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Middle East/North Africa - Syria

Raid and arrests

Jordanian police close Iraqi opposition TV station, arrest staff

10 June 2014

Reporters Without Borders condemns a [raid by police](#) yesterday on *Al-Abasiya*, an Iraqi opposition TV station based in the Jordanian capital. It ended with the suspension of broadcasting, the arrest of all 14 employees present and closure of the station, which is critical of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki.

"We have often reported that Nouri Al-Maliki gags the media in Iraq but it seems he is not content with that and now wants to silence critical media based outside his country," Reporters Without Borders said.

"At the same time, by bowing to pressure and demands from Baghdad, the Jordanians have flouted their international obligations regarding media freedom and protection from arbitrary arrest, including articles 9, 16 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

Reporters Without Borders calls for the immediate release of all those arrested and the reopening of the TV station.

Syrian, Iraqi and Jordanian journalists were among the [14 employees arrested](#) during the raid, which was carried out in response to an Iraqi government complaint [accusing the station](#) of "inciting terrorism and sectarian conflicts."

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, the prosecutor-general has decided that the 14 employees should be detained for 14 days.

The Iraqi authorities have initiated legal action against several other Iraqi satellite TV stations for allegedly inciting violence and sectarianism in their broadcasts from Jordan. The *Khabarnet news agency* quoted *Sumariya News* as saying Iraq [threatened](#) to suspend all of its assistance to Jordan last December if it did move against these TV stations.

Al-Abasiya, which began broadcasting from Amman four years ago, has been critical of both the Maliki administration and Iran's alleged meddling in the region.

Jordan is ranked 141st out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#). Iraq is ranked 153rd.

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