

THE WAITING IS OVER - IRAQ MUSEUM REOPENS



After six long years of waiting, the Iraq Museum finally opened its doors - some appear to believe it is not in a presentable state yet, however, the country's Prime Minister Nouri Maliki believed otherwise and joined the re-opening ceremony. What many Iraqis believed to be yet improbable, it recently became true. The Iraq Museum in Baghdad, which for most of the 20th century was admired as a shrine of great ancient civilizations, lost many of its treasures in the first months of the Iraqi war. Unfortunately, the objectives of the U.S. Army did not state to protect the cultural riches of the Iraqi nation and thus, piece by piece, the ancient relicts disappeared. Since then, many countries have been cooperating with Iraq to retrieve the precious treasures, in many cases successfully. And thus, the newly refurbished museum walls barely dry, opened up its doors to show the world the time is ripe. As many critics point out, this may just be an attempt by the government to say the country's ready and show power which it does not really possess. Furthermore, thousands of artifacts are still missing and the museum facility itself is far from being finished. With the financial help of Italy and the USA, the museum has undergone a major reconstruction, however, it is still in need of more advanced security arrangements as well as a proper heating and cooling systems. The opening ceremony involved some extensive security measures and invitations were distributed only a week prior to the big day. Prime Minister Maliki himself participated, thus attracting many visitors as well. Those who were not officially invited were however only allowed to sneak a peek at the fence protecting the area of the museum. Only 8 of the original 26 galleries were available for the visitors to explore, nevertheless, they had the unique opportunity to admire the **ancient art of pottery, beautiful sculptures and other relics from Sumerian and Babylonian times, as well as stone, relieves of the Assyrian King Sargon II**. Even though the feelings about the museum vary, it is still great news that culture is returning back to the Iraqis. Finally, something else to talk about than war and daily loss of life.

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