

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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New York, NY – In the fifteen years since the United States invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003, American troops have relied on the trust and support of local partners to carry out the U.S. mission. Unfortunately, many of these loyal wartime allies have been threatened and attacked as a result of their service and continue to live in danger. Despite promises made by the U.S. Government to safeguard these allies and their families, the programs created to bring them to safety have not provided sufficient relief.

Both the Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, which is no longer accepting new applications, and the Direct Access Program (DAP) for U.S. affiliated Iraqis, which is severely backlogged, have proven to be insufficient pathways to safety. In order to ensure the United States maintains its reputation as a loyal wartime partner, the [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) (IRAP) at the Urban Justice Center urges the Administration to prioritize programs aimed at protecting local allies and resume resettling refugees at previous levels.

“Supporting programs aimed at protecting our Iraqi partners is imperative to the United States’ national security and foreign policy interests,” said **Betsy Fisher, IRAP’s Policy Director**. “On the fifteenth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, we must remind ourselves that we have a moral obligation to those who risked their lives for us. Now is the time to show our allies that we can continue to be a trusted ally.”

To raise awareness of the ongoing plight of U.S.-affiliated Iraqis, IRAP today released the report [Fifteen Years On: Protecting Iraqi Wartime Partners](#), which outlines a set of recommendations to improve the important legal pathways available to them.

International Refugee Assistance Project at the Urban Justice Center

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