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## **IRAQ DOES NOT HAVE CAPACITY TO REBUILD AFTER ISIS, CULTURE MINISTER SAYS**

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Devastated by a war with ISIS that ruined its cities and left millions homeless, Iraq does not have the capacity to rebuild without major support from the international community, the countrys culture minister Fariyaad Rawandizi told The National on Monday.

A Unesco conference held on Monday in Paris, which focused on reconstructing the northern city of Mosul, was attended by dozens of potential donors.

Numerous Iraqi cities were reduced to rubble in the three-year occupation by ISIS and the ensuing battles to wrestle them back.

This conference aims to implement the initiative of rebuilding Mosul; this is very important because we cannot do this by ourselves, we dont have the capacity, Mr Rawandizi told The National.

The size of the destruction in Mosul and especially in archaeological sites was huge, he said.

It needs national and international co-operation between Iraq and Unesco and other organisations to rebuild archaeological sites, the minister said.

More than 40,000 houses have been destroyed and around 700,000 people have been displaced, according to UN estimates, in addition to the damage to religious, governmental and medical buildings, museums and libraries that need restoration.

We are in need of financial international support, Mr Rawandouzi said, adding he expects that Mosul will need \$2 billion (Dh7.35bn) in reconstruction aid to unblock streets and rebuild homes.

Mosul has a unique role to play in the rebuilding of Iraq, he said.

The city is a living symbol for the identity of Iraqis; the city is very rich in heritage and was not only known as a centre of trade but as a heartland for the culture and civilisation, not only in the Middle East but also in the world."

<https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/iraq-does-not-have-capacity-to-rebuild-after-isis-culture-minister-says-1.768917>