



## A Guillotine Violating the Constitution

30 Decisions — Most Violating Order 65 — in 6 Months: A New Ministry of  
Information in Iraq

The Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq monitored decisions issued by the Communications and Media Commission (CMC) over a six-month period (December 1 – May 31). These included the suspension of 5 political television programs, warnings issued to 2 Arab media outlets, fines imposed on 3 media organizations, and 18 additional decisions banning or preventing individuals from appearing on air under what are known as "broadcast regulations."

The Association noted legal and constitutional violations in the CMC's conduct, detailed in the conclusion of this report. It also observed that the head of the Commission's executive body granted himself the authority to issue blocking, suspension, and fine decisions — powers not granted to him under Civil Administrator Paul Bremer's Order 65. Furthermore, the Association documented the executive head banning individuals from appearing on air due to content they posted on social media, despite the Commission having announced in March 2023 the freezing of regulations that sought to subject social media to strict oversight, accountability, and opinion-based fines.



**Numerical Summary:**

Action	Number of Cases
Program suspension	5
Media outlet warnings	2
Media outlet fines	3
Appearance bans	18
Individual warnings	1
Presenter reprimands	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>



## Narrative Report

- December 17, 2025 The program "With Mulla Talal", presented by Ahmed Mulla Talal, was suspended for ten days on the pretext of violating broadcast regulations, with the Commission claiming the reason was blasphemy against the divine.
- January 25, 2026 The program "Qadhaya Al-balad; Issues of the Country", presented by Majid Salim and broadcast on Al-Balad satellite channel, was suspended for three months, with a fine of 40 million dinars imposed on the channel, on the grounds of hosting a political analyst previously banned by the Commission.
- January 25, 2026 The Commission imposed a fine of 40 million dinars on Zagros satellite channel, under the pretext of an unlicensed broadcasting violation.
- January 25, 2026 The Commission banned activist Ahmed Al-Washah from appearing for 90 days, citing violations of public decency standards and information integrity and transparency rules.
- January 25, 2026 Political analyst Fattah Al-Sheikh was banned from appearing for 90 days, citing violations of public decency standards and information integrity and transparency rules.



- February 9, 2026 The program "Sawt Al-Shaab; Voice of the People", broadcast on Iraq Al-Hadath satellite channel, was suspended for 30 days, and its presenter was suspended for 90 days. The channel was also required to delete the episode, refrain from redistributing it, and broadcast an official apology to the Ministry of Interior and the aggrieved party.
- February 19, 2026 Salam Adel was banned from appearing, citing violations of decency, public conduct, and information accuracy, pending the resolution of a complaint before the Hearing Committee.
- February 19, 2026 Bashir Al-Hujaimi was banned from appearing on the same grounds, pending the resolution of a complaint before the Hearing Committee.
- February 19, 2026 Abdullah Al-Jughaifi was banned from appearing, citing violations of decency, public conduct, and information accuracy.
- March 6, 2026 Jordanian political researcher Adel Mahmoud was banned from appearing in Iraqi media for three months, following statements he made during his appearance on "With Mulla Talal" broadcast on UTV satellite channel.

March 13, 2026 The program "Alhaq Yuqal; Truth Be Told", presented by Adnan Al-Tai, was suspended for 20 days, on the grounds of using language inciting sectarianism and contributing to division and strife among Iraqi society's components.



- March 13, 2026 The Commission fined Al-Ayyam channel 40 million dinars and banned Imad Al-Musafir from appearing for 20 days, citing violations of broadcast regulations.
- March 13, 2026 The Commission reprimanded the presenter of "Alqarar Lakum; The Decision Is Yours", Sahar Abbas Jamil, for failing in her professional role by not intervening to stop a verbal altercation between guests. In the same decision, Khaled Abu Iraq was banned for 45 days, Abdullah Al-Jughaifi for 45 days, and Bashir Al-Hujaimi for 60 days.
- March 15, 2026 Political analyst Ghaith Al-Tamimi was banned from all Iraqi media for a full year, on the grounds of broadcasting content that violates regulations on incitement to violence and hatred, as well as information accuracy and integrity.
- March 24, 2026 The Commission's executive head personally banned political analyst Najah Mohammed Ali from appearing for 45 days due to content posted on social media — not because of any media appearance.
- March 30, 2026 Journalist Hussam Al-Tai was banned from media appearances for 90 days, citing violations of broadcast regulations and professional standards that are adopted by the commission.
- March 30, 2026 Political analyst Nizar Haider was banned for 30 days on similar grounds.



- March 30, 2026 Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath channel received a formal warning for violating broadcast regulations, and was required to delete the offending material from all its platforms and publish an official apology.
- March 30, 2026 Al Jazeera English received a warning for supposedly publishing misleading information regarding the shelling that targeted Al-Habbaniyah camp in Anbar province.
- April 7, 2026 Political analyst Kamil Al-Kinani received a warning for violating broadcast regulations during his appearance on "Iraq Talk" broadcast on Al-Ayyam satellite channel.
- April 27, 2026 Political analyst Imad Al-Musafir and journalist Ahmed Abd Al-Sada were both banned from appearing for 60 days, on the grounds of publishing false and unfounded material and failing to uphold accuracy, integrity, and transparency in information dissemination via Meta platform.
- May 13, 2026 Hussein Al-Shalakh was banned from media appearances for 60 days for violating broadcast regulations during a statement made on "Al-Maydan" broadcast on Al-Oula satellite channel.
- May 14, 2026 The program "Truth Be Told", presented by Adnan Al-Tai on UTV, was suspended for 45 days, with the channel required to delete violating episodes broadcast on May 4 and 12 from all digital platforms.



May 24, 2026 Bashir Al-Hujaimi was banned from all media for 30 days — his third ban in less than a year — for violating broadcast regulations during his appearance on "Bisara; Frankly speaking" broadcast on N TV Iraq.

### Recommendations:

- The Prime Minister should assume his role in protecting press and media freedom in Iraq, and distance the Commission from prevailing political quota practices.
- The positions of the Commission's executive head, members of the Board of Commissioners, and the Hearing Council should be entrusted to media professionals, to correct the course of a body that has come to resemble a ministry of information.
- Parliament should legislate a law governing the Communications and Media Commission that guarantees its neutrality and insulates it from political whims.



## Conclusion:

The Communications and Media Commission has adopted conduct inconsistent with the form, spirit, and core of the Iraqi Constitution, and has come to pursue politically motivated behavior driven by narrow partisan interests — a consequence of the Commission's slide into political quota-based governance, which inevitably leads to the appointment of unqualified individuals to sensitive posts. A body that should be managing Iraq's entire frequency spectrum has abandoned that role and instead taken to monitoring what people say and write in order to silence them.

The Press Freedom Advocacy Association holds that the principle of banning individuals from television programs is a matter for the media outlet itself to decide — not any authority — as this contradicts the constitutional principle of dissolving the Ministry of Information.

Reviewing Paul Bremer's Order 65, which governs the Commission's work, the executive body has committed violations not stipulated in the Order, and has exceeded its regulatory mandate into outright censorship. Article 103 of the Constitution, in its first clause, states that the Communications and Media Commission is financially and administratively independent and that its work shall be regulated by law — yet the Commission remains subject to political quota systems and the control of ruling parties, with its powers manipulated through unconstitutional means.

While Order 65 specifies in its eighth section the form, type, and mechanism of penalties — exclusively within the authority of the Board of Commissioners, not the executive director (currently Baligh Abu Kallal) — a significant number



of these decisions were issued by the executive director without referral to the Board. Moreover, nowhere in Order 65 are banning or preventing individuals from appearing in Iraqi media listed among permissible penalties. This represents an interpretation that directly contradicts the Constitution's guarantee of freedom of expression, and indicates that the Commission has drafted its broadcast regulations in violation of Section 8 of the law.

A particularly troubling pattern has emerged in monitoring the Commission's conduct: individuals have been banned from television appearances due to content they posted on social media — not because of anything broadcast through media outlets — in direct contradiction of the Commission's own broadcast regulations, however unlawful those regulations themselves may be.

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