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IWPR article on grim conditions at Kirkuk's principal hospital seen by staff as timely expose of deterioration in local health services.

Staff at Kirkuk's main hospital say an IWPR article on its poor state is sure to draw health officials' attention to the serious problems facing medical facilities around the country.

The comment, *Medical Shortages Fatal for Kirkuk Patients*, written by Ayub Nuri, an Iraqi journalist and a former IWPR journalism trainer, impressed medical staff who said it provided an accurate assessment of conditions in the crumbling hospital.

The facility lacks the most basic supplies such as gauze, equipment is outdated and conditions are unsanitary. Patients have died as a result.

"The hospital is in awful condition," said a hospital employee who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "What has been said about it [in the article] is quite right as lack of medical supplies is prevalent throughout the country, not only Kirkuk."

Poor security – particularly along the road between Baghdad and Kirkuk – has in the past made deliveries of much-needed medical supplies difficult.

But even as violence has subsided, there has been little improvement in the state of the hospital, which, the source said, still suffers from a severe shortage of supplies.

Linda Akram, a hospital employee, said that the IWPR article "makes it clear to the officials in the ministry of health the extent of the ministry's negligence of hospitals, particularly those in Kirkuk".

Akram said that the hospital has occasionally received supplies from aid organisations and the United States military "but they are not sufficient".

Nabil Omar, a physician at the hospital, said hospitals in Iraq were all under pressure and that it was the media's responsibility to highlight the challenges health service facilities face in improving medical provision.

Omar said that IWPR's story was unique because it was "the first time I have seen small details of a purely local health problem posted on an international website".

He said such news is rarely published in the Iraqi media because of concerns that it might undermine a hospital's reputation.

The source who asked not to be named said that the media usually only shows up at the hospital if there's violence and does not concentrate on the bigger problem: that Kirkuk hospital has difficulty treating patients.

"We rarely see journalists visit hospitals to investigate what is happening there and publish something on it," he said. "They always come to report on the victims of bombings and killings. They're like the government. They usually only pay attention to hot political events."

Location: [Iraq](#)

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