

May 24, 2021

Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA): KRG is Committed to International Principles with Regard to Freedom of Expression

On May 11, 2021, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report about the status of freedom of expression in the Kurdistan Region. The commentary of the KRG Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA) is attached to the report.

KRG has exhibited the embodiment of the crucial democratic values and has exemplified the consolidation of pillars of good governance. The legal proceedings solely rely on the laws and rules in place. The UNAMI/OHCHR report analyzes alleged shortages within the realm of freedom of expression, regardless that some of these law-breaking incidents often led to subversion, vandalism, and violence.

Most of the comments are pertinent to legal proceedings. KRG reiterates that the courts are independent, and the government bodies merely enforce the laws. The prosecutions enjoy impartiality and transparency.

There are always improvements to be made, and the KRG is committed to making improvements where they are needed. To take this work forward, KRG has invited the OHCHR, UNAMI and international organizations to support the KRG in improving institutional processes in Kurdistan. And the KRG has been holding consultations with advocacy groups to address concerns regarding media freedoms and rights.

The government is also working with international counterparts to train local judges.

Nevertheless, KRG has a consistent and reciprocal connection with UN agencies, chief among them UNAMI. The latter has been granted access to the Asayesh detention facilities and other reformatory facilities.

The KRG is engaged with UNAMI and OHCHR on media freedom – both on broader policy and procedural advancement and on individual cases – and remains committed to this relationship.