

Dr. Yassin Taher al-Yassiri
Minister of Interior
Al-Kailan neighbourhood behind Al-Shaab Stadium
Baghdad
Iraq
Email: infor@moi.gov.iq

Dear Minister Yassin Taher al-Yassiri,

On 6 December, a few minutes after 4am, four men in a 4x4 car abducted 22-year-old photographer Zaid Mohammed Abid al-Khafaji from the doorsteps of his house in Baghdad, Iraq. The four men, dressed in civilian clothes and not masked, were seen on CCTV footage captured from cameras outside Zaid's house. The local authorities have launched an investigation but his whereabouts remain unknown to this day.

Zaid Mohammed Abid al-Khafaji has been going to Baghdad's Tahrir Square to take photographs of the mass protests every day since they broke out on 1 October. Every night/early morning, he is dropped off by his friend at his house in Baghdad's al-Qahera neighborhood after attending the protests. Zaid's family is not aware of him having received any threats prior to his abduction.

Since the beginning of the mass protests across the country, many journalists and activists have been threatened and targeted. Authorities have failed to carry out independent and impartial investigations into the abuses committed against activists, journalists and other protesters. There is evidence that security forces maybe involved in the campaign to intimidate and silence protesters, activists and journalists.

I call on you to urgently use all resources at your disposal to find Zaid Mohammed Abid al-Khafaji and secure his safe return to his family, immediately investigate his abduction, in accordance with Iraq's obligations under international human rights law and keep his family informed of developments in the investigation on a regular basis and in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely,