



By: TA | AP Brief

# UN ends its mission in Iraq after 22 years



United National Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was in Baghdad on Saturday to mark the end of the **political mission** set up in 2003 following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that toppled Saddam Hussein.

The **U.N. Security Council**, at Iraq's request, voted last year to wind down the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), by the end of 2025.

The mission was set up to coordinate post-conflict **humanitarian and reconstruction efforts** and help restore a representative government in the country.

Iraqi caretaker Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said his country "highly values" the mission's work in a region "that has suffered for decades from dictatorship, wars, and terrorism." He said its conclusion showed Iraq had reached a stage of "full self-reliance."

"Iraq emerged victorious thanks to the sacrifices and courage of its people," he said in a joint statement with Guterres.

The ending of UNAMI's mandate "does not signify the end of the partnership between Iraq and the U.N.," Sudani said, adding that it represents the beginning of a new chapter of cooperation focused on development and inclusive economic growth.

The prime minister said a street in Baghdad would be named "United Nations Street" in honor of the U.N.'s work and in recognition of 22 U.N. staff who were killed in an Aug. 19, 2003, **truck bomb attack** on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, which housed the U.N. headquarters.

## Iraq is now a normal country

Guterres praised "the courage, fortitude and determination of the Iraqi people" and the country's efforts to restore security and order after years of sectarian violence and the rise of extremist groups, including the Islamic State group, in the years after the 2003 invasion.

"Iraqis have worked to overcome decades of

violence, oppression, war, terrorism, sectarianism and foreign interference," the secretary-general said. "And today's Iraq is unrecognizable from those times."

## Relations between the U.N. and Iraq will become normal relations with the end of UNAMI - Antonio Guterres

Iraq "is now a normal country, and relations between the U.N. and Iraq will become normal relations with the end of UNAMI," Guterres added.

He also expressed appreciation for Iraq's commitment to returning its citizens from the **al-Hol camp**, a sprawling tent camp in northeastern Syria housing thousands of people — mostly women and children — with alleged ties to the IS.

Guterres recently recommended former Iraqi President **Barham Salih** to become the next head of the U.N. refugee agency, the first nomination from the Middle East in half a century.

Salih's presidential term, from 2018 to 2022, came in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic State group's rampage across Iraq and the battle to take back the territory seized by the extremist group, including the key northern city of Mosul.

At least 2.2 million Iraqis were displaced as they fled the IS offensive. Many, particularly members of the Yazidi minority from the northern Sinjar district, remain in displacement camps today.