

**L. Paul Bremer, III**  
**Weekly Address to the Iraqi People**

**As prepared for delivery**  
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**MAllah Bil Khair.**

**I am Paul Bremer, Administrator of the Coalition Provision Authority.**

**This week I would like to talk to you about the quest for law and order.**

**The Governing Council, in its political statement, named security as its number one priority. The Council said it want to emphasize**

*Providing security and stability for citizens and the protection of their properties as well as activating and rebuilding state institutions, specifically the Iraqi police force and army.*

**The Coalition Authority agrees with that goal. We are working with the Governing Council to help achieve it. We understand, as does the Governing Council, that**

Iraq is not as safe as it once was and not as safe as it must become.

Rebuilding the police service is an urgent and critical problem, but the rebuilding requires careful thought and implementation. In Iraq, as in many countries, some individuals in the police force participated in repression by the state.

Right now there are almost 34,000 Iraqi police on the streets. Of these, over 4,500, plus 1,200 traffic police, are in Baghdad. We are reviewing the backgrounds of an additional 4,500 candidates for police work in Baghdad.

Within the next week we will begin an aggressive campaign recruit over 31,000 additional men and women for the police service. Once recruited, these 31,000 potential police officers must pass a background investigation and complete a rigorous, eight-week training course. Only after completing training will they be on the street.

Some retraining of current police has already begun. Police have been graduating from several police training programs around the country— here in Baghdad, in Al Fallujah and elsewhere. As they complete their training these retrained officers will resume their duties.

You should know that the Iraqi police are working harder than ever to make your streets safer. In the past few weeks they have been involved in many operations that have resulted in the arrests or deaths of kidnappers, carjackers, robbery suspects and violent criminals. This activity will continue and as the new police are recruited, trained and assigned, the streets will become safer.

I know this is a frustrating time for you and that the high crime rate makes everything worse. Programs to solve the crime problem are underway and before the end of 2003 you will start to see more and more Iraqi policemen and fewer and fewer soldiers on your streets.

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A larger and better police service will help. But, police work is only part of a criminal justice system. While the police must investigate crimes and arrest those suspected of crimes, judicial systems must determine the guilt or innocence of the accused. And, if the individual is found innocent, determine punishment—usually a term of imprisonment.

There is progress here as well. Right after the war, most of Iraq's courthouses were badly damaged and only a few were operating. Today about 300 of Iraq's 400 courts are operating. Not only are the courts functioning, they functioning in way that protects society and while assuring that the rights of the accused are respected.

Apart from the regular courts the Governing Council has directed the creation of:

*specialized courts to prosecute officials of the former regime who collaborated in the commission of crimes against the Iraqi people and humanity and to exact just punishment of those who are convicted of such crimes.*

The Governing Council has now set up a committee to create these specialized courts. We at the Coalition Provision Authority completely support these actions by the Government Council. We work daily with them providing advice and assistance on how such a tribunal might function.

Additionally, Coalition holds 34 senior members of Saddam's regime. When the Governing Council opens the Special Courts we will turn over these 34 prisoners.

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Convicted criminals are often sent to prison as punishment for their crime and as a means of protecting society.

Here too there is progress. Although many of the Iraq's 151 prisons were badly damaged, many are now open and operating, often with funds made available by local Coalition commanders. We are also rebuilding prisons to humane standards.

While many prisons are not yet open, there is one kind of prison Iraq should never see again—the secret prison.

We know that secret prisons existed under Saddam.

The very fact that they were secret makes it hard for us to be certain how many there are and where they are.

We think most of them were underground and in rural areas, though some were in the city.

However many secret prisons we find, whatever atrocities were committed there, you may be sure of one thing:

Imprisonment without cause, imprisonment in secret places, ended with Saddam and his Baathist thugs.

In a few cases, we are keeping unusually dangerous prisoners, mostly Saddam's henchmen, in separate detention facilities. But these places are very different from Saddam's secret torture chambers. The International Committee of the Red Cross is permitted access to any prisoner anywhere in Iraq at any time. We encourage their visits so that an independent organization can verify that all prisoners are humanely treated. Additionally, we are developing a tracking system which will permit family members and friends to obtain information about prisoners.

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**In closing, I want to say again that we understand the desire of you, the Iraqi people, to end your fear of both political oppression and the depredations of common criminals.**

**We are going to remove that fear from your lives.**

*Drafted: D.R. Hamilton*