



Европейски парламент Parlamento Europeo Evropský parlament Europa-Parlamentet Europäisches Parlament  
Euroopa Parlament Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο European Parliament Parlement européen Parliamint na hEorpa  
Europski parlament Parlamento europeo Eiropas Parlaments Europos Parlamentas Europai Parlament  
Parlament Ewropew Europees Parlement Parlament Europejski Parlamento Europeu Parlamentul European  
Európsky parlament Evropski parlament Euroopan parlamentti Europaparlamentet

H.E. Nechirvan Barzani  
Prime Minister of Iraqi Kurdistan

H.E. Masoud Barzani  
President of the Kurdish Democratic Party

Brussels, 6th March 2019

*Dear Prime Minister,  
Dear President,*

I am writing you to express my concern following several reports that I received on the case of Mr Sherwan Sherwani, a Kurdish journalist and outspoken critic of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), who was arrested last January 28 allegedly by party-affiliated security forces in the Iraqi Kurdistan city of Dohuk, together with several of his friends. According to these reports, in particular those from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Mr Sherwani is accused by the Asayish intelligence service of violating Article 156 of the 1969 Iraqi Penal Code which states that anyone who wilfully violates the independence, unity or security of the country can be sentenced with life imprisonment. This is an accusation even more serious than violating Iraqi Kurdistan's press laws and Asayish agents are basing their accusation on Mr Sherwani's posts on social media.

These reports also underline that on February 1, Mr Sherwani was moved to Zirka prison in Duhok and he has been in solitary confinement being prevented of receiving any visits. Later on, on February 13, he was transferred again, this time to Gishy Prison also run by Asayish. In both prisons, Mr Sherwani has been subjected to inhuman conditions and ill-treatment.

There are also concerns that this politically motivated detention has to do with Mr Sherwani's collaboration as a freelance investigative journalist with 17Shubat for Human Rights an independent, non-profit and non-governmental organization that provides support and protection to human rights defenders, journalists and activists who attacked, abused or jailed by the authorities in the Iraqi Kurdistan. In reality, Mr Sherwani's research also featured in TV report documenting motivated killings committed in the regions of Dohuk and Bahdinan since 1991. Besides his work as a freelance journalist, Mr Sherwani is a human's right activist who has founded a non-profit organisation Tekoshan that promotes ethical journalists and is licensed by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

I ask you to ensure that Mr Sherwan and the other detainees, arrested at the same time, are immediately released. Human rights are universal rights and where they are violated there is no peace, nor stability. The violation of fundamental rights of Kurdish citizens does not serve the interests of a stable and peaceful Kurdistan.

*Best regards,*

*Ana Gomes*

Ana Gomes  
Member of the European Parliament