV series of "Salam Shabab" which was filmed on location in Erbil, Iraq. In this unique format for Iraq, youth from six different Iraqi governorates (Basra, Babylon, Baghdad, Tikrit, Kirkuk and Erbil) compete in four different challenges to become the national "Ambassadors of Peace." The Salam Shabab series is scheduled to air on several Iraq channels beginning in December 2010.

Lessons Learned

Drawing from exit and post-deployment interviews conducted by USIP of Americans returning from Iraq, the Institute produced an award-winning DVD on “The Iraq Experience” in 2004. The Institute is now incorporating such best practices and lessons learned, from Iraq and elsewhere, into a series of courses being taught at its Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding.

Over the last few years, USIP has brought together senior Iraqi officials, civic leaders, and international experts to assist the Iraqi government in developing and implementing a strategy to enable the safe and durable return of Iraq’s displaced community. USIP’s Network of Iraqi Facilitators continues to work towards increasing public awareness of services offered by the government and is implementing projects locally to help mitigate violence. In addition, USIP has played an instrumental role in helping create the Iraqi Committee on Judicial Independence (ICJI), a consortium of representatives from the Ministries of Human Rights and Justice, the judiciary, the legal community, civil society organizations, academia and the media across Iraq. USIP’s legal experts provided technical assistance to help ICJI develop sound consensus-based policies and advocacy strategies to promote judicial independence. Separately, USIP has worked with Iraq’s national and regional judiciaries to improve the effective administration of justice in Iraq. These works have continued independently through their members’ activity.

Distance Learning

The Academy continues work on a series of online courses to make training in conflict management and peacebuilding as widely available as possible. The award-winning program, which will eventually include most of the Academy’s classroom courses, provides an overview of key principles, illustrated with case studies and interviews, and presents an organized set of practical take-away points for course participants. The *Conflict Analysis* and *Interfaith Conflict Resolution* courses are now available in Arabic. The *Negotiation and Conflict Management* course will be available in Arabic in the coming year. To date, more than 400 Iraqis have benefited from the Arabic translations of these courses.

Policy Focus

USIP was the facilitating organization for the Iraq Study Group, which was a forward-looking, independent assessment of the current and prospective situation on the ground in Iraq and how it affects the surrounding region as well as U.S. interests. Following the success of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group in 2006, USIP continues to convene regular expert working groups to discuss policy options for mitigating the present challenges faced in Iraq. In-house research fellows regularly publish articles, books, and option papers that are furnished to the public.

USIP’s Future in Iraq

USIP’s mission in Iraq is to strengthen local capacities to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts peacefully and to promoting the achievement of conditions which advance stabilization and peacebuilding efforts. The Institute believes that the primary means of fulfilling its mission is by supporting the growth of local Iraqi institutions that is committed to a similar vision. USIP is committed to continuing its programming in Iraq and is currently evaluating alternative organization models for achieving this. These include establishing Iraqi civil society networks working on facilitation and conflict management, developing relationships with local partner organizations and examining alternatives for launching a new Iraqi organization that will directly benefit from over seven years of USIP’s experience in Iraq.



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