



Middle East and North Africa

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U.S. Envoy, U.S. General Praise Iraqi Police Force

Iraqi police force observes 84th anniversary of its founding

U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad and General George Casey, commanding general of the Multinational Force in Iraq, praised the courage and dedication of the Iraqi police January 9 in recognition of the 84th anniversary of the force's founding.

"Democratic countries depend on police forces that protect everyone and are well trained and equipped," the two men said in a joint statement. "Totaling more than 118,000 members, Iraq's police force is moving forward towards living up to its full potential as the provider of security to Iraq's neighborhoods and upholder of the rule of law in the nation."

They said the police would play an increasingly important role in enforcing the rule of law as the insurgency is neutralized. The police have already played a "critical role" in Iraq's march toward becoming an independent, stable nation, they said, noting elections held in 2005. (See [Iraq's Political Process](#).)

The United States is committed to investing more resources into training and equipping the Iraqi police force, the officials said.

For additional information, see [Iraq Update](#).

Following is the text of the joint statement:

Embassy of the United States of America
Baghdad, Iraq
January 9, 2006

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Statement by Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad and General George Casey

January 9, 2006

Today, a nation paid tribute to its brave sons and daughters who sacrifice so much to protect the Iraqi people, and we congratulate the Iraqi Police on this special anniversary.

Democratic countries depend on police forces that protect everyone and are well trained and equipped. Totaling more than 118,000 members, Iraq's police force is moving forward

towards living up to its full potential as the provider of security to Iraq's neighborhoods and upholder of the rule of law in the nation.

As the insurgency is neutralized, the police will be the key instrument to deal with terrorists and criminals. For that reason together with the Iraqis, we are calling 2006 the year of the police. Police operating under the rule of law are also vital to the continued stability of the 14 provinces that are not grappling with an insurgency day to day and to preserving an environment conducive to international investment. We are putting more resources into helping Iraq have effective police forces by reviewing the vetting process to avoid infiltration by militias, investing additional resources into the training and equipping program, bringing more than 100 additional trainers and putting more U.S. military advisors (Police Transition Teams) to work side-by-side with them.

Iraqi Police already played a critical role in Iraq's march toward becoming an independent and stable nation in the Middle East -- January's parliamentary election, October's constitutional referendum and last month's national election.

The United States is proud to be a part of the new Iraq. We continue to work with the Iraqi Police as this great country takes its rightful place.

May God Bless the People of Iraq.

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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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