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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Secure Document Storage Facility completed

By Grant Sattler
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BAGHDAD, Iraq – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has turned over a 2,500 square meter secure document storage facility to the Regime Crimes Liaison Office for transfer to the Iraqi High Tribunal.

The \$1.8 million concrete and steel facility is adjacent to the Iraqi High Tribunal courthouse in Baghdad's International Zone. The only facility of its kind for Regime Crimes evidence, the new structure provides administrative space and contains climate controlled document repositories.

Construction was paid for by the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund. The facility provides a secure location for evidentiary documents and is more convenient for ongoing prosecutions and investigations, said U.S. Navy Capt. Randy Wood, the chief of staff for the Regime Crimes Liaison Office. The RCLO, a U.S. Department of Justice organization under Chief of Mission authority, assists the Iraqi High Tribunal in investigation and preparing for prosecution of former regime members for crimes against the Iraqi people during 1963-2003.

This building was envisioned in 2006 to bring the documentation from a secure location in another city to a more convenient location.

"Half of this facility of 2,500 square meters is the six storage vaults. Each of these storage areas has climate control, fire detection and plenty of room to hold the documents that the Iraqi High Tribunal has," Wood said. There are about eight shipping containers of original documents in possession of the Iraqi High Tribunal. "I believe one or two of these storage rooms can house all of the documents they have now," he said, "so they have room to expand."



Navy Lt. Cmdr. Charles Smith with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central district International Zone Resident Office and Quality Assurance representative Michael Baum check final details on the Secure Document Storage Facility. (USACE photo by Grant Sattler)

"For the Iraqi court system, their laws require that original documentation is brought into the court, so the goal is to have a secure facility where these documents can be held in perpetuity until they are needed and for historical purposes in the future," Wood said. He also believes there may be a time when the Iraqi Minis-



Secure Document Storage Facility includes document storage vaults, washrooms and a large administrative space. (USACE photo by Grant Sattler)

try of Justice may want to provide to the Iraqi people some evidence of what was used to try the former regime members. "...[T]his facility could be used to allow Iraqi historians to come in and research and provide that information to the public," Wood said.

"The other half of the facility is open space with a drop ceiling, good ventilation, good lighting and is set up in a manner that there are connections in the floor throughout the open space so that the Iraqi High Tribunal can set up the office space however they want to continue the archiving, investigations that are on-going and research they will be doing in the future," Wood said. The administrative side includes connection for a LAN server, washrooms and back up electricity generation.

Work on the open span structure was completed by a Lebanon-based construction firm employing an average of 25 to 45 local workers daily on the project, said Mike Baum, the USACE contract Quality Assurance representative since July 2007. There were no lost time accidents during construction of the project.

The turn over included transfer of keys, warranty documentation and other information to the RCLO for transfer to the Iraqi High Tribunal. The Iraqi High Tribunal will install shelving and furnishings as it chooses. Wood said the President Judge visited the facility earlier during construction. "I think he'll be pretty impressed with what he's getting," he said.

Note: Grant Sattler is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.