

IRAQ CULTURAL HERITAGE PROJECT (ICHP)

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The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) works on **cultural heritage issues around the world**, including protecting cultural property, stemming illicit trafficking, and providing support to cultural heritage preservation projects in developing countries.

In Iraq, ECA has invested nearly \$3.4 million in cultural heritage projects over the past several years, including the renewal of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad.

With steady progress and welcome signs of stability in Iraq, **the time is right** for a more vigorous and visible effort in the area of cultural heritage. ECA is implementing a multi-faceted initiative that will directly address key challenges and have a beneficial impact in Iraq by aiding in reconciliation that emphasizes the rich heritage shared by all Iraqis.

The "Iraq Cultural Heritage Project (ICHP)" focuses on three critical areas:

- Museum Development includes enhancements to the Iraq National Museum system, consistent with international professional practices.
- Establishment of a conservation and preservation training institute in Erbil.
- Professional Development and Training opportunities are provided for museum professionals in collections management, conservation, and education. This area of focus also supports dual-language publications and joint scholarly activities in partnership with Iraqi professionals.

The project already has the support of the following partners:

- International Relief and Development, Inc.
- The Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago
- The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago
- The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore
- Conservation Department of the Winterthur Museum and Country Estate, Delaware
- University of Delaware
- National Park Service
- The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq
- State University of New York at Stony Brook

An additional overall goal is to reduce looting and illicit trafficking of Iraq's cultural property through promoting public stewardship, border security, and international cooperation.

"Iraqi heritage does not concern Iraq only. It **belongs to all humanity**. Our great ancestors showed remarkable ingenuity and enterprise. Through the hundreds of thousands of artifacts and records they left us a description of the dawn of civilization which, given its extreme antiquity, was marked by an amazing coherence and sophistication."

"Iraq alone, in its present situation, despite the great strides it is making, cannot cope with all these requirements. This is why **this initiative is so valuable**. It will help to get us started on this...immensely important task. We should now work hard on bringing other countries into this partnership."

-Ambassador **Samir Sumaida'ie**,
Ambassador of Iraq to the United States

