

**February 17, 2023**

## **DISSEMINATION BY THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, LLC**

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Please see the following joint statement on the US-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee.

The Deputy Prime Minister concluded his visit to DC today. If you would like to hear him speak, check out his conversation with the Atlantic Council: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/event/a-conversation-with-fuad-hussein/>

THE LIVINGSTON GROUP PROVIDES REPRESENTATION FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ.  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.

### **[Joint Statement on the U.S.-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee](#)**

*02/15/2023 03:56 PM EST*

Office of the Spokesperson

The following statement was released by the governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq.

*Begin Text:*

The delegation of the Republic of Iraq, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, and the delegation of the United States, led by Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, co-chaired a Higher Coordinating Committee (HCC), in accordance with the 2008 Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq (SFA). The delegations reaffirmed their determination to deepen the strategic relationship across the full range of bilateral issues, for the sake of their respective national interests and their shared interest in regional stability.

This meeting marked the first HCC focused on economic cooperation, energy sector development, and climate change – a sign of a maturing strategic partnership under the SFA. The Iraqi delegation included high-level representatives from the Council of Representatives, the Central Bank, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Electricity, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Climate Envoy, and the Kurdistan Regional Government. In addition to the Secretary of State, the U.S. delegation included National Security Advisor Sullivan, USAID Administrator Power, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change Kerry, Deputy Treasury Secretary Adeyemo, Special Presidential Coordinator for Global Energy and Infrastructure Hochstein, Coordinator for Global Anti-Corruption Nephew, and National Security Council Middle East Coordinator McGurk, as well as senior officials from the Departments of State, Treasury, Energy, and Commerce.

The two sides discussed challenges facing Iraq's economy, including the parallel currency exchange markets. The United States welcomed the Iraqi government's efforts to enact economic and monetary-policy reforms, modernize the financial and banking system, combat corruption, and prevent manipulation of the financial system – actions that can help boost Iraq's economic prospects, including strengthening financial and currency markets. The U.S. delegation reiterated support for Iraq's ongoing efforts to build technical capacity and implement international standards to protect the banking system from financial crimes, money laundering, and terrorist financing. The two sides resolved to continue working together to modernize Iraq's financial system for the betterment of the Iraqi people.

The U.S. and Iraqi delegations shared the view that pursuing an ambitious energy-independence agenda is necessary to maximize Iraq's economic prosperity and safeguard its sovereignty. The two delegations acknowledged that Iraq has a historic opportunity to invest in energy infrastructure initiatives designed to improve electricity services for the Iraqi people, secure Iraq's energy self-sufficiency, and mitigate environmental damage to both the global climate and Iraqi public health. To this end, the two sides resolved to accelerate efforts to capture flared gas, upgrade natural gas distribution infrastructure and reduce methane leakage, regionally interconnect Iraq's electricity grid, modernize Iraq's electricity infrastructure, and explore renewable energy opportunities. The U.S. delegation lauded Iraq's commitment to regional electricity interconnection projects with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority.

The delegations reaffirmed the importance of combatting and adapting to climate change. The Iraqi delegation previewed that Iraq would soon publish a comprehensive government strategy to confront climate change. Both sides resolved to expeditiously implement gas capture projects in an attempt to achieve zero routine flaring by 2030 and to meet the Global Methane Pledge. The United States reviewed plans to expand climate change programming in Iraq, having provided Iraq more than \$1.2 billion in overall development assistance over the past five years. Discussions also prioritized the need for ambitious solar farm projects and establishing a regulatory framework to attract investment in renewable energy.

The two sides also discussed Iraq's water crisis. The United States plans to continue its technical assistance to improve Iraq's water-management practices. The United States invited Iraq to nominate water-management experts to participate in exchange programs with U.S. leaders in this field. The delegations resolved to prioritize leveraging modern technologies in groundwater management and irrigation efficiency.

The United States welcomed positive developments in relations between the Iraqi federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government and the ongoing negotiations over the 2023 federal budget and the hydrocarbons law.

The United States reiterated to the Iraqi delegation the U.S. private sector's best-in-class technology and its unique ability to address Iraq's energy challenges. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-Iraq Business Council hosted a roundtable for the Iraqi delegation with 40 U.S. companies, industry leaders with expertise in gas capture, electricity infrastructure modernization, and renewables. Following the event, the Chamber announced it would lead two U.S. business missions to Iraq in June to explore commercial and investment opportunities.

Additionally, the delegations noted the intent of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the Iraqi Ministry of Trade to begin planning a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council meeting in 2023. The U.S.-Iraq TIFA serves as a forum for resolving trade concerns and enhancing opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.

The U.S. delegation also announced that U.S. Embassy Baghdad has begun phasing in nonimmigrant visa services.

The United States and Iraq confirmed they planned to convene Joint Coordination Committees under the SFA, as well as additional HCCs, to follow up on the economic, energy, investment, and climate discussions held during this HCC. The U.S. and Iraqi delegations reaffirmed their determination to strengthen the strategic relationship.

*End Text.*