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**1 KOSB BRING SCHOOL AID TO SOUTHERN IRAQ**

Soldiers from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers have transported three lorry loads of desks and chairs across southern Iraq to be used in schools in Al Amarah. The furniture was donated by the British Schools of Kuwait.

Working in partnership with the Directorate of Education for Maysan Province, Mr Laith Hatam Salem, 1 KOSB CIMIC (Civil and Military Co-operation) team is helping normality to return to the schools. In the aftermath of the conflict, nearly every school in Maysan Province was completely looted. Anything portable was taken, leaving little or no infrastructure to allow the schools to function.

The CIMIC team are helping Mr Laith Hatam Salem to prepare the schools in Al Amarah for the start of the new term on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. Captain Greg Denning of the Educational and Training Services, who is from Bristol, said: "Being a teacher of primary children is not easy. They are difficult to keep occupied, interested and amused in the very best of teaching environments. Imagine trying to do that when your classroom has no tables or chairs". This is the possibility facing many teachers on 1<sup>st</sup> October when school returns from its summer holidays. However, thanks to the British Schools in Kuwait and the King's Own Scottish Borderers, several schools in the Battlegroup area can look forward to having tables and chairs on their return.

This is one of many projects being undertaken in Maysan Province. Along with the rehabilitation of schools, schools will be receiving "Schools in a Box" crammed full of teaching aids, books, pens and pencils. New blackboards will also be installed in many schools, thanks to a UNICEF programme.

The CIMIC team co-ordinated the move of the desks and chairs to Al Amarah using local civilian contractors, where the KOSB provided manpower and security.

The return to school does not seem as daunting for these children as it could be. There is still much work to do and challenges ahead, but by working together we're getting there.

Photograph – Left to Right - Mr Laith Hatam Salem, Captain Greg Denning, Mr Mohammed Aziz