



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Southern District of New York

U.S. ATTORNEY PREET BHARARA

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Ellen Davis, Jerika Richardson,
Carly Sullivan
(212) 637-2600

MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY RETURNS STOLEN SADDAM HUSSEIN PLATES AND IRAQI ROYAL CHINA TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Nineteen Royal Plates Returned in Total

Preet Bharara, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today the return to the Republic of Iraq, of several pieces of stolen dinner and salad plates once belonging to Saddam Hussein. Also returned was stolen china that once belonged to the Iraqi Kingdom's King Faisal II Royal Family (collectively the "Iraqi Plates"). The Iraqi Plates, some of which contained the Iraqi seal, were returned yesterday to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations.

In November 2011, the United States Attorney's Office became aware that the Iraqi Plates had been illegally imported into the United States in violation of United States law and subsequently sold on Ebay. The Iraqi Plates, which were purchased by Creative Time, an art group in Manhattan, were being used by a Manhattan restaurant, Park Avenue Autumn, as part of a creative art exhibition. After being advised of the illegal status of the Iraqi Plates, Creative Time, the owner of the Iraqi Plates, agreed to voluntarily relinquish them to the custody of the United States Attorney's Office, so they could be returned to their rightful owner, the Republic of Iraq.

Mr. Bharara praised the Department of Justice Office of International Affairs and the United States Marshals Service for their assistance in the investigation and repatriation. Mr. Bharara thanked Creative Time and Park Avenue Autumn for their cooperation and prompt response which ensured that these stolen cultural items were returned to the Republic of Iraq, the rightful owners.

This case is being handled by the Office's Asset Forfeiture Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney and Asset Forfeiture Unit Chief, Sharon Cohen Levin, is in charge of the investigation and repatriation.

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