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The Communication and Media Commission Guidelines for the Management of Iraqi Mass Media During the War on Terror



The recent security reversals, including the success of the Iraqi state in regaining the initiative to strike at the focuses of terror and dry up the sources of security threats, have revealed disturbed behavior from some media outlets that contravenes Iraqi laws and the international customs observed in the interest of social peace and stability. This also indicated that the terror offensive has arms in the media which work to insinuate the messages of terror groups and their backers, through the broadcasting of rumors and false information, in order to terrorize Iraqi society and provoke social panic, in addition to inflaming sectarian strife, and belittling the role of the brave Iraqi army and security agencies. They aim to demoralize members of the armed forces by promoting "security breakdowns" and "mass exoduses". Therefore the CMC, endeavoring to protect citizens from media threats, to strengthen the internal front during the war on terror and to guarantee Iraqi national security, and in accordance with its mandate, as per the 65/2004 executive order, to

organize the sector of audio-visual media, is hereby requiring all licensed and unlicensed media outlets to abide unequivocally with the following guidelines:

1. To hold themselves to the highest possible standard of professionalism and neutrality in covering security-related events, abide by the profession's behavioral norms so as to maintain the country's sovereignty and security, and refrain from broadcasting news material that may be interpreted against security forces, or broadcasting visual material that may harm them.
2. To focus on the security achievements of the armed forces, by repetition throughout the day, and highlighting them in special newscasts and coverage, praising the heroic acts performed by security personnel. And also to broadcast material showing the brutality of the enemy, and genuine news of the desperation and bankruptcy of the armed, terror groups.
3. To focus on the courageous, historical *fatwa* of the Supreme Guide Ali Sistani, giving it a patriotic character, and linking it to similar *fatwas* from Sunni men of learning, such as that of Sheikh Kabissy and other esteemed *ulema*.
4. It is absolutely forbidden, under any circumstances and even accidentally, to broadcast the messages of armed groups or their savage acts, to interview their members or to use material taken from international agencies with similar content. Do not seek a "scoop" at the expense of your country and its security.
5. It is absolutely forbidden to broadcast messages, information or breaking news that may lead to the targeting of security forces, the uncovering of their

positions or the identification of their areas of deployment, thereby giving terrorists a "free service" while trying to attack them or instigating attacks on them.

6. It is absolutely forbidden to conduct live or recorded interviews, personally or via satellites, with individuals who are wanted by the law, or who head armed groups or adopt an inciting and escalating discourse, or who harm national security or disclose military or security-related classified information.
7. To absolutely refrain from broadcasting audio-visual material that may create an atmosphere of hostility between the elements of the Iraqi people, or lead to the targeting of any of those elements.
8. To hold on to the patriotic sense, and be careful when broadcasting material that may harm that sense, abiding by professional balance in cases where angry mobs, or program guests, may express insulting sentiments. It is necessary in such cases to indicate that such sentiments do not accord with the moral and patriotic order required for the war on terror.
9. To focus in news coverage on professionalism and patriotism, and to broadcast programs that spread enthusiasm and a fighting spirit against terror, in addition to patriotic anthems and the broadcasting of teeming crowds, and the heroic deeds of our security forces.

The CMC urges all local media outlets or those working from Iraqi soil to abide by the present guidelines, in support of the fight against terror and the efforts of regaining security and stability, fulfilling their humane and patriotic mission, and the requirements of professionalism, independence and positive neutrality.

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