

Iraqis angered after U.S. channel insults religious institutions



Baghdad, September 2 (RHC)-- Numerous Iraqi personalities and bodies have voiced outrage after an American satellite channel airs a report insulting the Arab country's religious institutions.

The U.S.-based Alhurra channel, which maintains a bureau in Baghdad, had unilaterally accused the institutions of "corruption" in an across-the-board affront seemingly aimed at the country's religious authorities and entire religious organizations.

Parliament Speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi condemned the report, underscoring the religious figures and entities' significant role in preserving national and social integrity, according to Iraq's al-Sumariah television network.

"It is time that the country's establishments played their part in devising of professional media principles governing satellite channels and the media sphere in order to prevent insult against state and religious institutions," he said.

The Victory Alliance political coalition, established by former prime minister Haider al-Abadi, supported the country's clergy and urged media outlets to rather "speak out the truth" and fulfill their duties free of malicious intents.

Iraq's pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) paramilitaries, which is commonly known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha'abi, also condemned the move.

"Alhurra's adversarial policy and recurrent attacks in its broadcasts on notable figures, personalities, the society, and Islam amounts to blatant abuse of media freedom in Iraq," it said in a statement.

The Fatah Alliance political coalition, where the PMU is a component, called for legal action against the channel, while its fellow political grouping of the National Wisdom Movement, which is led by senior cleric Ammar al-Hakim, asked the country's Communications and Media Commission to call the channel to account and close down its Iraq offices.

The United States and its affiliates and nationals have, in the past, run afoul of the country's public and political spheres on countless occasions. They have incurred nationwide outrage through either their direct and indirect contribution to violence on the ground or other instances of unlawful behavior

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