

## **Movie Script Iraq: “Social Media and Social Activism in Iraq”**

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After 2003, when Iraq was introduced to the internet. Gallup Co. made a survey about internet access in Iraq. The result was 70 % access to the internet. This rapid access to internet made social activist to use the internet as a mean to communicate with society and to achieve their goals. We surveyed activists, to know how social media is used by social activists to mobilize social movements and improve their media situation. Most activists are males and most activists are young. The reasons for the social activists to use social media, we interviewed Dr. Sahar Khalifa Professor of Publicity and Media Education at the Iraqi University - Faculty of Information.

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### ***Interview with Dr. Sahar Khalifa, Professor of Publicity and Media Education at the Iraqi University***

*Accessibility, more freedom and the impact. That is why we find that social activists shifted or started using Social Media, because Social Media meets their needs to address various subjects and to achieve their goals. Mass Media institutions do not care to cover social activism unless it helps their agenda and political propaganda. That is why using Social Media by the Social or Civil activists helps achieve their goals, find bigger audience and build their fan base.*

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The most frequent answer of the survey is easy access, to reach and interact with recipients via Social Media. In addition, we interviewed the social activist Mohamed about the importance of Social Media.

### ***Interview with Mohamed, activist***

*Yes, because of the lack of trust from the Iraqi society Regarding Mass Media Because of the political situation, adding to that social media is easier, faster, more practical and cheap.*

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The activist Tuqa agreed with him about the importance of Social Media.

### ***Interview with Tuqa, activist***

*Yes, It is more important, because it is easy to access and cheap.*

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### ***Interview with Dr. Sahar Khalifa***

We asked Dr. Sahar Khalifa about if the social activists have traditional media background.

*There are some, but Civil and Social Activism is for all and success requires some knowledge in media influence. Therefore, the use of Social Media by activists is due its popularity and its influence. That does not mean that there are no activist without Mass Media background. The use of Social Media does not require certain skills; it requires only an account and good administration.*

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According to our survey, activists prefer to post an image with a text, only about one third of them prefer to post a video with text. On the other hand, to know about the impact of social activism through social media, we asked the activist Mohamed.

### ***Interview with Mohamed***

*Very! but on a small scale. Activism in Iraq is new and it is taking baby steps. The lack of experience, and haste in implementation, adding to that the security situation.*

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In our survey, social activists are optimistic about their impact on civil society. However, they are less optimistic on affecting the actions or behaviors of the government or political parties. About the role of politicians and political parties, Dr. Sahar added:

### ***Interview with Dr. Sahar Khalifa***

*There is a role, mostly negative one, through using some of the activists by political parties or leaders to gain specific benefits. Either through financial support or facilitate their work. Of course, there's no support without something in return that's why political parties hire media figures to run their the Social Media pages, that appears to be social or civil activism. But in truth, it's a mean for political gain. For politicians, it is a cheap and rewarding project propaganda.*

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Most social activists complained, “Mass media are politicized by its owners”. They believe that mass media are affiliated with political and sectarian power. On the topic of funding, activists Tuqa & Mohamed informed us about the difficulties to fund project and idea in social activism.

### ***Interview with Tuqa***

*One of the most common problems in using Social Media especially Facebook are some reports, breaches and some threats from fake accounts.*

### ***Interview with Mohamed***

*Mohamed: The lack of experience in analyzing data and the public opinion through Social Media. In addition, the lack of studies and researches about it. Furthermore, the lack of experience on how to create FUNDRAISING campaign for a project or a cause.*

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Half of the activists in our survey self-fund their projects. Tuqa and Mohamed talked about the problems faced by activists.

### ***Interview with Tuqa***

*Funding is limited between self-funding and friends, where mutual trust existed through Social Media. Mohamed: Of course! At first, the funding was from international organizations, then the local organization started funding lately, but getting this funding is really difficult, a lot of activists, especially the young ones don't have the experience to apply for funding.*

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The survey shows that there is no vivid future and no cooperation to build social concept. Yet, activists have several ambitious objectives. But they rarely affirmed having any clear purposes with a bright future. Although development of social media and social activism boomed in Iraq, bringing more freedom than before, but the effects are limited. This is due to the lack of stable funding, no financial independence, and lack of experience, the negative role of politicians and the security situation.

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