

MIC

Media in Cooperation
Berlin - Baghdad - Amman



Radio & Media Development Projects in Iraq:

An Approach to Politics, Civil Society and
Culture in Iraq

02/06

Introduction

“Media In Cooperation - MIC” is a non-profit non-governmental media organization that was founded in Germany in April 2004. With close connections to and associations with radio stations and local NGOs in Iraq, MIC implements media projects (political and cultural) that aspire to help media development and to create a stable civil society structure in Iraq and encourage dialogue among the society.

Moreover, through creating constructive links between civil society institutions and those of the state, MIC aims to enable citizens to form their own opinion on the political and cultural processes in Iraq. Finally, MIC aims to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Iraqi people of such political and cultural issues that concern them the most.

MIC’s cultural projects aim at offering young Iraqi intellectuals and artists a voice by highlighting new forms and approaches of arts. Furthermore the projects foster cultural dialogue between artists and intellectuals from Iraq, the Middle East and Europe.

MIC’s projects are funded and supported by the German Federal Foreign Office, The Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the UNESCO.

Targeting the Iraqi people in general, but more specifically the young generation in Iraq, MIC’s international Arab-European team produces radio programs, websites, print publications, movies, trainings, and workshops with both political and cultural foci.

Through the implementation of MIC’s projects the organization aims:

1. To develop independent and interactive media programs to be involved in the rebuilding and transformation of Iraq on all levels of Iraqi society.
2. To contribute to creating independent media networks with qualified professionals.
3. To strengthen investigative journalism skills within the media sector so that it becomes both: an independent part of the civil society and a support of civil society’s impact on the political process.
4. Capacity Building of young professionals through workshops and training-on-the-job methods.
5. Highlight arts and culture as a form of dialogue and exchange of ideas.

MIC is currently implementing the following projects:

Radio Report Network

“Radio Reports Network - RRRN” is a radio agency-like project. RRRN produces daily radio reports (features, interviews, and vox pops) and disseminates them to 20 Iraqi radio stations.

MIC’s coordinators in Baghdad, Basra and Sulaymaniya and the network of 30 reporters located all over Iraq produce daily radio reports and send them via the internet to the editorial team in Amman. The editorial team in Amman finalizes the reports and places them on a special website from which Iraqi radio stations can download the materials and then broadcast them.

The project’s objective is to produce a free and responsible media source that is vital for the Iraqi people to grasp the daily political developments. This will help Iraqis to attain cognizant and informed opinions about and enable them to participate in the political processes that shape their country’s future.



MIC Reporter Ziad Al-Ajjily (Baghdad) Interviews a Sunni Arab Sheikh during a protest against the torture scandal, November 2005.



Sheimaa' at a journalist training workshop in Amman

Partner Radio Stations:

MIC is the partner of 18 Iraqi radio stations located in all parts of Iraq. The radio stations download the produced materials by MIC and broadcasts them during their shows or news bulletins. The radio stations are:

- Radio Dijla, Baghdad.
- Radio AlMahaba, Baghdad.
- Radio Dar Al-Salaam, Baghdad.
- Radio Alrashid, Baghdad.
- Radio Ashur, Baghdad.
- Radio Iraqi Republic IMN, Baghdad.
- Radio Alhurriyah (Kurdish), Baghdad.
- Radio Basra, IMN.
- Radio Shatt Al-Arab, Basra.
- Radio Shanasheel, Basra.
- Radio Karbala, Karbala.
- Radio AlFuratain, Babel.
- Radio Dyala, Dyala.

- Radio Nineveh AM and FM, Mousel.
- Radio Baba Gurgur, Kirkuk.
- Radio Sawt Shaab Kurdistan, Suleymaniya.
- Radio Sawt Kurdistan, Dohuk.
- Radio Sawt Kurdistan, Arbil

Radio Representatives Conference



MIC and UNESCO conference with 22 Iraqi Radio station Directors, 9 August 2005.

Prior the radio reports production, on 15 August 2005 a conference was held for which representatives and directors of 22 Iraqi radio stations were invited to Amman. The purpose of the conference was to network with Iraqi radio stations to find ways of future cooperation, in general, but specifically to agree on the distribution of ready-to-broadcast radio reports evolving around the topic of the new constitution.

In fact, this event was the first in which representatives from all the radio stations met and had a chance to discuss current crucial political and media issues, in addition to exchange views as well as voice their challenges and difficulties. Aiming towards partnership, on the second day of the conference MIC set up three working groups. The intention was to involve the radio stations in the new project by letting them come together and decide on issues regarding production such as the terminologies to be used, the contents, and a few guidelines for good reporting.

As a result of the conference, all 22 radio stations agreed to sign a Professional Code of Ethics that binds those stations to the commitment to free and ethical journalism and professional partnership. (see supplement at the end of the document)

Produced reports

Currently, at least three reports (two Arabic and one Kurdish) are produced daily, six days a week, varying from a full feature to an interview or a Voxpop.

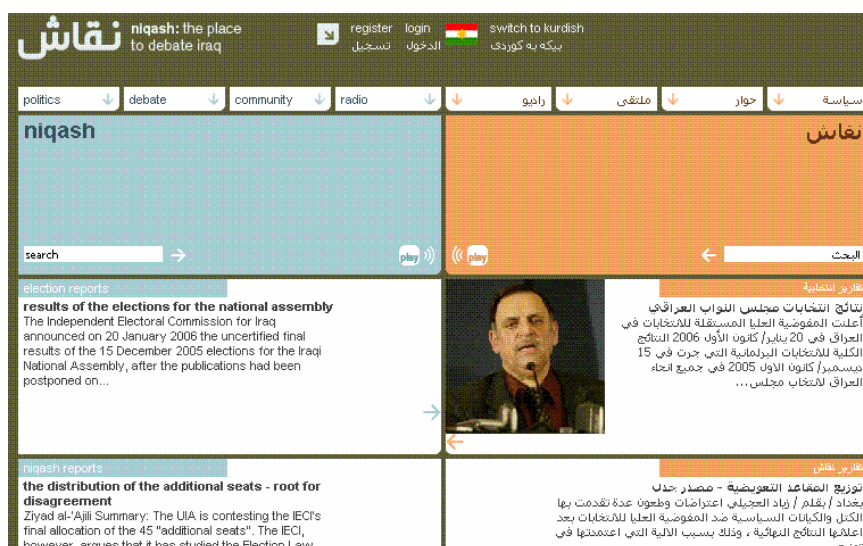
All the materials produced were directly (and sometimes indirectly) related to the new constitution, the drafting procedures and the referendum. Topics covered are political, economic and social. During the first months of production, the reports

have covered important events, political news, social activities, and at all time recorded the beat on the streets of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, Kirkuk, Arbil, Karbala and the rest of Iraq.

Niqash.org

Niqash is a space for Iraqi citizens to interact with each other, to exchange views on the current political process, to debate the processes that are shaping their society. Its main focus is on issues relevant to the drafting of the new Iraqi constitution. Its main goal is to facilitate a public and popular debate on the current political process in Iraq, thus fostering and strengthening Iraqi civil society. In order to do so, Niqash provides background information, organizes expert exchanges on current topics, and offers every visitor the possibility to participate in discussions or even create a personal web-diary (blog). A newsletter keeps registered users updated.

Visit www.niqash.org



Niqash website

The following topics and themes were the main focus of the website:

- Federalism vs. centralized state
- The role of religion in the constitution
- Iraq's identity
- Women's rights in the constitution
- The role of Sunni Arabs in the process of drafting the constitution
- The role of civil society in the process of drafting the constitution
- Postponement of issuing the constitution draft
- The question of Kirkuk
- De-Ba'thification

The website attracts an average number of 1,100 visitors per day. During important events the number of visitor reaches 2,000. More than 40% of visitors are from Iraq.

Newsletter:

The weekly Niqash newsletter (Arabic and English) is sent to 2,200 subscribers. The newsletter includes an editorial on up-to-date political issues in Iraq, highlights the new content on the website, and gives an overview of the radio projects. Moreover, a radio station or NGO is featured weekly in the newsletter.

Niqash "Election Focus"

A new section of the website, providing information on the 15 December 2005 election, was launched in November 2005. This section offered readers detailed information on election candidates and political lists with an overview of their general and political agenda, in addition to controversial debates on the election and the political parties and lists.

Niqash also developed special interactive tool, "The Electionnaire". This feature enabled the users to educate themselves on which party or election list best represented their own positions and thus educated the Iraqi voter about the positions of the main parties on pertinent political issues.



MIC reporter interviews Hussein Al-Hindawi, Head of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI).

niqash: electionnaire

english
عربي
كوردی

the electionnaire has compared your answers with the positions of the Iraqi parties. In order to see the results, please click on one of the parties below.

Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)	Islamic Virtue Party (Fadhila)
Islamic Dawa Party (IDP)	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)
Iraqi National Accord (INA)	Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)
Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)	Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP)
Iraqi National Congress (INC)	Iraqi Turkman Front (ITF)

1 I am in favor of establishing more federal regions in addition to the Kurdistan Region.
party: agree / you: disagree

2 The competences of the Iraqi Prime minister should be expanded.
party: agree /

3 The laws issued by the federal authorities should overrule those issued by the regions.
party: neutral /

4 Federalism as described in the draft constitution will stabilize the unity of Iraq.
party: agree /

The "Electionnaire" on the Niqash website

Election supplement:

MIC produced an "Guide to Iraqi Parties" that was distributed as a supplement of the Iraqi newspaper "Al-Sabah al-Jadid" all over Iraq in the week before the 15 December 2005 election.

Previous Projects:

1. **NIQASH Radio program:** Niqash Radio focused on the drafting of the new Iraqi constitution and the elections and on the building of public awareness of and focus on this process, as well as the structures and norms of the emerging political system and societal values.

The radio shows are archived on the Niqash website
Check out: www.niqash.org

2. **IRAQ - 360 Degrees:**

This is a radio program produced from September until December 2005 that focused on Iraq's cultural relations with neighboring countries. Two Iraqi artists-journalists traveled outside Iraq - a tour that took them to the capital cities of Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Kuwait, and Turkey where they met up with



fellow journalists from those countries. Together they produced cultural reports on the Youth and Arts scenes of each country. The project aimed to connect the younger generations across borders and, at the same time, to build up a network of journalists in the region. The program was aired throughout Iraq and in Lebanon. The protagonists were accompanied by an Iraqi film-maker. A documentary film about the project will be released in fall of 2006.

3. **TELEPHONE FM:** This radio program was produced in Berlin in the summer of 2004 and aired in Iraq. The broadcasts centered on discussions between Iraqi radio broadcasters in Germany and young people in Iraq who, as intellectuals, business entrepreneurs or creative artists, were able to reflect on and help shape the ongoing transformation in their country.

Check out: www.telephonefm.com

4. **ELECTION MONITOR IRAQ:** This radio project was implemented from December 2004 to February 2005. The aim of the daily "Election Radio" program was to enable Iraqi journalists and media to disseminate independent, objective and extensive information on the January 2005 elections and its candidates.

Check out: www.electionmonitoriraq.com

MIC 2006 - Future Projects

MIC will continue to design and implement media projects focusing on Iraq. As in 2005 the projects will be of either a political or cultural nature. With the selection of the themes of this year's projects, MIC aims to contribute to the reconstruction and nation-building in Iraq by supporting civil society institutions and help raise awareness on current issues.

The foci of the upcoming projects will be based on the principles of democracy, the respect of all basic human rights and the respect of freedom of opinion and press.

Cultural projects

Planning to continue last year's cultural radio "Iraqi - 360 Degrees", MIC intends to start the production of a documentary film and a book on the project that revolved around the journey of two Iraqi artist-journalists through Iraq's neighboring countries. Additionally, MIC is planning to establish a platform for dialog between Iraqi artists inside the country and their counterparts in exile.

Political projects

The website, the radio report agency and the radio programs will continue. However, this year's focus will be on post-election Iraq. With a new constitution and a new parliament, Iraqis will continue the shift towards reconstruction and democratization. Issues such as internal security, economy, legislation, federalism and dealing with the past are necessary to the achievement of a democratic state that is based on the respect of human rights.

- **Iraqi Economy:**
The Iraqi economy will be one of the highlights of the upcoming projects. Information on reconstruction, foreign trade, and oil and labor issues will be provided, discussed, and debated.
- **Security:**
This highlight will discuss such controversial matters as insurgency, fighting occupation, terrorism and crime. Moreover, the functions of the army and the different militias in Iraq will be a focus of the reporting of next year.
- **Politics:**
This focus will collect positions from the Iraqi Society on the most crucial and controversial political topics: Is there still a national Iraqi identity? Has the secular Arabic national identity been defeated with Baath? Is there a chance for the return of Secularism? Or can there be a compromise between Islam and Modernity? How can the balance of powers be kept between the federal and the regional governments? Is a decentralized state able to provide security? How will resources be distributed between the provinces? Who will determine the fate of Kirkuk?
- **Legislative:**
The questions addressed under this heading include, for example: What will the final constitution look like? Which laws will be passed? What are the consequences of the new legislation for the individual Iraqi citizen?
- **Human Rights:**
The contents will also focus on human rights issues, civil society institutions concerned with such agenda and the capacity of change as well as government's performance on that aspect. This will contribute to the general awareness raising of Iraqis basic rights.

The projects will be implemented by experts in the various fields, MIC's journalists in Iraq, and the professional multi-national team in Amman, Baghdad, and Berlin.

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