

Statement by KRG Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA)

May 2, 2021

Statement in Response to CPJ

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) raised some concerns regarding the temporary detention of Rebaz Hassan in Sulaimani.

The person in question was detained because he participated in an unlicensed demonstration. All public gatherings and demonstrations require permits issued by the governor's office. This particular demonstration had no permit. When those gathered, the police forces asked them to seek a permit and return once the permit had been issued but they refused.

Rebaz Hassan's participation in this demonstration was not in his capacity as a journalist. When covering protests and other public activities, we request that journalists have their press credentials clearly on display so they can be easily identified.

Regardless, he, along with others detained, were released the next day. KRG strongly believes in freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, while expecting citizens and activists to follow the laws and government guidelines, especially during the ongoing health pandemic.

KRG proudly flourished with the preservation and promotion of values indispensable for a decent civil life. The KRG continues to support the right to protest for all citizens in the region as long as a local government entity is notified of the event and the messages are conveyed peacefully. KRG rules in accordance with democratic values that preach freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and expression, electoral integrity, good governance, and alike.