



## **Statement by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff on New Security Procedures for Processing Iraqi Refugees Seeking Resettlement in the United States**

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The Department of Homeland Security has developed enhanced security screening procedures for Iraqi refugees applying for resettlement in the U.S. As a first step in fulfilling the Administration's commitment to accept up to 7,000 referrals of the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees – such as persons whose lives may be in jeopardy because they worked for coalition forces – the department is poised to approve the applications of nearly 60 Iraqis.

The Departments of Homeland Security and State continue to work closely toward this fiscal year 2007 goal, and the new security screening procedures will facilitate our progress while ensuring that terrorists do not enter this country posing as refugees. These new screening procedures supplement the checks conducted for all refugee applicants who are considered for resettlement in this country. Applicants will not be admitted if doubts arise about whether they pose a security risk.

This department has been actively interviewing Iraqi refugees for potential resettlement, and has already completed interviews for more than 300 cases affecting more than 700 Iraqis. The first 20 cases involving 59 individuals have been approved and these refugees will travel to the U.S. in the coming weeks.

America's tradition of welcoming international refugees and responding to humanitarian emergencies is unrivaled. Yet we also must be mindful of the security risks associated with admitting refugees from war-torn countries – especially countries infiltrated by large numbers of terrorists. These enhanced screening procedures will help to ensure the continued security of our homeland while upholding this great tradition.

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