

# Reconstructing Iraq

## Supporting a Transition to Democracy



Photo: Thomas Hartwell

No one with an understanding of Iraq's history should expect the country to immediately become a fully functioning democracy. The brutal rule of the Ba'ath Party created a legacy of suspicion and fear. The socialistic and violent nature of the regime afforded small opportunity to develop independent local government.

USAID is working with local communities to foster democratic principles by supporting neighborhood council meetings and rebuilding media infrastructure. USAID has also provided local election assistance in several cities.

### On behalf of the American people, USAID:

- Provided a Local Governance team to Al Basrah and Umm Qasr town councils to identify areas for immediate humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, establish objectives, and coordinate with British authorities.
- Managed Neighborhood Advisory Council meetings—many of which were attended by a sizable number of women—in 27 of Baghdad's 83 recognized neighborhoods.
- Assisted Kirkuk local elections which culminated in late May with the installation of a new city council and mayor.
- Is promoting the development of independent media in Iraq by constructing concrete platforms for radio and television broadcast towers.
- Supports Radio Sawa and its reporting on humanitarian and reconstruction news.
- Awarded cooperative agreements to five NGOs—Mercy Corps; International Relief and Development; Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance; Cooperative Housing Foundation International; and Save the Children—to promote grass-root citizen involvement in 250 Iraqi communities.

Website: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

Telephone: 202-712-4810

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