



**SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR IRAQ
RECONSTRUCTION**

CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2009

I. Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

1. Description

The Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) has taken a very proactive stance on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Guidelines to administer all FOIA requests on the presumption of openness by posting its full body of works on a public website (www.sigir.mil). The website serves as an electronic reading room holding the Quarterly Reports, audits, project assessments, and other publications developed by SIGIR.

SIGIR has made available to the public the maximum amount of information on its operations and activities, consistent with our responsibility to protect sensitive information. In furtherance of this goal, SIGIR:

- a. Allows as many records as possible to be made available on SIGIR's website without requiring a FOIA request
- b. Promptly answers all requests for information and records in accordance with its internal FOIA policy (No. 6300), effective August 18, 2009.
- c. Complies with the Attorney General's Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, dated March 19, 2009, which encourages agencies to make discretionary disclosures of information unless the agency reasonably foresees that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one of the statutory exceptions, or the disclosure is prohibited by law.
- d. Processes requests from individuals for information about themselves according to SIGIR's Privacy Act procedures.

Since issuance of the new FOIA Guidelines, SIGIR has taken the initiative of translating its inventory of audit reports in Modern Standard Arabic for ease of use by the Iraqi Ministries and pre-empting the need for special Embassy requests. Additionally, SIGIR has begun posting its quarterly investigative activities and case summaries on its website. Recently, the complete inventory of assessment reports has been posted, from the time of inception of the directorate to its closure.

The SIGIR website has been redesigned to facilitate navigation and data downloads. This initiative included de-aggregating the figures, pictures, and data tables utilized in the Quarterly Reports and enabling ease of download for independent analysis, as an affirmative step to make information public.

The FOIA tab on SIGIR's website has been upgraded to incorporate frequently asked questions and facilitate electronic requests. Additionally, SIGIR's first FOIA Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009 is posted on its website.

2. Disclosure Comparisons

SIGIR is a temporary agency established by the Congress in late 2003. SIGIR filed its first FOIA

Annual Report after Fiscal Year 2009. Consequently, SIGIR has no disclosure comparisons.

As reported in the FOIA Annual Report, SIGIR processed a total of 12 requests during the previous fiscal year. The FOIA processing statistics for FY 2009 were as follows: 6 full grants, 1 partial grant, 2 full denials, and 3 no-records responses.

II. Steps Taken to Ensure That Your Agency Has an Effective System for Responding to FOIA Requests

On August 18, 2009, SIGIR established a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Program, setting forth a simple approach for responding to FOIA requests and processing appeals through a single point of contact: the FOIA Officer. The FOIA Officer is accountable for recording, assigning, and tracking all FOIA requests from receipt through final disposition.

SIGIR's General Counsel and Deputy Inspector General review all responses before release. Since SIGIR is a relatively small agency, the FOIA Officer can easily follow up on all requests and appeals. Moreover, a customized FOIA Tracking System is housed in a shared drive accessible to all SIGIR Directorates to facilitate tracking the timeliness of responses.

The FOIA Officer has sufficient information technology support via the information technology staff and SIGIR's various databases that house the majority of responsive documents. Additionally, the latest Adobe Acrobat 9 Professional software is utilized to facilitate document redactions.

SIGIR's average response time on FOIA requests processed in FY 2009 was 15 days.

III. Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosure

Within 30 days of the end of each fiscal quarter, SIGIR is required to report to Congress on U.S.-funded reconstruction activities in Iraq. These Quarterly Reports must also detail SIGIR's activities over the past quarter and be published on the internet in both English and Arabic. SIGIR's Quarterly Reports are posted on its website on or about January 30th, April 30th, July 30th, and October 30th.

Over the past year, SIGIR has proactively extended access to its audit and inspection reports. In FY 2009, SIGIR began an initiative to translate all of its more than 160 audit reports into Arabic. This project was completed and the reports are now posted on SIGIR's website. Additionally, SIGIR's five Lessons Learned reports, several white papers, and statements submitted to Congress are all publicly available on the website.

IV. Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

1. Does your agency currently receive requests electronically?

Yes. SIGIR has a web page with easy access to a dedicated e-mail account that enables electronic submissions of FOIA requests.

2. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency establishing a mechanism to receive requests electronically?

Not applicable.

3. Does your agency track requests electronically?

Yes. SIGIR uses an Excel spreadsheet to track both initial requests and administrative appeals.

4. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency utilizing a system to track requests electronically?

Not applicable.

5. Does your agency use technology to process requests?

Yes. SIGIR maintains databases containing sources for all Quarterly Reports, audits, inspections, and investigations.

6. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency utilizing technology to process requests?

Not applicable.

7. Does your agency utilize technology to prepare your agency Annual FOIA Report?

Yes. SIGIR's current electronic tracking system allows for the creation of the documentation needed to draft the Annual FOIA Report.

8. If not, what are the current impediments to your agency utilizing technology in preparing your Annual FOIA Report?

Not applicable.

V. Steps Taken to Reduce Backlogs and Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests

1. Backlog Status

Not applicable. SIGIR has no backlogs. (Note: This is SIGIR's first Chief FOIA Officer Report).

2. Backlog Reduction Steps

Not applicable. SIGIR typically addresses requests within the 20 day response window.

3. Steps to Improve Timeliness

Not applicable. All FOIA requests are transmitted immediately to the appropriate SIGIR Directorate for research on the day they are received.