



## Facing up to Corruption in Iraq

- **Gol Still Challenged by Corruption, Exploring Solutions:**
  - Ratified the UN Convention Against Corruption in March 08
  - Lauded by UN for Commitment to Anti-Corruption (AC)
- **Noteworthy Achievements in 2008:**
  - 4,000 New Cases, 87 Convictions
- **Key Issues Still Hinder Swift Progress:**
  - Underfunding, Intimidations, Obstruction
  - Gol Still Requires a Comprehensive AC Law
- **Iraq Recognizes the Need for Continued Progress:**
  - Commission on Integrity Promoting Initiatives to Fight Corruption Long-Term



Iraqi's Face Corruption Charges

***Assessment:*** Significant progress has been made in developing the legal framework and increasing corruption awareness. Continued Gol focus is essential to implement a comprehensive program that advances the rule of law in Iraq.

In January of 2008, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih proclaimed that 2008 would be the “year of fighting corruption” during an anti-corruption forum that brought together Iraqi ministers, members of parliament, and international representatives. While corruption still remains a critical and challenging issue going into 2009, the Gol, working with the UN and other international entities, continues to explore many initiatives to combat this impediment to sustained development, stabilization, and the rule of law in Iraq.

The Gol has made progress in establishing the legal and policy framework for what could be, with full implementation and enforcement, the basis of an effective anti-corruption program. After Iraq ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption in March of 2008, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime lauded the Gol for demonstrating its commitment to fight corruption. It also acknowledged the need for Iraq to “overhaul” its anti-corruption system by strengthening prevention, transparency, and accountability of private and public entities. The Commission on Integrity, seen as the lead agency of Iraq’s three anti-corruption institutions, reported noteworthy anti-corruption achievements in 2008. According to Judge Rahim al-Ugaili, the agency’s commissioner, the Col opened over 4000 new cases nationwide in the past year, brought 386 of these to trial, and realized 87 convictions.

Despite some successes, the Gol still faces many challenges as it works to shape an enduring and effective anti-corruption institution that can adhere to the UN guidelines. Issues hindering progress on this critical rule of law concern include chronic underfunding of Iraq’s Commission on Integrity, intimidation of judges and investigators, elimination of charges and investigations, and the removal of key officials directing anti-corruption programs.

The Gol initiative to provide the requisite legal framework in a comprehensive anti-corruption law, while still currently a work in progress, could be a major boost to Iraq’s anti-corruption efforts if implemented. A review of the draft version in mid-2008 by UN officials concluded that the provisions of this law would strengthen the independence of Iraq’s anti-corruption institutions by expanding their investigative powers, and releasing them from strict administrative and financial dependence. While a draft version

was submitted to the CoR later in 2008, it was quickly withdrawn without a specific timeline for resubmission.

The GoI also recognizes the need for expansive, long-term programs to address corruption at a fundamental level. The Commission on Integrity is looking to promote anti-corruption in schools and is working with the education ministries towards this effort. It has committed to heighten awareness of critical issues through public awareness campaigns utilizing publications and TV programs, and is seeking to build an academy to train officials from Iraq's anti-corruption institutions. Iraqi officials are expected to continue working with the U.N. and international organizations to enhance transparency and accountability of institutions, develop the necessary legislative reforms, and promote anti-corruption initiatives at all levels of government and society.

*While Iraq still has considerable work to do in terms of providing an effective, comprehensive anti-corruption tradition, significant progress has been made in developing the legal framework, and increasing the awareness of this critical issue. Continued cooperation between the GoI, anti-corruption institutes, and external organizations will be essential in building an anti-corruption program that promotes and protects the advancement of democracy and the rule of law in Iraq.*