

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

YASSER AL-HAMDANI

ياسر الحمداني

At liberty **Iraq**

Iraqi journalist charged with defaming an official after exposing corruption on social media. Subject of an arrest warrant in 2022, he turned himself in, was questioned and bailed in February 2023, and was acquitted in May 2023. He has documented violations in Mosul since 2003 and has received death threats for his work.

HuMENA.

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Case reference HM-IQ-2026-004

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Iraqi journalist charged with defaming an official after exposing corruption on social media. Subject of an arrest warrant in 2022, he turned himself in, was questioned and bailed in February 2023, and was acquitted in May 2023. He has documented violations in Mosul since 2003 and has received death threats for his work.

STATUS	**At liberty**
COUNTRY	**Iraq**
SENTENCE	**Acquitted on 30 May 2023; charges dismissed for insufficient evidence.**
CHARGES	**Slander and defamation of a government official under Article 433 of the Iraqi Penal Code**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Confirm publicly that no charge, restriction or proceeding remains against Yasser Al-Hamdani in connection with this case.

02 Guarantee that Yasser Al-Hamdani can continue peaceful human rights work without surveillance, summons or further reprisal.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/yasser-al-hamdani/

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
Press freedom violation	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19
Threats and intimidation	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

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HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

June 2014

CONTEXT

Leaves Mosul under Islamic State occupation

He left Mosul during the Islamic State occupation of the city and worked with several newspapers and international agencies.

2016

CONTEXT

Injured while covering the battle for Mosul

He returned as a war correspondent during the military operations to retake Mosul and was injured several times while covering the fighting. Exact dates are not given.

17 July 2022

SURVEILLANCE DETECTED

Security services begin tracking

Security services began investigating and tracking Yasser Al-Hamdani after he reported on corruption in a government agency.

20 November 2022

ARREST WARRANT ISSUED

Arrest warrant issued

The Court of Publishing and Information Cases in Nineveh issued an arrest and investigation warrant under Article 433 of the Iraqi Penal Code without prior summons.

21 February 2023

HEARING

Questioned and released on bail

Yasser Al-Hamdani turned himself in to the Court of Publishing and Information Cases. An investigative judge questioned him and released him on bail of three million dinars the same day.

21 February 2023

REFERRAL TO TRIAL

Case transferred to Mosul court

His case was referred from the Court of Publishing and Information Cases to the Misdemeanor Court in Mosul.

30 May 2023

ACQUITTAL

Acquitted

The Misdemeanor Court in Mosul acquitted Yasser Al-Hamdani, ruling insufficient evidence for the slander and defamation charges.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Yasser Al-Hamdani is a journalist and human rights defender based in northern Iraq. He has documented violations and attacks in Mosul since 2003, covering two decades of armed conflict, occupation, and efforts at reconstruction. He left Mosul during the Islamic State occupation in 2014, and returned as a war correspondent during the military operations to retake the city, when he was injured several times. His reporting centres on corruption, the protection of journalists, and abuses committed during and after the conflict period.

He is a registered member of the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate and has collaborated with organizations working on the rights and safety of media workers. His public advocacy has made him a target of state agencies and authoritarian political parties.

The Charges

In mid-2022, Yasser Al-Hamdani published reports and gave interviews highlighting administrative and financial corruption in a government agency. On 17 July 2022, security services began investigating and tracking him. He was not summoned or notified of any charges.

On 20 November 2022, the Court of Publishing and Information Cases in Nineveh issued an arrest and investigation warrant under Article 433 of the 1969 Iraqi Penal Code, which addresses slander and defamation. A police officer informed him of the warrant after it was issued. The government agency that filed the complaint refused to recognize his status as a journalist, in apparent violation of Article 10 of the Journalist Protection Law of 2011, which requires that the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate be notified before any journalist is summoned or arrested.

Judicial Harassment and Restrictions

At the time the warrant was issued, Yasser Al-Hamdani was living in Erbil, in the Kurdistan Region, where Nineveh police had no jurisdiction to arrest him. Nevertheless, his name was circulated at all checkpoints. He had been travelling daily between Erbil and Nineveh to report on events in the city; the warrant made that impossible.

The warrant caused him financial difficulty and psychological distress. He delayed turning himself in for fear of prolonged detention and because he could not locate a lawyer with expertise in journalist protection cases. He also believed that additional lawsuits related to his work might be pending.

Legal Proceedings

On 21 February 2023, Yasser Al-Hamdani turned himself in to the Court of Publishing and Information Cases. An investigative judge questioned him and released him on bail of three million Iraqi dinars

(approximately 2,064 euros) the same day. His case was then transferred to the Misdemeanor Court in Mosul.

On 30 May 2023, the Misdemeanor Court acquitted him of all charges. The court ruled that there was insufficient evidence to support the alleged crime of slander and defamation under Article 433 of the Iraqi Penal Code.

Pattern of Threats

The prosecution of 2022 and 2023 was not the first attempt to silence Yasser Al-Hamdani. He has faced various forms of targeted harassment over the years, including death threats from state agencies and authoritarian political parties, in retaliation for his work exposing corruption.

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SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing about the case of Yasser Al-Hamdani, journalist and human rights defender; member of the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate; documents corruption and violations in Mosul in Iraq, whose prosecution has ended. I am writing to ask that the case be closed properly and that no further reprisal follows.

In brief: Iraqi journalist charged with defaming an official after exposing corruption on social media. Subject of an arrest warrant in 2022, he turned himself in, was questioned and bailed in February 2023, and was acquitted in May 2023. He has documented violations in Mosul since 2003 and has received death threats for his work.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Confirm publicly that no charge, restriction or proceeding remains against Yasser Al-Hamdani in connection with this case;
2. Guarantee that Yasser Al-Hamdani can continue peaceful human rights work without surveillance, summons or further reprisal.

I will continue to follow this case until no reprisal remains.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026