
IRAQ SUSPENDS US-FUNDED TV CHANNEL OVER CORRUPTION DOCUMENTARY AT RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

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Iraq has suspended the licence of a US-government funded broadcaster for three months after it aired a documentary alleging corruption within the countrys religious institutions.

The countrys media regulator on Monday shut down the local offices of Al Hurra television □ a broadcaster funded by the US Agency for Global Media □ for three months, accusing the network of bias and defamation in their report.

The program failed to uphold the principles of media professionalism, Egypts Ahram Online quoted the Communications and Media Commission (CMC) as saying in a press statement, accusing the reporters of using anonymous sources to defame and to cause moral injury.

The investigative report, which aired last week, alleged corruption within the Sunni and Shia Muslim endowments □ state bodies that administer religious sites and real estate □ including foundations linked to Iraqs top Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

The Sunni endowment denied the allegations in the report and said they would take legal steps against the channel. The Shia endowment could not immediately be reached for comment.

In addition to the three-month suspension, Al Hurra must stop all activities until they correct their position and must issue a formal apology, the CMC decision said.

Al Hurra said it would issue a statement shortly.

Neither the US Department of State nor the US Embassy in Baghdad oversees the content of Al Hurras programming, Embassy Spokesperson Pedro Martin said.

Alhurras mission is to deliver accurate and objective information on the region, American policies and Americana, he said. The Government of Iraq has the right to question Al Hurra on any reporting that is perceived to be false or unprofessional and has the right to respond with their position.

<https://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/iraq-suspends-us-funded-tv-channel-over-corruption-documentary-at-religious-institutions/>

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