

## **Summary of Kennedy-Smith-Levin-Brownback Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act included in FY08 DoD Authorization Act**

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### **In Country Refugee Processing for Iraqis Associated with the U.S. Government**

The provision requires the Secretary of State to establish a refugee processing program in Iraq and in countries in the region for Iraqis threatened because of their association with the United States Government. All applicants must demonstrate they have a well founded fear of persecution. Iraqis who can apply directly to the United States in Iraq – rather than going through the United Nations referral system outside Iraq – include:

- Iraqis who were or are employed by or worked for the United States Government in Iraq.
- Iraqis who were or are employed in Iraq by a media or nongovernmental organization headquartered in the United States or an organization closely associated with the United States mission in Iraq that has received United States Government funding through an official and documented contract, award, grant, or cooperative agreement.
- Iraqis who are members of a religious or minority community with close family members in the United States.

The provision allows the Secretary to suspend in-country processing for periods of 90 days and requires reporting to the Congress outlining reasons for any suspension.

### **Special Immigrant Status For Iraqis Who Work For U. S. Government**

The provision provides 5,000 special immigrant visas yearly for five years for Iraqis who have worked for the U.S. Government in Iraq and are threatened as a result. Applicants must have a positive recommendation or evaluation from a senior supervisor and be approved by the U.S. Ambassador in Iraq or his designee. The provision sunsets after five years.

### **Iraqis receiving SIV status are eligible for eight months of benefits.**

Iraqis granted SIV status are eligible for reception and resettlement benefits for up to eight months.

**Asylum**

Allows Iraqis in the United States who have been denied asylum, in part, because conditions in Iraq changed after Saddam Hussein's government fell to reapply.

**Special Coordinators for Iraqi Refugees**

The amendment directs the Secretary of State to designate a high-level special coordinator in the Embassy in Baghdad to handle Iraqi refugee and internally displaced person issues. He or she would be responsible for overseeing the in country processing of refugees and special immigrant visa applicants and would have authority to refer people directly to the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Parallel positions would be designated in the American embassies in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

**Host Nation Support**

The amendment requires the Secretary of State to consult with other countries about resettlement of refugee populations and to develop mechanisms in and provide assistance to countries with a significant population of displaced Iraqis to ensure the refugees' well-being and safety.