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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Water treatment plant repairs, training offer long-term solution

By Alicia Embrey
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Babil Province, Iraq - An Iraqi crew's repairs to the water treatment plant in Musayib will ensure clean drinking water to 50,000 households in the area.

"After years of neglect, the facility is currently pumping water directly from the Euphrates River into the city's drinking water distribution system with little or no filtration," said Lt. Col. Michael Darrow with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "The only treatment that is being provided is chlorination. It is unregulated and insufficient to adequately treat the raw river water," he continued.

Nearly 35 Iraqi workers are on the crew rehabilitating the plant's major mechanical systems, with the goal of restoring its full design capacity of 2,160 cubic meters per hour. The \$1.6 million project is now 32 percent finished, Darrow said.

This is one of more than 600 water treatment or sewage projects in Iraq overseen by USACE, which have direct impact on the quality of life for nearly 5 million people.

In addition to the construction effort, there is also a mission to ensure that the Iraqis are trained and ready to operate the plant on their own. The Babil Provincial Reconstruction Team and embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team supporting the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, are developing training programs to certify Iraqi operators. Once the plant



The Musayib Water Treatment Plant in Babil Province will soon have a new look under a \$1.6 million repair project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (USACE photo by Alicia Embrey)

repairs are complete next spring, the staff will be ready to produce clean water and will know the proper maintenance requirements to avoid major breakdowns. "The intent is to offer a certification process similar to what the typical water treatment plant operator in the United States is required to go through," Darrow noted.

"We all recognize that operations and maintenance is one of Iraq's biggest challenges and that a priority needs to be placed on developing skills and abilities," said Maj. Kimberly Peoples, deputy team leader of the North Babil embedded PRT. "We are working hand-in-hand with the Babil water director general and the Babil PRT to identify a sustainable solution.

"We are committed to assisting the Iraqis take this important step," she concluded. "It will ensure Musayib families can count on

clean water coming out of their taps for years to come."

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Repairs to the Musayib Water Treatment Plant will allow it to provide potable water for the first time in years.
(USACE photo by Alicia Embrey)

These photos document the repairs being made to a high school in Thi Qar Province by an Iraqi construction crew.
(USACE photo by Norris Jones)

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Note: For high resolution photos see www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/releases/index.asp.