



U.S. EMBASSY - BAGHDAD

2008 Provincial Reconstruction Team News

-Salah ad Din Investigations Course Graduates Eighteen-

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On Thursday August 28, the TIPS Academy in Tikrit, Salah ad Din graduated eighteen Iraqi investigators from the Basic Criminal Investigators Course. The four-week course was supported by the Salah ad Din Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), in conjunction with Multinational Division – North (MND-N), the Provincial Police Training Team, and the 320th MP Company.

A true joint U.S. – Iraqi endeavor, instructors included David Creamer from International Police Advisors (IPA) and Major Crimes Court Investigative Judge Amer Abed Rashid. The course was conducted in a train-the-trainer format, and the graduates are expected to serve as instructors themselves as they pass their newly-acquired knowledge and skills on to their colleagues. This will allow the Iraqis to take the lead in offering this training to future investigators.

The course emphasized crime scene investigation and processing, forensic skills, and documentation of the evidence. It also included scenario-based training, with the students processing simulated crime scenes, interviewing witnesses, and presenting the results of their investigation. The course marks a step forward in the strengthening of the criminal and judicial processes and the fight to eliminate human rights violations of detainees in Iraqi custody.

“This course is designed to change the culture of confession-driven investigations” said Joseph W. H. Mott, an Assistant U. S. Attorney and the Rule of Law team leader for the PRT in Salah Ad Din.

“Almost all detainee abuse occurs during the investigative stage, and results from a perceived need to extract confessions from defendants, a process that not only violates human rights but leads to inaccurate investigations.” By shifting the focus to gathering and presenting physical evidence, the course seeks to encourage evidence-driven investigations. “People may lie to save themselves or from ill motive, but physical evidence never lies”, Mott said.



DCG of MND-N, BG Boozer, looks on as a graduate of the Basic Criminal Investigation course shows what he learned from the 28 day course sponsored by the Salah ad Din PRT in Tikrit, Iraq.

The students, both Sunni and Shia, were drawn from throughout the province. One of several practical techniques taught during the course was how to fashion investigative tools from common objects, including a Super Glue chamber used to extract fingerprints from a knife. Salah ad Din Police Chief Major General Hamad Al Namis, expressed his happiness at the students' graduation and praised the hard work of the trainees.

This course was the first of its kind in Salah ad Din, a Sunni-majority province north of Baghdad and home to Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit. The PRT's Rule of Law Section has been working closely with the Salah ad Din Major Crimes Court and the Iraqi investigators to improve criminal investigations, thereby allowing criminal cases to either be brought to court or dismissed more quickly.

By speeding up the course of justice for detainees, more timely and efficient investigations should alleviate the severe overcrowding experienced in Iraqi detention facilities throughout the province. The three jails in Tikrit house more than twice the number of prisoners that they were designed to accommodate, and this overcrowding causes many problems, including outbreaks of scabies and other skin diseases among the detainee population.

The Iraqi investigators celebrated their graduation from this intensive four-week course with smiles and cheers. In addition to Chief Al Namis, the graduation ceremony was attended by MND-N Deputy Commander Brigadier General Boozer, Director of the TIPS Academy Colonel Ziad, and several PRT members.