

Alive in Baghdad: first-hand accounts

Citizen journalism is gaining ground in dangerous places. Last month the website [Alive in Baghdad](#) won a crop of "Vloggie" industry awards for showing the human face behind Iraq's daily toll of deaths and kidnappings.

[Bomb survivors' video](#)

The site offers a series of short films documenting the lives of Iraqis in their own words.

These range from a piece on family men trying to protect their neighbourhood from death squads, to an interview with car bomb survivors. [Both are shown on this page.]

The founder of Alive in Baghdad is Brian Conley, a 26-year-old American journalist and film-maker.

He went to Baghdad and gave equipment and training to the small team of Iraqis who now produce a new short film every week.

Brian is now in Mexico, setting up a similar operation there.

He says he wanted to escape what he calls "live from" journalism.

"Essentially, there's something lost when you send someone from another part of the world, or with a specific audience in mind, to tell another individual's story.

"We are striving to build journalism in the voice of locals, so that people in different parts of the world can communicate almost directly to their audience around the world."

The footage is shot by Iraqis and edited in the United States.

The website has survived until now on donations from foundations and individuals. Staff in Iraq receive a small salary. US staff are not paid.

Suspicion

The team in Baghdad face the same personal risks and professional limitations facing all journalists in Iraq.

AiB's co-ordinator in Baghdad is 21-year-old Omar Abdullah.

He says levels of suspicion and violence in Baghdad can make it hard to find willing subjects, but people overcome their fear.

[Civilian patrol video](#)

"Some people are so sick of being frightened, they are willing to take a risk. We're just trying to show the truth to the outside world."

For founder Brian Conley, Iraq and Mexico point the way forward to future projects.

"We're thinking about Africa next summer. After that it will probably be back into the frying pan: Palestine, Syria, Chechnya, Afghanistan, something like that."

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/talking_point/6195960.stm

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