



Baghdad Calling: Iraq in photos as never seen before

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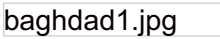
BAGHDAD CALLING is an exceptional photography book by photojournalist [Geert van Kesteren](#) – but it much more than that. Kesteren has combined his own professional photography with images taken from the mobile phones and digital cameras of ordinary Iraqis. 

The book itself is printed on newspaper paper but bound which gives it an eerie quality. It combines a coffee-table photo book with both news photography and a family album. It is a creative example of networked journalism mixing the professional with the public as journalist.

The scenes are not particularly harrowing at first glance. There are images of happy family gatherings as well as explosions and wreckage. The minimal text gives first-hand accounts by Iraqi refugees of what happened since the 2003 invasion. 

But overall it builds up a convincing and moving picture of life in war-time. The surreal but very practical nightmare that everyday existence can become when normal society falls apart. The Independent's [Robert Fisk](#) covered Iraq and he points out the need for this kind of approach to recording what was happening:

“We Westerners need the locals to photograph their tragedy and their ragged, often fuzzy, poorly framed pictures contain their own finely calibrated and terrible beauty. The fear of the cell-phone snapper is contained in almost every frame.”

Fisk is right. The people are recording their lives, even when living at the heart of a conflict. It is part of the journalist's job now to draw upon that material to give a better picture of what the news stories mean for the humans involved. 

You can buy [Baghdad Calling here](#). You can see extracts [here](#).

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