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Sent: Monday, August 16, 2004 10:53 AM
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Subject: FW: DETAINEE RELEASE BOARD TAKES ON IRAQI PARTNERS

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Sent: Monday, August 16, 2004 5:22 PM
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DETAINEE RELEASE BOARD TAKES ON IRAQI PARTNERS

Aug. 16, 2004

The release of security detainees interned by the Multi-National Force - Iraq underwent a major change Saturday when the MNF unveiled a new review process that incorporates the Interim Iraqi Government's Ministries of Justice, Interior and Human Rights.

The new process centers around a nine-member Combined Review and Release Board. The board adds two commissioners from each of the ministries to the current MNF panel of three senior officers.

The board's presiding officer, a colonel from the MNF's legal staff, presented the goals and procedures to the new Iraqi commissioners during an orientation meeting Saturday morning. The board plans to meet at least three days per week at an undisclosed location. The identities of all board members will remain confidential to help ensure their personal safety.

The board will begin reviewing the files of detainees this week to determine whether individuals continue to pose a risk and should therefore continue to be held as threats to the MNF and the security of Iraq, as authorized by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546.

The UNSCR provides the basis for review, stating the "multinational force in Iraq shall have the authority to take all necessary measures to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq." This includes "internment where this is necessary for imperative reasons of security."

The new board provides greater oversight by the Iraqi government in the review process, further ensuring that the circumstances surrounding a detainee's capture are reviewed impartially to determine whether he should continue to be held. The board previously consisted of three senior officers from the MNF - a legal expert, a military policeman, and a military intelligence officer. These three officers will continue to serve as the MNF's commissioners on the new board.

The CRRB will consider several factors when reviewing each file, such as the circumstances of the detainee's capture, the length of detention prior to review, the level of cooperation by the detainee, and the detainee's potential for further acts of anti-Iraqi misconduct if released.

Upon reviewing the file, the CRRB will recommend either unconditional release of the detainee, release with a suitable guarantor of high standing from the detainee's community, or continued internment. A tie vote between internment and release will result in a recommendation for release with guarantor.

The final approval for all releases rests with the MNF's Deputy Commanding General for Detainee Operations, Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, who will make a decision after consultation with the Iraqi Minister of Justice. Maj. Gen. Miller has vowed to accept the board's recommendations unless substantial additional information about a detainee becomes available that would cause the file to be sent back to the board for further review.

The new board is an extension of a process the MNF has used to review the status of over 12,000 detainees throughout the detention mission, resulting in 7,000 releases. Over 3,700 of those releases have taken place over the past four months alone.

The review process was originally adopted in accordance with Article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which requires a review of each individual's status every six months, if possible. The goal of the board is to complete the review for each detainee at least every three months. The MNF continued this process after adoption of UNSCR 1546, since it is the internationally-accepted standard for reviewing the internment of security detainees.

Currently, the MNF detains about 5,000 individuals for imperative reasons of security. A review of all files is conducted before they are sent to the CRRB to determine if criminal charges are warranted. About 700 detainees are subject to criminal charges that will be prosecuted in the Central Criminal Court of Iraq and will not be considered by the board. Many of the individuals who will not be recommended for release by the board are also likely to face criminal charges for their activities.

Creation of the CRRB marks a new phase in the detention mission and the security of Iraq, giving the interim government a strong hand in determining which individual's remain a threat for acts such as possession of illegal weapons, attacks on Multi-National Forces, producing and emplacing improvised explosive devices, financing insurgent activities, and other anti-Iraqi activities.

TEXT PROVIDED BY MNF-I DETAINEE OPERATIONS PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT LTC [REDACTED] AT [REDACTED]@vcmain.hq.c5.army.mil .

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