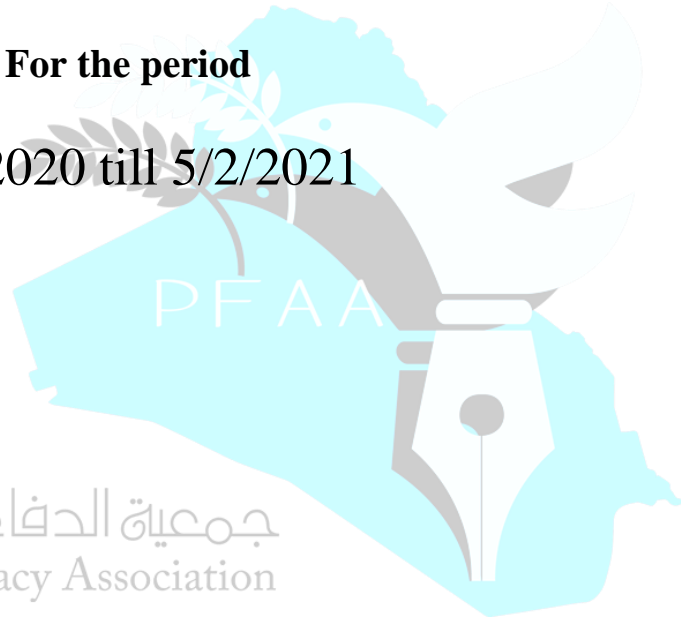


# Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq

## Media Observatory Report on the violations against Iraqi Journalists

For the period

3/5/2020 till 5/2/2021



جمعية الدفاع عن حرية الصحافة  
Press Freedom Advocacy Association

## **Reporting Team**

### **Preparation**

Israa Tariq

### **Translation**

Amal Ibrahim

### **Observation**

Nagham Kamel

Manar AlZubaidy

Shihab Ahmed

Mustafa AlSaeidy

Omar AlHilaly

Ouzin Joula

Mutaz AlAboudy

Buraq AlShimmary

### **Supervision**

Administrative Board

جمعية الدفاع عن حرية الصحافة  
Press Freedom Advocacy Association



## Structure

<b>Violations Enumeration Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Violations against Iraqi Journalists</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Violations plot in months</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Violations plot in provinces</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>11_10</b>

## Violations Enumeration Summary

<b>Violations</b>	<b>Total</b>
Raiding , storming, and armed attacks against journalists' homes and Media bodies	<b>10</b>
Threats	<b>2</b>
Injuries	<b>11</b>
Filing lawsuits, issued sentences and arrest warrants	<b>13</b>
Arrests and confinements	<b>63</b>
Beatings and prohibiting and obstructing coverage	<b>141</b>
Media Bodies closure and Relieving workers	<b>28</b>
Laws deemed critical to press freedom in Iraq	<b>9</b>

Press Freedom Advocacy Association

## Baghdad; the most dangerous area for Journalists

### **Preface:**

The Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq underlined the continuity of abuses and violations that are uprooting press freedom in all its forms in the country. Levels of violations are not diminishing and preserve their past levels due to the lack of interference and no steps were taken to eliminate these actions.

As World Press Freedom Day approaches, the line of suppressing freedom of expression continues, and press field spaces are narrowed by weapons, violence, threats and pressures by many official and informal actors.

Baghdad alone recorded (77) violations in one year, followed by Kirkuk (36) cases, out of a total of (268) cases observed by the Association within one year for the period (3/5/2020- 2/5/2021), nearly half of the violations took place in these two cities. The most recorded months of violations were June and August, with 51 violations each.

The violations varied this year to include threats, imprisonment, Vexatious actions, assaults, denial of coverage, as well as the closure of media outlets and the dismissals of workers.

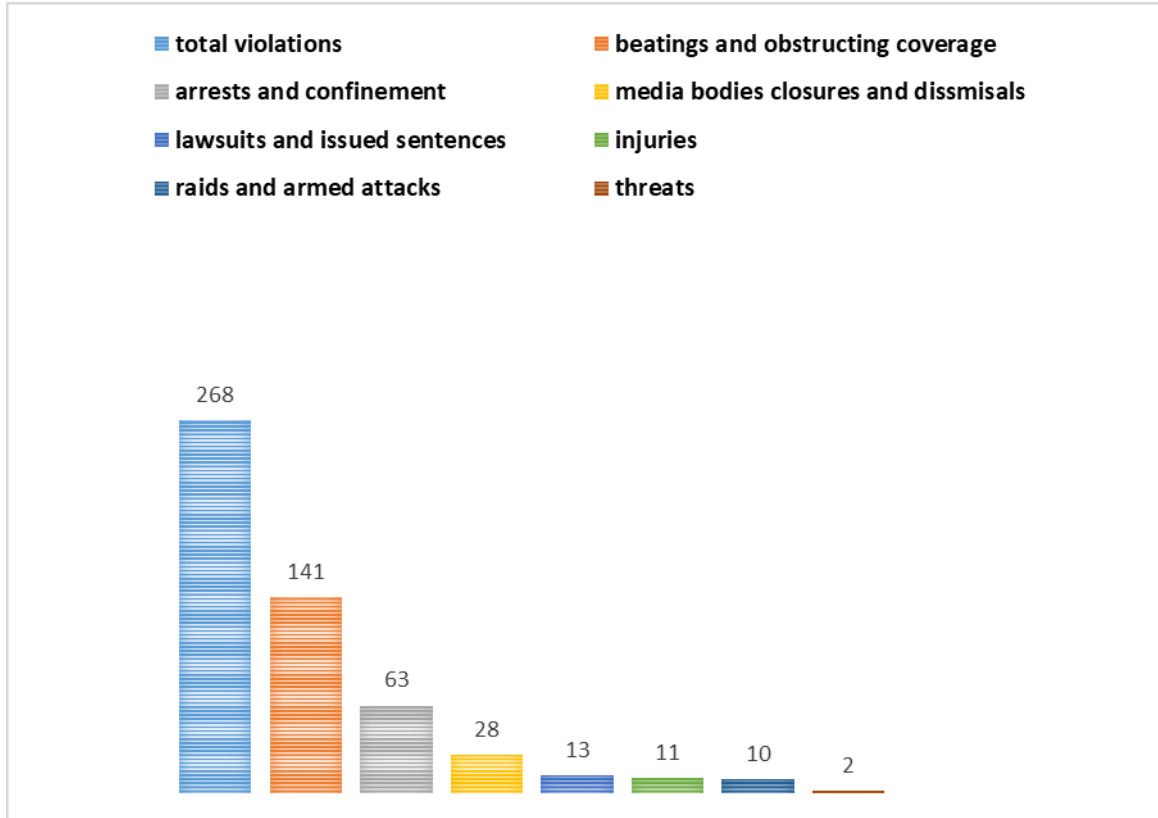
The association recorded 11 cases of injury despite the decline in protests, 63 arrests and detentions without judicial orders or arrest warrants, while (10) armed attacks were recorded, and (141) cases of beatings, prevention and obstruction of coverage, as well as threats against two of our fellow journalists.

At the level of job security, 28 media workers told the Press Freedom Defense Association that they were dismissed without prior notice.

Under the legal system inherited from the former regime, 13 lawsuits, sentences and arrest warrants have been filed against 13 journalists, in spite of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression principles. Still, the Iraqi legislator does not intend to amend or repeal this legal legacy.

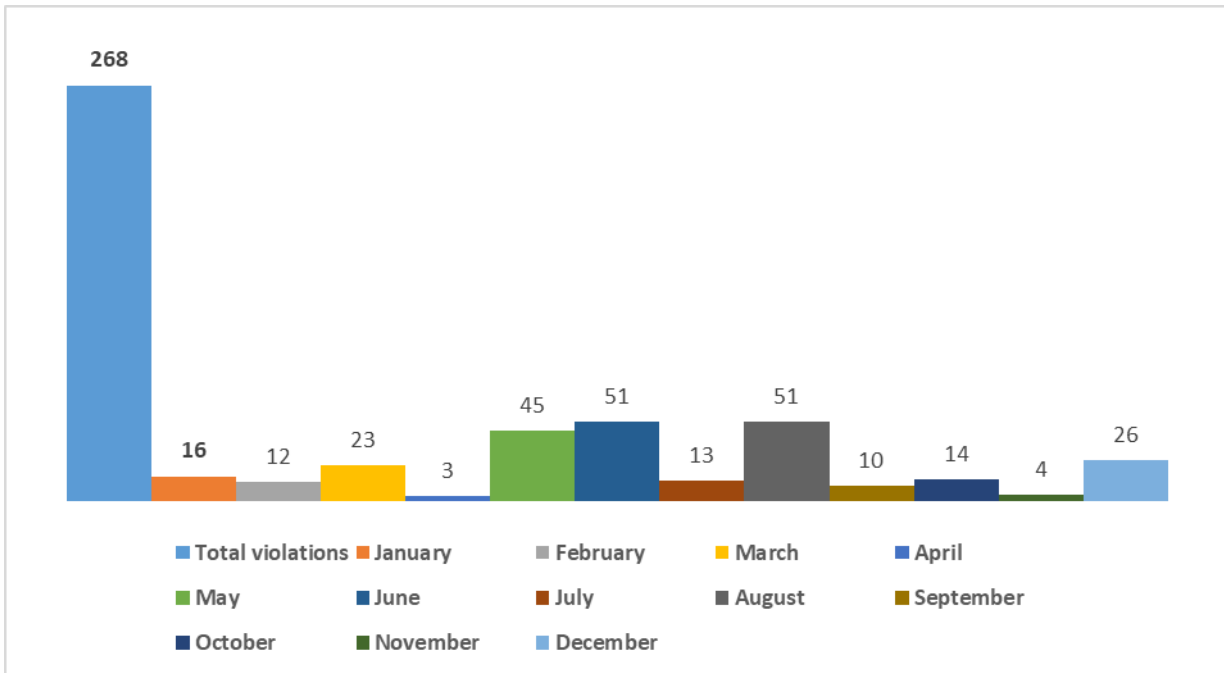


## Violations against Iraqi journalists



Figures show that the cases of prevention and obstruction of coverage and beatings are the highest during this year as well, and this indicates the authority's indifference to violence against journalists, as well as the marked rise in arrests and detentions. the security and safety of journalists is still at risk thus leading to their departure from their place of residence to a safer environment such as the Kurdistan Region or outside Iraq; a scene that is claiming the country numbers of journalists and declining press freedoms further more.

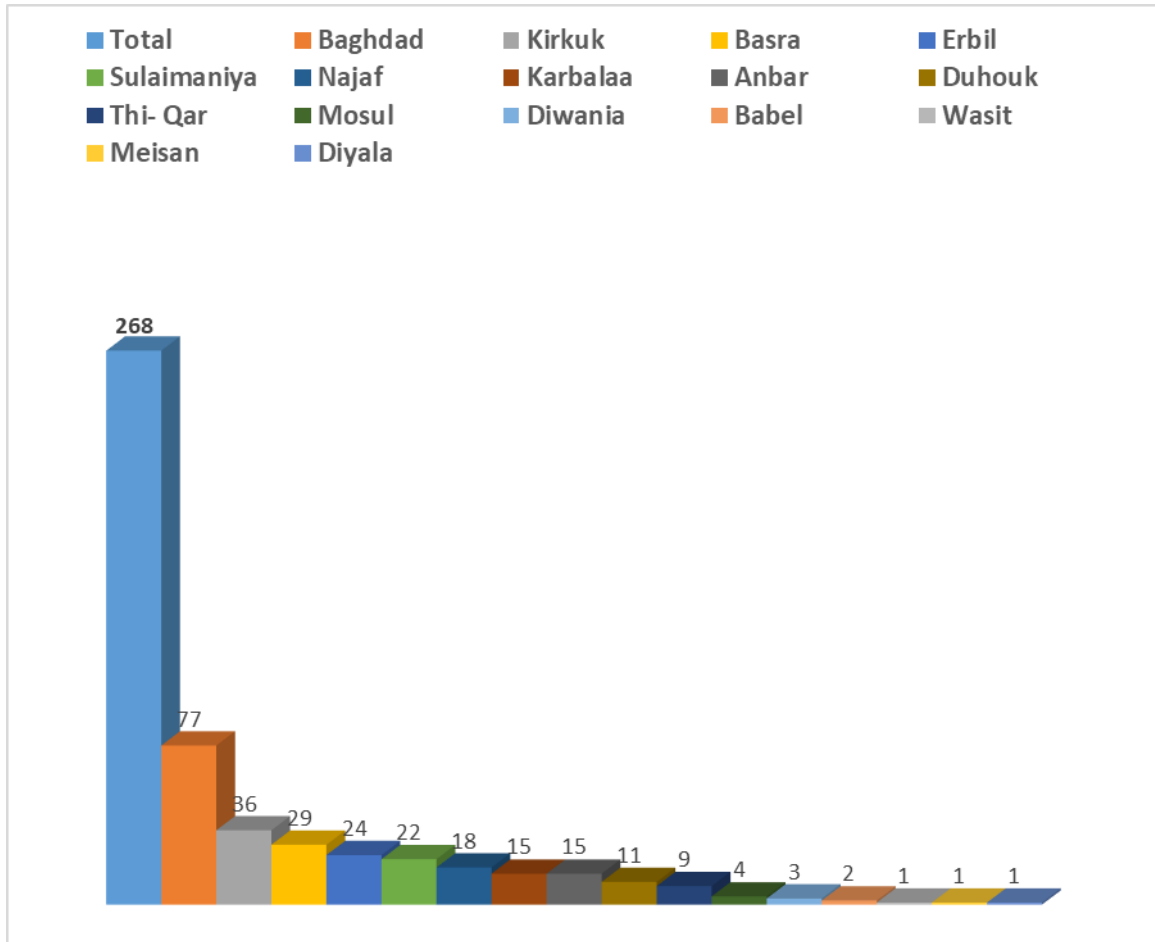
## Violations plot in months



According to the chart above, the highest incidents of violations were recorded in June and August (51) cases each, followed by May (45) cases.



### Violations plot in provinces



Not much difference from the past years, Baghdad ranked first in terms of the most registered provinces for violations with (77) cases and second place Kirkuk with (36) cases, and then Basra. Compared to previous reports, the three cities are the most frequently reported with the highest cases of violation with no serious approach to reduce figures.

## **Conclusion:**

From all of the above, it is evident that there is no involvement by the official authorities in confronting the recurrent violations of the constitution in addition to the indifference of the competent authorities to protect the constitution and its core principles. The president and PM of the Iraqi Republic failed to abide to their commitments to protect freedom of expression and press work in the country. Silence covered the file of impunity, as the murderers of journalists and perpetrators of armed attacks on the media are still free at large.

In addition, the authority is motionless about the beatings and attacks exercised by members of the security forces, as well as the lack of protection of media. Iraq recorded the worst incursions, burning and sabotage of a number of media organizations.

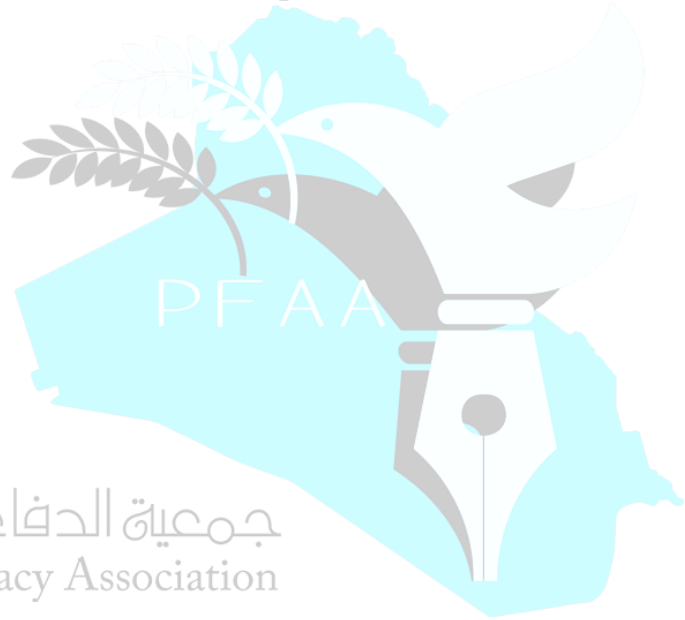
It is also noted that the Constitution is overseen, by activating laws inherited from the previous dictatorship, and deliberately restricting the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of journalistic work.

This justifies the ranking of Iraq as one of the last countries in the field of freedom of press work, especially since this year the country witnessed the issuance of a court ruling against Kurdish journalist Shirouan Cherwani, on charges of espionage and employment to sabotage the political system, only because he wrote articles criticizing the conduct and approach of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

This comes in the near absence of the role of unions and press associations, and their indifference to the freedom of press work, as well

as their silence over the lack of job security for journalists working in the local media.

All of the above highlights the need for journalists to join hands, create a new bloc that faces increasing challenges to freedom of journalistic work, expand the spaces eliminated by successive authorities to revive the independent press. It is also a matter of urgency to end the dominance of political parties in force in Iraq, and prosecute anyone found to be involved in violating the stipulations of the Iraqi Constitution.



جمعية الدفاع عن حرية الصحافة  
Press Freedom Advocacy Association