



# Starting a Rotary Club in Hillah, Babil

## Babil Reconstruction Team (PRT)

### Engagement Overview: Charter of Rotary Club in Hillah

**Objective:** Rotary is the premier international civil society organization with 1.3 million members in 32,000 clubs in 168 countries. Rotary clubs promote business networking and ethics, international friendship, assist in humanitarian activities, and continue to fight to eradicate polio world-wide while helping to build civil society. The Rotary Club in Hillah will come under Rotary District 2450 that includes 9 countries: Armenia, Georgia, Egypt, Cyprus, UAE, Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan and Bahrain.

Hillah will benefit immensely by having this prestigious international institution. It will provide a platform for international investors and visitors to interact with prominent Iraqis and develop relations for mutual benefits.

**Situation:** At present Iraq does not have a Rotary Club. The condition of the past 20 years did not permit organizations like the Rotary Club to function in Iraq as it requires free press, freedom from government oppression and a civil society. Having a Rotary Club will show the world that Iraq has joined the international community as a democratic country.

Mr. Pradeep Patnaik, Economic Development Adviser of the Babil PRT is a Rotarian. He served as the President of the Rotary Club in Graham, North Carolina. He is leading the effort to charter a Rotary Club in Hillah. In March, 2008 he contacted Rotary District 2450 and Rotary International for assistance. Through the generosity of a Rotarian in Lebanon, Mr. Patnaik arranged for certain basic information to be translated into Arabic and in June he received the translated information, including its Constitution and By-laws. On July 5, 2008 he invited 35 prominent citizens, including 5 females, to the first organizational meeting held at the RTI/Hillah compound. Thirty-two of the 35 invited guests attended the meeting counting all five female guests. Rotarian Randy Repola, Governance Advisor of Babil PRT, and Major Edward Hass of the US Army Civil Affairs also supported the meeting and distributed information on the Rotary Club. A Power Point presentation of Rotary Club was given by Mr. Repola, followed by a question and answer period. The group selected nine members to the Chartering Committee, three of the members are women, who will take on the responsibility for organizing and formalizing the Rotary Club. The former Governor of Babil, Mr. Iskander Witwit, will serve as the Committee Chair and Mr. Sadiq Al-Feehan, President of the Babil Chamber of Commerce, will be the Deputy Chair. All 32 attendees committed to join the Club, surpassing the minimum requirement standard of 20 members.

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### Critical Next Steps:

1. Obtaining permission from the Government of Iraq
2. Obtaining approval from Rotary International
3. Securing sponsorship of the Hillah club by a Rotary Club in District 2450
4. Membership drive and electing the officers
5. Guiding the Chartering Committee in each step

The Chartering Committee will work on items 1 and 4. Mr. Pradeep Patnaik will work on items 2 and 3. Mr. Patnaik and Mr. Repola will lend their expertise and guide the Chartering Committee in its activities.

### Budget:

The estimated budget for initial expense is \$8,000. The expense includes fees to the Rotary International and District 2450, purchase of certain Rotary paraphernalia like the official Rotary banner, Rotary pins, bell, gavel, etc. Mr. Patnaik will apply for QRF to fund the initial expense.

**Target Month for Grand Opening:** October, 2008

### The First Meeting Photo

