

Iraq: Jun/Jul '11 Part II

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Arabic-language initiative aims to link activists across the country.

As part of its Human Rights Media Links, HRML, programme, IWPR has created a new Facebook page in Arabic (See **[IWPR - Iraq Human Rights Media Links](#)**) to inform and connect a network of lawyers, journalists, activists and others interested in human rights issues.

Future workshop participants will be encouraged and trained to use this social media platform to highlighting a human rights abuse that they have witnessed, reported on or presented in court.

Ahmad Jassim, a lawyer from Anbar, believes the page, created in July 2011, enables him to stay in contact with other activists across the country.

"I used to think violations were being committed in Anbar only, but when browsing the page I discovered the same violations happening in other places," he said. "We might need the same solutions."

He added that the page enabled him to "learn from my friends' experiences and apply them in my area of expertise".

One of the main aims of the page is to encourage former HRML workshop participants to become better informed about international and local human rights issues.

Uthman al-Mukhtar, a Washington Post correspondent who attended an HRML workshop in Baghdad, said he uses the page to generate story ideas.

"The IWPR Facebook page supported my training at the Institute, which equipped me with the skills and knowledge to report on human rights," he said. "The political process in Iraq is no longer the main theme of my reports."

Al-Mukhtar said that he wrote four reports in July, three of which were on human rights issues. The reports included issues such as the rights of children to education and women's rights to choose their partners.

"I'm glad to have tackled such violations in areas where no one has reported on before," he added.

Imad Al-Khozaei, Reuters correspondent in Al-Qadisiyah, south Iraq, believes IWPR's human rights page will benefit activists across the country, "The page will be a source for all activists to recognise violations, and solutions, across the country. It is a good start."

"Professionalism, accuracy, credibility, and quick access to information which serves human rights activists is the aim of the page," said Ammar al-Shabandar, IWPR country director, noting that repeated requests for information about human rights matters encouraged IWPR to launch the page.

Al-Shabandar believes that social networking sites created by IWPR will develop and support all IWPR programmes.

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