

Kazem Tarek Adil Kazem,
Chargé d'Affaires
of the Republic of Iraq to Ukraine

FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ AND UKRAINE

— *Your Excellency, please give us a brief overview of the Iraqi-Ukrainian relations.*

— 16 December 2025 will mark the 33rd anniversary of the official establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Iraq and Ukraine, yet the ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries date back to the 1960s. These relations are continually developing in a wide variety of fields and have strengthened substantially since Ukraine's independence on 24 August 1991. Since the official opening of its headquarters in Kyiv on 22 June 2009, the Embassy has been constantly keen to enhance cooperation in the political, economic, cultural, and other fields that serve the common interests. The Iraqi diplomatic mission continued to perform its diplomatic duties with the Ukrainian side and protect the interests of the Iraqi community in Ukraine, despite the exceptional circumstances Ukraine is experiencing due to the outbreak of the deplorable war on 24 February 2022. Over the historical course of the diplomatic relations between our two countries, many bilateral events and activities, mutual visits, and numerous meetings and contacts were held between Iraqi and Ukrainian officials at different levels.

— *During the First Global Peace Summit in Switzerland, held on 15 June 2024, Ukrainian Foreign Minister (2020–24) Dmytro Kuleba met with his Iraqi counterpart, Mr Fuad Hussein. How do you assess the importance and outcomes of this meeting? What is the role of the Republic of Iraq in the endeavours to end the Russian war against Ukraine?*



— Based on the Iraqi Government's eagerness towards global peace and security and settlement of armed conflicts via diplomatic means, Iraq has joined the Arab Ministerial Contact Group on the Ukrainian Crisis, which was established in March 2022, in accordance with the resolution of the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States and included Foreign Ministers of Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, and United Arab Emirates, as well as the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, in order to follow up and conduct the necessary consultations and communications with the parties relevant to the Ukrainian crisis, with the aim of contributing to finding a diplomatic solution for the crisis.

Consequently, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, Mr Fuad Hussein, participated in the First Global Peace Summit, during which he held a meeting with the then Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Mr Dmytro Kuleba. This meeting was preceded by another meeting between the two Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on 18 February 2023 and Mr Kuleba's subsequent visit to Iraq on 17 April 2023.

Besides, in the context of the diplomatic interactions between the two countries, it should be mentioned that on 10 April 2023, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani received a phone call from President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and the two sides met on the sidelines of the 32nd Arab League Summit

held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 19 May 2023. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq received a second phone call from the President of Ukraine on 21 May 2024.

All these political activities — among other issues — are within the framework of Iraq's neutral stance on the Russian-Ukrainian war, which, in accordance with the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution, focuses on not standing with one party against the other and calls for dialogue and resolving disputes through peaceful means with the participation of all parties to the conflict, as well as for supporting efforts aimed at ending the ongoing war and strengthening peace initiatives intended for finding a real and lasting solution to the conflict, in a manner that ensures respect for the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter.

— The Republic of Iraq has extensive experience in the field of humanitarian demining. What are the potential possibilities for cooperation in the mentioned field between Iraq and Ukraine, and have there been any steps in this regard?

— Our country has undoubtedly suffered from the scourge of wars and their devastating consequences. As a result, Iraq has gained considerable experience in the field of anti-mine activities and combating environmental pollution. In the context of strengthening the bilateral cooperation, Iraq is ready to share with Ukraine its experience in the field of environmental protection, climate change, mine clearance and removal of its negative impact, the process of agricultural land clearing, as well as application of innovative technologies, to solve the problems related to the negative effects of climate change, especially air pollution, lack of water resources, water quality deterioration, and other environmental issues.

The Embassy has already conveyed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq the request of the Ukrainian side to provide assistance regarding Ukraine's benefiting from Iraq's demining experience. The Iraqi side has expressed its readiness to cooperate with Ukraine in this area in compliance with international conventions. The Embassy has also addressed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and requested to be informed about Ukraine's suggestions in this regard. It is worth mentioning that the Ukrainian side asked for assistance concerning benefiting from Iraq's experience in the field of mine clearance during our meeting with the then Special Representative of Ukraine for the Middle East and Africa, Maksym Subkh, on 30 April 2024.



Пам'ятник Свободи. Багдад, Ірак
The Freedom Monument. Baghdad, Iraq

— Ukraine and the Republic of Iraq share many years of trade and economic cooperation. What is the Embassy's role in strengthening and developing this cooperation and increasing the volume of trade turnover between the two countries?

— Through extensive meetings with the Ukrainian side, the Embassy continues to stimulate trade and economic cooperation as well as increase bilateral trade rates by means of expanding the scope of exchange of agricultural, food, and industrial goods and products needed by the Iraqi markets, and by excluding intermediaries from the trade and economic cooperation processes between the two countries. These efforts also include the reactivation of the Iraqi-Ukrainian Business Council and the encouragement of companies and businessmen from both countries to participate in economic exhibitions and conferences held in Iraq and Ukraine, noting that the majority of trade exchanges between the Republic of Iraq and Ukraine are carried out through the private sector in both countries. Some private Ukrainian companies perform commercial and economic activities in Iraqi Kurdistan. Ukrainian companies also participated in the implementation of small housing projects in Baghdad, road projects, rehabilitation of electricity networks, and development of oil fields in Southern Iraq.

— It has been noted that the Embassy is interested in holding meetings with the heads of Ukrainian universities and institutes. What are the priorities for expanding your cooperation with Ukrainian higher education institutions? Are there plans to develop joint educational programmes or scientific cooperation that would enhance academic exchange and cultural ties between the two countries in the future?

— The Embassy attaches great significance to the development of bilateral cooperation in educational, scientific, and academic fields by conducting extensive meetings with the officials of Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science. These meetings explore ways to promote bilateral cooperation in these areas as well as by means of activating the Memorandum of Understanding for Educational and Scientific Cooperation signed between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Iraq and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in 2013, along with expanding direct contacts and academic cooperation, as well as prospects for exchanging scientific experience and the possibility of holding joint scientific conferences between Iraqi universities and prestigious Ukrainian universities.

The Embassy paid a number of visits to various prestigious Ukrainian universities, as well as received a lot of university rectors at its headquarters to discuss the affairs of the Iraqi students studying in Ukrainian educational institutions, and the ways to overcome the difficulties they face in Ukraine, along with the possibility of enhancing cooperation between Ukrainian and Iraqi universities (in particular, exchange of scientific and academic experience, curricula, research and scientific cadres, arranging qualification and training courses for teaching cadres, visit exchange, and establishing twinning relationships between the prestigious Ukrainian universities and their Iraqi counterparts).

— Cultural diplomacy plays a pivotal role in consolidating mutual understanding and strengthening bilateral relations. What initiatives does the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Ukraine plan to undertake to expand the scope of introducing the Iraqi cultural and civilisational heritage to the Ukrainian audience?

— One of the tasks entrusted to the Embassy lies in introducing friendly people of Ukraine to the civilisation of Mesopotamia and the cultural heritage of modern Iraq, as well as familiarising them with folklore and visual arts by means of carrying out events in Kyiv and

other Ukrainian cities within the framework of cultural diplomacy. However, Ukraine's current exceptional circumstances prevent us from holding large-scale events similar to those held before the outbreak of the war such as art exhibitions, concerts, cultural festivals, and theatrical performances and other events which were organised by the Embassy alone or jointly with the Ukrainian Side or Embassies of other brotherly and friendly countries accredited in Ukraine, in particular the Nowruz International Festival and OUTLOOK World Culture Festival. Depending on the circumstances, the Embassy receives scholars, researchers, media professionals, and students from a number of Ukrainian universities to acquaint them with the cultural activities held in the Embassy's premises on various occasions, such as the Baghdad Day, Iraqi Diplomacy Day, etc. Also, the Embassy participated in the Charity Fair 2024, where the Iraqi stand was highly appreciated by Ukrainian and foreign visitors.