

Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq

World Press Freedom Day/ THE FALL OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL HIGH CEILINGS ON THE FREEDOM OF JOURNALISTIC WORK IN IRAQ

Media monitoring report on violations against Iraqi
journalists

For the period 3/5/2021 - 2/5/2022

جمعية الدفاع عن حرية الصحافة
Press Freedom Advocacy Association

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Press Freedom Advocacy Association

Report in Figures

Type of Violation	
Assassination Attempts	1
Abduction	1
Imprisonment	36
Killing Threats	10
Storming, raid, or armed attack against journalists' houses and media headquarters	8
Injuries	10
Beating, obstruction, and coverage hindrance	192
Lawsuits, court Sentences and arrest warrants	45
closures and Lay-offs	5
Others	12
Total	280

Preface

The annual monitoring Efforts of the Press Freedom Advocacy Association in Iraq /PFAA indicates a similar setback to last year's record of violations against journalists and press and media workers, through daily and immediate monitoring of all violations.

During the reporting period, PFAA monitored (280) violations involving journalists alike, including various types of violations such as attempted murder, break-ins, armed attacks, kidnapping, death threats, injuries during coverage, lawsuits in accordance with laws drafted during the dictatorship era, arrest and detention, as well as beatings, prevention and obstruction of coverage, closure of channels and dismissal of workers.

Like previous years, the Association recorded (192) case of beatings, prevention and obstruction of coverage, and this year the beating wasn't against the men journalists, but included women journalists as well, such as the incident that took place against Nour Tamimi, who was beaten and detained in the line of duty. (36) arrests and detentions without arrest warrants were recorded, and (10) cases of death threats and physical liquidation as well.

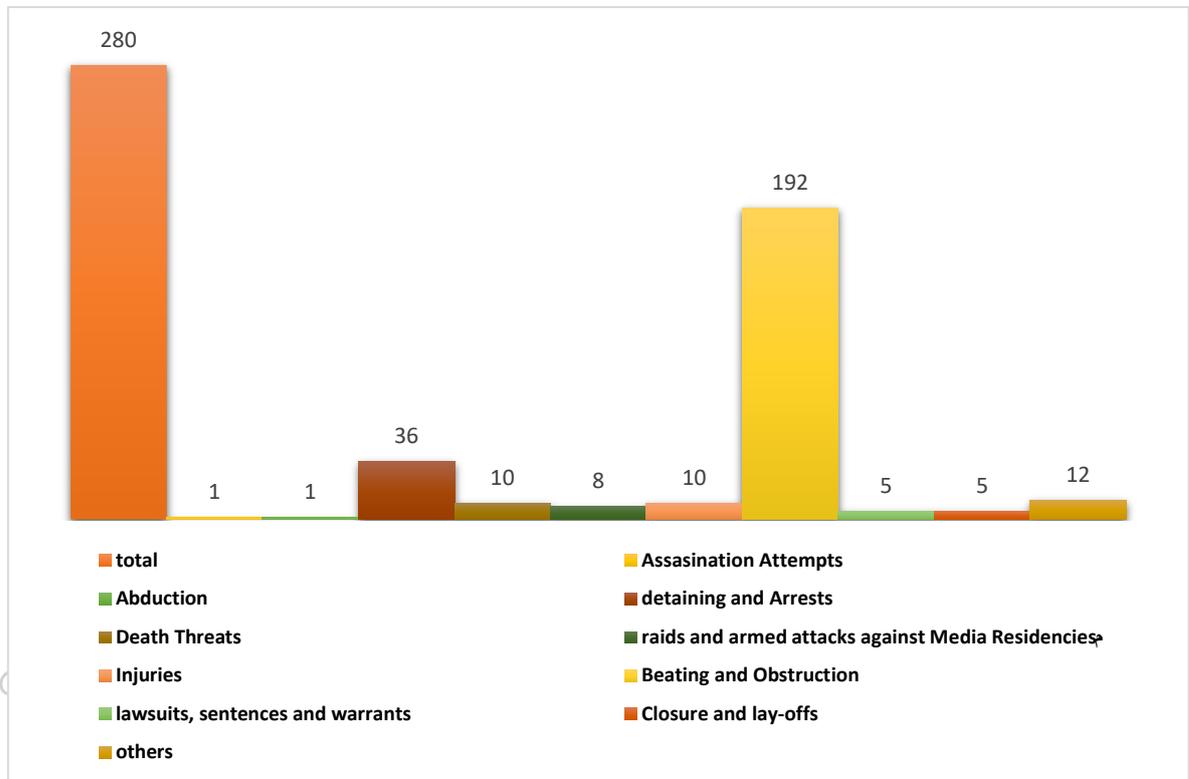
With regard to the distribution of violations according to the provinces, Kurdistan Region was ranked first with (83) violations, and its capital, Erbil, was the leading in the number of violations, with (56) cases, sharing its status with the federal capital Baghdad recording (56) as well. Kirkuk came in second with (37) cases of violations, followed by Mosul that is the third with (27) cases and Basra with (23) cases of violation.

It should be noted that the Iraqi journalist faces various types of violations, restrictions and mouth muzzling procedures in different provinces.

Provinces that have not recorded violations cannot be considered safe, as journalists fear reporting violations against them and also because some

provinces are almost free of journalists, following the wave of assassinations and direct threats against most of them.

Indicators of the types of violations journalists are facing in Iraq

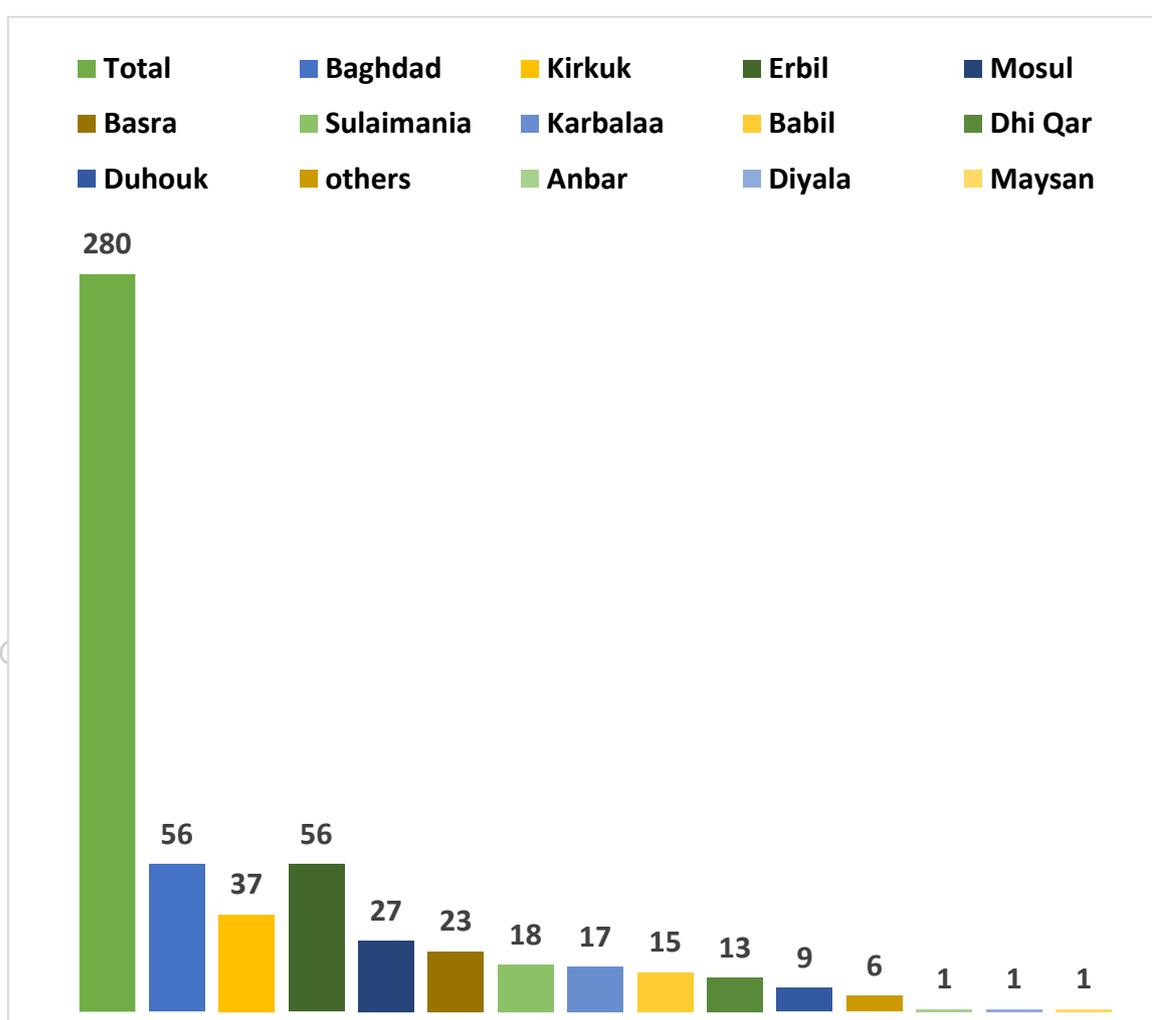


Monthly Chart of Violations



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Geographical (Provinces) chart of violations against Journalists in Iraq



Narrative Report

Assassination Attempts

On 13/5/ 2021, Ahmed Hassan, al-Furat TV correspondent in Diwaniyah, was subjected to an assassination attempt targeting his head, s by unidentified gunmen. The incident took place in front of his home in Al-Shamia district, after his return from Baghdad. The victim escaped certain death, but still suffers from the effects of the injury.

Abduction

On 3/8/ 2021, masked gunmen kidnapped the correspondent of the news agency "Shaha" (Asan Ahmed Mohammed) in front of the Sulaimaniyah provincial council, while he was on duty, and severely assaulted him. The victim was then released six hours after his abduction, after signing on false confessions.

Arrests and Imprisonments

- On 16/5/ 2021, the security authorities in Sulaimaniyah detained the Editor-in-chief of the Diplomatique Journal , (Makzin Himan Baqir), inside the Bakhtiari center, after he went to inquire about the report he had received at his home, following a complaint against him in Erbil by a party that the center declined to name, because of his publication of reports linked to the Kurdistan Regional Government, and released him on bail of four million Iraqi dinars.

- On June 5, 2021, members of the Petroleum Facilities Protection Force arrested the cameraman of the “Hona Baghdad” TV channel in Mosul, (Mr. Muhammad Al-Tai) while performing his press assignment near the Al-Shuhada gas station. Mr. Al-Tai was prevented from performing his work. He was aggravatedly beaten by the security force, smashing his mobile phone confiscating his channel camara. The cameraman, with

him, was detained inside the station before handing him over to policemen from Karama police station. The cameraman was released after signing a certain pledge.

- On July 1st, 2021, a crew from Al-Hurra Iraqi TV channel was detained by the security forces while covering demonstrations calling for better services in Nahrawan. The crew was released following interventions from the demonstrators.

- On July 5th, 2021, a security force detained the correspondent of Dijla TV channel in Dhi Qar, (Mr. Rasim Al-Saeedi) while he was near the governorate's HQ, covering protests. He was denied coverage, severely beaten and detained for more than three hours.

- On July 13th, 2021, members from the intelligence service arrested the reporter of Russia Today (RT) TV channel (Mr. Ashraf Al-Azzawi), after the force raided the channel's headquarters in Baghdad and took him to an unknown destination without an arrest warrant. Mr. Al-Azzawi was interrogated about his work in the channel, and the security force indicated that the reason for his arrest came as a result of a lawsuit filed by the Communications and Media Commission CMC against him, which was denied by CMC. He was released after 5 hours of detention and paying a bail.

- On July 13, 2021, elements affiliated with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan / Bafel Talabani wing arrested a number of workers at the headquarters of IBLUS, Kurdish-speaking channel in Sulaimaniyah, which is still in the process of experimental broadcasting via the Internet, and destroyed most of their equipment.

- On July 24, 2021, elements belonging to the security of the Director of the Transport Authority in Karbala, Sadeq Al-Mousawi, detained the correspondent of Al-Hurra Iraq TV channel, (Mr. Haider Hadi), while performing his work in one of the bus terminals of Karbala, where they verbally assaulted him with insults and slander, and took him to Al-Abbasiya Police Station for interrogation. He was detained for an hour.

- On July 27, 2021, a security force claiming to be from the Countering Crimes and Anti-Money Laundering arrested the presenter of the (Studio

AlTasiaa) TV program, (Mr. Ali Al-Dhabhawi) and the director of the news department of Al-Baghdadia TV channel, (Mr. Taha Khalil) in Baghdad, without knowing the reasons behind their arrest, which lasted for 24 hours. The incident aimed to close down the Baghdad Office (further details below).

- On August 9, 2021, a colonel from the security forces detained the NRT TV channel reporter (Mr. Noor Al-Saidi) for half an hour while covering the demonstration of Independent High Electoral Commission contracted employees in Dhi Qar, without a judicial warrant, and without knowing the reasons.

- On September 4, 2021, a security force in Kirkuk detained five journalists while covering the security events in the village of Shaal in Sarkaran subdistrict in Dibs district of Kirkuk. The detained journalists are: Anadolu Turkish News Agency correspondent Mr. Ozin Mohammed, Anadolu cameraman Mr. Hisham Mohammed, NRT correspondent Mr. Diyar Muhammad, NRT cameraman Mr. Ali Baghdadi, correspondent of Kirkuk TV channel Mr. Youssef Murad. The journalists were released after being detained for more than two hours.

- On October 18, 2021, members of the police responsible for protecting the Uqba bin Nafeh gas station in Kirkuk detained the correspondent of Shar Press Foundation (Mr. Akam Waziri) inside the station while he was covering the crowded Ques for oil derivatives, confiscating his mobile phone. He was released after being detained for more than an hour. Mr. Waziri was forced to delete the video that he filmed of the people lining at the station .

- On October 21, 2021, a number of protesters near the Green Zone detained the correspondent of Rudaw TV, (Mr. Mustafa Koran and cameraman Muntazer Jaafar) inside the protester's tents for four continuous hours while covering the protests rejecting the election results under the pretext of their orientations contrary to the protesters' demands.

- On November 5th , 2021, the security forces detained Al-Jazeera correspondent in Baghdad (Mr. Johnny Tanios) and cameraman (Mr. Rayhan Abdel-Wahhab) inside the Green Zone for one hour, while they

were covering the protests against the election results. They were not released until after they signed a pledge.

- On November 24th, 2021, members of the Sulaymaniyah Asayish arrested Payam TV channel cameraman, Mr. Nawzad Muhammad, while covering student demonstrations demanding the reintroduction of their stipends cut since 2014. Mr. Muhammad was released three hours later.

- On November 24th, 2021, the security forces in Sulaymaniyah arrested the correspondent of Al-Baghdadiya TV channel, (Mr. Abbas Al-Arkawazi) while covering the student protests there. At the same time, “Rose News” confirmed the disappearance of their correspondent Mr. Barham Latif and cameraman Barwa Asaad after going for a news assignment. Eyewitnesses confirmed that the journalists were arrested by a Kurdish security force, taken to an unknown destination. It was then exposed that the detaining side was the Asayish.

- On December 2021, the Anbar Countering Crime Directorate arrested Al-Ahd TV correspondent (Mr. Hamid Majeed Al-Fahdawi) without charge or an arrest warrant, after the director of the Anbar Countering Crime Directorate lured him, and invited him to drink coffee and discuss an important topic. Once the reporter arrived at the Directorate, he was detained inside a prison. He was released after 6 days of detention.

- On January 23rd, 2022 The riot police arrested the cameraman of Al-Jsanubiya channel in Thi qar, Abbas Razzaq. The forces confiscated his equipment while he was performing his duty in covering a protest stand on behalf of the Martyrs of AlNaqaa center in the province.

- On January 27th, 2022, a civil dressed Officer in Basra arrested the staff of Al-Merbad Radio(woman correspondent Nour Al-Timimi, and cameramen Ali Tubaina and Azhar Al-Edani) for more than one hour. The officer physically abused Ms. Nour by beating her and confiscated the cadre’s equipment. The equipment was returned after deleting the shootings under the claim that the officer had appeared on tape while they were covering the Prime Minister’s visit to “Muharbin Hunak” Association.

- On February 5th , 2022, a force of Asayish in Zakho detained the staff of The Speda Channel, consisting of (reporter Barzan Hassan and cameraman Musheir Ahmed) after covering the opening of a religious center for teaching Qur'an in the locality of Nowruz .
- On February 27th, 2022, Karbala Emergency Police detained Al-Taghyir Channel reporter (Jassim al-Himaim) inside al-Hindia hospital for more than half an hour and took away the channel's logo, while filming the fire at Twairij District Hospital .
- On March 15th , 2022, Asayish forces in Dohuk arrested the NRT staff; Taif Kuran and Ahmed Zakary for more than two hours while covering a fire at a tourist hotel near the markets in the locality of Geli.

Threats

- On May 31st, 2021, the Director of Al-Taghyir TV channel, (Mr. Akram Zanganeh), received messages threatening to kill him and all the channel's employees, after a fabricated video clip from the show of Mr. Najm Al-Rubaie, a TV host at Al-Taghyir, was circulated on social media, in which he appeared criticizing one of the armed factions. The channel had to evacuate the workers from the channel's headquarters located in the Al-Mansour area of Baghdad.
- On June 14, 2021, journalist Hazar Ali received threatening messages on his mobile and his Facebook private account because he exposed a number of corruption files in the field of exporting oil and its revenues, as well as investigating the loss of salaries of workers in the region for several months.
- On August 3, 2021 the correspondent of "Washa" news agency Mr. Asan Ahmad Muhammad received a death threat and physical liquidation by masked gunmen who kidnapped him for six hours in front of the provincial council in Sulaymaniyah as he was performing his work.
- On October 8, 2021, journalist Mahmoud Yassin, who lives in Britain, received messages threatening to pursue and physically liquidate him "wherever he is" by a security officer working in the Ministry of Interior in Kurdistan called Serbas Saleh Sadiq , on the background of his

criticism of a video published by Rudaw Channel. The video shows a security officer swearing in favor of Barzani's government .

- On October 29 , 2021, masked gunmen threatened three UTV presenters of physically liquidating them after storming the channel's headquarters and handing over (lighters) to the staff of the channel reception desk, telling them to hand the lighters to three of the channel presenters as a threatening message, on the background of hosting the Iraqi politician Faiq Al-Sheikh Ali in one of the channel programs .

- on February 15th, 2022, UTV channel received a direct threat against presenter "The Truth Prevails", Adnan Al-Taii, on the background of broadcasting an episode that some considered would defame , Abu Fadak Al-Muhammedawy, a leader in the Popular Mobilization.

Storming, raiding or armed attack on journalists' houses and media headquarters:

- On July 13, 2021, a security force raided the headquarters of the RT TV channel and closed the channel's office in Baghdad. The channel's office had received a warning from CMC about the channel's delay in renewing its work permit. The police expelled all employees and confiscated the channel's equipment and closed its office.

- On July 13, 2021, elements affiliated with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan / Bafel Talabani wing raided the headquarters of IBLUS Kurdish channel, which is still in the process of experimental broadcasting via the Internet.

- On July 27, 2021, members of a security force claiming to be affiliated with the Counter Crime and Anti-Money Laundering force raided the headquarters of Al-Baghdadiya channel, located in the Al-Waziriya area in Baghdad, and they demanded from the channel's management to shut down the TV broadcasting devices. However, the transmitters are located outside Iraq, so they were unable to stop the broadcasting. The journalists of the channel were held inside one of the channel rooms.

- On September 4, 2021, unknown armed men targeted the house of journalist (Ali Fadel) with a stun grenade in the Shafta area in the city of Baquba in Diyala governorate, against the background of publishing reports criticizing the deterioration of the service and political situation in the governorate through his personal account on Facebook. The incident resulted in Material damage to the facade of the house.
- On October 29, 2021, unidentified gunmen stormed the office of UTV in the capital, Baghdad, threatening to set fire to the channel if one of the political figures, who appeared on the channel a day before the storming would be hosted again.
- On November 5, 2021, a videotape from surveillance cameras showed that two security personnel near the Green Zone set fire to the broadcasting cars of Beladi channel, which were parked at the channel's headquarters, located near the Green Zone and the protesters' tents.
- On November 14th , 2021, an Asayish force stormed the Kaf News Corporation in Dohuk governorate, forcing its employees to leave and then closing the facility with wax seal, due to an ongoing conflict between the President of the Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani, and his cousin, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani. The corporation is close to Nechirvan. It highlighted issues and files against the government's policy during the election period, opposing Masrour Barzani.
- on March 12th, 2022, Kurdistan 24 channel's resident in Erbil was largely damaged after the Iranian missile attacks that targeted the home of Kar company CEO.

Injuries

- On August 17 , 2021 the staff of Rudaw TV, consisting of Reporter Tahseen Qassem and Photographer Ali Hammad sustained multiple injuries to the head and back as a result of the attack by the PKK forces while covering the aftermath of the Turkish bombing on a hospital in Sinjar. Their equipment was confiscated.

- On November 5th, 2021 , the staff of Al-Jazeera channel, consisting of reporter Johnny Tanios and cameraman Rayhan Abdel-Wahab suffered bruises and injuries as a result of the severe beatings by Law Enforcement Forces near the Green Zone, while covering the sit-ins rejecting the results of the parliamentary elections .

- On November 23, 2021, the staff of Speda TV suffered from severe suffocation and minor injuries, while covering student protests near the University of Sulaymaniyah as a result of the Asayish firing tear gas, to disperse the protesters.

- On November 23, 2021, an NRT TV crew consisting of reporter Juman Muhammad and photographer Muhammad Ismail were slightly injured as a result of being beaten with batons by the security forces while covering the student protests in Erbil.

- On November 25, 2021, while covering the student protests in Erbil, the staff of the Esta Agency: reporter Ayoub Warti and the accompanied cameraman were severely assaulted and suffered from minor injuries.

Assault and Prevention and Obstruction of Coverage:

- On May, 10th, 2021, a Traffic Policeman Major prevented Alsumaria TV correspondent, Mr. Amir Al-Khafaji from crossing one of the checkpoints on Abu Nawas Street heading to his workplace, because of the curfew during the COVID-19 shutdown. A fine of one hundred thousand dinars was imposed on the correspondent, despite showing his press ID card, and despite the issuance of directives to exclude journalists from the curfew.

-On May 25th , 2021, the security forces banned the crews of (Al-Jazeera, Al-Baghdadiyah, Iraq 24 , Asia, Al-Sumeria, and Rudaw channels) in Tahrir and Al-Nusour Squares while covering the protests that were organized to demand an end to corruption and protection of protesters.

- On June 2nd, 2021, the security personnel of the Minister of Interior, receiving an order from the Minister, confiscated the mobile phone of the

correspondent of Al-Amal Radio in Basra, Mr. Safaa Al-Fariji, while covering the security meeting held by the Minister of Interior in the Basra Operations Command building. The video footages filmed by the reporter were erased.

- On June , 6th, 2021, the Minister of Agriculture, Muhammad Karim Jassem, prevented the correspondent of Merbad Radio, Ahmed Ali from covering the minister's visit to Basra Governorate to learn about the problem of the bird flu outbreak that affected the governorate's poultry at that time. The Minister accused Merbad Radio of publishing reports about the numbers of poultry mortalities that do not match the numbers announced by the Ministry.

- On June 10th, 2021, elements from the protection of the Kirkuk Education Building prevented (Saadoun Sultan, correspondent for Al-Taghyir TV, Hewa Husam El-Din, correspondent for Rudaw, and an NRT correspondent from covering a press conference for representatives of governorate with the Supreme Audit regarding suspicions of corruption in the file of appointments at the Education Directorate, without clarifying the reasons.

- On July, 1st , 2021, the security forces prevented the crew of Al-Hurra Iraq and Al- Taghyir channels from covering a demonstration in Nahrawan, Baghdad, of people demanding better services.

- July, 16th, 2021, a joint force of the army and police prevented the crew of Kurdistan 24 channel, consisting of reporter Hemin Dalo and cameraman Sabah Anwar from covering a murder crime in Bardi district, north of Kirkuk, and forced them to drive out of the city accompanied with army vehicles. The force warned them from returning to the scene again.

- On July 16th , 2021, elements from Karbala Police Operations Command prevented Al-Taghyir cameraman Mohammed al - Fayadh from covering a fire incident at the police headquarters building , and confiscated his camera, and flash memory. The police insulted and slandered him without mentioning the reasons.

-On July 28th , 2021, a member of the Parliament Speaker Muhammad al-Halbousi's security, assaulted the crew of Al-Rasheed, Al-Mawsiliya, Al-Sharqiya, Turkmani, and Nineveh Now channels while they were covering the Speaker's visit to Mosul. The journalists were verbally assaulted and threatened with arrest, as they were expelled from the Mosul municipality building.

- On August, 9th, 2021, a security officer banned NRT reporter Noor Al-Saidi from covering a demonstration for the staff of the Independent High Electoral Commission in Dhi Qar Governorate, without any justification.

- On August, 9th , 2021, a security officer prevented the crew of Al-Sharqiya News channel; reporter Atilla Agha and cameraman Sarmad Al-Jumri from covering the aftermath of the electricity towers' bombing by ISIS in Kirkuk, and threatened to arrest them in case of coverage.

- On September, 12th , 2021, the President of the University of Dhi Qar Dr. Yahya Al-Khafaji, prevented a number of media crews from Al-Janoubia, Al-Ahed, Al-Ghadeer, and Al-Ahwar channels, from covering a demonstration at the university campus, organized by members of the teaching staff, protesting against forcing them to participate in voluntary work, and the non-disbursement of their financial dues.

- On October, 13th , a security officer prevented the crew of Al-Ghadeer TV, consisting of reporter Alaa Hussein and cameraman Muhammad Shahid from covering the announcement conference of parliamentary electoral results inside the building of the Aljundi Almajhoul monument in the Green Zone. The officer threw the journalists' equipment outside the building .

- On October, 19th , 2021, members of the riot police banned a number of media outlets (Koli Kurdistan, Kirkuk, Esta News Agency and NRT) from covering a demonstration of workers in one of the popular markets in Kirkuk .

- On November, 1st , 2021, the Director of Kirkuk Education Directorate, Abdul Ali Hussein, prevented the crews of Kirkuk Now Agency, Al-Iraqiya TV, Kuli Kurdistan TV, Kirkuk TV, and Andolu Agency from covering the ceremonies of the new school year in one of the

governorate's schools. The Director expelled the journalists, and verbally abused them.

- On November, 5th, 2021, security elements near Al-Jadiriya Bridge prevented the crew of Al-Ahad and Al-Nujaba channels from passing to Al-Jadiriya area to cover a sit-in rejecting the election results near the Green Zone, while Al-Ghadeer TV crew was forced to cut off its live broadcasting near the Green zone because of the sound of shelling.
- On November, 12th, 2021, workers in Zyszk fish restaurants in Erbil, prevented the crews of Erbil Live website, Rudaw and NRT channels from covering a fire incident in the restaurant building and the journalists were beaten, before the security forces rescued them.
- On November, 23rd, 2021, the Asayish forces in Dohuk prevented Speda channel crew from covering student protests demanding the release of their financial dues that were cut since 2014.
- On November 23rd, 2021, the Asayish forces in Sulaymaniyah prevented Mr. Ramiar Othman, correspondent of Payam channel, and Speda channel crew from covering student protests demanding the release of their financial dues that have been cut since 2014.
- On November, 24th, 2021, a riot police force in Erbil prevented the crews of Koli Kurdistan, Rudaw, KNN, NRT, channels in addition to Idris Muhammad, correspondent of Payam channel, and Akar Fares, correspondent of Speda channel from covering the student protest that took place in front of the gate of the Ministry of Higher Education. The journalists were attacked with electric shock sticks.
- On November 25th, 2021, the security forces in Erbil banned Hazar Anwar, correspondent of Shar Press channel, Beriyyar Muhammad, correspondent of Politic News Agency, Ayoub Warti, correspondent of Esta Agency, Tahan Rawanzi and Yasser Muhammad of Walat News Agency from covering the students protests there.
- On November 28th, 2021, a security force prevented Al-Rabia channel reporter Ihab al - Maliki and cameraman Rami Alaidani from covering

the demonstration of the workers who were laid off from the Oil Pipelines Company in Khor Al - Zubair in Basra.

- on 24/12/2021, A Traffic Police Officer prevented the staff of Al-Rashid Channel; correspondent Ali Fleifil, and cameraman Khalid Walid from covering the situation of abusing the pavements and the trespassing of the shops on the main roads of AlAttibaa area in Hilla city and stopped them from carrying on their duty.

- on 1/1/2022, A security force in Kirkuk attacked Diyar Mohammed, NRT correspondent, and destroying his cell phone while he was covering the celebrations of the new year in Kirkuk Center Mall.

- On 1/1/ 2022, the Basra Health Department prevented (Ali al-Batat, correspondent of Al-Itijah TV, Hassan Mazloun, correspondent of The Dijla Channel, Musallam al-Mayahi, a correspondent Huna Baghdad Channel, as well as al-Hurra and Al-Marbad tv teams) from entering the Zubair General Hospital, covering the number of patients and their health condition and testimonies without knowing the reasons.

- On 6/1/ 2022, members of PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi's protection prevented several media outlets (Dijla, Furat, Baghdad, AlAhad, I News, Al Jazeera) from covering the prime minister's visit to the site of Jabala incident in Babylon. The security threatened to arrest them and break their equipment in case of filming. One of the reporters' vehicles was locked to ensure no footage took place.

-On 11/1/ 2022, members of Karbala police command prevented al-Iraqiya TV staff (reporter Hassan al-Mahalla and photographer Alaa Najm) from covering the opening of one of the main streets in Husseiniya district. The media performed its duty of coverage after a while when an order was finally released.

- On 27/1/ 2022, the information staff of the Southern Technical University in Basra prevented the correspondent of Al-Marbad radio and the staff of Al-Janoubiya channel ; (reporter Maher al-Harbi and cameraman Asaad Yusuf) from covering a student demonstration outside the campus. The staff was attacked with insults and slander.

- On 6 /2/ 2022, members of the protection of oil facilities in Kirkuk prevented KNN and Rudaw cadres from covering a fire in the oil pipelines in the Darwaza area, confiscated their personal phones, seized press equipment, deleted the video material and asked them to leave the site without any clarification.
- On 23/2/ 2022, Walid Juma, head of the Abuse Campaign in Basra province, prevented AlTaghyir channel staff (reporter Younis al-Rubaie and cameraman Amin Khyoun) from covering the campaign to eliminate abuses in Al-Brom and Al-Dakir area, without clarification.
- On 27 /2/ 2022, Karbala emergency police prevented a Group of Channels (One News, Iraqiya, Zagros, Rashid, Dijla, AlSharqiya) from covering the fire that ate up Tweirig district Hospital, assaulted the cameraman of the Sumerian channel by severe beating, smashed parts of the Dijla channel camera and confiscated other equipment.
- On 15/3/ 2022, the Iraqi ambassador to Lebanon, Haidar al-Barrak, prevented Iraqi Media Network staff there from performing their duties to cover the visit of the Iraqi energy delegation to Beirut.
- On 15/3/ 2022, Asayish elements in Dohuk severely beat the NRT staff ; Taif Kuran and Ahmed Zakiri while covering a fire at a tourist hotel in the province.
- On 17/3/ 2022, the Director of Shirin Bank in Erbil prevented the NRT staff (reporter Mourad Surji and cameraman Ahmed Mohammed) from private coverage of retirees gathered in front of the bank to receive their financial dues as families of martyrs.
- On 20/3/ 2022, members of the Prime Minister's protection prevented the cadres (Alitijah, UTV, Zagros, Dijla, Altaghyir, AlHurra Iraq, INEWS, One News) channels from covering the prime minister's visit to Mosul to open the Batoul Hospital.
- On 27/3/ 2022, Basra police prevented the staff of "Huna al- Basra" foundation (reporter Montazer al-Abadi and cameraman Safaa Hussein) from covering the campaign to lift the trespasses on Al-Wufud Street in the province, forcing the staff to stop filming and leave the site.

-on 26/4/2022, an Asyish security force blocked a number of satellite channels(Bergrav Esta, Rudaw, Speda, Pyam, Westke News, Politic News, Char Press, Walat Media, Rogue News, KNN, NRT) from Covering a demonstration organized against Turkish shelling of areas in Erbil, near the United Nations building, where the correspondent of the channel "Bergrav" , (Ferman Sadiq) was kept away from the scene of the demonstration in an attempt to cover it up but the Asayish followed him and threatened to beat him and seized his press equipment. Meanwhile, the staff of Esta channel was attacked by a security officer, forcing them to leave the scene of the demonstration.

Lawsuits, Court sentences and Arrest Warrants:

-On 30/6/ 2021, Duhok Court issued a seven-year prison sentence against cameraman Kahraman Shukri , due to his participation in the recent protests against the Turkish incursion into the territories of the Kurdistan region and for covering the protests and its suppression.

-On 17/10/ 2021, Dohuk court issued a third sentence against journalist Umid Broshki . Mr. Broshki was sentenced to six months in prison on the grounds of incitement to peaceful demonstration in the Kurdistan region, after being sentenced, a full year in two other cases, a couple of weeks before, on charges of degrading figures in the region .

- On 27 /12/ 2021, The Secretary of Baghdad filed a lawsuit against the "National News Center" agency and the presenter of al-Rasheed channel (Yasser Amer) for exposing corruption files related to reconstruction projects and the lack of monitoring in the capital.

- On 7/4/ 2022, the Iraqi judiciary issued an arrest warrant and investigated presenter Ahmed Al-Mulla Talal for broadcasting a content that revealed corruption in the military system, which the Ministry of Defense considered an insult to the military leadership, and issued the memorandum based on article (226) of the Iraqi Penal Code.

Channels Closures and Lay-offs

- On July 17th, 2021, members of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan / Bafel Talabani wing informed the channels (Zhyan, Chaw, Agans) that their offices located in the Sulaymaniyah governorate will be closed. The closure came after the deep rift within the party.

-On August 12th, 2021, the management of Al-Merbad Corporation was subjected to an illegal takeover due to the influence of some political parties in Basra, which resulted in the arbitrary dismissal of 11 employees of the corporation, after the Iraq Projects Officer in the Media Development Fund of the BBC imposed a compulsory leave for the governing body of the corporation.

-On September 14th, 2021, the current management of Al-Merbad Radio imposed a compulsory leave against cameraman and editor Sajjad Ali Jassim and prevented him from entering the radio building, after informing orally to leave, on the grounds that he would be re-employed after the return of the legal Administration.

-on 8/4/2022, the IMN issued an administrative order to end the services of the presenter Salih Al-Hamdani who presents (Bilmukhtassar) on the background of publishing a post that reappeared from 2012 on his personal page of Face Book. The post was considered a violation of paragraph 5 of article 5 of the network's law "enhancing and supporting the Democratic principles and measures and to encourage acceptance and others opinions in the light of tolerance culture".

Others

- On July, 6th, 2021, the Iraqi Council of Representatives issued a decision obligating all journalists to wear the official uniform as a condition for their entry into the parliament building, in an insulting manner.

- On July 29th, 2021, CMC issued a letter that contains a number of obligations for the media, which included legal and constitutional violations. The letter was titled “Circulars to All Media” which contains interference in the nature of dialogues, the choices of hosting figures, and the form and framework of hosting in talk shows, similar to those of the Ministries of Information in countries under dictatorial regimes.

-On October 1st, 2021, Al-Merbad radio platforms were subjected to hacking by Al-Sharqiya channel correspondent Ayman Al-Sheikh, who is the apparent Director of the Al-Merbad Corporation and the brother of Kamal Al-Asadi, who took over the Corporation’s building and dismissed a number of journalists. After hacking the sites, Ayman Al-Sheikh published fake news after the issuance of a court order stipulating the return of the previous management.

-On November, 16, 2021, CMC stopped the program “Biwidhooh: Clearly” broadcast in Zagros satellite channel, for hosting a figure and the charge of the President of the Republic and Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council. CMC obtained an undertaking from the channel to stop the program and provide an official apology for the abuses mentioned in the program and give the right to respond to the affected parties, in addition to publishing an apology in the news ticker for two days, broadcasting a video that included an apology for the abuses mentioned in the program for two days, sending a letter of apology to the Supreme Judicial Council and respect the Iraqi judiciary.

-12/12/2021, The Iraqi Ministry of Education directed all its institutions that no media body is allowed in any educational institutions nor schools lest official approvals are acquired exclusively from the ministry. The directions also mentioned that the approvals should be applied for in a fair length of time so that the ministry staff would have the chance to review them. The ministry made no further comment about the reason behind its decision.

- on 20/1/2022, a large number of journalists in Basra, Maysan, Thi Qar, Kirkuk and Baghdad provinces faced humiliation and expelling while receiving their financial grant that was allocated by the Ministry of Culture; each journalist would receive about \$350 as one payment.

- on 5/4/2022, CMC ordered the ban of (With Mulla Tallal) program that is broadcasted from UTV by the presenter Ahmad Mulla Tallal on the background of a scene with Ayad Al-Taii, (corruption files), inside the Military body of the country. The ban was executed as claimed, upon the stipulations of articles 1 ,under the 2nd Clause of agitating violence and hatred, and 4 of the second Clause (precision, integrity and transparency) of the broadcasting legislature. The mentioned clauses were the claimed reasons for the allegations against the program in spite that the conversation had nothing of the above mentioned violations.

- On 13/4/2022, CMC Directed a warning to the UTV channel according to a request by the shiia endowment. The warning was directed to object against the content of a series and demanded that the channel sign a pledge that such actions will not be repeated since it considered the content abusing to the Iraqi social texture and a violation to the basics of the broadcasted media applied by CMC.

Conclusion

The recorded figures reflect the continuity of the dictatorship scheme against press and media in the country. Mounting figures of security forces and governmental actors abusing journalists and violations continue to rise. In addition to illegal closures and bans that are against the stipulation of the Iraqi constitution that secured the freedom of journalistic work in the country. Many legal violations are recorded against the Communication and Media Commission, CMC, that is subordinate to the wills and whims of Ministries and political sides defeating the fact of its supposed independency.

Military sides continue their threatening approach against journalists and it is more evident than ever before that the media is suffering to exercise any chance of freedom in Iraq. The journalists are aggravated with the burden of any “censored” content that could possibly trigger any side and subject them to a totally insecure position.

According to the monitoring status of PFAA, it defines the media situation under this dictatorship Era that it continues to muzzle their

mouths and silence their voices under different forms of pressure: threats, evacuation, killings and even abduction.

After breaking all the promises made by the interim government to protect the freedoms of journalists and press, and to provide the needed security environment, the journalists faced the worst threats and tracking down under the October protests 2019, throughout 2020.

According to the figures that have been recorded on the World Press Freedom Day, 2022, they show a slight rise from what they have appeared in 2021. This is evidence that the governmental sides take no consideration to address the issues facing the freedom of press in the country.

Recommendations

PFAA, accordingly, recommends the following:

- The HOR amends the alleged “Protection of Journalists Law” to provide the needed security for all journalists and to include penal articles against the security sides that assault the press on daily bases.
- The legislation of the Information Access law to enable press performance in the country.
- HOR should legislate the CMC law to secure its independency and to remote it from partisan influences.
- The Council of Ministers issues a set of regulations that stipulate penalty clauses against security sides and the officers who regularly assault journalists.
- The Council of Ministers issues a set of directives to the security and governmental sides obliging them to seriously undertake the investigating the crimes against journalists and to activate the issue of ending impunity.