

# Annual Report 2025

## A Legacy of Oppression Feeds on Press Freedom

**Monitoring Violations Against Journalists in Iraq**

**1/1/2025 – 28/12/2025**

## Introduction

Cases of restriction and the decline of press freedoms in Iraq continue at a deeply alarming rate. The year 2025 witnessed a clear shift in strategies of repression targeting journalists of all genders and media outlets.

Based on a full year of monitoring, it has become evident to all that journalists are facing increasing pressure and unprecedented challenges, with most restrictive measures resulting from the instrumentalization of state authorities as a means to silence voices and curtail journalistic work.

Throughout 2025, the government devoted intensified efforts to monitor media outlets and journalists, mobilizing all state institutions as tools of pressure and blackmail. It also continued last year's methodology of filing lawsuits against journalists and media outlets under laws inherited from the former dictatorial regime.

The *Communications and Media Commission (CMC)* has emerged as one of the most prominent entities misusing powers not stipulated in its mandate to ban, block, or suspend media outlets, television programs, and news websites.

Meanwhile, security agencies continue to employ policing tactics to restrict journalists: confiscating their equipment, detaining them, subjecting them to torture and assault—without deterrence or accountability.

Despite a reduction in the number of violations compared to last year, the severity and gravity of these violations have increased significantly, contradicting the spirit and essence of the Constitution.

The aim of this annual report is not to attack any specific entity, but rather to correct course and reinforce the principles of media freedom and journalistic work guaranteed by Article 38 of the Iraqi Constitution.

This report also serves as a direct appeal to the international community and institutions responsible for safeguarding freedoms, to put an end to what Iraqi journalists and media professionals endure while striving to convey the truth to the world.

The report documented **182 violations** in 2025, distributed among arrests and detentions, prevention of coverage, lawsuits, restrictions imposed by the CMC, in addition to assaults, beatings, and individual decisions to block journalistic coverage, as follows:

**Arrests and detentions:** 34 cases

**Prevention of coverage:** 53 cases

**Assault and obstruction of work:** 22 cases

**Lawsuits related to journalistic work:** 28 cases

**Threats and intimidation:** 7 cases

**Murder and attempted assassination:** 2 cases

**Broadcast suspension:** 4 cases

**CMC violations:** 21 cases

**Other:** 11 cases

According to the association's monitoring over the past months, **February recorded the highest number of violations**, followed by **July**, out of the total violations during the year.

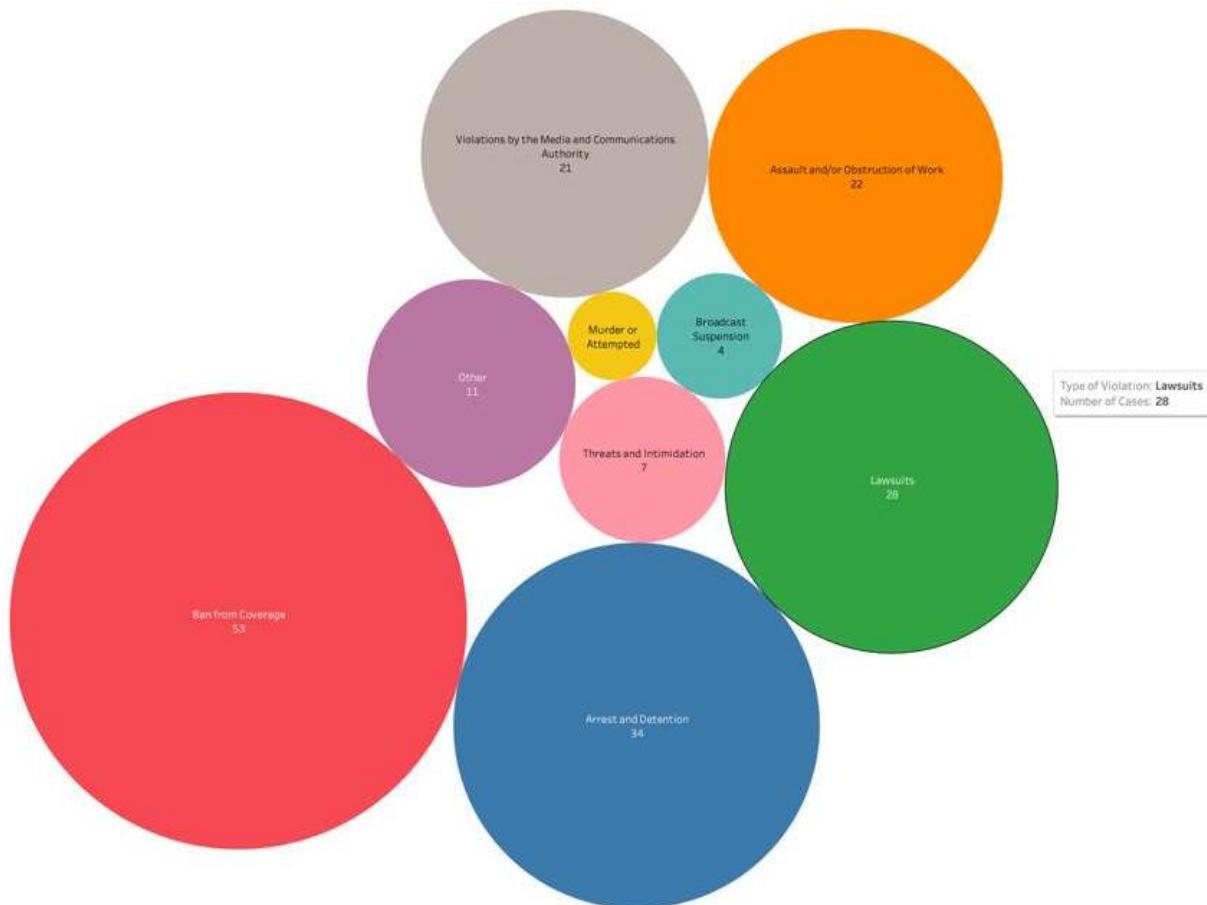
At the governorate level, **Baghdad topped the list** with 62 violations, followed by **Sulaymaniyah with 22**, and **Basra with 19 cases**.

## Statistics of the violations against the Iraqi Press during 2025

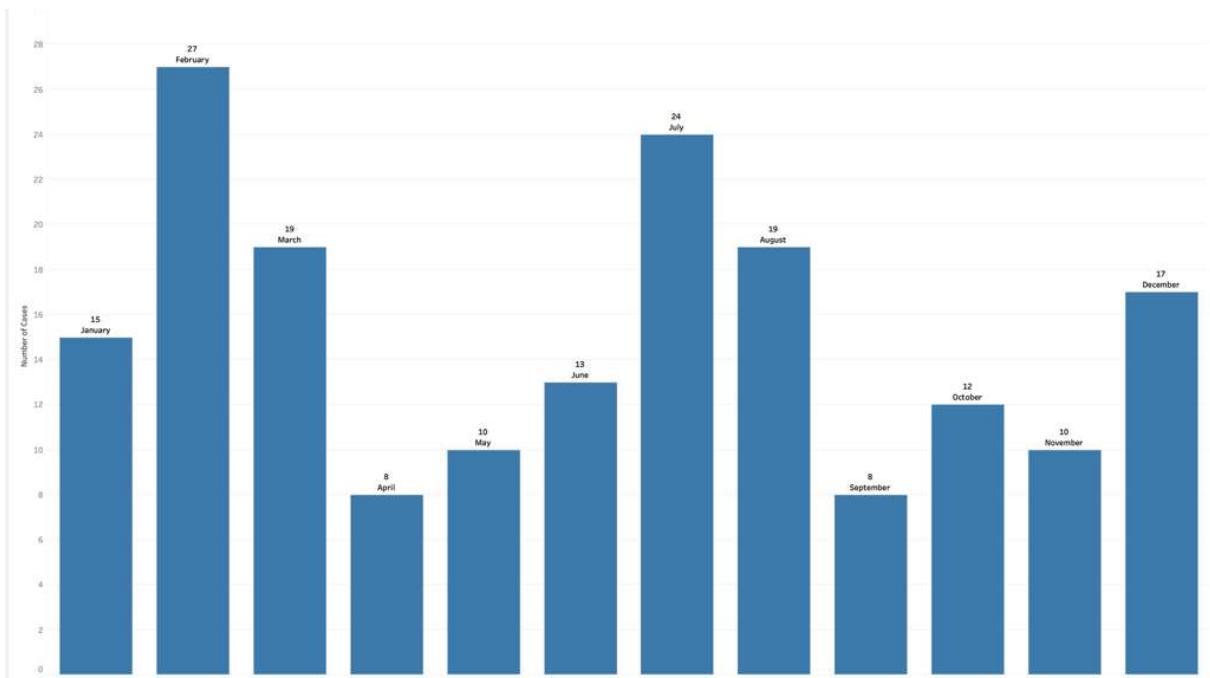
Nature of violations	Number of cases
Killing and assassination attempt	2
Arrests and detention	34
Threats	7
Assault and obstruction	22
Prevention of coverage	53
Lawsuits	28
Broadcast Suspension	4
CMC Violations	21
Others	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>

## Report in Figures

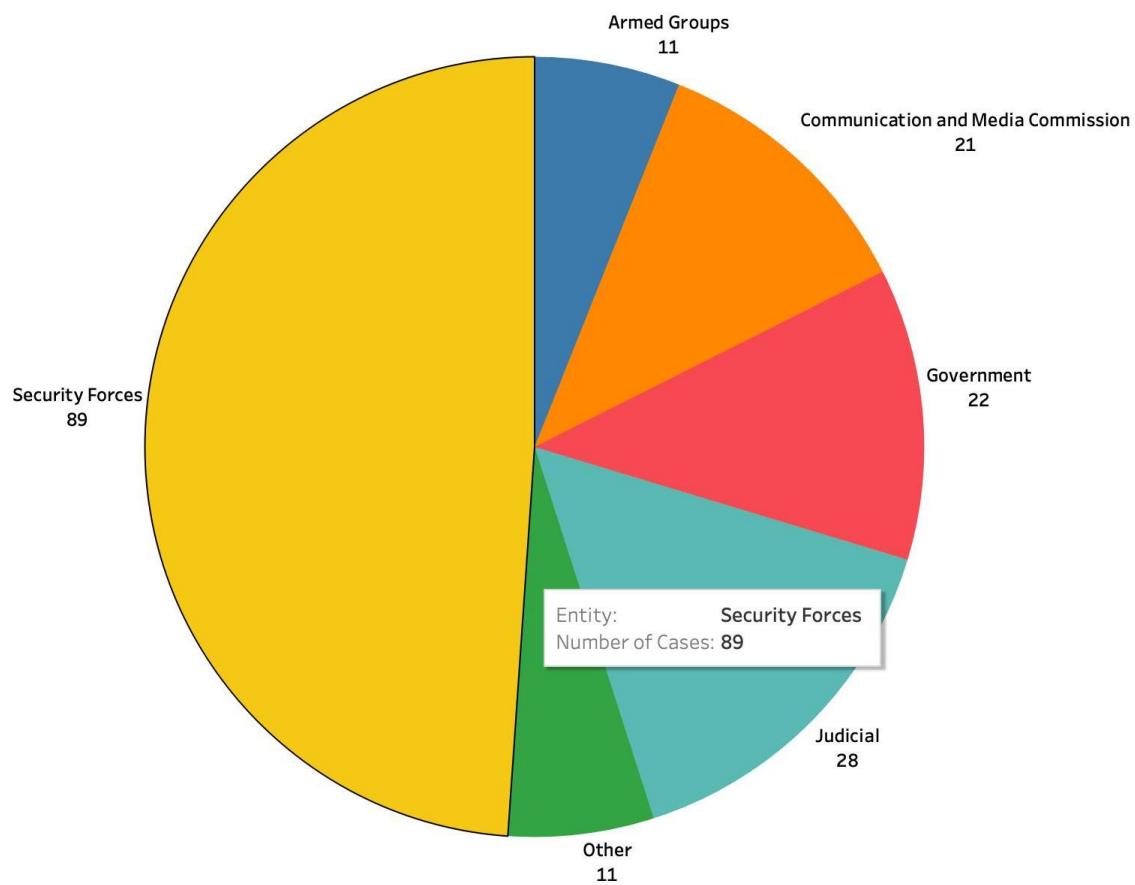
### Violation Type



### Violations By Month



### Violations By Entity



### Violations By City



## Conclusion

According to the monitoring report of the **Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq**, a clear deterioration has been observed in the state of press freedom in the country. Violations are no longer confined to a single pattern; instead, they range from arrest and arbitrary detention, to prevention of coverage, threats, intimidation through legal action, and the instrumentalization of state institutions to restrict journalists both as individuals and as media entities.

The report warns of a **growing hostile environment** towards journalistic work, especially in light of the persistent culture of impunity and the absence of accountability—factors that continue to encourage the repetition of repressive practices.

This situation persists amid the continued insistence of successive parliaments on **not amending laws inherited from the former dictatorial regime**, and their failure to enact legislation on the **Right to Access Information**, as well as the failure to pass a law regulating the **Media and Publishing Court**, which was dissolved in 2017 due to the absence of a legal framework.

The report stresses that the authorities are failing to comply with the Constitution and international conventions that guarantee freedom of the press and journalistic work, and calls for **holding all perpetrators of violations and assaults accountable without exception**.

## Recommendations

The Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq (PFAA) submits its recommendations to the Iraqi authorities and to international bodies concerned with the protection of human rights and the preservation of the freedoms guaranteed by the Iraqi Constitution:

Reinstate the Media and Publishing Court in a manner consistent with the Constitution and international standards that safeguards freedoms, ensuring that publication-related offenses are not equated with other criminal offenses.

Enact the Right to Access Information Law in the form proposed by civil society organizations and journalists, and amend provisions related to publication offenses within the Iraqi Penal Code to align with constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press and journalistic work.

Release all detained journalists and end the systematic restrictions currently imposed by the authorities.

Preserve the independence of the Communications and Media Commission and prevent political agendas from influencing its work or being used to settle scores against opponents.

Instruct security forces not to demand official permits from media and journalistic staff, as such requirements have been annulled and are no longer legally in effect.

Protect journalists from assaults and threats, and open serious investigations to hold perpetrators accountable, thus addressing the ongoing issue of impunity.

Implement constitutional provisions that ensure the protection and respect of press freedom and journalistic work as guaranteed by law.

Refrain from using any form of authority to exert pressure on or restrict journalistic freedoms.