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Prison project supports rule of law for Iraq

By Mohammed Aliwi
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This administration building, part of the Nasiriyah Prison, will take care of inmate in-processing. [USACE Photo by BJ Weiner]

NASIRIYAH, Iraq –The Iraqi government has started to establish the basis of national unity by creating a democratic political process and conditions for Iraq to assume a leading role both in the region and internationally.

“Through the justice and security projects, the Iraqi Government is trying to transition Iraq to security through self-

reliance,” said Ali Nasser, Nasiriyah prison warden, Dhi Qar province. “These projects will help Iraq strengthen the rule of law and promote civil rights; build government capacity and provide essential services; strengthen Iraq’s economy; increase international support for Iraq; strengthen public understanding of international efforts; and create public isolation of the insurgents.

"To preserve the peace and to ensure the safety and security for all Iraqis, rule of law is a critically important part of the Iraqi security forces effort. Rule of law requires confidence in all the factors of security stability; and trust in the institutions of government, provincial and city governments, elected officials and police," he said.

Nasir has been impressed by what he feels are many courageous Iraqi leaders, judges, prison officials, police officers, non-governmental organizations and other entities that pursue rule of law principles while operating in the midst of violence. "We are trying to make a difference in our lives and help our people for future generations," he said. He added that the new prison gives him enthusiasm for an Iraq without terrorists as better place with a future.

Security progress in Iraq requires more than military success; it also requires advances in Iraq's institutions, including its criminal justice system, said Lt. Col. Jan Carter, senior project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Iraq. Carter is assigned to the USACE Gulf Region South district and works with the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I).

"There are three separate contracts in the An Nasiriyah prison project," she said. "Phase I is a \$15.3 million contract. This contract required the designing and building of a multi-phased construction of a new maximum security correctional facility located near the city."

Jim Marple, project manager with USACE in southern Iraq, said that the contract includes all design, construction and furnishings for an 800-inmate facility. Currently there are two maximum security buildings that will house 400 inmates per building with a visitor control building attached to each. Also included in the original contract is an administration building that will process people coming

into the facility. Additionally, there are four pre-engineered packaged metal buildings which include a medical, laundry/kitchen, maintenance and a prayer building.

"Phase II is a \$6.2 million project," said Marple. "It contains the housing portion of the facility - with a visitor control building attached to each. Phase III is a \$7.3 million contract which will provide an additional pod to increase the capacity of the prison and will house 400 additional inmates."



This water treatment facility will provide potable water for the prison. [USACE Photo by BJ Weiner]

Carter said that this project will alleviate a congested Iraqi prison system. Inmates at Abu-Ghraib Prison and Camp Bucca (currently at maximum capacity) may eventually be housed in Nasiriyah. The prison was designed under U.S. standards for prisons and includes recreation and visitor buildings. This facility will also provide more than 1,000 jobs and an economic boost to the Nasiriyah Region, she added.

“The Nasiriyah prison is an important project which will help overcome insurgency and put an end for terror in a country torn by the influx of the terrorists from the neighboring countries that are trying to destroy us and watch our people die,” said Nasir.



Iraqi workers apply finishing touches to one of the cell blocks completed at the Nasiriyah Prison. [USACE Photo by BJ Weiner]

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