

KRG Coordinator Office for
International Advocacy (OCIA)
Dr. Dindar Zebari
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Dear Dr. Zibari,

I would like to express my concern about the activists and journalists Sherwan Sherwani, Guhdar Zebari, Hariwan Issa, Ayaz Karan and Shvan Saeed. On 16 February, the 2nd Erbil Criminal Court, in the Kurdish Region of Iraq's capital, sentenced all five men to six years in prison following an unfair trial, based on trumped-up charges, among others of "destabilizing the security and stability of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I)". On 28 April 2021, the Court of Appeal upheld the prison sentence of the five activists and journalists. In its ruling, the court rejected the defendants' claims of torture and ill-treatment and confirmed the charges brought against them.

I am calling on the Kurdistan Regional Government to immediately and unconditionally release Sherwan Sherwani, Guhdar Zebari, Hariwan Issa, Ayaz Karam and Shvan Saeed. Please take all steps to ensure their unjust convictions are overturned and ensure a prompt and effective investigation into the allegations of torture and other ill-treatment is carried out, with a view to holding perpetrators accountable and providing redress to them. Pending their release, please ensure they have access to qualified health professionals providing health care in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent, and have regular and unfettered access to their lawyers and family.

Yours sincerely,

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