

## **International media organizations' role in assisting the media sector in Iraq after 2003**

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### **Abstract**

Several international media organizations worked in Iraq after 2003 to assist Iraqi news organizations and journalists in their work. This kind of assistance included providing technical guidance, equipment, logistical support, training, media monitoring and general consultancy in order to assist in building a new Iraqi media. Many of these international media organizations cooperated with the US authorities that offered funding for various media projects. Aside from critically reviewing previous declassified documents from Wiki leaks on the role of international media organizations, the study is complemented by an interview with the former head of IWPR in Iraq, Ammar Al Shahbander who was killed in Baghdad in May 2015. This cooperation was facilitated by the US government in the first phase to send a message to other Arab countries showing the positive change that can come with the new political and media system in Iraq. Whether by US authorities or international organizations, millions of dollars were spent after 2003 on improving the Iraqi media, yet what was achieved was not up to expectations partly due to lack of coordination among international media organizations and/or Iraqi institutions and the epidemic deterioration in the security situation.

**Keywords:** Iraqi media, International media organizations, Media assistance, Media training, Media intervention

## **Introduction**

The goal of this study is to provide a brief survey of international media organizations that work in Iraq by highlighting their sources of funding, type of activities and assistance, and the security threats that they encounter. Before the beginning of the military operations against Iraq in 2003, some international media organizations worked on media plans to develop the media sector. The aims of this assistance are related to training Iraqi journalists, empowering news organizations, supporting news agencies, and providing guidance and specialized expertise in certain areas. It is not clear whether they acted alone or were funded by the US government. The “The White Paper project” documents released by the National Security Archive clearly emphasized involving international media organizations in reforming the Iraqi media sector. This included establishing an independent public broadcasting service like the BBC which was later called the Iraqi Media Network (IMN) ([www.imn.iq](http://www.imn.iq)) and the Communications and Media Commission (CMC) ([www.cmc.iq/en](http://www.cmc.iq/en)), Iraq’s regulatory telecommunication and media body (Al-Rawi, 2013a). The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA) that was later named the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was responsible for developing the media sector and gave the Iraqi Free Media contract (DASW01-03-F-0533) to a US corporation known as Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) in order to:

*Provide media development, and production support services and training for the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Inter-Agency task force. The media team shall quickly establish a free and independent indigenous media network consisting of radio, television, and print media components to enable the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs to communicate with the indigenous population in a post-conflict environment in the country of Iraq (The National Security Archive, 2004, p. 23).*

SAIC received over \$82.3 million as of September 30, 2003 to establish IMN, yet there were many documented irregularities noticed in the expenditure (The National Security Archive, 2004, p. 17). As mentioned above, the original goal was to create “free and independent” media outlets, yet IMN and CMC never became independent because they remained polarized and controlled first by the CPA and the consecutive prime ministers who ruled Iraq (Al-Rawi, 2013b). According to the recent declassified document released by the Rumsfeld Library, the US administrator of Iraq, Paul Bremer, listed on October 4, 2003 the CPA activities in terms of establishing IMN, saying: “I want to advise you on a number of

steps we have and will be taking to make IMN's TV programming more appealing to viewers, more professional in its approach, and more directly supportive of CPA objectives" (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2003). It seems that the original plan of establishing independent public broadcaster was only communicated to the public as the real objective was to create a media tool to serve the US efforts in Iraq. In fact, the cable cited above revealed that the aim of changing the Iraqi media in 2003 was not only meant to address the information needs of the Iraqi population but the Arab public as a whole. Bremer discussed the need to develop public affairs programs such as TV shows on writing the Iraqi constitution and the electoral process, stressing: "We believe that exposing these advances to the larger Arab world will have a profound impact. Arabs watching other Arabs go to the polls will inevitably raise the question, 'Why not here?'" (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2003). In fact, even the name given to IMN's TV channel, Al-Iraqiya, was "deliberately" chosen to look like the pan-Arab Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera channels for the sake of making Al-Iraqiya a "major regional TV broadcaster" (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2003). As will be explained below, the US government and its aid agencies like USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) were instrumental in assisting the Iraqi media with the help of international media organizations. This cooperation underlined international cooperation to prove that Iraq opened up to the international community after decades of sanctions during Saddam Hussein's rule. In fact, Iraqi journalists were in dire need for training as they lacked contact with the outside world (Al-Rawi, 2013b). Further, the US government wanted to send a positive message to other Arab countries in order to suggest that the new political system in Iraq can also be successful in their respective countries.

### **The Beginnings**

One of the first international media organizations involved in assisting the Iraqi media sector was the London-based Arab Press Freedom Watch (APFW) which held a discussion in September 2002 in London on the Iraqi media after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Another APFW meeting in which the Iraqi media was discussed was in May 2003 in Cairo with the involvement of some Iraqi journalists (APFW Report, 2003, p. 2). It is not clear who supported APFW, but the organization and funding for these two activities certainly came from sources outside APFW.

Before the official end of military operations on Iraq, twenty media organizations met on 24 April 2003 in London to discuss future media plans. Among the participants were representatives from Baltic Media Centre, BBC World Service Trust, Danish School of Journalism, European Journalism Centre, International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), International Federation of Journalists, Internews International, Internews Europe, Media Action International, Media Diversity Institute, Open Society Institute, Press Now Foundation, U.S. Committee for a Free Press in Iraq, and World Association of

Newspapers (International Media Support, 2003). After the invasion of Iraq, many international media organizations worked closely together to develop the Iraqi media, and they shared information in order not to duplicate efforts (Jayasekera, 2003) though this was only done for a short period of time. Some of these organizations included: Index on Censorship, International Media Support (IMS), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Internews, Index on Censorship, Alliance Internationale pour la Justice, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting and Article 19.

Under the international law applicable to occupied countries, the UN is mandated to work and UNESCO in particular is the organ specialized in implementing any media project together with UNDP. It is important to refer here to the Iraqi Trust Fund (ITF) that is linked to the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) which has 21 themed projects. The total amount of money allocated and spent was over \$1.3 billion from January 2004 until the end of 2014 (UNDG, 2014). The media development sector is not a main theme but a sub-theme. UNDP is “one of two trust funds of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI)” which is organized by the World Bank and the United Nations in coordination with Iraq and the donors. In total, “25 donors have signed a Letter of Agreement with the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), as Administrative Agent of the UNDG ITF” (UNDG, 2014). In fact, the European Union is the largest donor for this fund with over \$594 million spent, while Japan came second with \$360 million and Spain third with over \$93 million. The total amount given by USAID for this fund was \$5 million. UNESCO received over \$71 million to fund its activities from this Trust (ibid.) of which \$7.2 million was spent on developing the media and communication sector by providing “sustainable local initiatives in defense of freedom of expression and press freedom” (UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, 2012, p. 9).

### **Foreign governments & International Media Organizations in Iraq**

In relation to the coordination between the US government and international media organizations, the US Department of State through *Internews* organized a conference in Athens, Greece between 1-3 June 2003 in order to discuss the future of Iraqi media and to propose a code of conduct. Ironically, the event took place without the presence of “indigenous” Iraqi journalists (Price, 2007, p. 7). There were 75 media experts from 21 countries that attended this meeting. Yet, some CPA experts, who were involved in writing the new Iraqi media codes, were not aware of this conference, according to spokesperson of the Coalition, Naheed Mehta, while State Department experts did not know about the CPA’s new media decrees that were being written (Daragahi, 2003). This lack of coordination was reflected on the level of confusion at the time of restructuring the new Iraqi media. During this conference, an “Iraqi Media Law Working Group” was formed and co-chaired by the Iraqi exile, Hamid AlKifaey, who later became the spokesperson of the Iraqi Governing Council. The Conference advocated new rules to be applied with its

motto: “A Law to Promote, Protect and Regulate Free, Independent, Pluralistic Media During the Transition to Democracy”. During the conference, it was suggested establishing the Interim Media Commission which later became the CMC as well as establishing a “Press and Broadcast Council” (*Internews*, 2003). The organizers suggested having the Iraqi Media Network (IMN) representatives present in order to be able to assist the public broadcaster. The aim of this gathering was stated in its report: “To achieve a free, independent and pluralistic Iraqi media that promote and protect freedom of expression in a democratic society” (World Free Press 2003).

In terms of US funding, there are no clear figures except for a few pieces of information. For example, the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) received \$109,000 in 2004 from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) allegedly to “strengthen the independent media sector” in Iraq (National Endowment for Democracy, 2004). However, the activities of IWPR were always shown to be an initiative from the organization itself rather than funded from another side. According to NED’s records, about \$325,000 was given between 2003 and 2005 to Iraqi media outlets and publications and about \$105,000 to other projects that involved media and publications (Barker, 2008, p. 122). Indeed, the US government provided such funding to different international media organizations not only because of their expertise but also to avoid highlighting its presence as many Iraqi journalists or news organizations would often find it risky to be connected with the new “occupier” due to fears from militant groups. In fact, the highest number of journalists killed in Iraq from 2003 to 2010 worked for IMN because there was a general understanding that they worked for the occupying powers (Reporters Sans Frontières, 2010, p. 7; Al-Rawi, 2013b).

Aside from NED, USAID was also active in supporting international media organizations in Iraq. For example, *Internews*, which did not have an operational office in Iraq, received from USAID \$160,359 in 2003 in order to work on developing the Iraqi media (USAID Report, 2004). It is important to note here that USAID, which is mostly funded by the US Department of State, became one of the tools in the US military after 9/11 events in terms of public diplomacy whose aim is to “seek international support for US policies”. Andrew Natsios, USAID director, revealed in 2003 that his organization is “an arm of the U.S. government” (*The Media Missionaries*, 2004, p. 26). In fact, USAID sponsored the “Iraq Civil Society and Independent Media” project between 08/16/2004 and 06/30/2007, spending \$57,104,492. Part of this project was “developing a professional independent media sector” (USAID, 2007) though no details are published on what was done and/or who received the assistance. It is relevant to note here that before the Athens Conference took place, *Internews* held in coordination with Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) a meeting in Cairo to prepare a draft media law in order to submit it in Athens. CIHRS, which worked on translation and technical issues for the Athens conference, was mainly funded by the NED getting \$160,000 from 1994 to 1999 alone (National Endowment for Democracy, 2004).

Further, USAID assisted in forming the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA) with the help of IREX to replace the infamous Iraqi News Agency (INA) which functioned as a propaganda tool for Saddam Hussein's government. The former dean of the College of Communication at Baghdad University revealed that IREX donated \$400,000 to a group of Iraqi media experts to form NINA. This news agency did not only disseminate news but also provided subscribed wireless Internet connections to some areas in Baghdad (Al-Samr, 2011). In 2006, the US Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad was pleased to know that over 100,000 visitors viewed NINA's website every month and that the website had a "link with BBC Arabic news" (Wikileaks, 2006a).

Further, the US National Democratic Institute (NDI) supported the creation of an Iraqi media organization called Al-Mir'at (Mirror) Center for Monitoring and Developing Media Performance in August 2005 (NDI, n.d). Al-Mir'at conducted monitoring of the Iraqi media coverage of the 2005 and 2010 general elections. During the 2005 general elections, there were five local media NGOs that aided Al-Mir'at which were all involved in the monitoring activity: (1) New Iraq Media Organization in Dhi Qar; (2) Bent Arafidain Organization in Babil; (3) Kirkuk Institute for Human Rights Studies; (4) Organization of Social and Democratic Support; (5) Organization of Ideal Youth. It is not clear how much NDI paid but funding for the website of Ben Arafidain and Al-Mira'at organizations came from NDI that gave \$8,985 for their construction (United States Internal Revenue Service, 2006, p. 20).

Further, the government of the United States supported other NGOs in the 2002 and 2003 as part of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) which had two bureaus in the Arab world: The UAE and Tunisia (Sakr, 2006, p. 3). In addition, the US Department of States supported in 2010 two media organizations, IWPR and IREX, via its Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL). A two-day conference was held in Erbil on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September in order to investigate the possibility that Iraq uses new technology, information, and E-Governance which included training sessions on managing blogs and "visualising information" (IWPR, 2010). In his overall account of the achievements of the US government, Khalilzad proudly wrote:

*Since April, 2005 over 1,000 Iraqi journalists and managers have received technical training from USAID on investigative journalism and strategic management. Over two hundred journalists have received informal training by working with MNFI and Embassy press officers, and up to 100 have participated in PAS exchange programs in the U.S. and the region (ibid.).*

The US Embassy in Baghdad was also active in assisting Iraqi journalists; for example, it supported the Iraqi media organization, the Journalistic Freedoms Observatory (JFO), in different ways such as training journalists, capacity building, and holding a "Press Courage Awards Ceremony" on the

6<sup>th</sup> of December 2009 in order to award Iraqi journalists who risked their lives to uncover government corruption and wrong practices in the society (Wikileaks, 2009b; Wikileaks, 2009a).

It is important to note here that some Arab governments supported the US as well as the UK efforts in rebuilding Iraq's media sector especially during the first phase of the occupation. This included the UAE especially the government of Dubai that helped in training 16 IMN employees at Dubai Media City in 2003 (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2003). Also, the Emirati and US Embassies in Baghdad invited ten Iraqi journalists to the UAE in order to attend a workshop entitled 'Effective Use of the Internet for Journalists' for the period 25-30 September, 2004 (Wikileaks 2004b). Besides, BBC World Service Trust started in August 2005 *al Mirbad* TV and radio station in Southern Iraq where British troops were stationed. The Department of International Development (DFID) spent \$11.81 million to cover the expense for two years after which the station should search for funding from other sources (Cochrane, 2006). Other expenses came from the UAE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, ruler of Abu Dhabi, to fund the construction of studios in the southern Iraqi city of Basra. Al-Mirbad had about 150 staff who were locally employed and trained by the BBC World Service Trust (BBC World Service Trust, 2006). Later, the US Department of State offered funding for Al-Mirbad radio station and its website in addition to the assistance from the Finish government and the United Nations Democracy Fund (BBC Media Action, 2012).

Finally, other countries offered their assistance to train Iraqi journalists and support the Iraqi media, mostly to improve their images and win supportive voices. For example, the Index on Censorship was partly funded by the British Foreign Office's Human Rights Programme Fund to support a group of Iraqi journalists in writing reports that will be later published online and on paper (Jayasekera, 2003). Also, the Jordanian government sponsored a three-day 'Media Training Workshop' in Amman between October 6-8, 2003. The theme of the workshop was focused on the 'Relations between Journalists and Media Officials'. Twenty journalists from Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan were invited to attend; amongst them five Iraqi journalists (Wikileaks, 2003). Further, the Italian state-sponsored network, RAI, invited ten journalists and technicians from IMN for training in January 2004. Interestingly, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized and sponsored the whole training, yet it asked RAI to keep the training issue a secret from the press without giving any justification (Wikileaks, 2004a). This move corresponds with the author's claim cited above about some governments' tendency to use media organizations to implement training programs in order to avoid any kind of association with the new occupying powers. Also, the Czech NGO, People in Need (PIN), supported a training program in 2006 for Iraqi journalists in Amman, Jordan with the help of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After the training, PIN paid the journalists money for every article they published in local Iraqi newspapers. PIN sought more cooperation with the US government to further assist Iraqi journalists (Wikileaks, 2006b).

## **International Media Organizations & Iraqi media**

In terms of consultancy, CMC and the Iraqi High Electoral Commission (IHEC) ([www.ihec.iq.en](http://www.ihec.iq.en)) benefited from the work of many international media organizations in setting rules and regulations like the programs' code and practice as well as other policy recommendations (Communications and Media Commission, 2007 & 2009). The documents were made public in Arabic since their sole purpose was for distribution to Iraqi journalists working during the sectarian tensions and election times. For the latter, a group of international organizations that included UNESCO, International News Safety Institute, Index on Censorship, Reuters Foundation, and Article 19 published *A Reporter's Guide to Election Coverage* (2008) which was often cited by IMN and CMC on how Iraqi media organizations must cover this important event. In fact, these rules and regulations were largely taken from the guidelines of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that monitored election and its coverage in a number of former Communist European countries (UNESCO, 2008, p. 3). Another report was written by the United States Institute of Peace in coordination with UNESCO in 2010 that was entitled "User Guidelines for Preventing Media Incitement to Violence in Iraq - Elections Edition". The report was mostly focused on minimizing the use of sectarian or provocative terms in the media that might trigger some sensitivity among the different ethnic and religious groups in Iraq (United States Institute of Peace, 2010).

Sensing the important role of the Iraqi media during the civil war period, UNESCO held a conference in Paris between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The conference, which was entitled "Freedom of Expression and Media Development in Iraq", witnessed the participation of 300 people including 200 Iraqi media personnel and 20 Iraqi MPs. Among the main recommendations of the conference were discussing the challenges of the civil conflict in post-2003 Iraq and the means of making IMN an independent media body by being "politically, financially and editorially independent of the Iraqi Government" (UNESCO Conference, 2007; Wikileaks, 2007). In the following year, UNESCO held another meeting in Amman, Jordan where 37 Iraqi journalists signed a professional code of conduct in order to develop the professional level of journalism and encourage pluralism in the Iraqi media (UNESCO, 2008).

Though some international media organizations preferred to work on a small scale from outside Iraq especially in Jordan and Lebanon due to the deteriorating security situation, the support from these organizations continued throughout the years that followed the invasion. For example, the United Nations Development Fund for Women supported the establishment of 'Al-Mahaba Radio' [Love] for Iraqi women with a budget of \$500,000 as of January 2005. The radio aired its programs for about 8 hours a day and discussed women's issue and was regarded as the first women's radio in Iraq and the Arab world (Wong, 2005). In relation to research consultancy, the Iraqi Institute for Economic Reform (2011) conducted a study entitled "Analysis of Iraqi Media Coverage on the Energy Sector" that was implemented by UNESCO, UNDP and UNAMI. The project was funded by the Government of Spain through the Iraqi Trust Fund (ITF) cited above. The study analyzed three Iraqi media outlets: al-Sabah and al-Zaman newspapers, and Aswat al-Iraq news agency. Aside from the general analysis of the news reports, the study examined the accuracy of reporting on the oil industry. In fact, UNDP was instrumental in establishing Aswat al-Iraq allegedly being "Iraq's first independent news agency" (UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, 2012, p. 7). Further, UNESCOCAT and UNESCO supported another report on the Iraqi media that highlighted the developments that occurred after 2003 particularly in relations to freedom of speech, digital media, and ICT use by Iraqi journalists (Al-Mawlawi, Fadhel & Qazzaz, 2010).

It is important to mention that among the drawbacks in the activities of international media organizations were the repeated duplications and lack of coordination among those organizations and other relevant UN agencies especially in the first phase after the US invasion. For example, during the 2007 UNESCO conference cited above, an Iraqi participant pointed out that he lately witnessed in Amman "three different UN and UN agency-sponsored training programs, all concerning media in Iraq". Ironically, these training sessions were "held in the same hotel with none of the meeting organizers aware of the fact that other UN groups were present" (Wikileaks, 2007). This is similar to the confusion that occurred during the Athens conference as mentioned above which is understandable since most of these media organizations had the funding and wanted to spend the money without much prior planning. Further, many Iraqi journalists who did not have the right contacts were marginalized, whereas other well-connected journalists got several training opportunities.

Currently, many media organizations are still involved like BBC Media Action which runs a program called Consolidating Media Freedom in Iraq which is funded by the UK government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United States government's Department for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour and EuropeAid (Kaisy, 2014). Other active media organizations include International Media Support which has a special section for Iraq on its website ([www.i-m-s.dk/areas/mena/iraq/](http://www.i-m-s.dk/areas/mena/iraq/)) and has issued some relevant reports and updates on the media scene like "Democracy Stutters in Iraq" (International Media Support, 2010). Also, the Institute for War and peace reporting has a fruitful

program as some of its locally trained staff have become responsible for the operations in the country ([www.iwpr.net/programme/iraq](http://www.iwpr.net/programme/iraq)). Further, the German Media in Cooperation and Transition (MICT International) is also working and is supported by the German Foreign Office. MICT established the Media Academy Iraq ([www.mict-international.org/p\\_iraq\\_training.php](http://www.mict-international.org/p_iraq_training.php)) whose role is to train Iraqi journalists in order to maintain high professional standards. Finally, the Dutch Free Press Unlimited is another active organization (<https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/file/iraq>), and is partly supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It has many activities in the Iraqi Kurdistan region due to safety concerns wherein it has established the Independent Media Center Kurdistan (<http://imckiraq.blogspot.nl/>). In the following section, the results of the interview with the head of IWPR's Iraq branch is presented.

### **IWPR in Iraq**

The researcher conducted an email interview with Ammar Al Shahbander, IWPR's former head in Iraq, on April 27, 2014 in order to further understand the kind of assistance international media organization offered in Iraq. Unfortunately, Al Shahbander was killed in a car explosion in Baghdad on May 2, 2015 after serving several years in the country especially working on developing the media sector. His death has been regarded as a loss for all Iraqi journalists and media practitioners (Borden, 2015; Packer, 2015; Gienger, 2015). In the interview, Al-Shahbander revealed that IWPR, which employs 26 Iraqi staff members, held about 230 training courses without taking into account the various other gatherings like seminars, conferences, and other types of activities. IWPR spent almost \$30 million since it started working in Iraq in the summer of 2003. Unfortunately, no local or Iraqi parties offered any support for IWPR as the funding exclusively came from foreign sides. In relation to the kind of challenges and risks faced, Al Shahbander categorized them into three main types: (1) Security as four IWPR employees were killed between 2005 and 2007, which was the most difficult situation faced. Despite this fact, the organization did not relocate to outside Iraq unlike the case of several other humanitarian and media organizations, (2) Operational as IWPR needs to keep "stakeholders engaged.... given the political turmoil and other priorities". Those stakeholders include governmental and non-governmental Iraqi institutions, (3) Financial as "raising funds for journalism related projects is becoming increasingly difficult and scarce". In relation to IWPR's main achievements, Al Shahbander summed them up in two main areas: leadership training for women and issue-focused training. In relation to the first area, he stressed that:

*Undervarious components of the Women Media Initiative established in 2005, IWPR has trained hundreds of women leaders, within politics, media and civil*

*society. The existing Women in the Commercial Sector project is a prime example of this type of programming, under which women leaders are trained on leadership, management and media awareness, and which is developing Iraq's first women-owned and operated advertising agency. Other relevant programs include the ongoing Human Rights Media Links program, under which leaders within the human rights advocacy community (which includes both men and women) on advocacy and mobilization.*

In relation to issue-focused training, IWPR conducted a variety of training sessions in Iraq. For example, “with support from the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2003-2005, IWPR’s Special Issues Reporting project trained more than 600 reporters on politics, security, economics, women’s issues, human rights, and service delivery; IWPR’s Local Governance Reporting Project has trained hundreds more reporters and activists on governance and service delivery”. Finally and similar to what was planned for Iraqi media by Paul Bremer, it seems that IWPR’s Iraq program, which began before many other countries in the region, “can be used as a template for what needs to be done in other Arab countries” especially after the Arab Spring events.

## **Conclusion**

The cooperation between foreign governments especially the USA and international media organizations was made to serve two purposes. First, the US government wanted to indirectly send a message to other Arab countries to implement political reforms by encouraging Iraqi media outlets in covering the election process and the constitution issue. Second and aside from their specialized media expertise, international media organizations were supported by the US government because it needed a different “face” to run its media projects and activities. In general, most international media organizations remain largely paralyzed to freely work in Iraq due to the security situation. The unfortunate death of Ammar Al-Shahbender who has been interviewed for this study is another sad reminder of the kind of risks media organizations are taking in order to implement their programs and be actively engaged with Iraqi journalists.

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