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Middle East & North Africa - Iraq

Attacks continue

More attacks on journalists covering demonstrations, TV cameraman missing

4 April 2011

Dana Bakir, a cameraman working for *Naliya Radio and Television (NRT)*, has been missing since 1 April, when security forces attacked journalists who were covering a demonstration in Freedom Square (Saray Azadi) in Sulaymaniyah. *NRT* director-general **Twana Othman** said he regarded his cameraman's disappearance as a case of abduction.

Othman told Reporters Without Borders that, according to the latest information, his cameraman appeared to have been arrested and was currently in prison. *"I asked if I could visit him but my requests were refused. Other people have told me he is Sulaymaniyah's Kani Goma prison."*

The Sulaymaniyah police deny having arrested Bakir.

Lvin Magazine journalist **Jiyar Omer** told Reporters Without Borders: *"I was on the square taking photos of the security forces, police and Asayesh (intelligence services) attacking the demonstrators. Despite their warnings, I did not hide. At no point did I think they would target me until the moment when they tried to arrest me. Demonstrators came to my aid. Later, when I tried to take photos of the security forces firing on the crowd, they hit me in the stomach and back with the butts of their Kalashnikovs."*

The demonstrations continued the next day in Sulaymaniyah, when journalists were again attacked by the security forces.

Goran Othman, who works for *Komal* (a weekly published by the Islamic Group in Kurdistan), said he and fellow journalist **Hakar Muhammad** were hit. **Mohamed Jamal**, another journalist working for *Komal*, was also attacked and his camera was seized. Freelance photographer **Zmnako Ismail** was briefly detained. The home of **Shirwan Muhammad Amin**, the editor of [Judinews](#) was meanwhile burgled and his computer and camera were taken. The website was also attacked.

Journalists who were covering a student demonstration outside the Department of Education in Erbil on 31 March were attacked by plainclothes members of the *Asayesh* while the police looked on without intervening. *Kurdistan News Network* TV reporter **Mariwan Mala Hassan** and cameraman **Ahmed Younus** were attacked and injured, and their equipment was damaged.

Halgurd Ahmed, the editor of the cultural magazine *Zinar*, was seriously injured in a shooting attack at his home in Raniya (110 km southeast of Sulaymaniyah) on the evening of 28 March. *"They prepared well,"* he told Reporters Without Borders. *"They night before the attack, they disconnected the lamp that lights the entrance to my house. The next night, they shut the door behind me and opened fire. I was hit by four shots."*

Ahmed is a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (one of the two parties that rule the region), but he maintains good relations with all the other parties. *"Representatives of all the political parties came to visit me,"* he added. *"They were all shocked. I don't know who did it. I don't want to accuse anyone."*

He added that he reported the attack to the police. Both the police and the *Asayesh* are investigating.
