



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

NOV 20 2013

Dear Mr. Israel:

Thank you for your letter of November 13 related to the Iraqi Jewish Archive (IJA).

In August 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) signed an Agreement, pursuant to which NARA was to take temporary physical custody of the IJA, in its damaged state, for the limited purposes of preserving, conserving, restoring, and exhibiting the material in the United States. We believe that without this agreement the U.S. would not have been able to remove the items from Iraq for restoration and preservation. The collection is currently on display to the public at the O'Brien Gallery at the National Archives. In response to a request from the Iraqi Jewish diaspora community, the collection will also be on display in New York in early 2014. Concurrently, NARA continues with its efforts to digitize the material so that it can be made available worldwide, and the State Department is funding the training of two Iraqi preservation specialists working alongside specialists at NARA on conservation techniques for the IJA materials.

The Department is committed, in accordance with the Agreement, to return the IJA to Iraq following the completion of the preservation and exhibition activities in the United States. At the same time, we are aware of the sensitivities surrounding the return of the material and are prepared to engage in discussions with the Government of Iraq on this topic. To this end, Iraqi Ambassador Faily recently suggested that he would be open to discussions with interested parties to address the return of the IJA to Baghdad. We will work to facilitate such a dialogue.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Julia Frifield  
Assistant Secretary  
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable  
Steve Israel,  
House of Representatives.