

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iraq-journalist-interrogated-in-iraqi-05-09-2012,43337.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Iraq

Apparent political motive

Journalist interrogated in Iraqi Kurdistan

5 September 2012

[Read in Arabic \(بالعربية\)](#)

Reporters Without Borders expresses its concern over an official investigation of journalist **Mohamed Abdu Hamu**, better known as **Biradost Azizi**, who was summoned to a police interrogation concerning reporting of his that angered major political forces in the Kurdish autonomous region of Iraq.

Azizi was summoned to the Siwan police station in Sulaymaniyah on 5 September for questioning. The order to appear followed a complaint concerning Azizi's reporting involving the Syrian civil war filed by two members of the Democratic Union Party (PYD). The party is the Syrian offshoot of Turkey's armed separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). He was released after several hours, but the investigation is ongoing.

"This interrogation of a journalist following a simple complaint, without formal charges being filed, raises deep concern over the functioning of the Iraqi Kurdish justice system," Reporters Without Borders said. "The apparent aim is to muzzle a journalist who has reported critically on the PKK's use of the Syrian conflict for the organization's own regional ends."

Azizi is a native of Qamlishli in northeastern Syria who took refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan after Syria expelled him. The complaints against him followed publication on the website of *Nawa* radio of his reporting on a confrontation between supporters of the Syrian uprising and PYD members in Amuda, in the Kurdish region of northeastern Syria, near the Turkish border. "This case is about politics," Bazizi said when contacted by Reporters Without Borders.

Last June, the press freedom organization [expressed its concern](#) over Azizi's safety, following threats against him by the PKK and its Syrian affiliate, as well as a murder attempt. At the time, Reporters Without Borders demanded that authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan investigate the matter and take all steps necessary to protect Azizi's safety.

Likewise, the organization called on the PKK to openly condemn the threats against Azizi. In an email, the party responded: "*We have never and will not threaten anyone because of his opinion and attitudes, as we stand solid in the face of violence and the policy of threat and intimidation, whether it is physically or verbally, and we believe in constructive dialogue approach as the only way for the convergence of political views*".

Nevertheless the PKK and PYD have never publicly condemned the threats that Azizi faces because of his professional activities.
