



STATEMENT

September 12, 2008

JOINT STATEMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE SENIOR COORDINATOR FOR IRAQI REFUGEE ISSUES AMBASSADOR JAMES FOLEY AND HOMELAND SECURITY SENIOR ADVISOR FOR IRAQI REFUGEES LORI SCIALABBA

The U.S. Departments of State (DOS) and Homeland Security (DHS) are pleased to announce that we have successfully achieved our goal of admitting more than 12,000 Iraqi refugees to the United States through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program during fiscal year (FY) 2008.

Throughout the course of FY 2008 we have developed an increasingly robust processing capacity for Iraqi refugees in multiple locations across the Middle East. This now includes an emerging in-country processing program in Baghdad.

Both DOS and DHS are committed to continuing efforts to resettle vulnerable Iraqis and, barring unforeseen adverse developments in the region, expect to significantly increase the number of Iraqi refugees admitted to the U.S. for permanent resettlement in FY 2009.

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) is an inter-agency partnership of many governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO), both overseas and domestically, whose mission is to resettle refugees in the United States. The U.S. Department of State's (DOS) Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) has overall management responsibility for the USRAP and has the lead in proposing admissions numbers and processing priorities. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is responsible for interviewing refugee applicants and adjudicating applications for refugee status. Through its cooperative agreements with overseas processing entities, PRM handles the intake of refugee referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and U.S. embassies, certain NGOs, the prescreening of cases and the out-processing of individuals for travel to the United States.

Part of the refugee program's important humanitarian mission is to offer resettlement opportunities to especially vulnerable Iraqi refugees. Since large-scale Iraqi refugee processing was announced in February 2007, DHS and DOS have worked cooperatively to increase the number of Iraqi refugees admitted as part of the worldwide commitment. DHS and DOS are committed to streamlining the process for admitting Iraqi refugees to the United States while ensuring the highest level of security.

(NOTE: A fact sheet on Iraqi Refugee Processing can be viewed at:

http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/Iraqi_Refugee_Fact_Sheet_update_20080912.pdf