



DISPATCH

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Iraqi police determined to defend Iraq

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq – For some police cadets who graduated from Iraqi Police Services Cohort Training here recently, becoming an Iraqi police officer is an eyes wide-open, life-or-death commitment to the defense of Iraq.

Almost 200 cadets became full-fledged Iraqi police officers in a graduation ceremony July 23, the last such class to be trained by Task Force Liberty. The new officers spent over two weeks at the 4th Iraqi Army Training Academy here and learned a variety of things, to include hand-to-hand combat, urban tactics, arrest procedures, search techniques, traffic control points, in addition to rifle and pistol training.

“We learned how to capture criminals and secure buildings,” said Cadet Osama Khalil Abraham Alahbabi. “We also learned ways to prevent crimes.”

They also learned how to conduct surveillance and be alert for the signs of improvised explosive devices, he said.

“I hope what I learned here will help me defend myself and the Iraqi people,” he said.

“The most important thing I learned was hand-to-hand combat,” said Cadet Arami Carbon Subar Alduri. “That way, I can continue to fight even if I don’t have ammunition.”

The training emphasized self-defense, a concept Cadet Unis Hamid Salman Almuji didn’t quite agree with.

“Here they taught us to defend ourselves first,” Salman said. “I think maybe we should defend the people first.”

“I want to protect my family,” Subar said. “The family unit is important to this nation. By defending it, I am defending all of Iraq.”

Subar lost his cousin Fazi in a double car-bomb attack. After the first car-bomb went off, Fazi ran to see if Subar was alright. The second car bomb killed Fazi and injured Subar, who is still nursing wounds - both physical and emotional.

“My cousin came to check on my safety, to take care of me,” Subar said. “So, now I will take care of his family.”

Like the other officers, Abraham has taken ownership of the fight. Insurgency violence is indiscriminate, he said, adding that “bullets don’t know where to go, so Iraqis get shot.”

“When the insurgents attack Americans, Iraqis suffer,” he said. “I live in Iraq. I have a family. I need security too. I want to help build the security in the new Iraq.”

“The most important thing I learned was to be honest and decent while doing my job,” said Salman. “When

people respect and trust us, they will help us.”

He is willing to die on the job, he said, since it is a good cause.

“I want security for Iraq, for my family, my children’s

family, and even visitors from outside Iraq, because this is a free country,” said Salman. “Everyone is welcome here, except for terrorists, because we want to live in peace.”



Graduates of the Iraqi Police Services Cohort Training Class march in commencement ceremonies at the 4th Iraqi Army Division Training Academy July 23. Almost 200 new officers spent over two weeks at the academy here and learned a variety of things, to include hand-to-hand combat, urban tactics, arrest procedures, search techniques, traffic control points, in addition to rifle and pistol training.

Iraqi town moves towards democracy



Story by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo
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TIKRIT, Iraq - Local Iraqis in the small town of Hamrin took a huge step towards democracy this week by electing their first mayor.

The town of Hamrin, a rural district located northeast of Muqadiyah in Diyala Province embraced the democratic process when 11 candidates stood up to take leadership in the community. Jabori candidate Khalid Ibrahim Khalif was elected by the people of Hamrin when over 2,700 men and women, approximately fifty percent of the electorate, braved temperatures of 120 degrees and threats of violence from terrorists to vote.

The election was organized and run by a committee of local volunteers who used the experience they gained in January's national election to plan an efficient, safe and honest election. "We have

brought democracy to Hamrin, and they have embraced it," said Colonel Steven Salazar, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division Commander.

On their own initiative, the people of Hamrin organized and elected a mayor. They felt their town was not developing as fast as its neighbors since they lacked an elected representative.

Iraqi police and army soldiers secured two polling stations and ensured the election was conducted without incident. The election committee requested that Coalition Forces serve as independent observers to ensure that the proceedings and the results were fair and would not be contested.

"The Hamrin elections are part of Operation Sunrise, 3rd Brigade's Summer Campaign to set the conditions for October's referendum", said MAJ Steve Warren, 3rd Brigade spokesman. "The election in Hamrin was an overwhelming success."



The new Mayor of Hamrin, Khalid Ibrahim Khalif (top right), celebrates his victory July 23. The people of Hamrin embrace the democratic process and reject the intimidation of terrorists demonstrating that democracy works and is rapidly on the move throughout even Iraqi's smallest towns. Photos courtesy of Hamrin Election Committee