

## Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq

### Media Observation Report on Iraqi Press Violations

(1/1/ - 31/12/ 2020)



جمعية الدفاع عن حرية الصحافة  
Press Freedom Advocacy Association

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## Numeral Briefing

### Violations

Total violations	<b>305</b>
Victims of duty	<b>4</b>
Death threats	<b>2</b>
Arrests and detentions	<b>74</b>
Injuries	<b>10</b>
Military attacks against journalists and media bodies	<b>14</b>
Physical abuse and preventing coverage	<b>167</b>
Media bodies' closures	<b>31</b>
Filing lawsuits, sentences, and arrest warrants	<b>3</b>

## Introduction

The year 2020 was different at all levels, but for the press scene in Iraq, not much has changed in terms of the violations affecting them, despite the Corona pandemic which remains the main concern of the world and the crises it has caused in various fields, violations continue.

Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq recorded (305) cases of aggressions in various Iraqi cities, including assassinations, death threats and physical liquidation, arrests, detentions, assaults, beatings, prevention and obstruction of coverage, confiscation of equipment, armed attacks on journalists and media organizations, injuring journalists, as well as the closure of institutions.

Most of the cases were recorded with the measures of imposing a preventive curfew, overlooking the decision to exclude journalists from the bans, despite the high risk during the process of news and information, and having to roam the field, but this risk was met with the prevention of some security agencies, preventing coverage and other irregularities.

The association recorded (167) cases of beatings and preventing and obstructing coverage, which confirms the association's view on restricting the freedom of journalistic work in the country.

As for the distribution of violations according to the provinces, 16 provinces have witnessed types of violations against journalists; where the capital Baghdad dominated the top as the

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most narrowing province on press freedom for the second year in a row, with (71) violations, followed by Kirkuk (58) cases.

The Kurdistan Region has seen a serious decline in press freedom, despite that local laws supporting freedom of the press and the media and the right to information have been endorsed, especially after recent protests calling for reforms in the region.

### **Press Victims**

- On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, unidentified gunmen assassinated Dijla TV reporter Ahmed Abdel Samad and channel cameraman Safaa Ghali in Basra's Hakimiya area after covering the demonstrations there.
- On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, unidentified gunmen shot dead the director of the al-Janabi Group media Institution, one of the supervisors of al-Rasheed TV.
- On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, unidentified gunmen assassinated security specialist and journalist Hisham al-Hashimi in front of his home after returning from a televised interview, and so far, the perpetrators have not been identified.

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### **Injuries**

- On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Baghdadia TV cameraman Uday Akab was injured in his hand after being hit by a smoke bomb while covering protests in Baghdad's Tayaran Square.
- On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Al-Marbad reporter Haidar al-Mozani was severely suffocated in the protest sit-in in Basra governorate as security forces threw large quantities of tear gas canisters at sit-ins demonstrators.
- On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, AFP correspondent Ahmed al-Rubaie was injured in the leg and shoulder by riot police in Tahrir Square in central Baghdad.

- On June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, several colleagues from different agencies were suffocated by the use of tear gas by security forces to disperse protesters and colleagues (Reporters of Al-Marbad, I News Ahmed Al-Mozani and Fouad Al-Halafi, and AP cameraman Nabil Al-Jurani, while they were in front of the Parliament building in Basra to cover the demonstrations there.

- On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, riot police beat Zagros TV cameraman Bashar Mahdi, while covering the angry demonstrations in Najaf to demand better electricity, near the local government building, and during the coverage, members of the riot police beat the cameraman with batons, confiscated the camera and other equipment, resulting in severe bruises on the leg and back area, and he was taken to the nearby hospital for treatment.

- On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, Ruz News correspondent Mohammed Hassan Ibrahim was wounded after being shot while covering demonstrations that began to protest the deteriorating economic and services conditions and the delay in the payment of salaries in Rania district of Sulaimaniyah province.

- On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the staff of al-Baghdadia TV channel, consisting of (correspondent Nour Saidi and photographer Bashir Abdul Sharif), suffered minor injuries from hunting iron balls while covering demonstrations in al-Tarbiya square in Karbala.

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## Arrests and detentions

- On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Basra police detained Reuters cameraman Mohammed al-Fartoussi, al-Ghadeer TV reporter Fouad al-Halfi and al-Sharqiya cameraman Ahmed Raed Al-Safar, while covering the demonstrations there, and released them after one hour.
- On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces arrested photojournalist Maamoun Mohammed while covering protests in Basra province.
- On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, unidentified gunmen detained photojournalist Fadhil al-Mayahi while covering events in a Karbala side street and released him about an hour later.
- On January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, a force from Asaish in Erbil, arrested editor-in-chief of (Paragraph) News Agency, journalist Surkiu Mohamed after publishing a corruption report last year of a politician. He was then released on bail.
- On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Asaish forces detained the staff of the Kurdish channel "NRT" (reporter Omar Fatih and photographer Ziad Kamel) while they were on a press mission to cover a demonstration in Sayyid Sadiq district of Sulaimaniyah province. they were only released after two hours of detention.
- On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, intelligence forces detained The Subul alsalam correspondent; Safaa al-Kanani while he was covering the explosion of a homemade bomb that targeted the doctors' residence in the center of the province.
- On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Erbil police arrested journalist Heymen Mamend for publishing a Facebook post about the delay of salaries payments to employees, and released him on bail after 10 days of detention.
- On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Basra intelligence detained a reporter for Baghdad Alyoum news agency; Hassan Sabah, for publishing reports on corruption and real estate manipulation cases in the province. Finally he was released on bail and signed a written pledge not to publish any related reports after five hours.

- On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Erbil police arrested journalist Heymen Mamend after raiding his home following a statement he disclosed to NRT, and he has not been released till reporting.
- On April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, members of the Hassiba police station in Anbar arrested al-Anbar News Network director Saadoun Sheehan, accompanied by the Head of the provincial Journalists' Syndicate. A case filed by the director of the center against Sheehan, was built on charges of verbally abusing security forces on social media.
- On May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Kirkuk detained the staff of The Kurdistan 24 channel, consisting of (correspondent Hayman Daloui and cameraman Nozad Mohammed) at the brigade's headquarters. their personal phones, cameras and other equipment, were confiscated after covering the ruins of the fires of wheat and barley crops in agricultural areas, in the "Zanqari" area of The Daquk district of Kirkuk.
- On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces arrested Karwan Sadiq ; "Kali Kurdistan" correspondent in Dohuk and confiscated his personal phone, Ali Diwali correspondent of "Speda" and cameraman Hejer Barwari, Mahir Skfan; Director of "Khabir" channel, and the director of its radio; Ahmed Khaled. The named were near the protests scene and were preparing for coverage when they were arrested and eventually released.
- On May 31st, 2020, a security force arrested the presenter of the programs of al-Iraqiya tv, Anmar Abdul Aziz, after finishing the press coverage at al-Kindi Hospital.
- On June the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, the Police of Al-Asaish in Sulaimaniyah detained the staff of "Speda" channel, at their headquarters, for three hours. The team was covering demonstrations against the strict lockdown regulations, but they were cut and banned by an aggressive verbal storm that withdrew the staff's equipment and deleted all the material that was documented on the camera.

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- On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Duhok arrested journalist Qarman Shukri Zainaldin, whose fate remains unknown.
- On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, security forces in Kirkuk detained Kurdistan 24 correspondent Soran Kamran and cameraman Nozad Mohammed during their coverage of the farmers' demonstration that arose in the province.
- On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, The Asaish forces in Duhok detained NRT correspondent Briar Haji and cameraman Abdul Wahab Binyamin while covering the demonstrations, which arose against the deteriorating living situation.
- On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces arrested Hazar Rashid, a journalist at "Sibeiy" website and Ahmed Seif eddin, a photographer for "NRT" for four hours at the headquarters of Kuisengq district. Another channel cameraman, Mohammed Khalil Shawani was also arrested from the front of Schneider Park, where the demonstrators were supposed to gather. and released after midnight.
- On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a force from Al-Asaish arrested the office Director of the Kurdish channel "NRT", Rebwar Helmi Nouredine, and all his staff without mentioning any reasons. The staff included Editor Rywar Ali Saleh, information officer Ahmed Adnan Khalid, and the driver Sherif Mohammed Salim, without any warrant. They were released hours later.
- On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a force of Al-Asaish detained a radio reporter in Klar district of Sulaimaniyah Province, Reinas Saleh, while she was distributing questionnaires on citizens' confidence in the security services, and whether these agencies were held account for abusing human rights standards. She was released after several mediations.
- On August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Kurdistan arrested a number of journalists in Zakhō: journalist Farouk Omar was imprisoned without knowing his charge, this led him to go on a hunger strike for two days, and his health deteriorated and was taken to a hospital. Security forces arrested NRT correspondent Ahmed Zakhawi and did not allow his lawyer to meet him until a week later. Security forces also arrested journalists Omed rushosh and Qarman Shukri.

- On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a security force in the region arrested NRT office reporters in both Amadiyah and Zakho; Nihad Ormari and Ahmad Zakhawi, and seized their cameras and other equipment, after covering the crash of a Turkish spy drone in the area.
- On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a force of Al-Asaish arrested KNN reporter Difaa Harki in Aqra district of Sulaimaniyah province, for posting a video on social media showing forces of Asaish beating protesters in the region. He was forced to board the car after his mobile was confiscated. The forces released him after paying a sum of five million dinars and to attend on December 30<sup>th</sup>, for interrogation.
- On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, security forces in Sulaimaniyah arrested the director of "NRT" office Shwan Adel, following a lawsuit filed by Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmed, sister of Heru Ibrahim and the wife of late president Jalal Talabani, on the background of defame; the channel published a report indicating her partnership in a residential project. the other charge was related to the copyrights filed by a citizen claiming that he owns the copyrights of the video he claimed stolen by the channel.
- On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Anbar police detained the staff of the "Afaq" channel, consisting of reporter Qatada Adel and cameraman Mohammed Jamal, while covering an explosion targeting shops. their equipment was seized, and only returned after surveying what they had documented. They were led to detention inside al-Qatana center that lasted for three hours.
- On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, a security force from Al-Asaish arrested journalist Behrouz Jaafar in Sulaimaniyah in connection with a critical article he wrote about President Barham Saleh, where the representative of the President of the Republic there complained accused the journalist of defamation, and issued a court order to detain him for eight days pending investigation.

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- On October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, federal police security officers in Baghdad detained al-Ahd, iNews and Rudaw satellite crews while covering demonstrations in front of the Kurdistan Party headquarters in central Baghdad.
- On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Iraqi woman journalist and Middle East Eye international correspondent: Suadad Al-Salhi, and the crime assigned to her is article 433 of the Penal Code on defamation and slander, a case that occurs for the first time in Iraq, in which an arrest warrant is issued for the background of a defamation case without informing the accused.
- On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a security force of the Intelligence Service of Dhi Qar province detained the cadre of Altaghyir channel; reporter Ihab Al-Khafaji and cameraman Saad Al-Rikabi, while covering the center of the province. They were led to the police station, interrogated for half an hour, and then released after the intervention of media authorities.
- On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Asaish forces detained the staff of the Kurdish channel "Al-Iraqiya": correspondent Amin Ahmed and cameraman Serwan Barzani in Sulaimaniyah. Both men were on duty when they were detained, covering the protests that erupted in the city.
- On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Al-Asaish detained the "Payam" staff, reporter Hoare Mohammed Kan and cameraman Ako Juma, while covering protests in Klar district of Sulaimaniyah province.
- On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Sulaimaniyah arrested NRT correspondent Karzan Tariq while covering protests in the province and took him to an unknown destination.
- On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a force of Asayish arrested the staff of "Kurdistan 24" channel, consisting of Dalia Kamal, Hardy Hassan, and Barham Jamal, while they were in a popular market in Sulaimaniyah, to prepare a report on the living situation there, the equipment was confiscated, they were then led to the security headquarters.
- On December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a force of Al-Asaish arrested a "Ruz" News correspondent, Zusik Jouman, in Erbil. on his social media page, he criticized the suppression of freedoms by the regional authority, after

arresting dozens of activists and journalists in um Qasr area in Erbil, during demonstrations that took place in most areas of the region.

- On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Kirkuk province arrested a number of reporters while performing their duties in one of the villages of the province. The journalists were led to an unknown destination. They were the correspondent of the Turkish Anatolia news agency: Eugene Omran, Ruz news correspondent Soran Mohammed, correspondent of "Xian Media" Suran Abdul Karim, Easta site reporter Helmet Hasan, Akam Waziri, Stander website correspondent, while they were in the village of Belkana, which is located in The Sarkaran district of Al-Debs area; a territory of dispute among minorities in Kirkuk. The journalists were arrested for failing to obtain routine official approvals from the provincial and army operations command to cover the village.

### **Armed Attacks against journalists and Media bodies**

- On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a force from the Ministry of Interior, accompanied by a representative of the Communications and Media Commission (CMC) raided the Office of Dijlah Channel in Baghdad hours after the Jordanian government decided to suspend the channel's work in Amman for a month, and the raiding force asked employees and guests of the midnight newscast to leave the channel, and not to reopen again.

- On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, Asia programs presenter, Ishtiaq Adel , escaped an assassination attempt by unknown gunmen, where she was shot the moment she left her home in Baghdad, resulting in a bruised leg and fainting as a result of panic.

- On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, al-Wafa radio and television office in Kufa was hit by a rocket attack by unidentified militants, causing serious material damage.

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- On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a political allying group stormed the headquarters of MBC Iraq in Baghdad, in response to a content it aired and was regarded offensive by some.
- On May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, unidentified gunmen targeted the home of Ali Deram, "Asia" channel News Editor, with a homemade sound device that was placed in front of his house in AlShaab area, resulting in material losses.
- On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a force from Al-Asaish raided the office of The NRT channel in Duhok and detained their office manager and all employees, without an arrest warrant, and closed down the office.
- On August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, al-Asaish operations raided the Office of the NRT channel in Dohuk and confiscated all its equipment, after driving all its employees out.
- On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a police force raided NRT Office in Erbil and gave the workers three hours to leave, whereas the workers refused to leave since they had no legal basis. security forces returned then and forced them to leave the channel that they shut down without legal justification.
- On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, dozens of people stormed the headquarters of the "Dijla" channel and destroyed all its equipment, setting fire to the building in response to the musical content aired by "Dijla Tarab" that coincided with the tenth of Muharram.
- On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Zakros Channel office was extensively destroyed due to a rocket attack on the office in the Green Zone.
- On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, an Asaish force raided the home of journalist Sherwan Shirwani in Erbil, and took him to an unknown destination, after confiscating his mobile phone and personal computer, as well as scanning the house's camera footage.
- On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a security force of "Al-Asaish" raided the headquarters of "NRT" in Sulaimaniyah and detached the broadcasting equipment, and damaged its contents, before confiscating the equipment . all workers were expelled from the headquarters, and its doors were

closed. The incident came on the background of covering the protests that demanded the payment of dues in the province.

- On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, unknown assailants burned the car of the Iraqi media network's presenter, Ahmed Shukri, in front of his home in Baghdad.

### Physical abuse and preventing coverage

- On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces prevented AlMerbad radio reporter Mustafa Shaheen from covering the protests in Basra, broke his personal camera and threatened to arrest him.

- On January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, Babil police attacked The Dijla tv reporter Ammar al-Taie while he was on the scene of the protests.

- On January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a group of Sadrists in Babylon expelled the cadre of "Dijla" satellite channel: reporter Mazen Alwan and cameraman Ali Haidar, after covering a demonstration organized by the bloc.

- On January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a Basra protester beat the staff of al-Itijah tv, consisting of correspondent Ali al-Batat and cameraman Mustafa Munther, while covering the demonstrations there.

- On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Kirkuk police prevented "Speda" channel staff, reporter Saif Anwar and cameraman Iyad Hama from covering demonstration of farmers in Ain Al-Debs district to resolve the issue of agricultural land in the area.

- On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a number of Tahrir Square protesters prevented the staff of the "Fi Almaydan" program, of al-Rasheed TV from coverage. reporter Ahmed Al-Rikabi, cameraman Ali Thaer and assistant cameraman Ali Hatif, were obstructed from duty, insulted and demanded to stop broadcasting and leave the square under the pretext of working with the hostile government against the demonstrators.

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- On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, al-Iraqiya tv reporter Iman Mohammed was subjected to verbal abuse while covering demonstrations in Babil, forcing her to stop the coverage and leave the square.
- On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, the staff of "Fallujah" channel, consisting of correspondent Ali Abdul Karim and cameraman Hassan al-Khafaji, were attacked by an armed group in Tahrir Square in central Baghdad during the raid on the Turkish restaurant by an armed group.
- On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, a group of people in Tahrir Square verbally assaulted al-Iraqiya TV staff, consisting of reporter Monatallah Taher and cameraman Marwan Mahmoud, and prevented them from covering.
- On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces prevented several media cadres from covering a demonstration in Kirkuk market. Al-Rashid TV, Rudaw Kurdish channel, NRT, K24 Kurdish channel, Turkmen satellite, Kirkuk satellite, Kurdish bayan, i News, Reuters and Kirkuk Now were obstructed from performing their journalistic duty.
- On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, students at Dhi Qar University expelled the staff of al-Iraqiya tv channel, consisting of reporter Mohammed al-Hilali and cameraman Mohammed Sadiq, during their duty on campus.
- On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, the director of the Kurdish NRT office in Kirkuk, Nabz Mekdad Fakhreddin, channel reporter Diyar Mohammed and cameraman Ali Nordi, were beaten by security forces while covering a demonstration by residents of al-Nasr neighborhood, near the maternity hospital in the area.
- On March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Baghdad prevented the staff of "Very Close" program in AlFurat Channel, consisting of Lt. Col. Laith al-Jazairi and cameraman Hassan Doij, from passing through to film the episode under curfew, although the crisis cell excluded journalists and members of the Ministry of Health and security forces from the preventive curfew.
- On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a member of the security forces in Baghdad obstructed the work of the staff of "i News" channel during their live coverage of the atmosphere of the curfew, and the application of the decisions of the crisis cell in Aden Square; he stormed the scene and

jammed the camera, after the staff was demanded to suspend the coverage, and leave the place immediately.

- On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, security forces severely beaten the director of Al-Melwiya tv, journalist (Mohammed Qadir al-Samarrai) while he was on his way to work in Samarra province, on the grounds of violating the health curfew.

- On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, a security force prevented the staff of al-Iraqiya tv in Maysan; reporter Haidar al-Jizani and cameraman Hussein Najm, from reaching their workplace, after being verbally assaulted.

- On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, security forces prevented the staff of Asia tv channel; reporter Tarek al-Rubaie and cameraman Raed Fouad, from covering the response of the curfew imposed in Baghdad.

- On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Diyala Health Director stormed Al-Sumeria tv reporter Hadi al-Anbaki with insults while he was preparing a televised report on the health situation in the province.

- On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a traffic policeman beat al-Rasheed tv cameraman Ibrahim Abdullah during his coverage of the curfew status quo at a security checkpoint in Kirkuk.

- On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a police force of Dhi Qar prevented the cadre of the "Dijla" channel, consisting of reporter Rasim Karim and cameraman Nour Saidi, from live coverage of the return of protests to the squares in Rifai area of Dhi Qar.

- On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, cadres of (Dijla, Sumeria, Alfurat, Mallwiya and Al-itijah) were denied coverage of the aftermath of attacks on security headquarters in Tikrit by Salahudin police.

- On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the contractor in charge of managing the Fallujah cement plant of the Ministry of Industry and Minerals prevented the cadres of (Dijla, Alsharqia, Fallujah and Anbar) from covering the work

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in the factory building, on the background of publishing reports on corruption cases and manipulating the quantity of the product.

- On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a security force affiliated to Anbar Operations Command prevented Reuters correspondent Kamal al-Ayash from entering the province, refusing to speak to him nor allowing him to pass, despite that he showed his IDs and clearances issued by the Operations Command.
- On May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces prevented journalists and media staff from reaching their places of work, although Baghdad Operations Command excluded journalists from the curfew.
- On May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, two journalists were prevented from reaching their work places by checkpoints in Al-Karrada, Baghdad.
- On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, The Commander of Operations of Karbala, Major General Ali al-Hashimi, ordered all checkpoints to prevent journalists from roaming the city to perform their work, preventing satellite personnel of (Alsharqia News, Dijla, Zakros, Al-Nujaba) from passing to their offices.
- On May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, members of the Protection of the Minister of Industry and Minerals Manhal al-Khabaz beat the correspondent of Al-Mosuliya tv (Ziad al-Sumaidai) during his press coverage of the minister's visit to Mosul with the Minister of Youth and Sports Adnan Dargal, former national team player Younis Mahmoud, and a number of other governmental figures.
- On May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a security force of the 61st Brigade in Kirkuk prevented a group of journalists of Alahad, Alsharqia, Kali Kurdistan, Rudaw, Kirkuk Now channels from coverage. their equipment was confiscated while covering a demonstration organized by a group of farmers in Kirkuk Silo demanding a facilitated market for their crops.
- On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the security of al-Hussein Teaching Hospital prevented the staff of UTV channel; reporter Walid Al-Salhi and cameraman Bilal Amin, from entering and covering the burning incident of a victimized girl due to domestic violence.

- On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, a security officer affiliated with the 61st Brigade prevented The Dijla correspondent Mohammed Saleh from coverage in Kirkuk.
- On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, the Asayish police attacked "Speda" and "NRT" channels by beating their staff with an electric rod. Equipment was confiscated and videos deleted. The material covered the demonstration rejecting the strict prohibition procedures in Sulaimaniyah.
- On June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the director of Kirkuk Silo prevented "Rudaw" channel team; correspondent Hiwa Hussam al-Din and cameraman Ahmed Najat, from covering a press conference held by the agriculture committee in the province.
- On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a traffic policeman at Al-Jadriya checkpoint prevented correspondent Ali Khashan from reaching his workplace despite showing his IDs, he was forced to go back.
- On June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, riot police and security forces prevented the cadres of "Baghdadia" and "Dijla" from covering the demonstrations in Najaf province that demand the dismissal of its governor, and destroyed their cameras and broadcast equipment.
- On June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Kirkuk prevented Kurdish correspondent Aji Jawhar and Shafq News correspondent Hazar Rashid from covering a demonstration in the city.
- On June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Kirkuk prevented an NRT correspondent from cursing his vehicle to reach his workplace.
- On June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces in Basra prevented Shihab al-Ahmed from radio "Al-Rasheed", correspondents of "i News" and al-Itijah: Ali al-Batat and Fouad al-Halfi, in the areas of Jubaila, Twasa and Al-Ashar, from reaching their workplaces. The incident coincided with the eruption of demonstrations demanding the dismissal of the governor and a group of security leaders.

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- On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Asaish police prevented "Speda" correspondent Younis Hama and its cameraman Rifaat Mohammed from covering an angry demonstration in The City of Shaqlawa, organized by residents of the slums against the local government's decision to demolish their homes.

- On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, the Basra Crisis Cell prevented a number of media personnel from working and roaming during the period of the partial curfew, and restricted exceptions to institutions and media staff exclusively authorized by the Journalists' Syndicate, preventing many cadres from exercising their duties.

- On 4 July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, members of the information unit of Diwaniyah teaching hospital prevented the correspondent of radio "Al-Marbad" Dhiaa al-Muhja from entering and covering the hospital building, which was set up by the Husseini religious authority for the purpose of health isolation of those affected by the Corona pandemic, despite obtaining required approvals.

- On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Basra Provincial Divan banned the cadres of (i News, al-Ghadeer, Huna al-Basra, Al-Nujaba, and Reuters) from entering the site of the conference held by Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in the province, despite the fact that other colleagues were allowed to enter and perform coverage.

- On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, the security forces of the 19th Brigade prevented the correspondent of "Kali Kurdistan" (Azad Shakur) and the staff of "NRT", from covering a farmers' demonstration that started in Kirkuk province.

- On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, members of the security forces who are responsible for protecting the Turkish hospital in Karbala prevented the staff of al-Taghyir tv from covering the fire that broke out inside the hospital a day after its opening.

- On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a Security Force of The Asaish in Erbil severely beat the staff of the "Payam" channel, consisting of fellow reporter Imran Amir and cameramen AbdulMutallab Khoshoi and Younis Abdullah, as soon as they arrived near the Sawaf Mosque, where clerics gathered to

demand the opening of houses of worship and the improvement of the economic situation in the region.

- On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security forces confiscated the equipment of the NRT staff; reporter Omed Joumani and cameraman Najm Siddiq and prevented them from filming in Erbil.

- On August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, riot police severely beat the staff of al-Hurra tv; correspondent Najah al-Abedi and cameraman Mohammed al-Hilali, as they were covering the protests in the Manawi Pasha area of central Basra, and the riot police prevented them from covering, beat them severely, and confiscated their equipment.

- On August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, members of the Swat forces severely beat, insulted and slandered al-Marbad radio reporter Mustafa al-Shaheen after covering the demonstration in Basra near the office of the House of Representatives, protesting the killing of activist Reham Yaacoub.

- On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, security forces prevented Al-Ahad, Al-Nujaba, Al-Alam media personnel from entering the Taji camp and covering the withdrawal of international coalition forces from the base.

- On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, the governor of Karbala, Nassif al-Khattabi, stormed Alsumeria channel cadre ; reporter Anwar Malik and cameraman Bilal Amin, with offences and insults, and drove them out and prevented the channel staff from entering the province building.. on the background of a delayed face-to-face meeting with one of the morning programs due to a technical issue not understood by the governor.

- On August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, members of the tribal crowd in Kirkuk prevented Kirkuk tv reporter Yusuf Murad, K24 correspondent Heyman Daloui, and Anadhoul Agency correspondent Eugene Ramadan Saleh from covering an explosion with a homemade device targeting AHussaini commemorative procession in the province, the journalists were beaten and their equipment damaged.

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- On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, police officers in al-Saqour checkpoint prevented "Asia" correspondent Mohammed al-Farid and cameraman Alaa Jabbar from entering Anbar province. Both journalists were covering the recreational places in the area and the stable security situation there, but they were prevented by security forces upon arrival.
- On September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, security members of the 56th Brigade, protecting the Green Zone, beat al-Nujaba tv team and prevented them from covering the demonstrations that were organized by the graduates to demand employment near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, CMC, backed by the Iraqi Security and National Security Service, prevented several Iraqi satellite channels from covering the Arbain ceremony in Karbala and pursued the wheels of live broadcasting (SNG), and suspended them for not renewing their broadcasting licenses, and paying the fees of the frequencies.
- On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a security officer affiliated to the 61st Brigade prevented The Turkman Eli correspondent Abdul Qadir Fouad from covering a demonstration organized by Kirkuk protesters against former Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, and upon his arrival at The province square, he was surprised that a security officer prevented him from filming, and threatened him to destroy the channel's camera.
- On October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Basra governorate's protection prevented al-Iraqiya tv staff from meeting with citizens and residents of the governorate building.
- On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, riot police beat al-Marbad radio reporter Haidar al-Muzani and Reuters cameraman Mohammed al-Fartoussi, preventing them from covering a demonstration in Basra.
- On November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Peshmerga forces beat Rudaw correspondent Bakhtaw Qadir, broke the channel's logo and then burned it, and confiscated the channel's camera. The reporter was covering the protests in Sulaimaniyah province.
- On December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Diyala Governor Muthanna al-Tamimi issued a decree prohibiting al-Taghyir correspondent Hassan al-Shammari from entering the provincial headquarters and performing his work, as he prepared reports on poor living and services conditions in the province.

- On December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a group affiliated with the Security Of Basra International Stadium prevented IQ News correspondent Ahmed Khairallah from performing his duties inside the stadium, after being verbally abused, and forced to leave the stadium.
- On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a number of Ministry of Transport officials prevented al-Iraqiya tv reporter Ali al-Ahmad from entering the ministry's headquarters and filming, without knowing the reasons.
- On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Dhi Qar police command prevented Dijla channel correspondent Rasim Al-Saidi from performing his journalistic duties in the province.

### **Killing Threats**

- On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Muntadhar Alkarkushy, Journalist, received a straight killing threat via sms. The message was sent by one of the security officers in Basra, after the journalist published a post on the status quo of security in Basra on social media.
- on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Ali Alhaj, Alsharqia correspondent was threatened to be killed by a person defining himself as the head of Almayah tribe. The threat was received via an SMS message on the background of killing Malak; a Najafi girl by burning her.

### **Media Bodies' Closures**

- on the first of July, Alsada News was shut down due to lack of funding.
- on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, CMC suspended Reuters Agency for three consecutive months after imposing a fine of 25 million Iraqi Dinars, after announcing the figures of covid-19 cases that were deemed different from those announced by the governmental authorities.

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- on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at least 22 local radios were shut down by the National CMC in Baghdad and other provinces under the excuse of not meeting their dues. On the other hand, CMC allowed tens of other media bodies with similar dues to continue functioning which might indicate political considerations.

- On July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the UTV administration announced the closure of its Baghdad office after receiving threats from an unknown armed party in, immediately after the end of the episode of a special testimony program, which dealt with information deemed offensive to an Islamic figure without naming it.

- On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the governors of Najaf, Maysan and Diwaniyah announced the suspension of the offices of the Dijla channel in their cities, while the police chief of Dhi Qar warned against cooperating with colleagues working for the channel, following a musical content broadcasted by the channel on the night of The Tenth of Muharram.

- On September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, CMC suspended the license of Dijla Tarab channel for a full year with a fine of 50 million Iraqi Dinars, in response to MP Majid al-Waili's request to CMC. Similar decisions were issued against Atlas Television Broadcasting Corporation of the channel.

- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Ministry of Culture in the Kurdistan Region issued a decree extending the closure of the NRT channel in the region and preventing it from carrying out its journalistic work for another week, coinciding with the protests that began in Sulaimaniyah and its districts, accompanied by the arrest of dozens of protesters and journalists.

### **Filing lawsuits, Sentences and arrest warrants**

- On May 2020, the head of the Iraqi media network, Fadl Farajallah, ordered the referral of a media staff consisting of Ali Jawad, Naseer Lazim, Ali Maften, Hossam Falah and Haidar Jawad to the legal department for interrogation, for their participation in demonstrations that erupted in the central and southern cities of the country.

- On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Erbil recommended that the Ministry of Culture of the Kurdistan Region closes

the NRT channel on the background of the publication of reports on the health conditions in the region and the high number of people infected with Covid-19.

-On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, Al-Rusafa Investigations Court issued an arrest warrant against the owner of "Dijla" channel, Jamal al-Karbouli, on the grounds that the channel, ignored the feelings of Muslims, and disrespected them, after broadcasting musical content by Dijla Tarab channel on the night of The Tenth of Muharram.

- On November 16 th, 2020, the Aoun police station in Karbala issued a warrent against al-Hurra tv reporter Haidar Hadi for covering a demonstration organized by students of The Warith Alanbiyaa University to protest the dismissal of a colleague after he participated in the demonstrations.

### 2020 and 2019: compared violations

#### Killings

2019: 4

2020: 4

#### Killing threats

2019: 45

2020: 2

#### Abducting Iraqi Journalists

2019: 2

2020: 0



## Detention

2019: 32

2020: 74

## On duty injuries

2019: 15

2020: 10

## Abusive attacks and obstructions

2019: 210

2020: 167

## Armed attacks against journalists and Media bodies

2019: 26

2020: 14

## Media bodies' closure

2019: 20

2020: 31

## Lawsuits and warrants

2019: 19



2020: 3

### Conclusion:

Compared to the 2019 violations, we see a rise in arrests and detentions of journalists, the closure of media channels and institutions, and a decline in armed attacks, death threats and kidnappings that year, which we have marked as a "setback in the field of freedom of expression and journalism."

The transitional government follows in the footsteps of the outgoing government in not holding accountable or prosecuting those involved in such a large number of violations by armed, security, and government, administrative or political actors.

In addition, Iraq is not serious about making any progress on the "impunity" file, after the assassinations of eight journalists in the past two years (2019 and 2020) were concealed.

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