

Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq

Press Calls SOS after a Year of Criminalization

PFAA annual report on press violations in Iraq

From January 1st till December 25th, 2024

Released under the supervision of the administrative board

Prepared by Nagham Kamil

Translated by Amal Ibrahim

Contents

Introduction	1
Violations in figures	3
Time- line	5
Geographical mapping	6
Sides responsible for violations	7
Narrative	8
Closure	36
Recommendations	38

Introduction:

The year 2024 marked another setback for media freedom in Iraq. Data recorded throughout the year by the Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq revealed a troubling rise in violations against journalists. These figures reflected a reality that disregarded constitutional protections and contravened international standards concerning press freedom. Consequently, the working conditions for media professionals have deteriorated significantly, with harassment or violence against journalists reported almost daily.

The recorded violations took various forms, including assassinations, bans on coverage, physical assaults, threats, lawsuits, arrest warrants, raids, job terminations, and the blocking of journalists and news websites. These actions were often carried out by government institutions operating beyond their mandate.

The pervasive influence of certain government institutions was evident, as security agencies frequently employed heavy-handed and police-like tactics. In many cases, these actions were either directly ordered by senior security officials or the result of individual officers' personal decisions.

Authoritarians targeted journalists through their agents or by shielding perpetrators from accountability. They also weaponized the judiciary, filing defamation lawsuits based on outdated laws from the 1960s and 1970s. Such judicial harassment has escalated alarmingly, pursuing journalists wherever they go under the pretext that exposing corruption constitutes a form of defamation.

Independent bodies and professional unions have also played a significant role in suppressing and intimidating journalists. Their efforts to censor the harsh realities of life in Iraq included imposing restrictions on media outlets, issuing warnings, and arbitrarily barring individuals from appearing in the media at the whims of powerful figures.

The Iraqi Journalists Syndicate, which should have been a defender of journalists' rights, instead emerged as a source of repression, according to the report. It filed lawsuits against journalists, revoked work licenses for newspapers, and even issued directives to governmental organizations prohibiting collaboration with journalists critical of the syndicate or its leadership. s syndicate's experts added to the attitude by issuing a number of recommendations to the courts concerning reaching the sentences against the journalists who had been sued by governmental sides.

Armed factions have continued to raid television stations and vandalize their equipment with impunity. This persists due to the weak performance of government security forces, which fail to protect media institutions. Instead, some independent bodies align with the agendas of these factions, further exacerbating the problem.

In 2024, the total number of violations against journalists reached 457. These included cases of detention, injuries, armed raids on journalists' homes and media offices, physical assaults, obstruction of journalistic work, and lawsuits filed against media professionals; detailed as follows:

- **Journalist Victims:** 5 killed and 1 critically injured.
- **Detentions:** 23 cases.
- **Arrests:** 11 cases.
- **Armed Attacks:** 7 cases.
- **Prevention and Obstruction of Coverage:** 280 cases.
- **Physical Assaults:** 17 cases.
- **Lawsuits Filed Against Journalists:** 68 cases.
- **Violations by the Communications and Media Commission:** 17 cases.
- **Blocking and Banning:** 9 news websites, television programs, and journalist accounts.
- **Violations by the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate:** 7 cases.
- **Direct Threats:** 2 journalists.
- **Other Violations:** 10 cases.

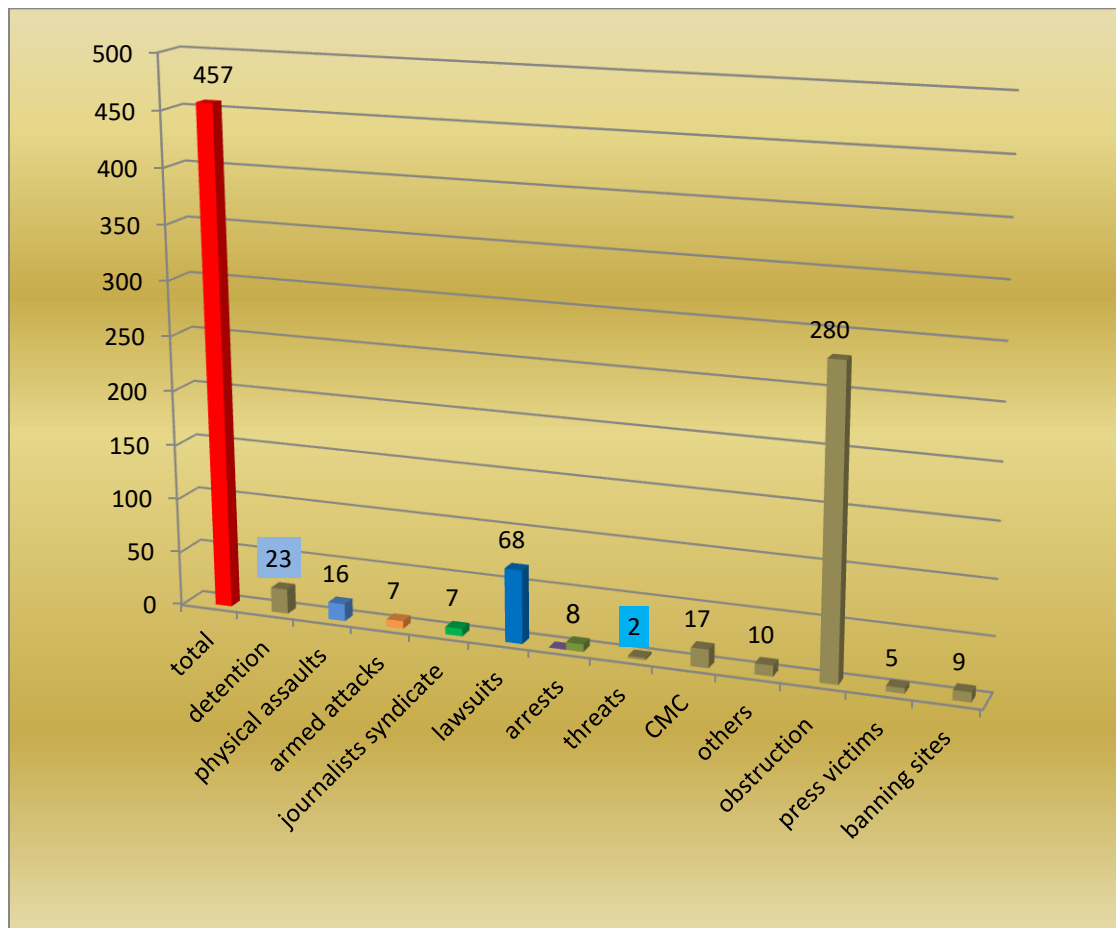
The Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq's monitoring over the past months identified **May** as the month with the highest number of violations (82 cases), followed by **April** with 58 cases, out of the total violations recorded during the year.

Regarding geographic distribution, **Erbil** and **Baghdad** topped the list of cities with the most violations against journalists, recording 103 and 100 cases, respectively, followed by **Sulaymaniyah** with 58 cases.

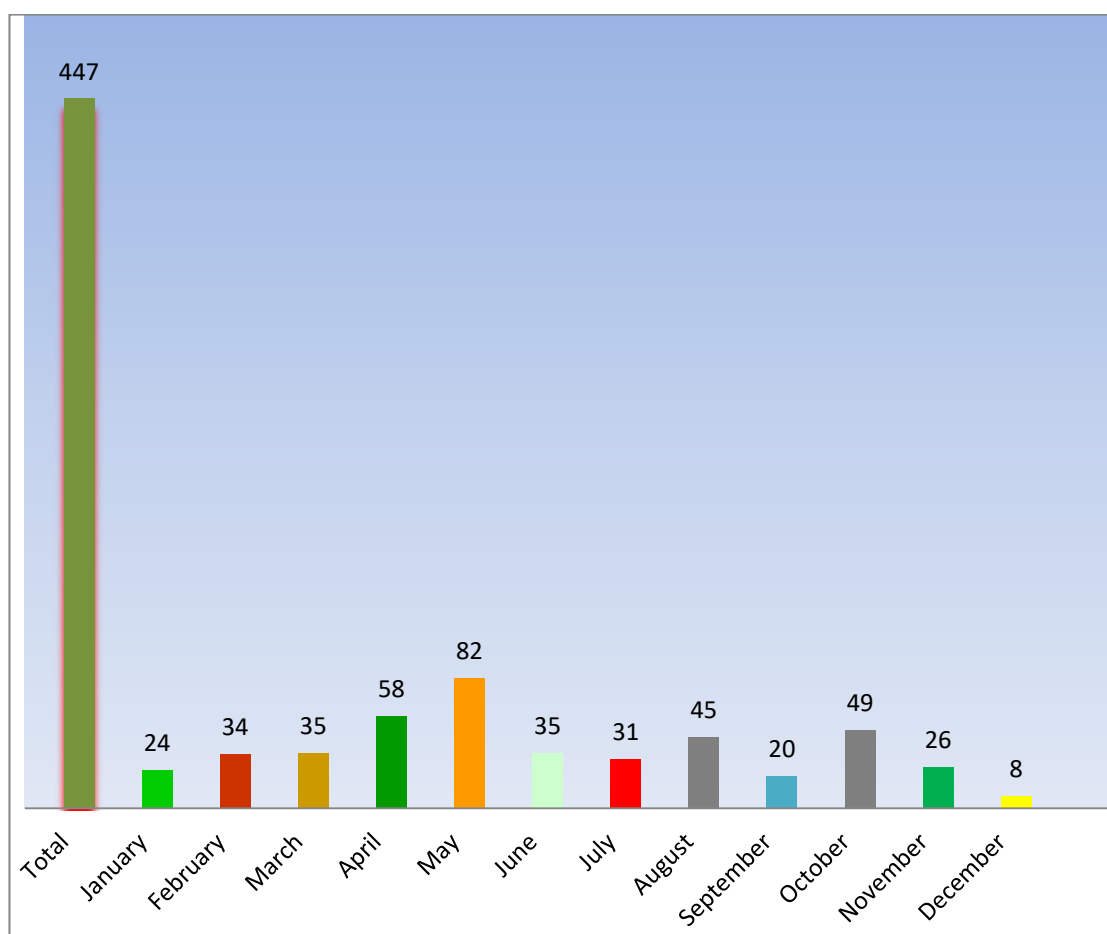
Violations in Figures

Violations	No. of cases
• Victims from the Press Community	6
• Armed Attacks/Raids	7
• Arrests	23
• Detentions	11
• Physical Assaults	16
• Prevention and Obstruction of Coverage	280
• Violations by the Communications and Media Commission	17
• Lawsuits	68
• Blocking and Banning	9
• Violations by the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate	7
• Threats	2
• Other	10
• Total	457

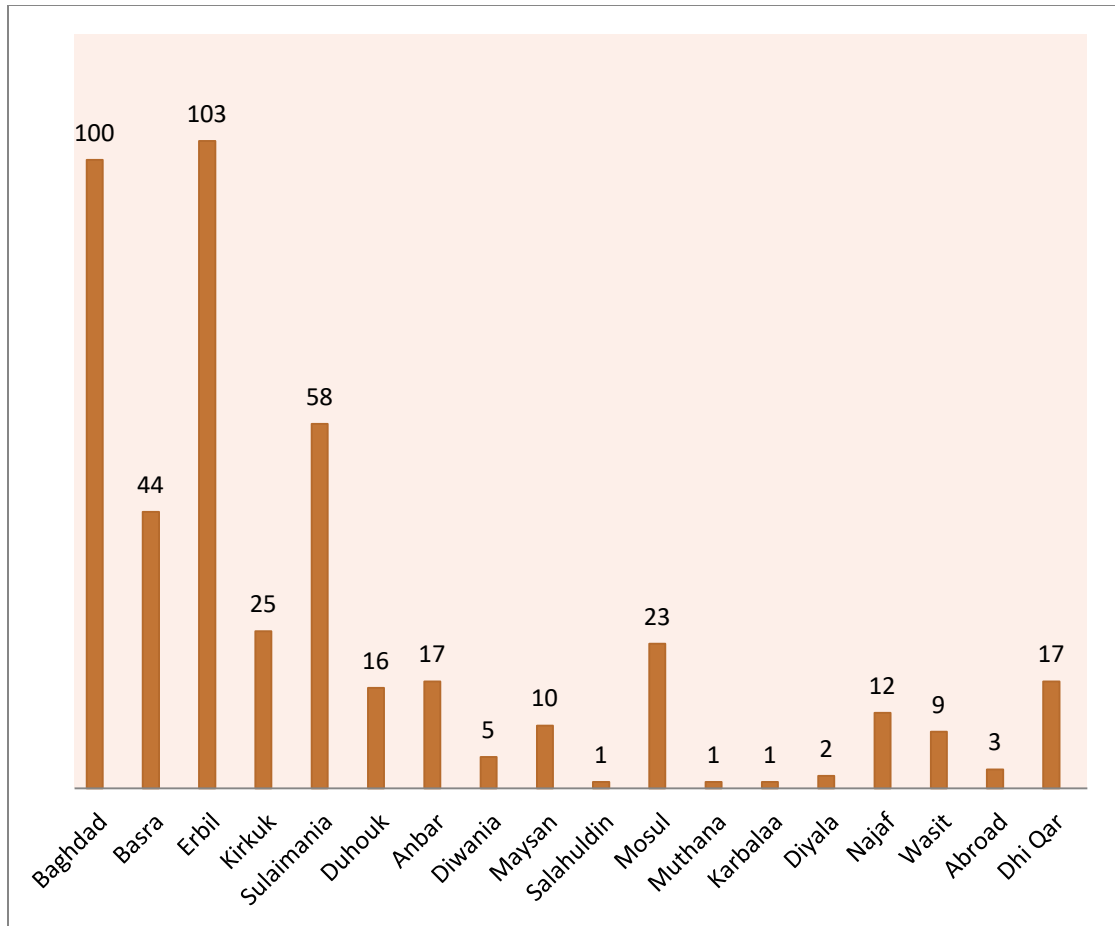
2024 statistics of types of violations against Iraqi Press workers



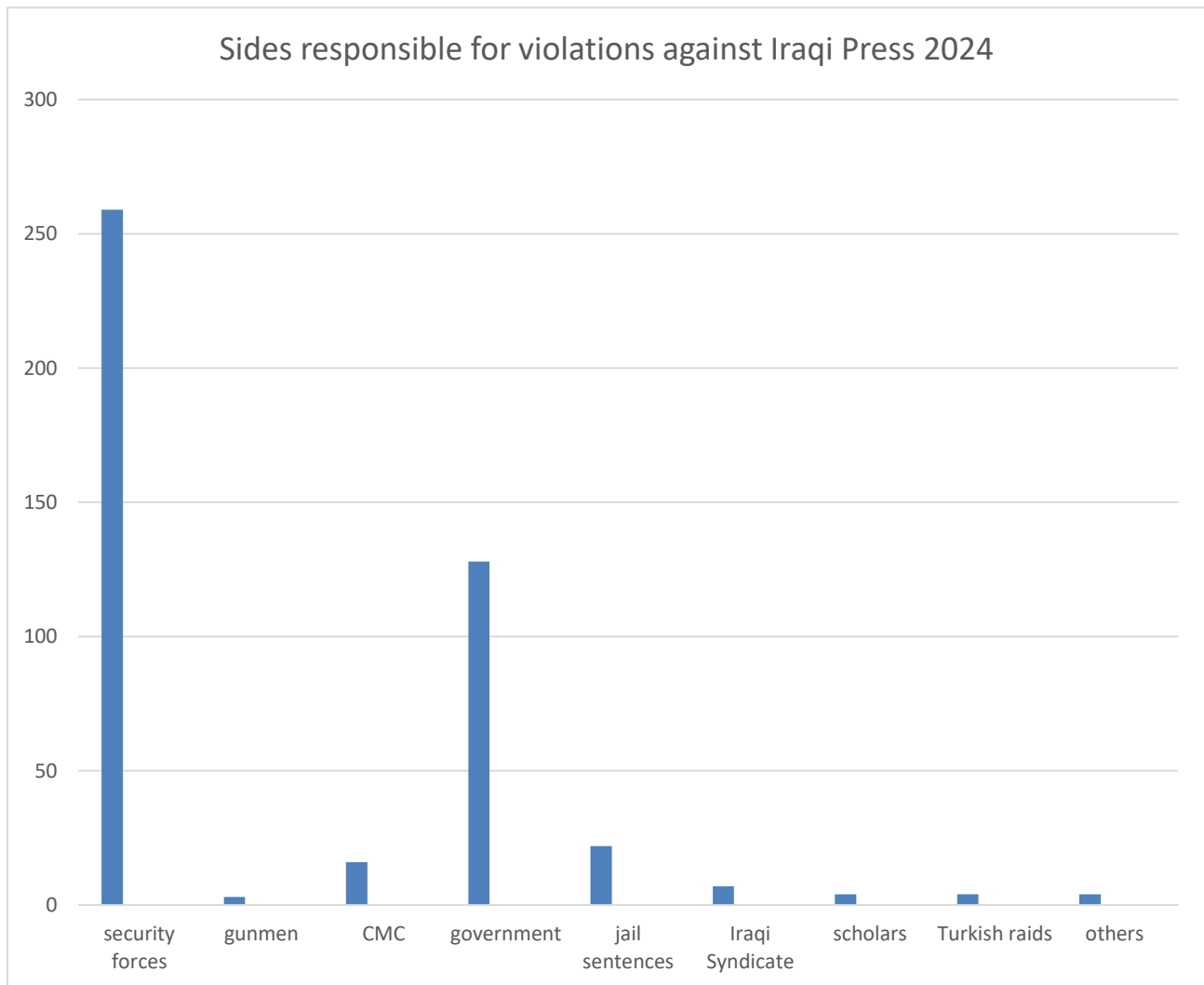
Violations according to monthly occurrence during 2024



Violations against Iraqi Press 2024 according to Provinces



The sides behind the violations against Iraqi Journalists in 2024



The Narrative Report

Victims from the Press Community in 2024

- **On July 8, 2024**, Murad Mirza Ibrahim, a correspondent for "Jara FM," was martyred due to injuries sustained during a Turkish airstrike in Sinjar. The attack targeted the vehicle they were traveling in, injuring two of his colleagues: Media Kamal Hassan, a correspondent for "Jara" TV, and the vehicle's driver, Khalaf Khidr. The incident occurred on the Tal Qasab-Sinjar road in western Nineveh province as they were returning from a journalistic assignment. Both injured were transported to a nearby hospital following the attack.
- **On August 23, 2024**, two journalists, Hero Bahaa Al-Din and Gulistan Tara, were killed, and their colleague, Riben Bakr, sustained severe injuries in a Turkish drone strike. The attack targeted the vehicle they were traveling in at the village of "Taba Rash" in the Said Sadiq area of Sulaymaniyah. The journalists were part of the media team for "Jatra Media Company."
- **On December 19, 2024**, a Turkish drone strike targeted a team from the Hawar Agency in Duhok, resulting in the tragic deaths of reporter Jihan Belkin and her colleague, cameraman Nazim Dashtan. The incident occurred while they were covering the unrest in the Tishrin Dam area and surrounding towns, as well as monitoring the movement of Turkish forces. Both journalists were killed instantly.

Armed Attacks/ Raids on Journalists' Homes or Media Offices

- **February 22, 2024:** A security force raided the home of Omid Buroshki, the director of "Rast Media" organization, and took him to the "Zerka" prison in Duhok. This action was in response to his criticism of the regional government's administration and the policies of the region's presidency. This marked his fifth arrest; he had previously spent two years in prison on fabricated charges.
- **February 22, 2024:** Fakhri Karim, the head of "Al-Mada" Media, Culture, and Arts Foundation, survived an assassination attempt near the Presidential

Square in Baghdad. Unknown gunmen intercepted his car and opened fire, causing significant damage to his vehicle.

- **April 21, 2024:** A security force in Dhi Qar raided the home of As'ad Al-Niazi, a correspondent for the French Press Agency, to arrest him. The arrest followed a lawsuit filed by the French Consul in Dhi Qar, Adel Al-Kinzawi, due to his publication of photos related to the fire incident at the French embassy in 2021.
- **September 6, 2024:** A security force raided the office of the "Jawdair" Cultural and Media Center, affiliated with the Kurdish leader in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Mulla Bkhtiar, in Sulaymaniyah. The raid resulted in the office's closure and the confiscation of its property, following Mula Bkhtiar's criticism of the performance of the President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Pavel Talabani, and his brother Qubad Talabani on a Kurdish TV channel.
- **October 19, 2024:** Armed groups affiliated with militia factions raided the office of (MBC Iraq) in Baghdad and set part of it on fire. The attackers also damaged the station's equipment and computers, ripped out doors, and broke windows. This attack was in response to a report broadcast by MBC, which they claimed insulted Hamas leader Yehya Sinwar. Despite this attack, security forces did not intervene to stop the raid on the station's headquarters in the Al-Jami'a neighborhood of Baghdad.
- **November 4, 2024:** A security officer brutally attacked Aria Abdul Khaliq, a journalist from "Bawar Media," in the town of Garmian in Sulaymaniyah, stabbing him multiple times. The attack followed the journalist's report that exposed false evidence presented by the officer, named Tahseen Mohamed Taha, in an attempt to block water and electricity projects in the village of Qashqa in the Garmian region in Chemchemal. This report angered the officer, leading to the violent attack.
- **November 19, 2024:** Three masked gunmen in Mosul stopped the vehicle of Jamal Al-Badran, the director of Al-Sharqiya channel's office in Nineveh. They dragged him from his car and severely beat him, leaving him with various injuries and bruises. The attack came after the journalist published documents related to the distribution of administrative positions in the Ministry of Education. Al-Sharqiya channel later announced that the attackers were affiliated with an armed faction operating in Mosul.

Detention and Arrest

- **January 22, 2024:** The National Security Agency in Diwaniya arrested Diaa Mahja, a correspondent for "Al-Mada" newspaper, and took him to the agency's building after he published a document from the forensic evidence department of the Ministry of Interior. The document indicated that the fire at the Maternity and Children's Hospital in Diwaniya was caused by an electrical short circuit, contradicting the security forces' earlier claim that they had arrested four youths accused of causing the incident.
- **February 5, 2024:** Security forces in Erbil arrested Dyaqo Hussein, a correspondent for the "Standard" news website, to prevent him from covering a demonstration organized by the Communist Party calling for the payment of overdue salaries for Kurdistan region employees.
- **February 15, 2024:** Security forces in Sulaymaniyah arrested two journalists, Beroa Abdul Rahman and Barham Sadiq, correspondents for "Jetra" media organization, to prevent them from covering a protest against what they called the "February 15 Conspiracy." They were released after more than five hours in detention following intercessions.
- **March 4, 2024:** "Ruz News" news agency announced that the regional authorities refused to disclose the charges against their correspondent, Suleiman Ahmed, who was arrested at a border crossing with Syria in October 2023. Authorities also refused to reveal his detention location or allow his family to meet him.
- **March 24, 2024:** A judge at the Al-Shirqat Court ordered the imprisonment of Salah Mahdi Al-Jamili, a correspondent for "Al-Ghad" Radio, following a lawsuit filed by the mayor of Al-Shirqat, Ali Al-Sheib, due to his publication of photos showing sewage overflow in the district. Despite Al-Jamili filing his own lawsuit against the mayor for seizing his equipment while documenting the flooding and assaulting him, the court dealt with him according to Article 438 inherited from the former regime, which criminalizes secret filming, while ignoring the lawsuit against the mayor.
- **March 25, 2024:** Security forces in Sulaymaniyah arrested several cameramen, including Marwan Firdous of "NRT," Oras Jabar from "Westka News," Emad Abdullah from "Era News," and Kreevan Farman from "Mic" media organization, to prevent them from covering teachers' protests demanding the localization of their salaries. They also forced the staff of "Voice of America" Radio to delete the footage they captured during the protests.
- **April 24, 2024:** The security guards of the Minister of Planning, Mohammed Tameem, detained the "Al-Ahd" channel team, consisting of

reporter Mohamed Al-Freid and cameraman Saif Ali, inside the Ministry of Planning building for over an hour. They confiscated the camera to erase a video showing security forces preventing the reporter from speaking to the minister about their expulsion from covering the national population census conference.

- **May 8, 2024:** Army forces in Kirkuk detained Suran Mohamed and Diar Kamal, a reporter and cameraman from "NRT" channel, for more than two hours while they were carrying out their duties in the village of Balkana in the Sarkan sub-district of Dibil. They were detained to prevent them from covering a farmers' protest over agricultural issues in the region. They were released after promising not to return to the area or continue their coverage.
- **May 20, 2024:** Security forces in Erbil arrested Shaker Sattar, a journalist and broadcaster at "Tewar" news website, when he passed through the "Ashti" checkpoint in Koya. The arrest was based on an arrest order issued against him after a report published by his organization in 2019, which exposed the presence of dangerous criminals in the border areas of the region. The authorities accused him of spreading misleading news on an "unofficial page," under Article 226 of the Penal Code. Sattar was unaware of the arrest order, and the regional authorities had not informed his organization.
- **May 27, 2024:** Security forces in Erbil detained Amir Hassan, a correspondent for "Westgen News," for more than two hours and confiscated all his equipment to prevent him from covering the opening ceremony of the "Raniya-Bankurd" bridge. He was only released after the ceremony ended and the guests had left.
- **June 1, 2024:** A security officer in Najaf detained UTV channel's team, including Hussam Al-Kaabi and Ahmad Al-Marjani, for more than half an hour to prevent them from covering a protest on Al-Atibaa Street. They were not released until their superior arrived.
- **June 10, 2024:** The Erbil court detained NRT channel's correspondent, Hirsh Kader, for over five hours in a cell after a lawsuit was filed against him by the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Masrour Barzani. The lawsuit was due to a report Kader prepared earlier, which revealed the internal financial revenues of the region. He was imprisoned and released only after posting a bail of 2 million dinars.
- **June 26, 2024:** Police officers from Shiladze sub-district in the Emidi area of Duhok detained Ahmed Shamki, a correspondent for "Ruz News" agency, when he went to the police station after being notified of a lawsuit filed against him by the mayor, accusing him of exposing a corruption case involving land manipulation and selling land outside regulations.

- **July 13, 2024:** Authorities in Kurdistan decided to hand over the detained journalist, Tami Al-Mujami, editor-in-chief of "Sada Al-Siyasa" news agency, to the federal government in Baghdad after a lawsuit was filed by Mustafa Ahmed, the head of the anti-terrorism intelligence in Salahuddin. This was after Al-Mujami exposed corruption allegations and images of detainees being tortured in the province's prisons during an interview on "Studio 9" on Al-Baghdadia TV. The court issued an arrest warrant under anti-terrorism law (Article 4).
- **July 13, 2024:** Asayish forces in Duhok arrested the "Al-Thamena" channel's team, including correspondent Nziar Niroi, photographer Bahiz Akri, and driver Howar Youssef, for covering the Turkish military incursion in the Emidi district of the province.
- **August 13, 2024:** Security forces in Duhok detained Omid Broshki, the director of "Rast Media" organization, for over 3 hours while covering the commemoration of journalist Widad Hussein's assassination in Duhok. They prevented him from going to the journalist's grave and physically assaulted him, causing a fracture in his nose.
- **August 19, 2024:** The police commander of Al-Rusafa, Major General Shalaan Ali, ordered the detention of "Al-Sumaria" channel's team, including reporters Amir Al-Khafaji and Omar Abbas, while they were covering the protests of health professionals in Baghdad. SWAT forces physically assaulted them, confiscated their equipment, and detained them for over two hours. They were then reprinted to Bab AlMuadham police station and ended up in Bab AlSheikh station; The reporters were only released after a couple of hours and signing a written pledge.
- **August 27, 2024:** Sirwan Hassan, the program manager of NRT's office in Sulaymaniyah, was released after being detained for three days in Kalar following an arrest order. The lawsuit against him was filed by the Altaghyir Movement due to his criticism of the movement's leadership using government vehicles for personal purposes. After being arrested at the police station in "Griman" area, where he was taken to Kalar investigation court; the court ordered his detention for 15 days for investigation and then transferred to the deporting jail. After several interventions, he was released on a bail of 5 million dinars. The lawsuit is still ongoing.
- **September 6, 2024:** Authorities in Mosul detained Star Mahal, the manager of "Hala FM" radio, for 3 days after a lawsuit filed by the Governor of Mosul, Abdul Qadir Al-Dukhail, with the National Security Directorate, due to his criticism of delayed public service projects in Nineveh. The court issued an arrest order, and Mahal was released on a bail of 3 million dinars.

- **September 16, 2024:** Asayish forces arrested and detained Bashdar Baziani, a correspondent for "Diplomatic Magazine" news agency, for 12 hours in a Peshmerga prison in Sulaymaniyah. This occurred after he published a court document accusing the head of anti-terrorism forces in Sulaymaniyah, Wahab Halabji, of the 2022 assassination of Colonel Hawkar Jaf in Erbil. Baziani was released after signing an agreement not to investigate the case further.
- **November 22, 2024:** Federal police forces at a checkpoint in Makhmur detained Bextiyar Kadir and Ibrahim Adnan, correspondent and cameraman for "Rudaw" channel, for over five hours and confiscated their equipment to prevent them from covering the population census event. They were released after several interventions.
- **November 26, 2024:** Security forces arrested Karzan Tariq, a correspondent for NRT channel, while he was at the Traffic Directorate in Sulaymaniyah to renew his driving license. The arrest was linked to a lawsuit filed by the Sulaymaniyah Police Directorate due to a 2019 report he published regarding the suspicious death of journalist Amanj Baban and his family, alleging they were murdered by gunmen, contrary to the police's claim that Baban killed his wife and child before committing suicide.

Physical Assault, Blocking, and Disrupting Coverage

- **January 10, 2024:** The protection detail of the Prime Minister prevented the media from covering the opening ceremony of the 47th Baghdad International Fair. One of the security personnel forcibly entered the filming site of Al-Rasheed Channel, stopping cameraman Adi Fawzi from filming. Subsequently, they prevented five other journalistic teams from filming as well.
- **January 16, 2024:** A security member in Basra prevented the team of "Al-Oula" channel, including reporter Maher Al-Harbi and cameraman Asad Youssef, from covering a protest. He threatened them with arrest and tribal legal action if they continued their work.
- **January 20, 2024:** Security forces in Sulaymaniyah prevented the team from "Diplomatic Magazine" news agency, consisting of Zylia Ali and Briar Mahmoud, from covering a press conference held by protesting teachers in the "Zergata" district. They were threatened with arrest if they continued filming.

- **January 21, 2024:** Security forces in Sulaymaniyah prevented the "Westke News" team, including Lania Bakhtiar and cameraman Oras Jabar, from covering ongoing protests by the teaching staff in Sulaymaniyah demanding payment of their salaries.
- **January 3, 2024:** A municipal employee in Diyala, named Ahmed Mahjoub, verbally assaulted Hassan Al-Shammari, the reporter for "Al-Taghyeer" channel, while he was covering the demolition of buildings by the municipality. The employee attempted to physically assault the reporter, but intervention from bystanders prevented this.
- **February 5, 2024:** The Anbar Provincial Council prevented the media from entering the council's building and covering the consultations between the elected officials regarding the election of a new governor and his deputies for the local government formation.
- **February 21, 2024:** Security forces at the headquarters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Erbil prevented the "Jamaro" channel's reporter from performing his duties outside the building. They threatened to break his equipment and arrest him if he filmed.
- **February 24, 2024:** A security officer prevented reporter Mohammad Al-Fared and cameraman Saif Ali from performing their duties and demanded they bring a letter from the Baghdad Operations Command to allow them to film in Al-Firdous Square in Baghdad.
- **February 27, 2024:** Asayish forces prevented "Voice of America" radio's reporter and photographer, Diar Jamal and Karwan Kakel, from passing through the "Hiran - Shaqlawa" checkpoint toward the Aqra district in Dohuk. They were interrogated for two hours, and the reporter was forced to sign a written pledge before being allowed to return to Sulaymaniyah.
- **February 27, 2024:** The head of the Najaf Provincial Council, Hussein Al-Essawy, expelled the journalistic teams from the council hall. The teams included cameramen from "Al-Taghyeer" and "Al-Sumaria" channels, reporters from "Al-Rabea" TV and "Zikra News" agency, and "UTV" Channel's team (Hussam Al-Kaabi and Ahmad Al-Marjani), following an argument with his deputy, Ghaith Shab'a, during a council session.
- **March 5, 2024:** The head of the Baghdad Provincial Council, Ammar Al-Qaisi, prevented the teams from "Al-Sumaria," "Al-Fallujah," and "Al-Ahd" satellite channels (Muttaz Jaleel, Alaa Al-Hadidi, Ali Hussein, Hisham Salim, Sajad Jafar, and Haidar Dakhel) from covering the council's discussion session, even though it was dedicated to discussing essential public service issues and projects directly affecting citizens.

- **March 5, 2024:** Security forces in Basra prevented the teams from "Al-Rabia," "Iraq 24," "Al-Hurra," "Al-Thamena," "Murfah Agency," and "Al-Janoub Radio" from proceeding to the Faw district to cover a protest. They were told to obtain official approval exclusively from the Basra Operations Command to cover or film any activity or street in the governorate.
- **March 27, 2024:** A security officer from Asayish forces prevented the team from "Bawar News" agency, consisting of journalists Nabz Rashad and Idris Jirjis, from covering a protest by businessmen in Erbil. The security forces seized their equipment to force them to leave and cease covering the protest.
- **March 28, 2024:** The organizing committee of a street opening ceremony in Karbala prevented Zainab Al-Ali, the reporter for "Al-Taliaa" Channel in Karbala, from covering the event, claiming her attire was not appropriate for the sacredness of the city. However, she had posted a video at the time showing her wearing a hijab and formal attire that covered her body completely, with no indication of inappropriate behavior in the video.
- **March 29, 2024:** The head of the Iraqi Media Network, Kareem Hamadi, issued a directive prohibiting employees of the network from criticizing government decisions and actions. Additionally, the appearance of TV presenter Anne Salah on the Iraqi TV channel was blocked and she was moved to the radio station for criticizing in a social media post the rise in prices and the cost of living.
- **March 31, 2024:** Reporter Mohamed Adnan from "NRT" channel was assaulted by security forces in the Kifri district of Diyala. His equipment was destroyed while he was covering an attack on Sheikh of the "Bayat" tribe by a drone.
- **April 7, 2024:** Journalists in Nineveh held a press conference to complain about ongoing restrictions during coverage of provincial council sessions, despite being invited. They were repeatedly expelled whenever any minor disagreement occurred among council members, forcing them to wait for long hours outside the council building to obtain session details.
- **April 8, 2024:** Security forces in Erbil attacked six journalistic teams (Anatolia Agency, Estha News, Standard News, Westja News, Bas Media, Bawar News) to prevent them from covering a fire at the "Lanja" market. Their equipment was confiscated to erase recordings. The journalists were also subjected to verbal abuse and threats of arrest.
- **April 8, 2024:** Security in Erbil prevented the "NRT" team, including reporter Hersch Qadir and photographer Mohammad Ismail, from covering an incident of missing funds at the "Gulan" Bank in the "Khabat" district of Erbil. They were threatened with arrest if they resumed filming in the area.

- **April 21, 2024:** The director of Nineveh's office prevented several journalistic teams (Mosulia, Dijla, Al-Ahd, Al-Fallujah, Al-Sumaria, Huna Baghdad, Radio Hala FM, and One FM) from covering a visit by the head of the Martyrs Foundation, Abdel Ilah Al-Nayli, to the provincial council building. The head of media in the province removed all logos from the podium and demanded the journalists leave immediately.
- **April 22, 2024:** The Kurdistan Journalists Syndicate and the protection detail of the Kurdish Prime Minister's office prevented several journalists (including Hersch Qadir, Mohammad Ismail, Diako Hassan, Ayoub Ali Qader, Rebaz Ahmed, Hazar Anwar, Nabz Rashad, Shahin Fouad, Ahmad Shawkan, Taman Abdullah, Diar Adel, Hawker Hassan, Shwan Shirzad, Mohammad Yassin, Jilan Saber, Heman Mohammad, Diar Hussein, Rabin Mohammad, Hisham Said, and Nahad Ahmed) from entering the "Rotana" hotel in Erbil to cover the Kurdish Journalists' Day celebration, despite the syndicate's invitation to the media to attend and cover the event.
- **April 29, 2024:** A security officer from the protection detail of Interior Minister Abdul Amir Al-Shammari prevented Mustafa Al-Rakabi, a cameraman for Dijla Channel in Al-Muthanna, from filming. The officer forced the journalist to leave the venue of the minister's conference on security and intelligence issues in the province.
- **May 5, 2024:** Security forces in Erbil prevented 13 journalistic teams (Bawar News, Khawkurk, Estha, Kurdstat, Teba News, Westga News, Speda, Wagun, Kurdistan Press, KNN, Peyam, Standard, and +964) from covering a fire that broke out at the "Qaysariyya" market in the city. Photographer Mohammad Raouf from "Speda" Channel was assaulted, resulting in a deep hand injury. The journalists left the scene fearing arrest.
- **May 10, 2024:** The protection detail of the Minister of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs at a seminar held at the "Polytechnic" University in Erbil prevented five journalistic teams (KNN, Bawar News, Bazmedia, Khawkurk, and Wagun) from speaking with the minister for an interview. The seminar organizers also attacked the journalists and threatened them with arrest if they filmed the minister or attempted an interview.
- **May 12, 2024:** The army forces in Kirkuk prevented a team of 10 journalists from "KNN" Channel from filming a field program about the agricultural sector in the village of "Balkana" in the Dibis district. The forces demanded a letter from operations, even though the latter does not issue work permits.
- **June 2, 2024:** Security forces in Dhi Qar seized the equipment of the "Dhi Qar" TV Channel reporter, Mujtaba Saleh, while he was covering protests in

front of the Oil Distribution Company in the province, organized by contract workers demanding permanent employment.

- **June 3, 2024:** The security detail at "Tomi Lik" bank in Sulaymaniyah forced "Walat Media" journalist Kashma Farouk to delete footage while preparing a report about a gathering of people in front of the bank regarding biometric process management.
- **June 6, 2024:** Security forces prevented "Al-Sumaria" Channel reporter Hussein Mohan and cameraman Ali Al-Rubaie from performing their duties in the "Al-Houra" area of Wasit, near international restaurant agencies, by order of the provincial police chief who was performing the Hajj pilgrimage.
- **June 7, 2024:** A member of the federal police prevented "Al-Sharqiya" Channel reporter Minas Al-Sahil from completing a report near a "KFC" restaurant in the University District of Baghdad. He was ordered to stop filming immediately and leave the area.
- **June 8, 2024:** Security forces in Basra and Maysan prevented all media outlets from covering Prime Minister Mohammad Shiaa Al-Sudani's field visit to both provinces. Only official "Iraqi" channel was allowed to film.
- **June 14, 2024:** Riot forces attacked the crew of the "Al-Hadarat" News Agency, photographers Karrar Hakim and Muntadhar Adnan, beating them severely, causing minor injuries, and destroying their equipment during a football match between the teams of Nasiriyah and Ramadi at the "Al-Shatra" stadium in the Iraqi Stars League. Other cameramen left the field for fear of their equipment being damaged by riot forces.
- **June 23, 2024:** A passerby claiming to be an organizer of the protests in Al-Haboubi Square in Dhi Qar prevented "Al-Janoub" Channel reporter Muntadhar Khalid and cameraman Abbas Rizq from working on a report about the deteriorating electrical system in the province. They left the square immediately despite the presence of security forces.
- **June 28, 2024:** Security forces in Basra prevented the "One News" team, including Atheer Al-Abadi and Ahmed Saleh, from filming near Friday Market, demanding that they obtain official approval from Basra Operations Command to work.
- **July 15, 2024:** Security forces in the Shafi'iya district of Al-Diwaniyah attacked the cameraman of "Shafi'iya News" Agency, Hussein Amer, with batons, causing severe injury to his leg. The agency's editor-in-chief, Sajad Al-Khazali, was also affected by smoke inhalation and blurred vision due to the use of smoke grenades by security forces to disperse protests organized by the local population demanding better services.

- **July 25, 2024:** The Anbar Police Command prevented "Al-Ittihad" Channel reporter Qatada Adel and his photographer from covering a brutal murder that occurred in the province, ordering them to leave the scene immediately.
- **July 30, 2024:** A member of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) prevented "Al-Sharqiya" and "Iraq 24" Channel crews from covering the British Ambassador's visit to a museum in Basra near the presidential palace gate. The security detail demanded that the teams obtain official approval despite being invited to the site by the Director of Basra's Antiquities Inspectorate.
- **August 8, 2024:** Religious leaders organizing an anti-reform protest against the Personal Status Law amendment prevented "Al-Taghyeer" Channel and "Network +964" crews (Mohammad Rizq, Mustafa Wala, Abdullah Ali) from covering a women's protest in Najaf against the efforts to amend the Personal Status Law, threatening to seize the equipment if filming continued.
- **August 11, 2024:** A security officer at a checkpoint in Kirkuk prevented the teams from the "Al-Ghadeer," "Dijla," "Al-Fallujah," and "Al-Sharqiya" Channels from covering a protest near the Kirkuk Governorate building, using offensive language to stop them from filming.
- **August 18, 2024:** Asayish forces in Halabja attacked the "Zoom News" team while covering a protest organized by the people of Halabja following the killing of a worker in the border area by border guards. The attack resulted in severe bruising for reporter Avin Atta's arms and minor injuries for photographer Jiaz Kamal. The forces also seized the channel's camera.
- **August 20, 2024:** The protection detail of Prime Minister Mohammad Shiaa Al-Sudani prevented all media teams from entering the Nasiriyah International Stadium to cover its opening during the Prime Minister's visit to the province. Journalists were forced to document the Prime Minister's convoy from the main streets near the stadium. The security detail ordered them to turn around and stop filming as the convoy passed.
- **August 24, 2024:** A group of supporters of the Democratic Party in Erbil attacked the filming site of the "NRT" Channel team, consisting of journalists Haval Fadil and Ali Abdulhadi, to prevent them from interviewing citizens about the lack of drinking water in the Khabat area of Erbil. The assailants also attempted to seize the team's equipment.
- **August 24, 2024:** Members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) prevented "Rudaw" Channel reporter Nizar Jaza and cameraman Ranjdar Amin from covering a protest in "Park Azadi" in Sulaymaniyah, condemning the Turkish airstrike that killed two female journalists. The

PKK members threatened them with violence, forcing the team to leave the protest immediately.

- **28/8/2024:** A traffic police officer in Basra attacked Radio Al-Mirbad's cameraman, Wissam Riyadh, with severe physical violence, resulting in heavy bruising on his hand and head. The attack occurred during a special coverage near the Tayaran Square. The officer also damaged the cameraman's vehicle, and when a colleague accompanying him protested the officer's actions, the officer became enraged and intensified the assault.
- **11/9/2024:** The Director of Media for the Presidency of the Republic prevented a crew from Kurdistan 24, consisting of reporter Dilan Barzan and cameraman Mustafa Basim, from covering Iranian President Masoud Bezhkian's visit to Baghdad. Only three TV channels were allowed to cover the event. The crew was forced to leave the Republican Palace after being denied access to work.
- **22/9/2024:** The Basra Governor's Office sent a letter to the Basra Journalists Syndicate requesting the list of authorized and accredited media institutions, to prevent interaction with unregistered and unofficial media outlets, aiming to restrict coverage and cooperation.
- **18/10/2024:** Security officers prevented the "Shaab Kurdistan" crew from filming an election campaign event organized by the Kurdistan Democratic Party near the Mahmoud Yazidi martyr polling station in Badrri, Dohuk. The security officers threatened reporter Akrem Drouish and photographer Beqes Qasu with arrest if they continued filming. One officer also seized and attempted to break their camera.
- **18/10/2024 (same day):** During the Kurdistan parliamentary election, security forces prevented 18 media crews from covering the security forces' voting. In Halabja, security officers prevented "Speda" reporter Arfan Ahmed and cameraman Mukhtar Habib from filming at the Burhan Primary School polling station. The crew was attacked, forcing them to leave. Similarly, the crew from Kurdistan 24, consisting of Hiro Maloodi and cameraman Zakros Akbar, was denied access to cover the election in Koya, where they were subjected to harassment and provocative behavior.
- **18/10/2024 (same day):** In the same election period, the crew from Kurdistan 24, including reporter Hawzan Jamal and cameraman Hevi Aziz, was allowed to work at the Burhan Haji Mohammed polling center in Halabja during the voting period. However, after voting ended, the security officers expelled them from the center and also removed crews from other media outlets, including: Payam, Rudaw, Al-Thamina, Zoom, Kurdsat, KNN, Majo, Ava, Kurdistan TV, Al-Iraqiya, Shab Kurdistan, 964, NRT, and Sulaimani Voice Radio.

- **20/10/2024:** Security forces in Shaklawā prevented NRT reporter Karim Kifi from covering the polling station. He was denied access to both the station and the area outside, forcing him to leave without completing his assigned work.
- **24/10/2024:** Security forces from Baghdad's riot police in Nasiriyah prevented Zaghros TV reporter Ali Saleh from performing his duties, threatening him with arrest after verbally assaulting him. The crew was forced to stop filming and leave the location.
- **28/10/2024:** The "Capital Media" team, consisting of reporter Nahro Georgeis and photographer Yousif Bakhtiar, was attacked while covering a protest by generator owners outside the Council of Ministers building in Erbil. The security forces confiscated their equipment to stop the coverage and forced the team to leave the scene.
- **2/11/2024:** A security officer at the Khraisat checkpoint at the entrance to Khur Al-Zubair, Basra, prevented the Al-Ittijah channel crew, consisting of Mazen Al-Tayyar and Riyadh Sadiq, from covering the visit of the Minister of Industry and Minerals to Basra. The officer also confiscated the reporter's ID and demanded clearance from the naval command, as the checkpoint was under the control of the Basra naval forces.
- **7/11/2024:** The Dean of the College of Education in Kirkuk, Dr. Farhad Aziz, prevented the "Turkmen Eli" channel crew, consisting of Ghanem Qassab and Jiten Aiden, from entering the Turkish section of the college, despite having obtained prior approval for their coverage.
- **19/11/2024:** Security personnel protecting Turkish Minister of Trade, Omar Bulat, assaulted Al-Janoub channel reporter Safaa Al-Freiji during an attempt to speak with the minister at a press conference held with Basra officials at the Grand Millennium Hotel.
- **20/11/2024:** Security personnel at checkpoints in Basra prevented Iraqiya and Al-Rasheed channel reporters Ahmad Ali and Ali Aziz from passing. In Diwaniya, they also blocked Al-Janoub channel reporter Bassam Hani, while security in Wasit stopped Sajad Al-Attiya, head of Al-Rabea channel's office, and reporters from Al-Furat, Dijla, Afak, and Iraqiya channels, including Faleh Al-Qureishi, Ali Al-Amara, Ali Al-Murshid, and Abbas Al-Essawi, from passing to cover the population census, despite having special permits for exemption from the curfew.
- **21/11/2024:** Security forces in Basra prevented Al-Ghadir channel cameraman Rami Al-Ameer and Al-Rabea channel reporter Ahmed Rayed from passing, while in Diwaniya, Al-Ghadir channel cameraman Mazen Al-Kaabi was blocked. In Wasit, security forces also obstructed Iraqi channel

reporter Abbas Al-Essawi, disrupting their coverage of the population census event, despite having the necessary credentials.

- **30/11/2024:** Protection personnel for MP Wasfi Al-Aasi in Kirkuk physically assaulted Al-Ghadir channel reporter Mohamed Shaheed Zada and Al-Ahd channel cameraman Abdullah Al-Naimi to prevent them from covering a ceremony for the return of missing persons outside the provincial intelligence office. The reporters filed a complaint with the MP's office, but the protection denied the allegations.
- **15/12/2024:** Protection officers of the Minister of Electricity, Ziad Ali, in Basra violently attacked two reporters from "I-News" and "Al-Taghyir" channels, Mustafa Al-Shammari and Foad Al-Hilfi, while they were attempting to cover the signing of a contract with a Turkish company. The assault resulted in severe injuries to both journalists.
- **24/ 12/ 2024,** a naval checkpoint prevented the Al-Marbad Radio team, consisting of reporter Ali Al-Haddar and cameraman Issam Al-Badran, from entering the Umm Qasr district in Basra. The team was attempting to document the demolition of homes along the border strip with Kuwait, carried out under orders from the local Basra authorities.

Violations by the Communications and Media Commission (CMC)

- **18/1/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission imposed a two-month ban on all media outlets from hosting political analyst Imad Bajlan. Additionally, the commission issued another order suspending the political program "Clearly- Biwudhuh" aired on "Zagros" TV for one month, due to the appearance of individuals who were banned by the commission.
- **20/2/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission issued a directive to all media outlets banning the appearance of political analyst Yahya Al-Kubaisi, threatening legal repercussions for any violations of the directive.
- **20/3/2024:** The commission issued an order to block the news website "Al-Markaz Al-Khabari" and requested the National Security service to take necessary actions to shut it down. However, the commission did not specify which materials violated its rules or provide clear reasons for this action. This came after a letter from the head of the Federal Court to the President of Iraq regarding a WhatsApp group managed by several individuals associated with the site.
- **2/5/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission issued an order to all media outlets prohibiting the appearance of political analyst Najih Al-Mizan for three months, citing violations of the Media Broadcasting Code.

The commission warned media outlets about legal consequences for non-compliance.

- **12/5/2024:** The commission issued a directive to all media outlets, banning the appearance of politician Bashir Al-Hajimi for two months, alleging that his statements misled the public. The commission warned media outlets of legal consequences for hosting him during the ban.
- **6/5/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission suspended the program "Nisf Da'ira" aired on Al-Ahd channel for 30 days, due to sectarian remarks made by one of the guests on the program.
- **19/5/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission ordered all media outlets to prevent the appearance of MP Haider Al-Mulla for 60 days, claiming that his statements violated the Media Broadcasting Code.
- **13/8/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission renewed the ban on political analyst Bashir Al-Hajimi for six months, invoking the powers granted by Order 65 of 2004.
- **1/9/2024:** The commission issued a directive to all media outlets, banning the appearance of researcher Gaith Al-Tamimi for three months, citing violations of the Media Broadcasting Code. The commission warned media outlets of legal consequences for violating the directive.
- **11/9/2024:** The commission issued a warning to UTV channel, prohibiting the airing of an episode of the program "Ma'a Al-Mulla Talal," as the guest, politician Mishaan Al-Jubouri, violated Article 2 of Section 2 of the Media Broadcasting Code, which addresses public decency, threatening the channel with legal and financial repercussions if the episode was aired again.
- **17/9/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission instructed media outlets to only host 19 legal figures for discussions related to the controversial Personal Status Law amendment, after the Bar Association imposed penalties on lawyers opposing the proposed amendment who appeared on media outlets during that period.
- **19/10/2024:** The Commission's Board of Commissioners announced the revocation of the "MBC Iraq" channel's license, which broadcasts from the Media City in Dubai, UAE, not from Baghdad. The decision cited the channel's inappropriate content about Palestinian resistance leaders. The executive body of the commission was also instructed to revoke the channel's work permit in Iraq.
- **27/10/2024:** The Media and Communications Commission issued a directive to all media outlets, banning the appearance of political figures Thaer Al-Bayati and Intifadah Qambar, accusing them of "inciting violence and hatred."

- **11/12/2024:** The commission issued a directive to all media outlets containing unusual and politically biased guidelines. The instructions required media to allocate broadcast time to praise the security forces, ban the appearance of political and security analysts who spread misleading statements, showcase the defeat of the Israeli army, and feature religious leaders and mosque imams from both the Shiite and Sunni endowments.

Legal Cases, Verdicts, and Arrests

- **8/1/2024:** NRT channel correspondent Khalid Mohammed appeared before the court in the Qusaynjik judiciary of Erbil due to a lawsuit filed against him by the Education Directorate of the region. The lawsuit stemmed from a report he produced revealing that a student had been abused by the principal of a local school.
- **30/1/2024:** The Iraqi Parliament filed a lawsuit against "Al-Sharqiya" channel and its presenter Hisham Ali due to statements made by two former female MPs on his show "Liibat Al-Karasi," in which they alleged incidents of "harassment" within the parliament.
- **5/2/2024:** The court of Qalar rejected a lawsuit that had been filed in 2013 against VOA correspondent Dilshad Anwar by the Minister of Labor in the Kurdistan Regional Government, Adnan Mohammed Qader. The lawsuit was related to a report he published on land appropriation in the region. Anwar had also been subjected to significant pressure after the former minister demanded compensation of 250 million Iraqi dinars.
- **22/2/2024:** Ali Al-Dhbhawi, presenter of the "Studio Al-Tasa'a" program, was imprisoned for three days upon his arrival at the court building. This came after he was notified of three lawsuits filed against him by senior military figures, including Chief of Staff General Abdul Amir Yarallah, former Interior Minister General Osman Al-Ghanimi, and current Minister of Defense Thabit Al-Abbasi. The lawsuits were due to a video aired on his show, where a retired general discussed his grievances. Al-Dhbhawi was released after paying a bail of 10 million dinars.
- **28/2/2024:** WTV presenter and program producer Qusi Shafiq appeared in the Court of First Instance in Al-Karada, after a lawsuit was filed against

him by politician Khamis Al-Khanjar. The lawsuit sought compensation for an investigation into land appropriation in the Green Zone under the pretext of investment. The court rejected the lawsuit for lack of legal grounds.

- **12/3/2024:** The Rasafa Misdemeanor Court sentenced presenter Qusi Shafiq to one year in prison for airing an appeal from a poor family. However, the sentence was suspended on the condition that Shafiq maintains good conduct for three years, refrains from publishing content, and signs a written commitment to the court. He was also required to pay a financial guarantee.
- **14/4/2024:** The Rusafa Investigative Court issued an arrest order against "I News" presenter Amal Ali due to a lawsuit filed against her by MP Mohama Khalil from the Kurdistan Democratic Party. The case arose from her criticism of his absence from her program two years prior, when she worked for a different channel. After the incident, she was banned from entering the Parliament building. The lawsuit was considered unusual as it was filed two years after the incident.
- **14/4/2024:** The Al-Karkh Misdemeanor Court issued a two-year prison sentence in absentia for presenter Qahtan Adnan. The case was based on a lawsuit filed against him by Migration Minister Ivan Faik, accusing him of exposing corruption regarding large-scale purchases of ice. The court issued the verdict despite the investigation into the case by the Integrity Commission, with the presenter having based his investigation on this ongoing inquiry.
- **18/4/2024:** The judiciary dismissed a lawsuit filed against Dajla Channel's presenter Sahar Abbas Jamil by the General Director of Roads and Bridges, Hussein Al-Sharomoti, related to her exposé on corruption and embezzlement of public funds.
- **14/5/2024:** The family of sports program host Haider Zaki filed an appeal for his release after he had spent six days in prison due to a lawsuit filed against him by Iraq Football Federation President Adnan Dhirjal. Zaki had been convicted of defaming the president, leading to a four-month prison sentence.
- **26/5/2024:** AFP correspondent Asaad Niazi appeared before the court in Dhi Qar Governorate Court of Appeal due to a lawsuit filed against him by the French Consul in Dhi Qar, Adel Al-Kanzawi. The lawsuit was related to his publication of photos from the fire that broke out at the French Embassy in 2021. The charge was defamation under Article 430, but Niazi was released on a 10 million dinar bail after interventions and mediation.
- **27/5/2024:** The Al-Karkh Misdemeanor Court sentenced journalist Adnan Qahtan to two years in prison for "obscene content," following a complaint

filed by lawyer Ahmad Shahid. Qahtan faces 12 additional lawsuits from former Parliament Speaker Mohamed Al-Halbousi, two from Rayan Al-Kildani's brothers, and others from Minister of Migration and Displaced Persons Viyan Faik and MP Hanan Al-Fatlawi, among several other government officials.

- **29/5/2024:** Presenter Qusi Shafiq appeared before the Rusafa Court of Appeal due to 6 lawsuits filed against him in previous years. These lawsuits were filed by the former Prime Minister's office (Mustafa Al-Kadhimi) in 2021 after Shafiq reported on the Abu Ragheef Committee, the Ministry of Finance in the same year for exposing corruption in tax funds, the Housing Bank in 2022 for reporting discrimination in loan distribution, the Director of Traffic in Rusafa for obstructing traffic, the Ministry of Defense in early 2023 over defense contracts, and the Ministry of Interior in mid-2023 for similar allegations.
- **6/6/2024:** Duhok Court scheduled a trial for Syrian journalist and "Ruz News" correspondent Suleiman Ahmed on charges of endangering the security of the Kurdistan Region. Ahmed was arrested upon his return from Syria, and while his defense team attempted to intervene, authorities denied his detention and claimed no such journalist had been arrested.
- **12/6/2024:** Dhi Qar correspondent for Dijla Channel, Rasim Karim, appeared in court following a lawsuit filed against him under Article 229 of the Iraqi Penal Code by the Dhi Qar Provincial Council. The lawsuit was related to his reporting on the council's confiscation of the Dhi Qar Electricity Training Center.
- **8/7/2024,** the Misdemeanor Court in Babil sentenced Al-Taghyeer channel correspondent to pay a fine of one million Iraqi dinars. The verdict was issued in response to a lawsuit filed by the owner of a beauty salon. The case stemmed from a report the correspondent produced about a campaign by the Ministry of Interior to shut down unlicensed beauty salons and centers in Babil. Although the report neither targeted nor defamed her specifically, the court ruled against the correspondent and imposed the fine.
- **10/7/2024:** Heiman Mamend, presenter and program producer for "SterkTV," faced 13 lawsuits filed by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, and the Kurdistan Parliament. He was detained in Erbil for two weeks but later released on a bail of 30 million dinars. Mamend was sentenced in absentia to two years in prison for another lawsuit. Additionally, the Ministry of Peshmerga filed a case against him after he posted a video on Facebook about an incident involving a child being hit by a vehicle in a military convoy.

- **23/7/2024:** Journalist Qais Hassan appeared in the Baghdad Court of First Instance following a lawsuit filed by former Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, who objected to Hassan's description of him as the "worst" among Iraq's leaders. The Journalist was fined by IQD five million.
- **23/7/2024:** The Rusafa Misdemeanor Court imposed a 1 million dinar fine on Ali Al-Khayal, a presenter at Al-Baghdadia TV, following a lawsuit filed by MP Ali Al-Saadi. The lawsuit stemmed from criticism of the MP's political performance.
- **29/7/2024:** The Duhok Court sentenced Syrian journalist Suleiman Ahmed to three years in prison under Article 1 of Law No. 21, related to national security in the Kurdistan Region.
- **20/8/2024:** The Iraqi Parliament filed a criminal complaint against media figure Ahmed Mulla Talal for "insulting" Parliament Speaker, Mohsen Al-Mandalawi, during an episode of his program aired on Utv.
- **23/8/2024:** The director of "Rast Media" Foundation, Omid Brusckki, was summoned to appear in the Duhok Court after publishing a report on the disappearance of a political detainee, Mulla Nazar, who was reportedly arrested under political charges.
- **12/9/2024:** Political program presenter Sahar Abbas Jamil appeared before the Rusafa Court due to a lawsuit filed by MP Mustafa Sand. This was in connection with a March episode aired on Dijla Channel, where Jamil raised suspicions of corruption in South Oil Company contracts and alleged involvement of some MPs. Although Jamil never named or described Sand in the episode, the MP filed the lawsuit. The court ordered Jamil to sign a pledge to attend further sessions for investigation.
- **19/9/2024:** The Iraqi Bar Association filed a complaint against "Min Alakhir;" program presenter Hussam Al-Haj for allegedly distorting facts in an episode broadcast on Al-Sumaria TV. The episode criticized the Bar Association's actions against members opposing the Personal Status Law amendment, and also discussed the dismissal of rights activist Muhammad Jumaa after his participation in protests against the amendment.
- **19/9/2024:** The Health Department in Anbar filed a lawsuit against Al-Idah Channel reporter Qatada Adel, accusing him of revealing a massive financial waste (approximately 5 billion dinars) in the Anbar Health Directorate during the COVID-19 pandemic. The channel also ended Adel's contract after the lawsuit, and the reporter's social media pages were hacked to erase his report.
- **23/9/2024:** Jordanian authorities summoned Hamid Abdullah, presenter of "Special Testimonies," to court due to a lawsuit filed by President Abdul Latif Rashid. The lawsuit followed Abdullah's revelation of a document

allegedly showing Rashid's involvement in leasing a house of a former regime figure to the Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad for \$50,000 per month.

- **24/9/2024:** Journalist Hirdi Mohammed appeared in court for the third time in Kirkuk after a lawsuit was filed against him by the Kirkuk National Security Agency. The case, based on Article 433 of the Iraqi Penal Code, stemmed from a 2021 report about the closure of real estate offices in the Kurdistan neighborhood of Kirkuk by security personnel. Mohammed paid a bail amount for his release.
- **29/9/2024:** Qatada Adel, reporter for Al-Idah Channel in Anbar, received a second lawsuit from the legal director of Anbar Health, based on Article 433 of the Iraqi Penal Code. The lawsuit required his presence in court, or a warrant for his arrest would be issued.
- **2/10/2024:** Al-Nu'maniyah Court of Appeals referred journalist Safaa Rashid to the Misdemeanor Court after a lawsuit was filed by the mayor of Al-Nu'maniyah, Mohammad Eidhan Mahdi, over Rashid's call for residents to elect representatives free of party-based quotas. The lawsuit was filed under Article 434 (defamation), and Rashid attended the court, posting bail. The case was transferred to the Misdemeanor Court.
- **10/10/2024:** The Rusafa Investigation Court dismissed a lawsuit filed by MP Ahmed Mazher Al-Jubouri against Dijla Channel reporter Ali Ibrahim. The lawsuit, filed under Article 433, stemmed from a report in which Ibrahim hosted a speaker from Al-Jubouri's region, who claimed he was denied road construction due to party affiliation. The court dismissed the case after review.
- **27/10/2024:** Mihevan Mardan, the director of "Shahba Kurdistan" TV, refused to attend a police summons in Duhok and instead sent the channel's lawyer. The police had summoned him regarding a lawsuit filed by Duhok University over a report about the university's administration directing students in the Kurdistan Parliament elections to show their voting cards. The police refused to disclose details of the lawsuit to the lawyer and insisted Mardan attend in person for investigation.
- **11/11/2024:** TV program host Yasser Ammar continues to attend sessions for the lawsuit filed against him by the management of Al-Janoob Islamic Bank. This lawsuit is due to his revelation of a document during an episode of his show "Al-Rasheed Wal-Nas" on Al-Rasheed TV. The document included a signed proposal from the bank's CEO to the Minister of Trade, suggesting the conversion of the bank into the Iraqi Export Bank, involving the Ministries of Oil and Trade in proportions he proposed.
- **9/12/2024:** Political program host Ali Al-Dhabbahwi announced that he had been fined 500,000 dinars as a result of a lawsuit filed by the Sadrist

Movement. The lawsuit was prompted by his demand for the movement's leader, Muqtada al-Sadr, to fulfill promises made regarding the construction of schools.

- **11/12/2024:** MP from the Coordination Framework, Saud Al-Saadi, filed a complaint with the Public Prosecution Office against political program host Adnan Al-Ta'i. The lawsuit accused Al-Ta'i of spreading hate speech and insulting a wide spectrum of Iraqis. This followed Al-Ta'i's national speech urging politicians to prioritize national interests over secondary ideologies and identities.
- On December 11, 2024, former MP Mohammed Al-Daini filed a lawsuit against political program host Mona Sami after she interviewed him and questioned him about properties he had allegedly seized. She also asked about demands from their rightful owners for their return. Al-Daini regarded her questioning as defamatory and targeting his reputation.
- On December 19, 2024, the Third Karkh Investigative Court summoned "With Mulla Talal" program host, Ahmad Mulla Talal in response to a complaint filed by Prime Minister Mohammed Shiyaa Al-Sudani. The summons followed a program episode addressing leaked audio recordings that had circulated widely on media platforms and social media.
- **23/12/ 2024,** the court convicted journalist Qusay Shafiq, imposing a fine of one million Iraqi dinars. The ruling was based on a complaint filed by Prime Minister Mohammed Shiaa Al-Sudani, following Shafiq's description of the prime minister's government as "a failure."
- **26/12/ 2024,** program host Zainab Rabea received a summons to appear at the Karkh Court of Appeals following a lawsuit filed by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani. The case arose from a comment made by the journalist on one of her social media platforms.
- **Kurdistan Region:** Authorities continue to detain two journalists. The first, photographer Kahrman Shukri, was sentenced to seven years in prison by Duhok Court in 2021 for participating in protests against Turkish incursions into the region and covering the accompanying crackdown. The second, journalist Shirwan Sharwani, was sentenced to six years by Erbil Criminal Court in 2021 for attempting to overthrow the government. He has served four years and three months and remains in detention with an uncertain future.

Censorship and Blocking

- **22/2/2024:** The Iraqi government blocked the website of "Haddod Network" in central and southern Iraq through Earthlink's internet gateways. No official reason for the blocking was provided, and it was not listed among the websites blocked by the Ministry of Communications. The site is known for satirical news and had not been registered for blocking by the ministry.
- **21/8/2024:** The Ministry of Communications blocked the "ABC Arabic" news agency's website within Iraq without prior notice or clear reasons. The website displayed a message: "This site has been blocked by the Ministry of Communications as per Federal Court orders." The agency's editor-in-chief, Salem Al-Sheikh, speculated that the block was related to the agency's reporting on the surveillance network inside the Prime Minister's office, which had been exposed recently.
- **14/8/2024:** The Ministry of Culture in the Kurdistan Region forced local broadcast companies to suspend the transmissions of "Sabida" and "Sabida Drama" channels abruptly, citing a lack of broadcasting licenses, even though the channels had been operating for 15 years under a license from the Iraqi Media and Communications Commission. The Kurdistan government also revoked the license of the channels, leading to their shutdown.
- **14/8/2024:** On the same day, the Kurdistan Regional Government halted the local broadcast of "NRT4", a channel focused on religious affairs in the region. The channel's broadcast was stopped without prior warning, allegedly due to expired work licenses, although the channel had previously obtained proper licenses.
- **25/8/2024:** Iraqi authorities blocked the TikTok account of journalist Adel Al-Khuzai, who resides outside the country and covers political developments. It is believed the block was to prevent his followers inside Iraq from accessing his posts.
- **24/9/2024:** The Prime Minister's office pressured the "Al-Jibal" news site to remove a report detailing internal conflicts within the Coordination Framework leadership and Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani. The conflict was linked to the "wiretapping" scandal involving a member of the Prime Minister's office.
- **27/11/2024:** The Prime Minister's office also pressured "Utv" TV channel to remove an episode of "Ma'a Malla Talal", a political program that discussed leaked audio tapes, implicating several political leaders in corruption and bribery. Following this episode, the program was suspended.
- **Ongoing:** The Iraqi government continues to block the news website "Ultra Iraq" for unknown reasons, and the blocking was not carried out through official channels.

Other Media Restrictions

- **9/1/2024:** The Iraqi Parliament imposed a dress code on journalists as a condition for entering the parliamentary building, with those failing to comply being denied access.
- **17/2/2024:** Authorities in the Kurdistan Region conditioned the release of journalist Kohdar Zibari, who had been sentenced to prison, on his agreement not to return to his journalistic work and to cease criticizing the authorities on social media. Zibari had served more than three years in prison.
- **9/6/2024:** The President of the Iraqi Media Network, Kareem Hamadi, issued a "warning" to sports broadcaster Ghazwan Shaker Mansour over a post on Facebook, believing it was directed at him. Despite the post not containing any criticism or insults, the legal department of the network warned Mansour that harsher penalties would follow if he criticized the network again. Hamadi had previously instructed all network staff not to criticize the work of the authorities or the network.
- **28/8/2024:** Journalist Omar Al-Janabi announced that he was facing harassment in the country where he resides, due to pressure from the Iraqi authorities, which forced him to leave his job. He shared on X (formerly Twitter) that he was being pursued at his workplace abroad due to Iraqi government intervention, but did not provide further details.
- **11/9/2024:** The Ministry of Higher Education and the Legal Department issued a directive to all universities prohibiting law faculty members from participating in television interviews or appearing in media that address public legal issues without prior permission from their respective colleges. The ministry threatened to initiate administrative investigations against violators.
- **12/9/2024:** The Syndicate of Journalists in Kurdistan's Sulaymaniyah branch, led by Karwan Anwar, threatened to take legal action by filing five lawsuits against journalist Mohammed Fathih if he continued publishing about his dismissal from his job at the eighth channel.
- **27/10/2024:** The management of Al-Ittijah TV terminated the services of its reporter in Anbar, Qatada Adel, without prior notice. The decision was reportedly influenced by entities connected to the lawsuit filed by the Health Directorate of Anbar, following a report Adel produced revealing significant

financial mismanagement amounting to 5 billion dinars in the Anbar Health Directorate.

- **1/12/ 2024:** The management of "Al-Rabia" Radio terminated the services of radio director Rashwan Fouad due to his posts on social media, particularly his criticism of Iranian policy in the region.
- **21/12/ 2024,** program host Saleh Al-Hamdani faced immense pressure to terminate his contract with the Iraqi Media Network after tweeting his opinion on the rapid steps being taken to establish a new political system in Syria. His fate remains uncertain as Thaer Al-Ghanmi, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Iraqi Media Network, has promised swift legal action to dismiss Al-Hamdani from the network.
- **22/12/ 2024,** the Bar Association announced the referral of lawyer Zainab Jawad for appearing on television. This followed a directive issued by the Communications and Media Commission urging television channels to host specific lawyers nominated by the Bar Association to discuss amendments to the Personal Status Law.

Violations by the Journalists Syndicate

- **3/3/2024:** The Iraqi Journalists Syndicate referred the editor-in-chief of Al-Sabah newspaper, Mohammed Ajeel, to the Disciplinary Committee due to his criticism of the Syndicate's president in a post on Facebook. The journalist did not attend the Syndicate's investigation session and was denied the renewal of his membership card while under investigation.
- **13/5/2024:** The Syndicate withdrew the accreditation of the newspaper Nabd Al-Shabab Al-Jadeed and issued a directive to ministries and government departments to refrain from dealing with the paper or granting it any advertisements. This action followed an investigation against Ali Kareem, the editor-in-chief, for his criticism of the Syndicate's president, Moayed Al-Lami. Kareem's membership was downgraded from a full member to a participating member, and his renewal was denied.
- **22/5/2024:** Moayed Al-Lami, the president of the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate, revoked the accreditation of Al-Dustour newspaper after it published documents that exempted him from accountability under the Accountability and Justice Law. The Syndicate also sent letters to all state ministries and agencies to prevent them from placing advertisements in the paper, a key source of its funding. The Syndicate also expelled the editor-in-chief of Al-

Dustour, Bassim Al-Sheikh, and contacted the Jordanian Journalists Syndicate and the Jordanian Media Authority to request the cancellation of the paper's office in Amman, which employed journalists Najem Al-Rubai and Mohammed Al-Sayed Mohsen.

- **22/5/2024:** Abdul Hussein Abdul Razak Ajeel, editor-in-chief of Al-Fayhaa newspaper, was summoned to appear before the Rusafa Investigation Court following a complaint from two Syndicate officials, Nazim Hassan Farhan and Firas Ghadhban Armash, due to his criticism of Moayed Al-Lami. The latter had previously ordered the revocation of the paper's accreditation and instructed the Basra governor to prevent advertisements from being placed in Al-Fayhaa, again affecting its funding.
- **6/6/2024:** Ali Kareem Hassan, the editor-in-chief of Nabd Al-Shabab Al-Jadeed, was summoned to the Al-Salihiya police station for questioning under articles 292/298 of the Penal Code following a complaint filed by the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate for his criticism of the Syndicate's performance.
- **2/7/2024:** A security force from the "Anti-Crime" unit raided the home of Bassim Al-Sheikh, editor-in-chief of Al-Dustour, in the Al-Jamia neighborhood to arrest him. This followed a lawsuit filed by the president of the Journalists Syndicate at the Rusafa Investigation Court, which resulted in an arrest warrant against Al-Sheikh over the publication of information related to Al-Lami being subject to accountability measures under the law.
- **23/7/2024:** Aqeel Al-Shweili, editor-in-chief of Kull Al-Akhbar newspaper, appeared before the National Security Agency's investigation judge in response to a lawsuit filed by the Syndicate, represented by the chairman of its Disciplinary Committee, Firas Al-Hamdani. The complaint accused Al-Shweili of publishing defamatory articles on an unknown website. The judge released Al-Shweili on the condition of presenting his identity papers.

Threats

- **9/8/2024:** A religious figure in Najaf threatened 964+ Network reporter Abdullah Ali with legal prosecution after a video emerged showing the sheikh participating in protests against the proposed amendments to the Personal Status Law. This followed Ali's coverage of the protests.
- **13/9/2024:** A security officer from the Basra Rapid Intervention Unit pointed his weapon at Basra 365 photographer Haider Muftan, threatening to kill him while he was attempting to cover a procession involving Iranian President Massoud Bezhkian near Basra International Airport.

Conclusions

The report above reveals a new authoritarian methodology aimed at restricting press freedom in Iraq. The key actors involved in this process include high-ranking government institutions, security leaders, and independent bodies that have attempted to impose the will of powerful individuals on the journalistic community and the media, especially independent outlets.

Security forces, under their leadership, have been one of the most aggressive bodies in restricting journalists, demanding special authorization from operational commanders, the Ministry of Interior, or police leadership for journalists to shoot in public spaces. Furthermore, officers' arbitrary treatment of journalists at security checkpoints has also been noted.

The Communications and Media Commission (CMC) has deviated from its intended role by acting to appease the ruling class, imposing restrictions on media outlets, preventing specific personalities from appearing, and blocking journalists' social media accounts and pages to prevent their opposition to the government from reaching the public.

The frequent filing of lawsuits against journalists has also become a nightmare, with courts failing to adhere to the Supreme Judicial Council's recommendations to transfer these cases to media courts. This has led to ongoing arrests, with journalists treated like criminals rather than protected professionals. As a result, some journalists have been forced to leave their jobs or relocate out of fear of arrest, while many still face an uncertain fate, with accusations fabricated to silence their voices.

The assassination of journalists by neighboring countries, with Iraqi journalists being targeted while performing their duties, is another alarming issue. The government's silence and inaction on these crimes suggest a lack of concern for the safety of journalists, in stark contrast to its rhetoric and promises to protect them.

The government's deliberate procrastination on addressing the issue of impunity and its lack of seriousness in pursuing those who attack journalists has allowed lawless entities to storm media offices, destroy equipment, and even burn offices to prevent journalists from returning to work.

The government continues to block news websites, including independent media outlets, without legal justification. The increasing involvement of the Prime Minister's office in pressuring media outlets that reveal sensitive reports or information is evident. Television channels and print media have faced significant pressure from the Prime Minister's office to delete or block journalistic materials related to the government's policies, further indicating the government's ongoing efforts to eliminate any form of dissent.

The parliament's disregard and delay in studying and approving the right to information law is another example of how the government has been restricting the work of journalists and limiting access to information channels.

Recommendations:

Based on the above findings, the Press Freedom Advocacy Association (PFAA) presents its recommendations to the Iraqi Parliament and international organizations concerned with human rights, freedom of expression, and press freedom:

1. Revive the Media and Publishing Court that was established under the UPR (Universal Periodic Review) recommendations to ensure a legal framework for media-related disputes, separate from the criminal justice system.
2. The federal government must exert pressure on the Kurdistan Regional Government to unconditionally and immediately release imprisoned journalists.
3. The Right to Information Law should be passed in the version proposed by civil society organizations and journalists, ensuring transparency and accountability. Additionally, amendments should be made to the criminal defamation provisions within the Iraqi Penal Code to align with the constitutional guarantees of press freedom.
4. The CMC should adhere strictly to its constitutional mandate, remain independent from political pressures, and cease imposing unwarranted

restrictions on media outlets. It should not allow political whims to shape its policies.

5. Security forces must be educated on the provisions of the constitution that protect press freedom. Accountability mechanisms should be established for security leaders who issue arbitrary orders restricting journalistic activities.
6. The government must respect the constitutional rights of press freedom by lifting any blocks on news agencies, websites, and social media accounts of journalists in Iraq, ensuring they can operate freely without governmental interference.

These recommendations aim to safeguard press freedom, ensure the independence of media institutions, and protect journalists from unwarranted harassment or legal action.