

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iraq-syrian-kurdish-journalist-14-06-2012,42791.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Iraq

Murder attempt

Syrian Kurdish journalist threatened by PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan

14 June 2012

[Read in Arabic \(بالعربية\)](#)

Reporters Without Borders is very concerned for the safety of **Mohamed Abdu Hamu**, an Iraqi Kurdistan-based Syrian Kurdish journalist better known as **Biradost Azizi**, who says he is being threatened by Turkey's armed separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and its Syrian offshoot, the Democratic Union Party (PYD).

Azizi is from Qamishli in northeastern Syria, but has been a refugee in Iraqi Kurdistan ever since his expulsion from Syria in 2004.

"We call on the authorities in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region to investigate what has taken place and to do whatever is necessary to guarantee Azizi's safety," Reporters Without Borders said. "We also call on the PKK to openly condemn the threats against this journalist and last week's attempt to murder him."

Azizi, who did a lot of stories for the Iraqi Kurdish TV station *KNN* and *Radio Nawa* last year about the Syrian uprising in general and the role of Syria's Kurds in the uprising, told Reporters Without Borders he has received repeated telephone threats for the past seven months.

A supporter of the Syrian uprising and the revolutionary movement in Syria's Kurdish regions, he has done many reports critical of the PYD's militia. In early 2012, he co-signed statements and communiqués by Kurdish intellectuals and activists accusing the PKK of atrocities in the Kurdish part of Syria. His signature appeared at the foot of a statement condemning the murders of three members of the same family in Qamishli on 10 January : <http://www.welateme.info/erebi/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=11333>.

On 7 February, he said that the [atrocities that took place in Afrin after a peaceful street demonstration](#) there on 3 February by Syria's Kurdistan National Council and the Youth of the Revolution were the work of the PYD, with help from the Syrian intelligence services.

He conducted [an interview with PYD leader Saleh Muslim](#) on 8 May in which Muslim said the anti-government demonstrations in Qamishli were being manipulated by Salafists and Islamists, in effect taking the same position as President Bashar Al-Assad's government.

A campaign to smear Azizi was launched on *Facebook* after this interview was broadcast. Death threats began being made against him, especially after an [article was posted on the BBC's Farsi-language website](#) in which a journalist quoted his statements about the situation of the Kurds in Syria and the PKK's role.

Azizi posted a "Statement for Syrian and Kurdish public opinion before my liquidation" on 15 May in which said he was being threatened by the PKK and its branch in Syria and named the people he thought would be responsible [if he were liquidated](#).

A defamation suit that was brought against him in Iraqi Kurdistan began being heard before a court in Sulaymaniyah on 10 June. He narrowly escaped a murder attempt as he was returning home on the eve of this hearing. He told Reporters Without Borders he thought it was prompted by his journalistic activities and his criticism of the Assad regime in Syria.

