
FRESH CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS SPRING UP AMID IMPROVED SECURITY IN IRAQ

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BAGHDAD

In light of the great improvement in the security situation following the victory over the Islamic State (IS) in Iraq, the capital Baghdad has seen an increase in construction projects.

In accordance with the rebuilding process and the growing needs of the Iraqi population, investing companies from around the world are expected to focus on Iraq.

In Baghdad's al-Qadisiyah neighborhood, a new five-star hotel that overlooks the Tigris river is erecting on a land of 20,000 square meters.

The hotel that will include an upscale shopping center and a hypermarket is expected to open in three years, one of many fresh projects reflecting the tangible stability in Iraq.

A series of engraving ordeals have engulfed Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, but now there are some good signs of healing. Real estate is signaling a new era in the country.

In western Baghdad, a fresh apartment complex of 37 towering buildings was built on a land of 120,000 square meters by an Iraqi-Egyptian company named Ayadi Group. The compound also includes a kindergarten, schools, a medical center and a social club.

Baghdad is on the cusp of acquiring mega city status with over eight million citizens living within its borders, a significant increase in population that calls for a transition from horizontal to vertical architecture.

"There are no electricity cuts, so we do not have to worry about alternate power sources such as noisy generators. I call on the government and banks to offer loans to people, especially low-income families, so they can purchase their own apartment," Kanaan al-Zaidi, a bank employee and resident in the complex told Xinhua.

In December 2017, Iraq declared full liberation from IS after recapturing all areas once seized by the extremist group. However, citizens of Baghdad still have fears of outlaw armed groups and gangs who could intimidate or harm civilians.

"Most importantly, it is a safe and comfortable environment for families, no strangers are allowed inside," Zaidi added, praising security within the complex.

A security supervisor in the complex named Abu Ali noted that "for the security provided by living

in the complex, some families sold their houses to purchase an apartment here. It is a relief from worrying about the threat of armed groups," he said.

In the past few months, a series of high profile assassinations targeting prominent women, medical personnel and intellectuals have spread fear among Iraqis and raised questions over the durability of security achieved in the country.

In face of the rapid increase in population, vertical architecture seems to be the right solution for Baghdad, especially with the country becoming a fertile ground for new investment projects as the new government seems keen to promote investments in the country.

Several apartment complexes have emerged in the Iraqi capital, such as the Iraq Gate project which overlooks al-Zawra Park and includes apartment buildings, a hospital, shopping center and an international school.

However, infrastructure in Baghdad and other major cities in Iraq remains in a dilapidated state with unrepaired deteriorated roads, almost non-existent public toilets and hospitals lacking capacity and cleanness.

Iraqis are still afflicted by a crippled health system, contaminated water and endless electricity shortages, and remain agitated by a history of unfulfilled fake service projects.

They accuse post-2003 local and central governments of negligence and nepotism in granting investment licenses to dubious companies and contractors.

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