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Fact Sheet

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

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The United States and International Civilian Policing and the Rule of Law (CIV)

[For more information on the CIVPOL program, please contact CIVPOL@state.gov]

Background

A cornerstone of stable and democratic nations is a criminal justice system in which citizens show broad acceptance and voluntary compliance with the law. As part of the U.S. Government's mission to support the emergence of stable democracies, especially in areas which have suffered from many years of civil strife, we support programs to help institutionalize a sustainable criminal justice sector, instill public trust in the Rule of Law and protect human rights.

Our support, often in cooperation with other nations or international bodies, is designed to promote the following institutions:

- Civilian police/law enforcement that prevents, detects and investigates violations of criminal law to identify, apprehend and assist in the prosecution of persons suspected of such violations.
- Public prosecutors to review evidence gathered in a case, make determinations regarding the appropriateness of initiating a criminal prosecution and presenting cases to the courts for adjudication.
- Courts that administer cases, set initial adjudication of guilt or innocence and conduct appellate review of cases for final determinations of guilt or innocence.
- Prisons or correctional facilities, designed to incarcerate and reform those convicted of criminal offenses.

In many countries in which a stabilization and reconstruction mission is being mounted, previous armed conflict left the criminal justice system dysfunctional or even completely failed. In such cases, crime and public disorder are likely to increase, the government cannot provide efficient services, and the economy cannot flourish. Without a strong and functioning criminal justice system - prosecutors to prosecute arrested persons, courts to try them, and prisons to incarcerate them -the police may by default apply "street justice" as judge, jury and jailer while human and civil rights are ignored and violated.

The prompt restoration of public order by non-repressive means, with an approach that focuses on the police, courts and prisons, is an essential component of post-conflict stabilization.

The CIVPOL Mission

Civilian police (CIVPOL) from the United States and more than 50 other countries are deployed around the globe in support of international post-conflict stabilization and redevelopment operations. Their presence promotes peace and stability in areas recovering from conflict, and their efforts to reform and/or develop indigenous police forces into modern, democratically-oriented law enforcement services helps to ensure that peace and stability can be sustained even after international peacekeepers depart.

Many CIVPOL programs are sponsored by the United Nations (UN), but regional security organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), or coalitions of interested countries, sponsor others.

The UN launched its first CIVPOL mission in the Congo in 1960, but CIVPOL did not become a major component of peacekeeping operations until the end of the Cold War. Since then, police have become an integral component of what were originally military peacekeeping operations.

CIVPOL missions vary. In some missions, officers perform typical law enforcement functions (patrol, investigation, etc.) in the absence of effective and fair indigenous police forces. In others, CIVPOL may be responsible for rebuilding, monitoring, and/or advising local police as they make the transition to democratic policing. In this capacity, CIVPOL may be directly involved in the entry-level, supervisory and managerial training and organizational development activities for a host country's police.

The United States and CIVPOL

The United States participated in its first CIVPOL operation in 1994 in Haiti. The United States led the multinational military intervention to restore the elected government of Haiti and sponsored a 20-country International Police Monitor (IPM) mission to help provide public security, maintain the rule of law, and establish a new Haitian National Police Service. The IPM mission transitioned to the UN in March 1995.

CIVPOL have become a vital tool of U.S. foreign policy. Only 50 American police officers participated in the Haiti CIVPOL mission in 1994. Since then, more than 7,000 experienced U.S. law enforcement officers and experts have participated in CIVPOL missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1996-2002); the Eastern Slavonia region of Croatia (1996-2003); Jericho (2002); the Palestinian Authority (2003); Sierra Leone (2003-2004); East Timor (1999-2007); OSCE Headquarters in Vienna (2002-2004); Haiti (1996-2000; 2004-present); Kosovo (1999-present); Serbia & Montenegro (2001-present); Macedonia (2002-2004); Afghanistan (2002-present); Iraq (2003-present); Sudan (2005-present); and Liberia (2003-present). Today, more than 1,600 U.S. police are deployed along with their international counterparts.

This dramatic climb in U.S. participation in CIVPOL missions reflects the U.S. Government's recognition of the importance of criminal justice to restoring stability in post-conflict situations. While international military forces often are necessary to restore a secure environment following a major conflict, they generally are not, in themselves, sufficient for the long-term reestablishment of civil order where local institutions have broken down. CIVPOL not only assist international military forces in the short term by addressing and resolving civilian law enforcement issues, but also help develop the local democratic policing institutions that ultimately will be responsible for integrating with the host country's criminal justice system (prosecutor, courts and correctional services) and providing law and order functions once the military and CIVPOL depart.

CIVPOL Rule of Law Programs

Initial missions focused almost exclusively upon indigenous civilian police and placed little, if any, emphasis on other aspects of the host country's criminal justice system. It soon became apparent that reform and developmental efforts were not as successful as they should have been, because other criminal justice components such as the prosecutors, courts and correctional organizations had not received commensurate support. Those elements needed reform or development assistance to function at a level equivalent to the police.

Accordingly, the CIVPOL Office within the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) was re-titled Office of Civilian Police and Rule of Law (CIV) and charged with working with all criminal justice agencies in post-conflict environments rather than simply the civilian police. CIV now employs senior technical specialists in prosecutorial, judicial and correctional development as well as in the civilian police field. Wherever possible, CIV plans, develops and implements post-conflict reform or redevelopment programs that contain elements addressing each criminal justice system component to maintain equilibrium among all.

Decisions to deploy CIVPOL and/or Rule of Law programs in a specific mission are made at the highest levels of the federal government based on consultations among the White House, Department of State, and other agencies. The responsibility for managing U.S. CIVPOL, Rule of Law and related issues generally rests with the Department of State.

The Mechanics of U.S. CIVPOL contributions

Most other countries that provide police to CIVPOL programs have national police forces and related personnel mechanisms to deploy officers for overseas service. Because the United States does not maintain a national police force, we do not send formed police units. Our contribution relies on individual volunteers. To handle such a large task, the Department of State contracts with private companies who implement requirements provided by the Department of State to recruit, select, equip, and deploy active and recently retired law enforcement officers from across the country. After conducting a screening process, the companies contract with individual officers and deploy them to missions.

Subject matter experts in criminal prosecution, court administration, judicial adjudication, criminal appellate practice and correctional programs are also recruited, engaged and deployed by a contractor in response to a U.S. Government-identified and articulated requirement.

Following pre-deployment training in the U.S., criminal justice program personnel are sent to the mission area and are "seconded" to the UN (or other sponsoring organization -- such as the OSCE). Within a mission, officers function under the operational control of the sponsoring organization, which also provides officers with an allowance to cover food, lodging, and incidental expenses. The contractors maintain offices in the mission areas to handle administrative and support issues, and assist with programs designed to improve quality of life.

Throughout the life of a mission, the Department of State provides funding and oversight for mission operations, manages U.S. policy on CIV operations and other related law enforcement and civilian security issues, provides bilateral assistance to local police forces, engages with the UN and other contributing countries on mission priorities and challenges, and keeps Congress, other U.S. Government agencies, and the White House informed of progress.





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