

# 1,100 Graduate Inaugural Iraqi Police Academy Basic Training Course

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**Baghdad's newest Iraqi Policemen stand at attention during their graduation ceremony, Feb. 21, at the Furat Iraqi Police Training Academy in Baghdad. The ceremony marked the inaugural graduation from the two-week course. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elvyn Nieves.**

**BAGHDAD** — History was made when the inaugural class of more than 1,100 Iraqi Police (IP) recruits graduated the two-week Basic Recruit Training Course, Feb. 21, at the Furat Iraqi Police Training Academy in Baghdad.

During the initial phase of their training, the graduates successfully completed training on weapons familiarization, law, ethics, crime scene, handcuffing and various other skills.

“Today’s graduation makes us very happy because this will provide security and control to this area,” said Nihad Mahmad Taha, an IP graduate. “We’re all very excited about it. I joined the IP because I’ve seen how much damage the extremists did to our country, and I wanted to provide protection to my people.”

“Following the ceremony, the graduates were issued orders to report to their respective districts,” said Capt. John Soto, a native of Manhattan, N.Y., who serves as officer-in-charge of the Furat Police Academy. Soto is assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Once in their districts, the new IPs will undergo additional training in vital police techniques, such as self defense and weapons training to prepare them for their next step in their training, which will be an eight-week course.

“This is the first of many steps to help the Iraqi people take control over their country,” said Soto. “We’re getting more recruits out to the streets, so when people are walking out [of] their houses, they see these Iraqis in the blue uniform providing security to them.”

The graduation of the IPs greatly contributes to the goal of Iraq becoming a self-sufficient country, capable of providing security to its citizens.