



## Media Development in Post-war Iraq Report

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On April 24, 2003 International Media Support met with twenty media organisations to discuss future media development in post-war Iraq. Amongst the organisations that participated were International Media Support (IMS), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Internews, Index on Censorship, Alliance Internationale pour la Justice, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting and Article 19.

## Aims

To improve participants' insight and understanding of the current situation in Iraq, with specific reference to the possibilities of media development.

To provide an open forum for the exchange and exploration of ideas.

To discuss and decide on future collaborative ventures, particularly future meetings in Baghdad.

The fall of Iraqi state media has left a huge void and successful development of Iraq's future media will depend on dealing with the legacy left by Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Independent media did not exist under the Baath regime - journalists were party members and had contacts with the security services, newspapers were funded by political parties, ownership of satellite dishes was illegal making satellite television unobtainable and there is only one journalism school in the whole country. The Iraqi Media Network, established by ORHA (Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid) is currently broadcasting in Iraq, but these broadcasts will cease the moment a substitute is created. ORHA also has a Media Development department lead by Bob Reilly. Coalition governments would like to see a private/public mix in the newly developed media.

The lessons learnt from recent efforts to build democratic media in conflict areas indicate that international media development organisations should:

involve capable local partners in initiatives

develop logical long-term strategies

work out effective coordination between themselves

avoid importing models, wholesale, from other countries

General discussion between participants focused on the need for an assessment of the Iraqi media carried out by the organisations present. The possibility of cooperation was discussed, as well as the creation of a rolling assessment procedure. Collaboration between organisations in training initiatives was also considered especially in the establishment of a local training institution in Iraq.

## Conclusions

There is a need for the development of a media policy for Iraq with a strong local ownership and participation.

International Media Support (IMS) was asked to consider the possibility of an assessment trip to Iraq leading to an assessment process that is broad and open to everyone.

The meeting should be reconvened in Baghdad, possibly in September, with a wider local participation.

Organisations involved in training journalists should coordinate their efforts. The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Index on Censorship and the Media Diversity Institute will help this process along.

A coordination forum Website and list serve will be created to help bring and keep organizations together.

## **Joint Statement**

### Media Development in Post-War Iraq

A meeting of international media development organisations was convened on 24 April 2003 in London to discuss support to media development in post-war Iraq. The meeting identified and addressed key considerations relating to the current Iraqi media environment and the necessity for support based upon the needs and requirements of the Iraqi media community.

## **Key Considerations**

On the basis of these discussions, three considerations were raised:

There is a need for the appropriate authorities in Iraq to issue a clear policy statement on media. Such statement would be instrumental in aiding a constructive dialogue on media development.

The close involvement of the Iraqi media community in designing the international support will be of key importance in ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of international assistance to media development.

A collaborative and strategic effort of international media development organisations is key to a successful support to the Iraqi media community.

## **Participation**

The meeting was organised by the Danish based International Media Support (IMS) in collaboration with the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) and ARTICLE 19. It included representatives from Alliance Internationale pour la Justice, Baltic Media Centre, BBC World Service Trust, Danish School of Journalism, European Journalism Centre, Index on Censorship, International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), International Federation of Journalists, Internews International, Internews Europe, Media Action International, Media Diversity Institute, Open Society Institute, Press Now Foundation, Reporters Without Borders (UK), U.S. Committee for a Free Press in Iraq, UNESCO, World Association of Newspapers.

## List of participants

**Judy Yablonky** ([Jayablonky@aol.com](mailto:Jayablonky@aol.com))

Alliance Internationale pour la Justice  
29 rue du Faubourg Montmartre  
75009 Paris  
Tel: 33.1.48.00.03.20  
Fax : 33.1.48.00.03.30  
Email : [ajj@noos.fr](mailto:ajj@noos.fr)  
Internet: [www.i-a-j.org](http://www.i-a-j.org)

**Andrew Puddephatt**, Executive Director ([Andrew@article19.org](mailto:Andrew@article19.org)) and **Peter Noorlander**

([Peter@article19.org](mailto:Peter@article19.org))  
ARTICLE 19  
Lancaster House  
33 Islington High Street  
London N1 9LH, UK  
Tel: +44 20 7278 9292  
Fax: +44 20 7713 1356  
E-mail: [info@article19.org](mailto:info@article19.org)  
Internet: [www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org)

**Bent Nørby Bonde**, Senior international consultant ([bentnoerbybonde@bmc.dk](mailto:bentnoerbybonde@bmc.dk)) and**Waseem Mahmood**, Chief Consultant.

Baltic Media Centre  
Skippergade 8  
DK-3740 Svaneke  
Denmark  
Tel: +45 7020 2002  
Fax: +45 70202001  
Internet: [www.bmc.dk](http://www.bmc.dk)

**Tim Williams** ([Tim.Williams@bbc.co.uk](mailto:Tim.Williams@bbc.co.uk))

BBC World Service Trust  
Bush House  
Strand  
London WC2B 4PH  
UK  
Tel: (+44) 20 7240 3456  
Fax: (+44) 20 7557 1258  
Email: [worldservice@bbc.co.uk](mailto:worldservice@bbc.co.uk)  
Internet: [www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/us/trust/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/us/trust/index.shtml)

**Jørgen Ringgaard**, International Secretariat ([jr@djh.dk](mailto:jr@djh.dk))

Danish School of Journalism

Olof Palmes Allé 11

8200 Århus N

Denmark

Tel: +45 89 44 04 40

Internet: <http://afdelinger.djh.dk/international/>

**Raymonde Griswold**, Director ([griswold@EJC.NL](mailto:griswold@EJC.NL))

European Journalism Centre

Sonneville-lunet 10

6221KT Maastricht

the Netherlands,

Tel: +31 43 325 40 30

Fax: +31 43 321 26 26

Email: [secc@ejc.nl](mailto:secc@ejc.nl)

Internet: [www.ejc.nl](http://www.ejc.nl)

**Rohan Jayasekera**, Web Managing Editor ([rohan@indexonensorship.org](mailto:rohan@indexonensorship.org))

Index on Censorship

33 Islington High St London N1 9LH

United Kingdom

Tel: +44 20 7278 2313 (mobile 07703574156)

Fax: +44 20 7278 1878

Email: [rohan@indexonensorship.org](mailto:rohan@indexonensorship.org)

Internet: [www.indexonline.org](http://www.indexonline.org)

**Anthony Borden**, Executive Director ([tony@iwpr.net](mailto:tony@iwpr.net)), **Duncan Furey**, Operations Manager ([duncan@iwpr.net](mailto:duncan@iwpr.net))

Institute for War & Peace Reporting

Lancaster House

33 Islington High Street

London N1 9LH, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7713 7130

Fax: +44 (0)20 7713 7140

Internet: [www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net)

**Mark Whitehouse**, Director, Media Development Division ([mwhitehouse@irex.org](mailto:mwhitehouse@irex.org))

International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX)

2121 K Street, NW

Suite 700

Washington, DC 20037

USA

Tel: (202) 628-8188

Fax: (202) 628-8189

E-mail: [irex@irex.org](mailto:irex@irex.org)

Internet: [www.irex.org](http://www.irex.org)

**Oliver Money-Kyrle** ([oliver@ifj.org](mailto:oliver@ifj.org)) Project Director  
International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)  
IPC-Residence Palace  
155 rue de la Loi, 1040 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 235 22 00  
Fax: +32 2 235 22 19  
E-mail: [ifj@ifj.org](mailto:ifj@ifj.org)  
Internet: [www.ifj.org](http://www.ifj.org)

**Jesper Højberg**, Executive Director ([jh@i-m-s.dk](mailto:jh@i-m-s.dk)), **Martin Breum**, Deputy Director ([mb@i-m-s.dk](mailto:mb@i-m-s.dk)), **Kamel Labidi** ([KELabidi@aol.com](mailto:KELabidi@aol.com)) and **Christian Friis Bach** ([cfb@i-ms.dk](mailto:cfb@i-ms.dk))  
International Media Support (IMS)  
Wilders Plads 8H  
1403 Copenhagen K  
Denmark  
Tel: +45 32 69 89 89  
Fax: +45 32 69 89 94  
Email: [i-m-s@i-m-s.dk](mailto:i-m-s@i-m-s.dk)

**George Papagiannis**, Regional Director for the Middle East ([george@internews.org](mailto:george@internews.org))  
Internews Network  
P.O. Box 4448  
Arcata, CA 95518  
USA  
Tel: (707) 826-2030, ext. 126  
Fax: (707) 826 2136  
Web: [www.internews.org](http://www.internews.org)

**Eric S Johnson**, Executive Director ([johnson@internews.fr](mailto:johnson@internews.fr))  
Internews Europe  
14, cité Griset  
75011 Paris  
France  
Tel: +33 1 5336 0606  
Fax: +33 1 5336 8341  
Internet: [www.internews.fr](http://www.internews.fr)

**Edouard Markiewicz** ([eddymark@mediaaction.org](mailto:eddymark@mediaaction.org))  
Media Action International  
Villa de Grand Montfleury  
1290 Versoix - Geneva  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41(0)22 950 07 50  
Fax: +41(0)22 950 07 52  
Email: [info@mediaaction.org](mailto:info@mediaaction.org)  
Internet: [www.mediaaction.org](http://www.mediaaction.org)

**Milica Pesic**, Director ([milica.pesic@media-diversity.org](mailto:milica.pesic@media-diversity.org)) and Lloyd Donaldson, Programmes Director ([Lloyd@media-diversity.org](mailto:Lloyd@media-diversity.org))

Media Diversity Institute  
100 Park Village East  
NW1 3SR London - UK  
Tel: +(44) 207 3800200  
Fax: +(44) 207 3800050  
Mob: +(44)(0)799 0971 564  
Email: [milica.pesic@media-diversity.org](mailto:milica.pesic@media-diversity.org)  
Internet: [www.media-diversity.org](http://www.media-diversity.org)

**Gwyneth Henderson**, Board member ([hendersongwyneth@hotmail.com](mailto:hendersongwyneth@hotmail.com))

Open Society Institute  
20 Hornsey Lane  
London N6 5LX  
UK  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7281 1816  
Mobile: +44 07799 062376  
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7561 0724  
Internet: [www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org)

**Paul Staal**, Director and **Dessislava Damianova** ([Damianova@pressnow.nl](mailto:Damianova@pressnow.nl))

Press Now Foundation  
Wibautstraat 3-5  
1091 GH Amsterdam  
Postbank 7676  
the Netherlands  
Tel: +31 20 5962 000  
Fax: +31 20 5962 001  
Email: [pressnow@pressnow.nl](mailto:pressnow@pressnow.nl)  
Internet: [www.pressnow.org](http://www.pressnow.org)

**Veronica Forwood** ([veronicaforwood@hotmail.com](mailto:veronicaforwood@hotmail.com))

Reporters Without Borders (UK)  
33, Islington High Street  
London N1 9LH  
UK  
Tel: +44 207 278 2313  
Fax: +44 207 278 1878  
Internet: [www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org)

**David Talbot** ([dtalbot@salon.com](mailto:dtalbot@salon.com))

Salon

22 4th Street, 16th Floor,

San Francisco, CA 94103

US

Tel: 415 645-9200

Fax: 415 645-9204

Internet: [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com)

(Representing the initiative: U.S. Committee for a Free Press in Iraq)

**Mogens Schmidt**, ([mschmidt@wan.asso.fr](mailto:mschmidt@wan.asso.fr))

UNESCO

7, place de Fontenoy

75352 PARIS 07 SP

France

Tel: 33 1 45 68 10 00

Fax: 33 1 45 67 16 90

Internet: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

World Association of Newspapers

25 rue d'Astorg

75008 Paris, France

Telephone: (33-1) 47 42 85 00

Fax: (33-1) 47 42 49 48

Internet: [www.wan-press.org](http://www.wan-press.org)

Email: [contact\\_us@wan.asso.fr](mailto:contact_us@wan.asso.fr)