

Sept. 17, 2007: Public Hearing: Sectarian Violence in Iraq and the Refugee Crisis

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) will hold the second of two hearings on Iraq on Sept. 19 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 138. The hearing will bring together State Department, United Nations and NGO experts on refugees and possible U.S. policy responses, as well as two prominent academic specialists addressing the impact of sectarian violence. Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR) is expected to participate. Specific questions to be addressed include: What steps should the U.S. government consider when addressing the human rights and religious freedom challenges posed by intra-Muslim sectarian violence? To what extent is the government of Iraq tolerating sectarian violence and other religious freedom violations? What are the current conditions for Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons and what policies should the United States consider in addressing the crisis? Witnesses are: Assistant Secretary of State Ellen R. Sauerbrey, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Assistant High Commissioner for Operations; Dr. Judith Yaphe, a specialist in Middle Eastern political analysis at the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS); Dr. Kenneth Katzman, a specialist in Middle East affairs for the Congressional Research Service, with special emphasis on Iran and Iraq; Dana Graber, Iraq Specialist, International Organization for Migration (IOM). RSVP: communications@uscirf.gov or (202) 523-3240 x 114. Michael Cromartie, Chair •••; Preeta D. Bansal, Vice Chair •••; Richard D. Land, Vice Chair •••; Don Argue •••; Imam Talal Y. Eid •••; Felice D. Gaer •••; Leonard A. Leo •••; Elizabeth H. Prodromou •••; Nina Shea •••; Ambassador John V. Hanford III, Ex-Officio