



## THE HISTORY OF KIRKUK TELEVISION AND ITS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT 1967-1999

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### ABSTRACT

The Television is a means of communication which combines between the voice and animation, it contributes to enhance the social and cultural consciousness of the audience through presenting educational programs and proper and healthy ways of living. Based on that, this research shades the light on the history of the Tv in Kirkuk between (1967-1999) and its cultural and social impact on the City's society since its foundation in 1967 until 1999 where the station was moved to Baghdad for political reasons.

### INTRODUCTION

From the second half of the 20th century, the Television began to play a significant role in social and cultural changes in society's development, particularly in the developing countries as it has been the main source of different types of information. Since then, the Television has also been a means for creating political, social and economic process.

What motivated me to write this research on documenting the history of media and communication in Kirkuk covers the 3rd quarter of the last century is due to a very limited interest in the topic both from the academia and the local newspapers. The investigation on the social history of Kirkuk, particularly on the media and communication side is, not uneasy task, and as a researcher you may face many challenges and hurdles due to the lack of documents and reliable sources, for this reasons, I relied on some related references and sources including some personal interviews with former employees of Kirkuk

Television Station instead of relying on the TV documents and archive which either had been withdrawn by the General Institute of Radio and Television in Baghdad or it had been lost due to the political events that the City had witnessed.

The research includes a brief history of the Television in Iraq, and three main topics: The First title, deals with the very beginning of the foundation of Kirkuk Television and its development in terms of the administration staff and Television programs. The Second title, highlights the Television's social and cultural Impact on Kirkuk's society during (1967-1999). The Third title, illustrates the central Government's policy towards the Television station of Kirkuk. The Final part includes the conclusion, recommendations, and the list of sources.

### *A brief History of the Television in Iraq:*

Since the invention of the Radio<sup>[1]</sup>, The technical advancement in the 20th century paved the way to the invention of a new means of communication that were unknown before such as the Television<sup>[2]</sup>. The UK is considered as the first country in the world where the Television transmission was launched in 1936 but stopped due to the second world war (1939-1945)<sup>[3]</sup>.

Prior to 1954, the Television was unknown in Iraq and the Radio was the only available means of media on the domestic and regional levels<sup>[4]</sup>. In 1954, the British Commercial Fair was held in Baghdad at which the Television was presented to the visitors. In Oct 18th 1954, some local newspapers published a job announcement seeking a Television presenter with the Arabic and English language skills<sup>[5]</sup>. H.M. The King Faisal II opened the British Fair on 25th Oct 1954<sup>[6]</sup>. The Middle East Radio Station revealed the intention of Iraqi Government to purchase the Television station at the British Fair in Baghdad<sup>[7]</sup>. The Government refused to make a deal due to the Television's high price 65000 ID. The British side agreed to donate the station freely to the Iraqi Government, in return for the latter's consent on importing the requirements for the Television's work from the UK and dispatching the Iraqi technicians to the UK for training. The Television station was consisting of three unites and a cinema instrument and a Television transmission with half kilo wat /power<sup>[8]</sup>.

In April 1956, the experimental transmission for the Baghdad Television was achieved prior to the formal opening ceremony in May 2nd 1956 when H.M. the King Faisal II attended and made a speech in which he mentioned that the number of the sold Television before the ceremony reached to 120 Television. The Director of Public Radio also made a speech and mentioned the Television Station would be supervised by three Iraqi engineers educated and trained in the UK, and also said 11 students finished their training and capable to pursue the technical jobs, after they were selected from ( Industrial School). The transmission time was 2 and half hour in the start<sup>[9]</sup>.

The programs were multiple and diverse. It was believed that Mohammed Ali Karim and Saabiha Al Mudars were the first male and female Television presenter in Iraq<sup>[10]</sup>. Iraq's Television Station was believed to be the first in the Middle East.

The Television's interest in topics such as, development and politics increased until after the 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1958 Revolution<sup>[11]</sup>. The legislation of Public Institute

of Radio and Television which was issued in 1970 enabled the Government to offer better work conditions for the Television with increased financial support and staff number. By 1980 the Government established 12 Television stations across the country<sup>[12]</sup>.

### ***The early history of Kirkuk Television and its development:***

The city of Kirkuk was among the most open and liberal cities in Iraq, due to the existing of Iraq Petroleum Company's headquarter since the 1930s which led to establishing other communication means with the outside world such as airport and papers and magazines for covering the news of the city, and Petroleum Company. Social, sport and culture clubs and cinemas were also established during the fourth and fifth decade of the century<sup>[13]</sup>. Launching Kirkuk Television was a big development not only for Kirkuk but for the other northern governorates. The Government used the Television as a new effective means for realizing the political and social objectives.

The idea of establishing Kirkuk Television goes back to 1961, when its foundation stone was laid during the opening of a group of service projects in the city by the Governor (Mahmoud al-Bakri) <sup>[14]</sup>, but the armed conflict between the Kurdish guerrillas and the Central Government prevented the project from happening<sup>[15]</sup>. The official opening ceremony of Kirkuk Television by then Iraq's Prime Minister Tahir Yahya took place in 18 Nov in 1967<sup>[16]</sup>, after the negotiation with the Kurdish Movement political wing had succeeded<sup>[17]</sup>, Kirkuk Television became the first Iraqi and regional station sending its transmission with 146 kw, it includes one studio and broadcasts its programs in Arabic, and later in Kurdish, Turkmen and Syria languages.

In 1968 20 minutes of the transmission time was allocated for the Kurdish language and, 15m for the Turkmani and 10m for Assyrian. The transmission time for the three language groups was extended in 1973, 40m for Kurdish, 20m for Turkmani and Assyrian got 15m<sup>[18]</sup>. By June 1st 1974, a special Kurdish station was established with a transmission time started from 18:00 AM to 24:00 mid night<sup>[19]</sup>. During the Iraq-Iran war 1980-1988, a great part of the Television's transmission time was allocated for covering this event. Kirkuk Television was moved to Baghdad in 1999 for political reason<sup>[20]</sup>. With this decision, Kirkuk Television was permanently suspended from work, and the radio and Television station sections and studios that were constructed to the best international specifications became typical compared to other stations in the Iraqi provinces and became unemployed until 2003.

### ***The administration Staff:***

After the station's opening in November 1967, The production of Kirkuk Television from the start, focused on covering the local news, and there for hiring the staff capable of translating the Arabic news to local languages ( Kurdish, Turkmani, and Assyrian ) was needed. TahsinHurmizy and Ibrahim Ismail were believed to be the most prominent Television news presenter at that time<sup>[21]</sup>. As the Television allocated partial transmission for the local languages in 1969, it relied on local employees as News presenters, like JabarJabari and HashimJabari for the Kurdish section and Abdulla Jaafer for the Turkmani.

Nassrin Mahmoud and Leyla Mohammed were among the first female presenters worked at Kirkuk Television, they are all from Fayhaa Zain Al Abidin Hassan, Laila Muhammad Nawroz, Karwan Saeed and Samia Atrash for the Arab section, Nisreen Mahmoud, Sahli Ibrahim for the Kurdish section, and Fadila Zain Al-Abidin Hassan of the Turkmen section and its fifth companion, Gedu Ndu of the Syrian section, and all of them worked as announcers and introduction to programs<sup>[22]</sup>. After the modernization and development of the Kirkuk Television, especially the modernization of the private section of the Kurdish channel in 1974 and the construction of a building for it in the year 1980, the station expanded its work and became in need many of professional and administrative staff over the years of the work of the Television, and a sheet shows the numbers of professional staff who worked in Kirkuk Television:

Kirkuk Television also played a role in training and qualifying a number of Television presenters such as, (Salaman Qassim, Adel Abdulla, Libron Simon, Ali Mohammed Ramazan and others), and Nassir Hasan and Baktiar Sia Mansouri were also prominent directors who directed Television programs in Baghdad that should be presented in Kirkuk<sup>[24]</sup>.

The management of Kirkuk Television during the years 1967-1999 punished a group of managers who were employed according to the administrative orders issued by the Ministry of Information / General Radio and Television, and a table below explaining the names of managers and the period of their management of the station:

**Table 1:** It shows the number of technical staff on Kirkuk Television during the 1967-1999<sup>[23]</sup>

<b>Kurdish section</b>				
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Adjective work</b>	<b>years of work</b>
1	Namiq Muhammad	male	NewsAnnouncer &Translator	18/7/1969 for one month
2	JabbarJabari	male	NewsAnnouncer &Translator	18/9/1969 to 8/1971
3	HashemJabbari	male	NewsAnnouncer &Translator	1/9/1969 - 1/9/2007
4	Muhammad Amin Murad	male	NewsAnnouncer	20/1/1971 - 31/12/2010
5	Sohaila Ibrahim	female	Announcer & Presenter	1/1/1973 - 6/9/1973
6	Nisreen Mahmoud Mohamed	female	Announcer & Presenter	1/1/1973 – 30/9/1984
7	Gohar Mohamed Murad	male	NewsAnnouncer	13/8/1974 – 10/9/1974
8	GareebBekas	male	NewsAnnouncer	1/1/1975 – 30/6/1975
9	Berwen Mahmoud Mohamed	female	Announcer & Presenter	29/10/1975 – 30/9/1984
10	Ismail Ibrahim	male	NewsAnnouncer	29/10/1978 – 1/6/1979
11	DelbakTaherDarwish	female	Presenter	1/3/1979 – 30/10/1983
12	Zhian Aziz	female	Presenter	11/7/1979 – 15/8/1980
13	ShafiqRafiq	male	NewsAnnouncer	11/11/1979 – 24/6/1998
14	Sabah Musa Ali	male	News Announcer & Presenter	27/8/1983 – 9/4/2003
15	Hello HashemJabbari	male	News Announcer & Presenter	1983 – 12/10/2000
16	Bayan Abbas Mohamed	female	Announcer & Presenter	21/2/1985 – 1/10/1987
17	Zamawand Hassan qadir	female	Announcer & Presenter	15/9/1985 – 1/11/1989
18	Ismail Dino Gilani	male	News Announcer & Presenter	15/1/1986 – 1/1/1989
19	YassinQassemKarim	male	NewsAnnouncer	1/8/1987 – 31/8/1988
20	Sirwan Ahmed	male	NewsAnnouncer	1/8/1987 – 31/8/1988
21	Layla Abdullah	female	Announcer & Presenter	10/1/1988 – 18/12/1988
22	Siham Mohamed Omar	female	Announcer & Presenter	27/3/1989 – 15/2/2000
23	Abdul Samad Abdul Raouf	male	NewsAnnouncer	12/10/1989 – 1/3/1991
24	Samira Mahmoud Mohamed	female	Announcer & Presenter	15/1/1992 – 17/7/ 1992
25	Prwin Hussein Ali	female	Announcer & Presenter	11/3/1993 – 11/12/1993
26	Noelle SadeeqFaraj	female	Announcer & Presenter	5/6/1993 - 15/1/1994

27	RizgarKakah Mir Shwani	male	NewsAnnouncer	10/11/1993 – 1/12/1999
28	Obaid Rashid	male	NewsAnnouncer	13/11/1993 - for now
29	Derakhshan Muhammad Rahim	female	Announcer & Presenter	15/5/1994 – 13/7/1997
<b>Arabic section</b>				
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Adjective work</b>	<b>years of work</b>
1	Laila Mohamed Nowruz	female	News Announcer & Presenter	1972
2	Krawnsaaed	female	News Announcer & Presenter	1972
3	SamiaAtruch	female	News Announcer & Presenter	1972
4	TahseenHarmazy	male	News Announcer	1980
5	Ibrahim Ismail Agha	male	News Announcer	1980
<b>Turkmen section</b>				
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Adjective work</b>	<b>years of work</b>
1	MuloodQaiji	male	NewsAnnouncer &Translator	1969
2	Abdullah Jaafar	male	News Announcer &Translator	1969
3	FayhaaZine El Abidine	female	News Announcer & Presenter	1972
4	FazelaZine El Abidine	female	News Announcer & Presenter	1972
<b>Syriany section</b>				
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Adjective work</b>	<b>years of work</b>
1	RabqaKhamasQandu	female	Announcer	1972
2	Louis Gorgues	male	Cinema	1980
3	Behnam Raphael	male	Cinema	1980
4	TomaBuya	male	Cinema	1980

**Table 2:** shows the names of the directors of the Kirkuk TV station during the years 1967-1999 [25]

	Name	Years of Work	Place of Residence
1	Mohamed Fawzy	1967-1969	Baghdad
2	YahyaJamilHammadi	1969-1970	Baghdad
3	Ibrahim Saleh Al-Douri /1	1970-1971	Beige/Tikrit
4	Rafa Muhammad Al-Kubaisi	1972-1973	Anbar
5	Abdul Jabbar Ahmed Sultan	1973-1975	Mosul
6	Khalil Ibrahim Al-Azzawi	1975(3mounth)	Baghdad
7	Tariq AlwanNajm	1976-1979	Baghdad
8	Ibrahim Saleh Al-Douri /2	1979(9mounth)	Beige/Tikrit
9	Ibrahim Saleh Al-Douri /3	1980-1983	Beige/Tikrit
10	Muhammad Reza Kazim	1984-1995	Qadisiyah
11	Salem Mahmoud Kababji	1995-1998	Mosul
12	Muhammad Daghistani	1998-2002	Kirkuk

**A Photograph of the Kirkuk Television Staff in 19/5/1973**[26]



***The start and development of program production in Kirkuk Television:***

Kirkuk Television was in its beginning using the machines, technicians and recording rooms prepared for the Television, also Kirkuk Television was a duplicate in its programs from Baghdad Television from the Qur'an and local and Arab news, songs, plays, just as Television in Kirkuk at its beginning was broadcasting its programs for a period not exceeding one hour per day And

over a period of five years, then it was raised to two hours per day, after which the average hours of video broadcast on Kirkuk Television reached about five hours per day on the Kurdish channel in all cities of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The production of programs had been through many stages:

1. July 14th 1968 witnessed the first music show by Solav Band, the most prominent musicians at that time were, shawkat Rashid, QadirMardan ,Salah Rashid and others, In the beginning of 1970s theTelevision started to produce programs related to culture and literature, first program in this regard was presented by Mustafa SalihKarim who was recording the episodes of his show in the studios in Baghdad before it was presented at Kirkuk Television every Wednesday<sup>[27]</sup>.

2. The year 1974 was considered as the biggest transforming point where the transmission time was extended to 5 hours a day and it reached to all cities in Kurdistan region. TheTelevision opened its doors for the talented artists and actors as the Government restrictions were eased, the financial support for the Television was increased which made it possible to hire more technical and administration staff, The mentioned developments paved the way for the artists and actors from Kurdistan cities ( Sulaymaniyah, Erbil and Dohuk ) to use Kirkuk Television for presenting the theaters and dramas and ,music festivals <sup>[28]</sup>.

3. Kirkuk Television produced also other culture and art related programs between 1976-1980, such as ( the message of art ) presented by Kamal Rauf and the (Public Culture) presented by Said Zangana, Nassir Hasan, a famous artist and director presented a program targeted the farmers called ( Modern Village) of which 32 episodes were made <sup>[29]</sup>.



**Table No. (3)** shows the number of cassettes recorded in black, white and colored colors in the Kirkuk Television archive during the years 1967-1999.<sup>[30]</sup>

Total	Songs						Drama						News & Programs	
	Kurdish		Turkmen		Syriany		Kurdish		Turkmen		Syriany		Three languages	
	black	Colored	black	Colored	black	Colored	black	Colored	black	Colored	black	Colored	black	Colored
	851	538	303	98	98	22	107	14	10	-	-	-	476	158
	1389		401		120		121		10		-		634	
<b>Total articles</b>	1910						131						634	
<b>Total Summation</b>	2675													

Photocopy of the archive of the cassettes on Television<sup>[31]</sup>



### ***The Social and Cultural impact of Kirkuk Television:***

The invention of Television and its development in the third decade of the last century and its wider use in the world during the 1950s and 1960s had made an unprecedented revolution in generating and spreading the knowledge. It also brought about new methods and relations in job and imposed new ideas and cultures which led to arising different changes in habits, norms and social values represented in generations clash and cultures merging [32].

Kirkuk Television had played an effective role in enhancing the people's consciousness and education of their culture, heritage, art and language through producing a range of programs related to art, culture and literature and hosting poets, intellectuals and artists on these programs, Kirkuk Television also contributed to promoting the national and ethnical sentiments of the Kurds in the city by producing special programs for celebrating national occasions like (Nowruz) [33].

It also paid a huge attention to the language and Kurdish folklore, and tried through different programs to make the new generation aware of the correct use of language terms and how they should be used correctly within the Kurdish language [34].

Kirkuk Television had also produced social programs both in the earlier and later stages, the most remained one in people's memory was the folklore program presented by Hardawel Kakai during the 1990s, focusing on traditional professions in Kirkuk, like carpenter, blacksmithing and tanning and how they should be inherited from generation to generation, (Sport and Youth) was another well-known program in Kirkuk Television prepared and presented by Sheikh Star Barzangi and highlighted the sport events on local and global levels [35].

### ***The Government's policy towards Kirkuk Television:***

As it has been mentioned earlier the Government used the Television to achieve the political objectives, and since the establishing of the Television, especially a Kurdish Television channel was part of the Declaration of 11 March 1970 reached between the Kurdish Movement and the Central Government of Iraq, the latter did not fully comply with the Declaration's paragraphs especially those related to the Kurdish channel and its independency. The Government changed the role of the Television from a means focusing mainly on culture and entertainment beneficial to the society to a politicized means directed by the Government [36].

Kirkuk Television was also exposed to the Arabization policy adopted by the Government for increasing the number of the Arab citizens in the City, The Government brought non-professional staff from the Middle and South Iraq in Kirkuk Television to replace the Kurdish and Turkman skilled employees [37]. As part of Government's policy during Iraq-Iran War 1980-1988, Kirkuk Television allocated a great part of its transmission for covering the news and films of the battle [38]. And any eyewitness in that period observes the programs and curricula of Kirkuk Television, and even the Baghdad Television see how the Television in Iraq in general has transformed from a cultural entertainment media interface into a media tool concerned with politics and harnessing, its capabilities to serve the war effort [39].

Therefore, we see that the news broadcasts that were broadcast on Kirkuk Television, often contained political contents, and could have dealt with events related to non-political topics and areas, such as cultural, economic, sports, social, art ... etc., if you could not transfer these areas to international news, It was able to convey local news.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The study illustrates that Kirkuk Television had been through different stages, and the second half of the 1970s could be considered as the (golden time) for the Television due the ampleness and diversity of the programs. The Television staff were also enjoying a great degree of freedom in conducting their jobs, and they were less restricted during the mentioned period of Television's history. The political developments happened in Iraq during 1980s and 1990s such Iran-Iraq War and the first Gulf War reflected negatively on Kirkuk Television's performance.
2. Despite the fact that Kirkuk Television was a very new experiment in the region and had a number of skilled and professional employees, but in general the professional and media level of its staff was not high compared to other international and regional Television stations. Choosing unskilled staff by the Government to replace the skilled in Kirkuk Television, for political purposes could be a main reason behind that.
3. Kirkuk Television, Kurdish channel witnessed a great development in the quality and quantity of program production, especially social and cultural programs whose effects on the society's different sections, particularly, the educated section was enormous.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The researcher recommends that the history of Kirkuk Television should be studied at Kirkuk University, College of Arts, Media Dept.
2. Conducting historical, analytical and comparative studies of the programs presented through the work of Kirkuk Television is highly recommended.
3. The researcher calls upon the Central and Local Governments on taking care of Kirkuk Television's archive and putting it in order in a scientific and advanced way, and also converting the cassettes from the old to a new system for keeping this very valuable media heritage and avoiding it from damage and loss.

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[4]The establishing of radio in Iraq goes back to the era of the King Qazi ( 1933- 1939), the radio of Al-Zuhur palace which launched its transmission on June 15th 1937 was considered to be the first communication means in Iraq...etc.For more see: KhaledHabib Al-Rawi, op.cit, p.10-11.

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[25]The table of the researcher's work based on the information available in the following source: A visit field of the researcher to the Iraqi Media Network / Kirkuk, the Archive Unit, on October 29, 2019.

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[27]A personal interview with **Hashim Abdulla Jabari**, The interview date and place Oct 5th, 2019 Kirkuk.

[28] A Personal interview with **Anwar Qaradaghi**, born in Halabja 1946., a well - known artist and musician who enriched Kirkuk Television archive by his ample musical work. Interview date and place Oct 19<sup>th</sup> 2019 Sulaymaniyah

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