UNESCO to hold next week intl conf. on freedom of expression in Iraq

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The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is to hold here next Monday an international Conference on "Freedom of Expression and Media Development in Iraq," UNESCO said in a press release Wednesday. Up to 200 people are expected to participate in the three-day conference, including the Iraqi media and government officials and representatives of international non-governmental organizations and other organizations. The release indicated that the conference, which will be inaugurated by its Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, is organized by the Communications and Media Commission of Iraq (CMC) in cooperation with UNESCO and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). According to the release, "a session will be devoted to journalists who have risked, and in all too many cases lost, their lives to cover events in Iraq." It added that the conference will focus on many media related issues, such as the medias state in Iraq at the present time, the safety and protection of the journalists and the international support for Iraqs media. Other issues the conference will cover before finally drafting a Declaration are "ownership, editorial independence and commercial sustainability, "human and institutional capacity building and the improvement of professional standards," in addition to revising the "regulatory frameworks and legislation," the release noted. (end) si.ajs KUNA 031801 Jan 07NNNN