
IRAQ: \$60M OF GOV'T FUNDS STOLEN FROM MOSUL

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Over \$60 million has been embezzled from the public purse in Mosul by officials close to the recently sacked governor, Iraqs anti-corruption Integrity Commission announced yesterday.

\$40 million of the money stolen had been set aside to rebuild the destroyed city which has been ravaged by three years of Daesh rule and a drawn out battle to oust the terrorist group.

Mosuls ex-Governor, Nawfel Akoub, is currently on the run after police issued a warrant for his arrest in the wake of the Mosul ferry disaster.

The disaster saw 100 people die when a ferry sank in the Tigris on 21 March. Most were women and children headed for Nowruz New Year celebrations on a small nearby island.

Following the incident, Akoub was accused of mismanagement of public funds and abusing his position.

The Integrity Commission avoided accusing Akoub personally but announced that it was someone close to him whod stolen the money.

Akoub is suspected to be laying low in Erbil in Iraqs Kurdish region after he was unanimously sacked by Parliament in March.

Parliament had already been investigating accusations of corruption in Nineveh province, of where Mosul is the capital. Their results came in light of the outrage over the capsizing of the ferry.

To date, only \$6 million of the missing funds have been recovered by the government, according to AFP.

Transparency International, a research institute for worldwide corruption, has said Iraq is the 168th most corrupt country in the world, of 180 listed.

Iraqs weak public institutions, internal conflict and deep instability allow corruption to become rife with little to no checks on official abuse, its report said.

Earlier this year, Kuwaits Consul General in Erbil, Dr. Omar Al-Kandari, said corruption and a lack of security are two of the major obstacles facing reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

In 2018, an Iraqi corruption watchdog estimated \$320 billion had been stolen over the past 15 years of conflict.

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