

Investigation 6: Disguised Unemployment

Title: Degrees on the Wall, Destitution on the Street: How Babylon University Became a Factory of Broken Dreams

By: "The Opportunity Seeker"

On the streets of Hilla, an army of young men in helmets rides motorcycles. They are not just delivery workers; they are the shadow army of a collapsed economy, an army **25,000** strong, **60%** of whom hold university degrees. The story of "Muhannad," the literature graduate who became a delivery driver, is not an individual tragedy; it is the story of an entire generation deceived by the illusion of a government job. The official graduate unemployment rate (32%) is a misleading figure, as it fails to account for this "disguised unemployment," which turns engineers, doctors, and teachers into day laborers with no rights and no future.

The provincial database registering **85,000** unemployed graduates is merely an administrative number. Our analysis of data from major delivery companies operating in Babylon (via internal sources) reveals that the average driver's age is **26**, and that **35%** of them are graduates of engineering and science colleges, not just humanities. They are not working in this sector as a temporary choice, but as the only option after an average waiting period of **4 years** to find a job in their field.

The salary, not exceeding **350,000 IQD (\$250)**, is not the worst part of the story. The contracts these young people signed, copies of which we

obtained, classify them as "independent partners," not "employees." This legal trick deprives them of all rights: no social security, no health insurance, no paid leave. If one of them has an accident, the company is not liable. It is a modern form of indentured servitude.

The issue transcends the state's failure to create jobs. There is a "black market for appointments." We have documented testimonies from three graduates who were offered to pay between **\$10,000 and \$15,000** for a "job placement" in a provincial department. For those without money or "wasta" (connections), the delivery bike is their destiny. This explains how "Muhannad's" less competent classmates secured jobs.

The "graduate-on-a-bike" phenomenon in Babylon is a dangerous indicator of the collapse of the social contract between the state and its citizens. When a university degree becomes worthless, and competence becomes secondary to nepotism and corruption, the state loses its legitimacy in the eyes of its youth. These young people are not just numbers in unemployment statistics; they are ticking time bombs of frustration and anger, ready to explode in the face of the system that failed them.