

The Law Enforcement Combined Interagency Task Force

By Chief Warrant Officer Three Sean Rafferty and Warrant Officer One Jason M. Nicholas

After deploying from Fort Lewis, Washington, to various locations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the War on Terrorism, select members of the 22d Military Police Battalion (U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command [USACIDC] [commonly referred to as "CID"]) established the Law Enforcement Combined Interagency Task Force (LECIATF) in Baghdad, Iraq, in August 2009. The LECIATF was initiated under the guidance of the commander of the 22d Military Police Battalion to support U.S. Forces–Iraq (USF-I) and Task Force 134 detainee operations. The LECIATF is comprised of a diverse group of investigators, experts, and leaders who, together, offer a wide variety of knowledge and expertise gained through innumerable years in law enforcement and other professions.

The mission objective of LECIATF is to conduct and complete expert criminal investigations of dangerous radical and enduring security threat (DR/EST) detainees who are being held for suspicion of terrorist-related crimes, attacks on coalition forces, or other general criminal activity. The goal of the LECIATF is to compile solid criminal evidence such as eyewitness statements, fingerprints, DNA evidence, weapons, digital media (video recordings, e-mails), photographs, and other items to be presented during a criminal prosecution. The members of LECIATF work in conjunction with USF-I, Task Force 134 (division provost marshal office, USF-I attorneys assigned to the task force, brigade combat teams that are responsible for the areas of operation), military unit commanders, the

Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Government of Iraq to locate and identify all witnesses and information necessary to build a successful criminal investigation.

Some of the DR/EST-related crimes that have been investigated by the LECIATF include the falsification of identification, displacement, weapons smuggling, financing of terrorist-related activity, attacks against coalition forces, improvised explosive device manufacture and emplacement, kidnapping, torture, and murder. One high-profile investigation uncovered a major terrorist cell that was suspected of various criminal activities. Further investigation by LECIATF members revealed a network of individuals who were linked to area crimes such as kidnapping, torture, and mass murder. The crimes were related to a mass grave site that contained the remains of several hundred area victims.

Upon completion of the investigations, LECIATF members help support the USF-I attorneys who prosecute the cases before an Iraqi judge at the Central Criminal Court of Iraq, thereby obtaining a sense of justice and closure for the Iraqi people.

To date, the LECIATF has supervised and investigated more than 200 DR/EST cases, with more than 50 cases already processed through the Central Criminal Court of Iraq. Three individuals have been convicted of their crimes. The successful investigation and prosecution of these crimes help illustrate to the government and people of Iraq that U.S. forces are committed to ensuring a safer Iraq for the future.

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